

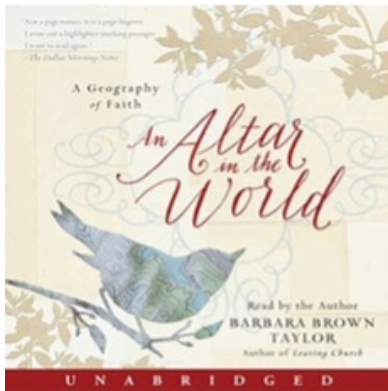
GO AND... *Be Church*

Summer Reading Ideas

There are a zillion books out there about faith, Christianity, being the church, prayer, discipleship, and social justice issues that the church cannot ignore. Find a book or two and invest time this summer exploring what being a disciple means to you and what it means for us to be the church in today's world. Here are five suggestions to get you off go.

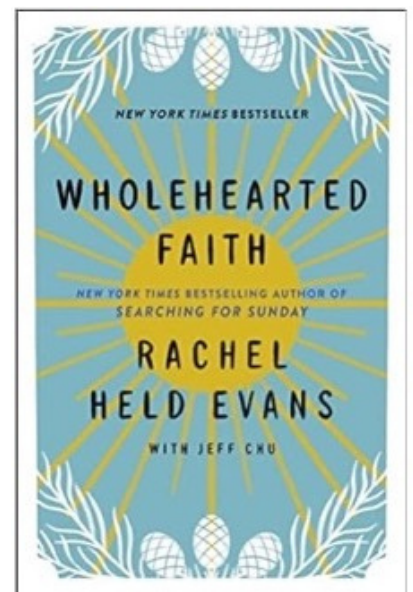
An Altar in the World: A Geography of Faith – Barbara Brown Taylor

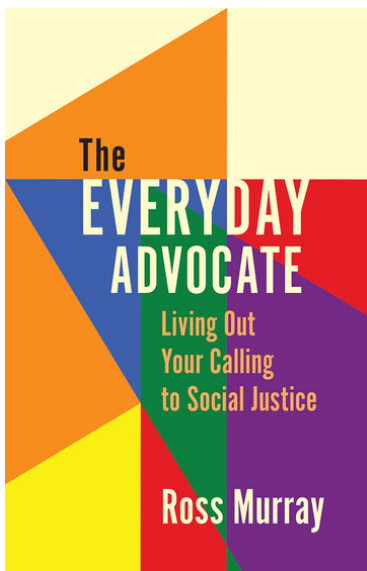
From simple practices such as walking, working, and getting lost to deep meditations on topics like prayer and pronouncing blessings, Barbara Brown Taylor reveals concrete ways to encounter God beyond the walls of any church and discover the sacred in the small things we do and see. Something as ordinary as hanging clothes on a clothesline becomes an act of devotion if we pay attention to what we are doing and take time to attend to the sights, smells, and sounds around us. Making eye contact with the cashier at the grocery store becomes a moment of true human connection. Allowing yourself to get lost leads to new discoveries. With Taylor's expert guidance, we can incorporate simple practices into our daily lives, we begin to discover altars everywhere we go, in nearly everything we do.



Wholehearted Faith - Rachel Held Evan and Jeff Chu

Rachel Held Evans was working on a new book on wholeheartedness when she tragically died at age 37 (2018). Jeff Chu took that work-in-progress and wove it together with some of her unpublished writings creating this rich collection of essays. Works that open the door for our own faithful wonderings with candid questions about the stories we have been told about faith, ourselves, and our world. This book is a must read for those on a spiritual journey trying to put the pieces of their faith story together and needing help wrestling with God's grace and love. Jeff Chu is one of the keynote speakers at the 2024 Nebraska Synod Assembly.





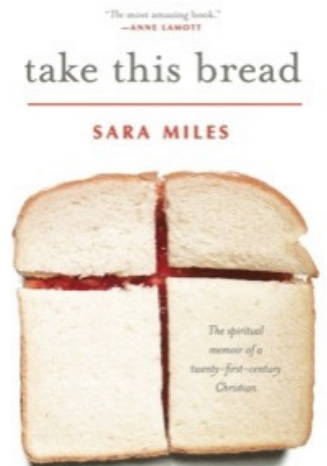
The Everyday Advocate: Living Out Your Calling to Social Justice - Ross Murray

The Everyday Advocate is for the layperson who feels overwhelmed by the world's troubles and helpless to address them. It is for the person who goes to church, hears the gospel, seeks to apply it to their lives, and yearns to be connected to, or create, a community that amplifies their voice and actions. It is also for pastors and faith leaders who want to help people think through their calling to advocacy and help connect them with the communities that can use their gifts and talents. Murray builds on two questions: Where is God? And what are we called to do? Deacon Ross was the Nebraska Synod LYON 2023 leader utilizing the keys in his book on advocacy.

Take This Bread: A Radical Conversion – Sara Miles

“Sara Miles’s joy, confusion, and passion for the Christian life, together with her skill as a professional journalist and the fullness of her own humanity, have produced what has to be the finest confession of faith I’ve read in years. Take this bread is a good, tight, absorbing read.”– Phyllis Tickle, author of *The Divine Hours* and former Religion Editor for *Publishers Weekly*. This is a story of call, compassion and an unstoppable response to the gospel. Sara Miles will provide inspiration, teach you to ask questions, force you to examine your congregational partnerships and accompaniment ministries and have you shaking your head with “of course” statements.

[Check out this video](#) where Sara shares the basics of The Food Pantry at St. Gregory of Nyssa Episcopal Church in San Francisco. This is in their sanctuary. Note the artwork depicting the Saints surrounding the people as they gather.



Future Faith: Ten Challenges Reshaping Christianity in the 21st Century - Wesley Granberg-Michaelson

Author Wesley Granberg-Michaelson provides a lucid view of how the top ten winds of change blowing through global Christian faith are reshaping the practice of Christianity today. Drawing on the stories, examples, and personalities of pastors and congregations from throughout the United States, as well as those from Africa, Asia, and Latin America, who are the faces of Christianity’s future, *Future Faith* is designed to inform and empower followers of Jesus to seek new ways of becoming the face of Christ to a rapidly changing world. It is a 2018 book, but the ideas Granberg-Michaelson presents are relevant for our work as the church in today’s world. Granberg-Michaelson has spent time with us in the Nebraska Synod at Assembly and the Fall Leadership Gathering.

The Cost of Discipleship - Dietrick Bonhoeffer

Bonhoeffer is considered one of the most important theologians of the twentieth century and one Bishop Scott Johnson often references. In this classic, Bonhoeffer challenges us to examine the relationship between ourselves and the teachings of Jesus. He is not going to let you off the hook with questions that demand only simple answers. The Cost of Discipleship is a compelling statement of the demands of sacrifice and ethical consistency from a man whose life and thoughts formed a new type of leadership inspired by the Gospel, the spirit of Christian humanism, and a creative sense of civic duty. It is one of the books that deserve to be re-read periodically.

