

Florida United Church of Christ Women
Reading for Renewal
2018 – 2019

“Planting Seeds”

This year’s list contains a selection of books with content representing new beginnings, new ideas, new relationships and/or new directions - all selected to plant seeds for growth, contemplation and discussion. Some are based on real events (factual or fictionalized) others are events/stories created by the writer.

My hope is that you will find a book or two that challenges you, entertains you, delights you, engages you and provides a common topic of conversation to share with others both in your home congregation as well as throughout the state of Florida.

~Terri Crawford, FL UCC Women/Reading for Renewal Chair

-Any number of books from this list that are read during the year should be reported. Reports are due in April 2019 to your local church’s Reading for Renewal contact.

A **Qualified Reader** must read **six (6)** books from this list, **including** one (1) Mission Study book,

In addition to retail bookstores, the books on the list may be available from your local public libraries and from online booksellers. Most are available in more than one format including large print, compact disc and various kinds of electronic media.

If you have questions or comments about this list, please contact FL UCC Reading for Renewal Chair, Terri Crawford at terric57@yahoo.com or Barb Coons at kayebarb3344@aol.com. Please include “Reading for Renewal” in the email subject line.

You may also send titles of books to be considered for future lists*. In general books to be considered should be:

- No more than 3 years old – based on release date
- Not a best seller or book from a best-seller list
- Available in multiple formats
- Not an author that has been the list in the past 2 years.

*In most cases, books selected for the list must in some way tie to the selected annual conference theme. There are occasional exceptions.



Reading for Renewal List for 2018 – 2019

Books are listed alphabetically by author/editor.

F = Fiction, NF = Non-Fiction, B = Biography/Memoir, SS = Short Stories

1. *The Floating World* – C. Morgan Babst (F) As Hurricane Katrina is fast approaching the Louisiana coast, Cora Boisdoré refuses to leave the city. Her parents, Joe Boisdoré, an artist descended from freed slaves who became the city's preeminent furniture makers, and his white "Uptown" wife, Dr. Tess Eshleman, are forced to evacuate without her, setting off a chain of events that leaves their marriage in shambles and Cora catatonic--the victim or perpetrator of some violence mysterious even to herself.
2. *Just One Touch: a slow burn novel* – Myra Banks (F) Raised in a strict religious cult since she was a young girl, Jenna has no connection to the outside world beyond vague flashes of memory that seem to be from another life Years held captive and forced to do the cult's bidding have turned Jenna into a meek, timid woman...or so they think. In truth, she is merely biding her time, waiting for the perfect moment to escape.
3. *Our Little Racket* – Angelica Baker (F) When the investment bank Weiss & Partners is shuttered, CEO Bob D'Amico must fend off allegations of malfeasance, as well as the judgment and resentment of his community. As panic builds, five women in his life must scramble to negotiate power on their own terms and ask themselves what—if anything—is worth saving.
4. *Alive In Shape & Color: 17 paintings by great artists and the stories they inspired* – ed. by Lawrence Block (NF) Any number of artists have produced evocative work, paintings that could trigger a literary response. Each author was invited to select a painting from the whole panoply of visual art—From the cave drawings at Lascaux to a contemporary abstract canvas on which the paint has barely dried. The result are these stories - each accompanied in color by the work of art that inspired it
5. *The Fifth Avenue Artists Society: a novel* – Joy Callaway (F) Virginia Loftin — Ginny — is an aspiring writer in a family of artistic sisters in the Bronx in 1891. She's certain of marrying the boy next door, Charlie Aldridge, until he proposes to another girl because his family needs her money. Heartbroken, Ginny determines to pour her grief into a novel about herself and Charlie and what could have been. Ginny is introduced to a group of writers, musicians and other artists who gather to discuss their work at meetings modeled on the European salons. John Hopper and the other members of the Society help Ginny make inroads with her writing, and she and John even start to fall in love.
6. *The Last Ballad: a novel* – Wiley Cash (F) Twelve times a week, twenty-eight-year-old Ella May Wiggins makes the two-mile trek to and from her job on the night shift at American Mill No. 2 in Bessemer City, North Carolina. While the dirty, hazardous job at the mill earns Ella May a paltry nine dollars for seventy-two hours of work each week, it's the only opportunity she has. When the union leaflets begin circulating, Ella May has a taste of hope, a yearning for the better life the organizers promise. But the mill owners, backed by other nefarious forces, claim the union is nothing but a front for the Bolshevik menace sweeping across Europe. To maintain their control, the owners will use every means in their power, including bloodshed, to prevent workers from banding together. On the night of the county's biggest rally, Ella May, weighing

the costs of her choice, makes up her mind to join the movement—a decision that will have lasting consequences for her children, her friends, her town—indeed all that she loves.

7. *Freedom's Ring: a novel* – Heidi Chiavaroli (F) Tragedy hits Boston 250 years apart in this time-slip novel of two stories woven into one with alternating eras between Annie David of modern-day Boston and Liberty Caldwell of colonial Boston. Annie is a marathon runner who with an injury from the 2013 bombing of the Boston Marathon. She had a weak relationship with her sister and niece who were also injured. The guilt Annie feels over the crippling injuries to her family hinders her from taking on that “Boston Strong” attitude that many New Englanders took on after the bombing. Liberty reunites with her brother only to lose him during the Boston Massacre of American Revolution making her the sole survivor of her immediate family. The two women must learn to overcome their guilt and fears to find their inner strength.
8. *The Cafe by the Sea* – Jenny Colgan (F) Years ago, Flora fled the quiet Scottish island where she grew up -- and she hasn't looked back. But when fate brings Flora back to the island, she's suddenly swept once more into life with her brothers and her father. Flora discovers a passion for cooking -- and finds herself restoring dusty little pink-fronted shop on the harbour: a café by the sea. But with the seasons changing, Flora must come to terms with past mistakes... and work out exactly where her future lies...
9. *The Whole Town's Talking* – Fannie Flagg (F) Elmwood Springs, Missouri, is a small town like any other, but something strange is happening at the cemetery. Still Meadows, as it's called, is anything but still. The story of Lordor Nordstrom, his Swedish mail-order bride, Katrina, and their neighbors and descendants as they live, love, die, and carry on in mysterious and surprising ways
10. *A Million Fragile Bones* – Connie May Fowler (B/Memoir) In this memoir, Fowler, details the beauty and peace she found on Alligator Point after years of heartbreak and loss, and the devastation and upheaval that followed the Deepwater Horizon oil rig explosion and oil spill. It is, at its heart, a love song to the natural world and a cry of anger and grief at its ruin for the sake of corporate profits
11. *Tales of Two Americas: stories of inequality in a divided nation* – edited by John Freeman (NF) Some of the literary world's most exciting writers look beyond numbers and wages to convey what it feels like to live in this divided nation. Their extraordinarily powerful stories, essays, and poems demonstrate how boundaries break down when experiences are shared, and that in sharing our stories we can help to alleviate a suffering that touches so many people.
12. *Woman at 1,000 Degrees* – Hallgrímur Helgason (F) Herra Björnsson is at the beginning of the end of her life. She has two weeks left, maybe three—she has booked her cremation appointment, at a crispy 1,000 degrees, so it won't be long. But until then she has her cigarettes, a World War II-era weapon, some Facebook friends, and her memories to sustain her.
13. *We Can't Help It If We Are from Florida: stories from a sinking peninsula* – edited by Shane Hinton (NF) This anthology of new stories and essays challenges a star-studded line up of current and former Floridians to write about the state through a literary lens, though not without the requisite weirdness. The Florida within this book contains: lightning, oil spills, road rage, a

lizard tied to a balloon, swimmers, sleepwalkers, characters that love Florida, characters that hate Florida, and at least three sinkholes.

14. *Seven Days of Us: a novel* – Francesca Hornak (F) It's Christmas, and for the first time in years the entire Birch family will be under one roof. Even Emma and Andrew's elder daughter, a doctor, who has been told she must stay in quarantine for a week...and so too should her family. For the next seven days, the Birches are locked down, cut off from the rest of humanity—and even decent Wi-Fi—and forced into each other's orbits. In close proximity, not much can stay hidden for long, and as revelations and long-held tensions come to light, nothing is more shocking than the unexpected guest who's about to arrive...
15. *An Inconvenient Beauty* – Kristi Ann Hunter (F) Griffith, Duke of Riverton, likes order, logic, and control, and he naturally applies this rational approach to his search for a bride. He's certain Miss Frederica St. Claire is the perfect wife for him, but while Frederica is strangely elusive, he can't seem to stop running into her stunningly beautiful cousin, Miss Isabella Breckenridge. Isabella should be enjoying her society debut, but with her family in difficult circumstances, her uncle will only help them if she'll use her beauty to assist him in his political aims. Already uncomfortable with this agreement, the more she comes to know Griffith, the more she wishes to be free of her unfortunate obligation. Will Griffith and Isabella be able to set aside their pride and face their fears in time to find their own happily-ever-after?
16. *The New Human Rights Moment: reinventing the economy to end oppression* – Peter Joseph (NF) In this engaging, important work, Peter Joseph, draws from economics, history, philosophy, and modern public-health research to present a bold case for rethinking activism in the 21st century. *The New Human Rights Movement* reveals the critical importance of a unified activism working to overcome the inherent injustice of our system. This book warns against what is in store if we continue to ignore the flaws of our socioeconomic approach, while also revealing the bright and expansive future possible if we succeed.
17. *Everything Here is Beautiful* – Mira T. Lee (F) The story of two Chinese-American sisters—Miranda and Lucia. When Lucia starts hearing voices, it is Miranda who must find a way to reach her sister. Lucia impetuously plows ahead, but the bitter constant is that she is, in fact, mentally ill. Lucia lives life on a grand scale, until, inevitably, she crashes to earth. Miranda leaves her own self-contained life in Switzerland to rescue her sister—but only Lucia can decide whether she wants to be saved. The bonds of sisterly devotion stretch across oceans—but what does it take to break them?
18. *Midwinter Break* – Bernard MacLaverly (F) A retired couple, Gerry and Stella Gilmore, fly from their home in Scotland to Amsterdam for a long weekend—a holiday to refresh the senses, to do some sightseeing, and generally to take stock of what remains of their lives. Their relationship seems safe, easy, familiar. But over the course of the four days we discover the deep uncertainties that exist between them.
19. *The Widows of Malabar Hill* – Sujata Massey (F) Perveen has just joined her father's law firm, becoming one of the first female lawyers in India. Armed with a legal education from Oxford, Perveen also has a tragic personal history that makes women's legal rights especially important to her. The law firm has been appointed to execute the will of Mr. Omar Farid, a wealthy Muslim mill owner who has left three widows behind. But as Perveen examines the

paperwork, she notices something strange. As she tries to investigate, she realizes her instincts were correct when tensions escalate to murder. Now it is her responsibility to figure out what really happened on Malabar Hill, and to ensure that no innocent women or children are in further danger.

20. *This Could Hurt: a novel* – Jillian Medoff (F) Five HR colleagues try to balance ambition, hope, and fear as their small company is buffeted by economic forces that threaten to upend them. Compelling, flawed, and heartbreakingly human, these men and women scheme, fall in and out of love, and nurture dreams big and small.
21. *Pieces of Happiness; a novel of friendship, hope and chocolate* – Anne Ostby (F) When Sina, Maya, Ingrid, and Lisbeth each receive a letter in the mail posing the same question, the answer is obvious. Their old high school friend Kat has extended the invitation of a lifetime: Come live with me on my cocoa farm in Fiji. Come spend the days eating chocolate and gabbing like teenagers once again, free from men, worries, and cold. Come grow old in paradise, together, as sisters. Who could say no?
22. *Patient H69: the story of my second sight* – Vanessa Potter (B/Memoir) In 2012, Vanessa Potter, a married advertising film producer with two young children, was stricken by Neuromyelitis Optica Spectrum Disorder (NMOSD), a rare illness that resulted in sudden blindness and paralysis. In her own words, Potter reveals the terror and torment of her blindness. While a multidisciplinary team of neurobiologists, psychologists, immunologists, and developmental biologists treated her, she blogged and kept audio-diaries, using the pen-name Patient H69. Her case offered scientists an important, and previously inaccessible, window into the process of early visual development, as her own optic nerves self-repaired and her brain went into overdrive.
23. *What She Ate: six remarkable women and the food that tells their stories* – Laura Shapiro (NF) Once we ask how somebody relates to food, we find a whole world of different and provocative ways to understand her. Food stories can be as intimate and revealing as stories of love, work, or coming-of-age. Each of the six women in this entertaining group portrait was famous in her time, and most are still famous in ours; but until now, nobody has told their lives from the point of view of the kitchen and the table. A lively and unpredictable array of women; what they have in common with one another (and us) is a powerful relationship with food.
24. *My Absolute Darling: a novel* – Gabrielle Tallent (F) Turtle Alveston is a survivor. She has grown up isolated since the death of her mother, in the thrall of her tortured and charismatic father, Martin. Her social existence is confined to the middle school and to her life with her father. Then Turtle meets Jacob, a high-school boy who tells jokes, lives in a big clean house, and looks at Turtle as if she is the sunrise. And for the first time, the larger world begins to come into focus: her life with Martin is neither safe nor sustainable. Motivated by her first experience with real friendship and a teenage crush, Turtle starts to imagine escape, using the very survival skills her father devoted himself to teaching her.
25. *The Resurrection of Joan Ashby: a novel* – Charise Wolas (F) When aspiring writer Joan finds herself unexpectedly pregnant, she is stunned by her husband's delighted response and his instant betrayal of their pact to never have children. She makes a fateful, selfless decision then, to embrace her unintentional family. Challenged by raising two precocious sons, it is decades before she finally completes her masterpiece novel. Poised to reclaim the spotlight, to

resume the intended life she gave up for love, a betrayal of Shakespearean proportion forces her to question every choice she has made.

Mission Study Titles:

26. *Did You Know? Over 100 facts about Haiti and Her Children* – Marjorie Charlet (NF) Looks in detail at a land and its people, uncovering the history, culture, challenges, and achievements of a country often stereotyped as deeply impoverished and bereft of any nobility of purpose. Tapping into her expertise in research and her familiarity with the wealth of resources residing in libraries, the author has gathered, curated and prepared a topically organized collection of vignettes presented in chapters organized according to themes. Themes include Africans, art and culture, civil rights, great families, inventors, the military, religion and science.
27. *Heartache and Hope In Haiti: the Britney Gengel story: making our daughter's last wish come true* – Len & Cherylann Gegel Britney Gengel was a vibrant nineteen-year-old Lynn University sophomore when she traveled to Haiti in January 2010 to work for an aide group. Deeply moved, she texted her mother that she dreamed of returning to open an orphanage of her own. But hours later, an earthquake leveled Port-au-Prince and the Hotel Montana where Britney's group was staying. After a gut-wrenching trip to the Haitian capital ten days after the quake, her family learned the truth: Brit was not coming home alive. Vowing that her death would not be in vain, Len and Cherylann Gengel along with sons Bernie and Richie kept alive their daughter's dream by building an orphanage in Grand Goave, Haiti. (***100% of the profits of this book will benefit The Be Like Brit Orphanage in Grand Goave, Haiti.***)
28. *A Sky the Color of Chaos* -M.J. Fievre (B/Memoir) This memoir chronicles M.J.'s perilous childhood during the turbulent rise and fall of Haiti's President-Priest - a time of nightly shootings, home invasions, robberies, and burning of former regime members in neighborhood streets. Haiti's rich culture and breathtaking beauty are contrasted not only with the terror in Port-au-Prince's streets, but also with the turmoil inside M.J.'s own home. Her father's hot-blooded nature and unpredictable moods amplify her fevered need to escape a home, and homeland, where random violence and bloodshed are commonplace.
29. *Dancing on Fire* -Maggie Steber (NF) Provides a pictorial chronicle of Haiti and its tumultuous history, and of the Haitian people and their struggle for freedom and modest prosperity.
30. *Hold Tight Don't Let Go: a novel of Haiti* – Laura Rose Wagner (F) The vivid story of two teenage cousins, raised as sisters, who survive the devastating 2010 earthquake in Haiti. After losing the woman who raised them in the tragedy, Magdalie and Nadine must fend for themselves in the aftermath of the quake. The girls are inseparable, making the best of their new circumstances in a refugee camp with an affectionate, lively camaraderie, until Nadine, whose father lives in Miami, sends for her but not Magdalie. As she leaves, Nadine makes a promise she cannot keep: to bring Magdalie to Miami, too. Resourceful Magdalie focuses her efforts on a reunion with Nadine until she realizes her life is in Haiti, and that she must embrace its possibilities for love, friendship, and a future.

2018 – 2019 Reading for Renewal Record Sheet

Due to your local church's Reading for Renewal contact in April 2019. Each reader is asked to record the books read from this list during the year. Please indicate the books you read by placing a check in front of the number of the book title listed below. Any number of books may be recorded. A **qualified reader** must read **six (6)** books from the list, **including** one (1) Mission Study.

1. The Floating World - Babst	14. Seven Days of Us - Hornak
2 Just One Touch - Banks	15 An Inconvenient Beauty - Hunter
3 Our Little Racket - Baker	16 The New Human Rights Movement - Joseph
4 Alive in Shape & Color - Block	17 Everything Her is Beautiful - Lee
5 The Fifth Avenue Artists Society - Callaway	18 Midwinter Break - MacLavery
6 The Last Ballad - Cash	19 The Widows of Malabar Hill - Massey
7 Freedom's Ring - Chiavaroli	20 This Could Hurt - Medoff
8 The Café by the Sea - Colgan	21 Pieces of Happiness - Ostby
9 The Whole Town's Talking - Flagg	22 Patient H69 - Potter
10 A Million Fragile Bones - Fowler	23 What She Ate - Shapiro
11 Tales of Two Americas - Freeman	24 My Absolute Darling - Tallent
12 Woman at 1000 Degrees - Helganson	25. The Resurrection of Joan Ashby - Wolas
13 We Can't Help It If We Are from Florida - Hinton	

MISSION STUDY BOOKS on Haiti

26 Did You Know? Over 100 facts about Haiti and Her Children - Charlet
27 Heartbreak and Hope in Haiti: the Britney Gengel story - Gengel
28 A Sky the Color of Chaos - Fievre
29 Dancing on Fire - Steber
30 Hold Tight Don't Let Go - Wagner

Total number of 2018-2019 Reading for Renewal Books Read: _____

I am a **Qualified Reader**: Yes _____ No _____

Name: _____