

2024-2025 Book Summaries Faith Lutheran Church Book Club

September 17, 2024

***Sold on a Monday: A Novel* by Kristina McMorris**

2 CHILDREN FOR SALE.

In 1931, near Philadelphia, ambitious reporter Ellis Reed photographs the gut-wrenching sign posted beside a pair of siblings on a farmhouse porch. With the help of newspaper secretary Lily Palmer, Ellis writes an article to accompany the photo. Capturing the hardships of American families during the Great Depression, the feature story generates national attention and Ellis's career skyrockets.

But the piece also leads to consequences more devastating than he and Lily ever imagined - and it will risk everything they value to unravel the mystery and set things right.

Inspired by a newspaper photo that stunned readers throughout the country, *Sold on a Monday* is a powerful novel of ambition, redemption, love, and family.

October 15, 2024

***The History of Us* by Leah Stewart**

Sometimes home is the hardest place to go

Eloise Hempel is on her way to teach her first class at Harvard when she receives the devastating news that her sister and her husband have been killed in a tragic accident. Eloise leaves her life in Cambridge and moves back into her family's century-old house in Cincinnati, pouring her own money into the house's upkeep and her heart into raising her sister's three children, Theodora, Josh, and Claire.

Nearly twenty years later, the now-grown children seem ready to leave home, and Eloise plans to sell the house and finally start a life that's hers alone. But when Eloise's mother decides that they should all compete for the chance to keep the house and Claire reveals a life-changing secret, the makeshift family begins to fall apart and ultimately must decide what in life is worth fighting for.

November 19, 2024

***In the Unlikely Event* by Judy Blume**

In her highly anticipated new novel, Judy Blume, the *New York Times* # 1 best-selling author of *Summer Sisters* and of young adult classics such as *Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret*, creates a richly textured and moving story of three generations of families, friends and strangers, whose lives are profoundly changed by unexpected events.

In 1987, Miri Ammerman returns to her hometown of Elizabeth, New Jersey, to attend a commemoration of the worst year of her life.

Thirty-five years earlier, when Miri was fifteen, and in love for the first time, a succession of airplanes fell from the sky, leaving a community reeling. Against this backdrop of actual events that Blume experienced in the early 1950s, when airline travel was new and exciting and everyone dreamed of going somewhere, Judy Blume imagines and weaves together a haunting story of three generations of families, friends, and strangers, whose lives are profoundly changed by these disasters. She paints a vivid portrait of a particular time and place — Nat King Cole singing “Unforgettable”

January 21, 2025

***Dead Wake: The Last Crossing of the Lusitania* by Erik Larson**

From the #1 New York Times bestselling author and master of narrative nonfiction comes the enthralling story of the sinking of the Lusitania

On May 1, 1915, a luxury ocean liner as richly appointed as an English country house sailed out of New York, bound for Liverpool, carrying a record number of children and infants. The passengers were anxious. Germany had declared the seas around Britain to be a war zone, and for months, its U-boats had brought terror to the North Atlantic. But the Lusitania was one of the era's great transatlantic "Greyhounds" and her captain, William Thomas Turner, placed tremendous faith in the gentlemanly strictures of warfare that for a century had kept civilian ships safe from attack. He knew, moreover, that his ship - the fastest then in service - could outrun any threat.

Germany, however, was determined to change the rules of the game, and Walther Schwieger, the captain of Unterseeboot-20, was happy to oblige. Meanwhile, an ultra-secret British intelligence unit tracked Schwieger's U-boat, but told no one. As U-20 and the Lusitania made their way toward Liverpool, an array of forces both grand and achingly small - hubris, a chance fog, a closely guarded secret, and more--all converged to produce one of the great disasters of history.

It is a story that many of us think we know but don't, and Erik Larson tells it thrillingly, switching between hunter and hunted while painting a larger portrait of America at the height of the Progressive Era. Full of glamour, mystery, and real-life suspense, *Dead Wake* brings to life a cast of evocative characters, from famed Boston bookseller Charles Lauriat to pioneering female architect Theodate Pope Riddle to President Wilson, a man lost to grief, dreading the widening war but also captivated by the prospect of new love. Gripping and important, *Dead Wake* captures the sheer drama and emotional power of a disaster that helped place America on the road to war.

February 18, 2025

***The Bishop's Pawn* by Steve Berry**

The Bishop's Pawn continues renowned *New York Times* top 5 bestseller Steve Berry's Cotton Malone series with another riveting, history-based thriller.

History notes that the ugly feud between J. Edgar Hoover and Martin Luther King, Jr., marked by years of illegal surveillance and the accumulation of secret files, ended on April 4, 1968 when King was assassinated by James Earl Ray. But that may not have been the case.

Now, fifty years later, former Justice Department agent, Cotton Malone, must reckon with the truth of what really happened that fateful day in Memphis.

It all turns on an incident from eighteen years ago, when Malone, as a young Navy lawyer, is trying hard not to live up to his burgeoning reputation as a maverick. When Stephanie Nelle, a high-level Justice Department lawyer, enlists him to help with an investigation, he jumps at the opportunity. But he soon discovers that two opposing forces—the Justice Department and the FBI—are at war over a rare coin and a cadre of secret files containing explosive revelations about the King assassination, information that could ruin innocent lives and threaten the legacy of the civil rights movement's greatest martyr.

Malone's decision to see it through to the end--from the raucous bars of Mexico, to the clear waters of the Dry Tortugas, and ultimately into the halls of power within Washington D.C. itself--not only changes his own life, but the course of history.

March 18, 2025

***The First Lady* by James Patterson**

One secret could bring down the government when the President's memorable affair becomes a nightmare, he longs to forget in this page-turner from James Patterson that will keep you up reading all night long.

Sally Grissom is a top-Secret Service agent in charge of the Presidential Protection

team. She knows that something is amiss when she's summoned to a private meeting with the President and his Chief of Staff without any witnesses. But she couldn't have predicted that she'd be forced to take on an investigation surrounding the mysterious disappearance of the First Lady -- with strict orders to keep it a secret.

April 15, 2025

***Run* by Ann Patchett**

It's a winter evening in Boston and the temperature has drastically dropped as a blizzard approaches the city. On this fateful night, Bernard Doyle plans to meet his two adopted sons, Tip the older, and more serious and Teddy, the affectionate dreamer, at a Harvard auditorium to hear a speech given by Jesse Jackson. Doyle, an Irish Catholic and former Boston mayor, has done his best to keep his two sons interested in politics, from the day he and his now deceased wife became their parents, through their childhoods, and now in their lives as college students. Though the two boys are African-American, the bonds of the family's love have never been tested. But as the snow begins to fall, an accident triggers into motion a series of events that will forever change their lives.

Run is at its very center, is a novel about what truly defines family and the lengths we will go to protect our children.