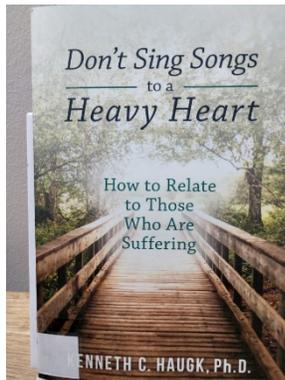


BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS BY ST. MATTHEW'S PARISHIONERS

Don't Sing Songs to a Heavy Heart by C. Kenneth Haugk – a book review by Jody Fletcher



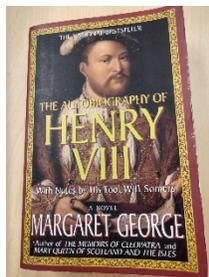
We all find it a challenge to relate to people who are suffering or near the end of life. I have struggled with what to say after greeting a person in these situations. What helps and what doesn't?

Dr. Kenneth Haugk's short book **Don't Sing Songs to a Heavy Heart** offers practical suggestions. It's based on his personal experience with his wife's diagnosis of ovarian cancer and her 41-month fight for life. He said, "We both learned a great deal about caring. We learned what helped and what didn't." In addition to their personal battle with cancer, they had previously worked together developing a training organization for care givers.

Have you ever said, "I know exactly how you feel" or "I remember". When a caregiver interjects his or her own experiences into the conversation, it shifts the focus from the suffering individual to the speaker. Dr. Haugk reminds us that "Conversations with a suffering person call us to set aside our own thoughts and needs and focus completely on the other's needs."

I highly recommend this book as a "must read" to have in your tool kit as a caring, compassionate, person of any faith.

Autobiography of Henry the Eight: with notes by his fool, Will Somers : a novel by Margaret George – a review from Pieter Keyzer



An interesting guy that Henry the Eight. After the culmination of the War of the Roses, he was meant to be churchman never meant to be king, supporter of the Pope, father of the Anglican Church, larger than life king and of course husband to all those women. Did he really start a new church, just to get a divorce? That's the easy answer. Have you ever wondered what he was thinking?

Well here are Margaret George's thoughts on just that. The premise, Henry kept a journal and not only was it not destroyed, it was spirited away and kept safe by his jester William Somers. The book opens with William sending the book to Henry's first child, the daughter of Mary Boleyn, Ann Boleyn's older sister.

Interesting you say? Wait it gets better. Over the thirty years that William had the journal, he took the time to add his notations... contrasting Henry's thoughts with what everyone else was thinking and adding historic references to contemporaries (early 1500's you remember) Leonardo da Vinci, Martin Luther, a flurry of international politics as a peripheral power set the stage for this novel. The perspectives, dynamic history as well as Margaret George's lush writing pull it all together in an almost 1,000 page tome full of juicy narrative and history.

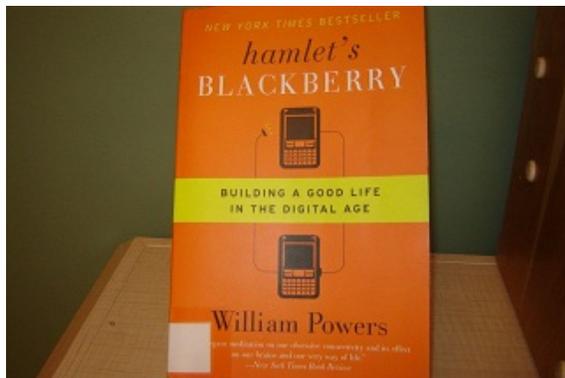
Ya just have to read it. Once you are finished, you can read Margaret George's take on Mary Magdalena. **Mary, called Magdalene** her novel on arguably the most important woman, next to the Madonna in the New Testament, also can be found in the library of St. Matthew's.

It is just a novel, but it's a good narrative wrapped around some fascinating events. Reading the book you just might learn

- Who was Henry's Grandfather and where did the House of Tudor come from?
- Who was Henry's sister married to and why was it important to England's future?
- Who came up with the idea that England break away from the Church in Rome and how was it justified?
- Who were his wives and why did he have such a hard time with relationships?
- What makes the Church of England different than other protestant churches?
- Why is the Book of Common Prayer so special?
- Who were Cardinal Wolsey, Cranmer and Cromwell and what role did they play in Henry's life?
- How many sons did Henry have and who were their mothers?
- And what does a jester do at court anyway?

---- You'll never be able to pick up the Book of Common Prayer without a second thought again. Have a good read! Pieter Keyzer

Hamlet's Blackberry – a book review by Joe Paul Pruett



If this book does not interest you, please read the metaphorical prologue depicting the stunning reality of our technological world. You might be enticed to read more. This is not a “dummy book” that offers solutions to every imaginable time consuming gadgets dilemma. It is an exceptionally well-written book by William Powers, an award-winning media critic who candidly writes about our travels through the world of screens (smart- phones, computers, tablets, notebooks, TV, etc.) He engagingly takes us with great ease and profound stimulation to where we have been and where we are and how our minds have responded on this amazing tech journey. For example, he suggests:

- Digital technology is not the Answer and the revolutionary creed to live for on earth.
- Life is different in a disconnected world. Can we really unplug the devices?
- A quiet moment is different today. The air is full of people with Smartphones in their pocket.
- Home is not a house filled with wall screens

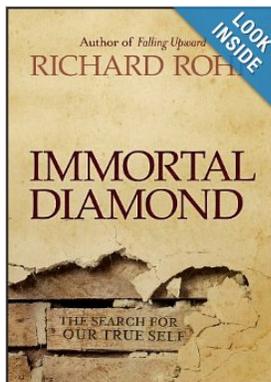
- Freedom to think outside the box of a computer enhances our reach for God and creative reality.
- The good life is not where you are, but where you decide to think and live.

William Power devotes seven chapters to some of history's greatest thinkers whose lives were suddenly interrupted by enlightening roads less traveled. Socrates finally broke from the speech world within the walls of Athens to the joy of a walk in the country. He then discovered the value of written words on a scroll rather than eloquent speech. Seneca learned to master the outer world of voluminous writings, but spent a lifetime trying to "measure a life that does not have room for so much." Thoreau's Walden Zone was around the corner and down the street like a backyard tree house without a tech devise. Yes, Shakespeare had his gadgets too. In "The Tragedy of Hamlet" he tells of Hamlet's table, a Molkeskine like tablet, on which he took notes to simplify all the clutter he encountered in his hectic London lifestyle.

Powers does not influence our tech habits with deliberate guilt associations or by offering a few tricks of the trades for disconnecting our electronics. In these fascinating pages, one discovers the importance of a flight from our busy boxes to the enjoyment of quiet habits.

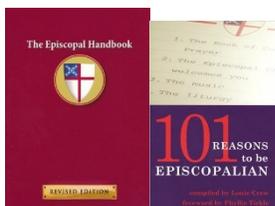
Anyone should enjoy reading this original and entertaining book. Oh yes, if you do not want to read it, please read the prologue.

Immortal Diamond: The Search for Our True Self - A Review by Ellie Britt



This book and many other thought-provoking books can be found in the St. Matthew's Episcopal Church Library. The library is open on Sundays after each morning service.

In this fourth book I have read by Richard Rohr, I have come to believe that Rohr is a western mystic in our time. While he may not be expounding all original thoughts, he does so quite originally in the complete context of what it is like to be a thoughtful and even doubtful practicing Christian in western society. Because of his empathy and grace, Rohr may be the best guide yet to lead us through the misconceptions or misperceptions that shape modern western faith. Rohr covers so much ground and can be so profound that I recommend reading this book with a group.



Book Reviews by Catharine Birch

As a 5o'clocker, I don't get into the church library often. I was at a meeting and discovered that our beautiful Library was open, so in I slipped.

Two brand new and tiny books caught my eye and **The Episcopalian Handbook** and **101 Reasons to be an Episcopalian** (compiled by Louie Crew). I recommend these to you if you are new to our faith or if you have always wondered why things in the service happen as they do or if you are just curious about your faith.

“In the Episcopal church you will be treated as an adult and the child in you will be welcomed.”

This is from Alex Macdonell writing in **101 Reasons to be an Episcopalian**. It is something I find especially true.

These are what I call stoplight books. Books that are great to have with you when having your oil changed, waiting to pick up a child or in line for that fast food burger. Each book has very short sections of several pages at most. Each is very easy with purposeful reading about the faith you are part of.

Our library has many, many good choices. Stop in today!