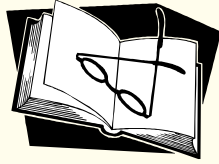


Adult Study Opportunities

Sunday Mornings 11th Hour

During Advent, one of the 11th Hour offerings will be a study of Arthur Simon's book, *How Much is Enough?* This powerful, engaging work helps us put into context concepts like needs and wants, legitimate personal "provision," compassion and consumerism and the consequences of our choices. Because each person's situation is different, the book helps us sort through the issues yet leaves the decision to each individual; there is no single answer. Please join us.



Sermon Talkback/Bible Study Returns

As a result of the Covenant Groups, there has been a call for a spiritually oriented Bible study on Sunday mornings. So...the Sermon Talkback and Bible Study are back! Those who wish to reflect on Sunday's message and scripture are welcome to gather in the Pastor's study from 11:00 am - noon.

Bible and Bagels Study Isaiah

It's not too late to join the Advent Bible and Bagel's study on the book of Isaiah. This prophetic book of the Bible addresses us, today, as poignantly as it addressed the people of ancient Judah. Join the group for study, prayer and good fellowship on Monday mornings from 10:00 - 11:30 am in the library.

Suggestions for Winter Reading

At a recent 11th Hour Study, members shared their all time favorite books that inspire them. Here is a list of some of these books. They might make good winter reading, especially if the Farmer's Almanac's prediction of a stormy winter is realized!

The Hound of Heaven (Francis Thompson); *The Brothers Karamazov* (Fyodor Dostoevsky); *Night* (Elie Wiesel); *As a Driven Leaf* (Milton Steinberg); *In Search of Belief* (Joan Chittister); *The Battle for God* (Karen Armstrong); *Pilgrim's Progress* (John Bunyan); *Harry Potter series* (J.K. Rowling); *Jonathan Livingston Seagull* (Richard Bach); *Bel Canto* (Ann Patchett); *Gift from the Sea* (Anne Morrow Lindbergh); *Siddhartha* (Herman Hesse); *Life of Pi* (Yann Martel); *Hatchet* (Gary Paulsen); *Truman and John Adams* (David McCullough); *The House on Mango Street* (Sandra Cisneros); *Franny and Zooey* (JD Salinger); *The Secret Life of Bees* (Sue Monk Kidd); *The Distant Mirror* (Barbara Tuchman); *Constantine's Sword* (James Carroll); *St Augustine's Confessions*.

2004 Upper Room Disciplines Available in Advent

The *Upper Room Disciplines* is found in many of our households and used daily many of us. Scripture, commentary and prayer are contained on each page. The daily Bible readings follow the cycle of lectionary readings; therefore, the texts studied are the same as the readings for the coming Sunday.

Copies of the *2004 Upper Room Disciplines* will be on sale during the December Sundays of Advent in Martin Hall for \$9.00. You are encouraged to pick up a copy for yourself and your household. The book would also make a meaningful Christmas gift for a friend. This daily devotional guide will encourage you into a daily habit of scriptural readings and prayer, for it is in daily practice that our faith becomes relevant and alive.

January Book Club

LUMC's Book Club will meet on Monday, January, 19 at 7:30 pm (meeting place TBD). The group will read *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* by Mitch Albom. Everyone is welcome! The following review describes the book:

Part melodrama and part parable, Mitch Albom's *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* weaves together three stories, all told about the same man: 83-year-old Eddie, the head maintenance person at Ruby Point Amusement Park. As the novel opens, readers are told that Eddie, unsuspecting, is only minutes away from death as he goes about his typical business at the park. Albom then traces Eddie's world through his tragic final moments, his funeral, and the ensuing days as friends clean out his apartment and adjust to life without him. In alternating sections, Albom flashes back to Eddie's birthdays, telling his life story as a kind of progress report over candles and cake each year. And in the third and last thread of the novel, Albom follows Eddie into heaven where the maintenance man sequentially encounters five pivotal figures from his life (a la *A Christmas Carol*). Each person has been waiting for him in heaven, and, as Albom reveals, each life (and death) was woven into Eddie's own in ways he never suspected. Each soul has a story to tell, a secret to reveal, and a lesson to share. Through them Eddie understands the meaning of his own life even as his arrival brings closure to theirs.

Albom takes a big risk with the novel; such a story can easily veer into the saccharine and preachy, and this one does in moments. But, for the most part, Albom's telling remains poignant and is occasionally profound. Even with its flaws, *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* is a small, pure, and simple book that will find good company on a shelf next to *It's A Wonderful Life*.

—Patrick O'Kelley