

REVISED BOOK LIST FOR MORNING/EVENING BOOK CLUB 2021-22

**DUE TO THE OCTOBER 26 CHARGE CONFERENCE AT OUR CHURCH,
THE OCT. MEETING IS CHANGED TO NOVEMBER 2.**

November 2, 2021 -- Ordinary Grace by William Krueger 336 pages

From *New York Times* bestselling author William Kent Krueger, a brilliant new novel about a young man, a small town, and murder in the summer of 1961.

"That was it. That was all of it. A grace so ordinary there was no reason at all to remember it. Yet I have never across the forty years since it was spoken forgotten a single word."

New Bremen, Minnesota, 1961. The Twins were playing their debut season, ice-cold root beers were selling out at the soda counter of Halderson's Drugstore, and Hot Stuff comic books were a mainstay on every barbershop magazine rack. It was a time of innocence and hope for a country with a new, young president. But for thirteen-year-old Frank Drum it was a grim summer in which death visited frequently and assumed many forms. Accident. Nature. Suicide. Murder.

Frank begins the season preoccupied with the concerns of any teenage boy, but when tragedy unexpectedly strikes his family—which includes his Methodist minister father; his passionate, artistic mother; Juilliard-bound older sister; and wise-beyond-his-years kid brother—he finds himself thrust into an adult world full of secrets, lies, adultery, and betrayal, suddenly called upon to demonstrate a maturity and gumption beyond his years.

Told from Frank's perspective forty years after that fateful summer, *Ordinary Grace* is a brilliantly moving account of a boy standing at the door of his young manhood, trying to understand a world that seems to be falling apart around him. It is an unforgettable novel about discovering the terrible price of wisdom and the enduring grace of God.

"Pitch-perfect, wonderfully evocative. . . . In Frank Drum's journey away from the shores of childhood—a journey from which he can never return—we recognize the heartbreaking price of adulthood and its 'wisdoms.' I loved this book." -- Dennis Lehane, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Live by Night* and *The Given Day*

November 30, 2021 -- Shepherds Abiding by Jan Karon Rated 4.8 288 pages

Since he was a boy growing up in Mississippi, Father Tim has lived what he calls "the life of the mind." Except for cooking and gardening and washing his dog, he never learned to savor the work of his hands. And then he finds a derelict nativity scene—twenty figures, including a flock of sheep, that have suffered the indignities of time and neglect.

Could he give the small company new life? Restore the camel's ear, repaint every piece, replace a missing nose on a wise man? "You can't teach an old dog new tricks!" he reminds himself. It's when he imagines the excitement in Cynthia's eyes that he steps up to the plate—and begins a small journey of faith that touches everyone around him.

The eighth novel in the bestselling *Mitford Years* series is a meditation on the best of all presents—the gift of one's heart. Lovingly written and beautifully illustrated, it seeks to restore the true Christmas spirit and give everyone a seat at Mitford's holiday table.

"This Mitford story presented itself to me, quite unexpectedly, and asked to be told. I hope readers will find it a perfect refuge from the holiday frenzy." -Jan Karon

NO MEETING IN DECEMBER

January 25, 2022 -- The Midnight Library by Matt Haig Rated 4.4 304 pages
The *New York Times* bestselling WORLDWIDE phenomenon. --Winner of the Goodreads Choice Award for Fiction. A Good Morning America Book Club Pick | *Independent* (London) Ten Best Books of the Year. "A feel-good book guaranteed to lift your spirits."—*The Washington Post*

The dazzling reader-favorite about the choices that go into a life well lived, from the acclaimed author of *How To Stop Time* and *The Comfort Book*.

Somewhere out beyond the edge of the universe there is a library that contains an infinite number of books, each one the story of another reality. One tells the story of your life as it is, along with another book for the other life you could have lived if you had made a different choice at any point in your life. While we all wonder how our lives might have been, what if you had the chance to go to the library and see for yourself? Would any of these other lives truly be better?

In *The Midnight Library*, Matt Haig's enchanting blockbuster novel, Nora Seed finds herself faced with this decision: Faced with the possibility of changing her life for a new one, following a different career, undoing old breakups realizing her dreams of becoming a glaciologist; she must search within herself as she travels through the Midnight Library to decide what is truly fulfilling in life, and what makes it worth living in the first place.

Feb. 22, 2022 -- Today Tonight Tomorrow by Rachel Lynn Solomon Rated 4.6 384 pgs
"A dizzying, intimate romance." —*Kirkus Reviews* (starred review)
"Funny, tender, and romantic." —*Publishers Weekly* (starred review)

The Hating Game meets *Nick and Norah's Infinite Playlist* by way of Morgan Matson in this unforgettable romantic comedy about two rival overachievers whose relationship completely transforms over the course of twenty-four hours.

Today, she hates him.

It's the last day of senior year. Rowan Roth and Neil McNair have been bitter rivals for all of high school, clashing on test scores, student council elections, and even gym class pull-up contests. While Rowan, who secretly wants to write romance novels, is anxious about the future, she'd love to beat her infuriating nemesis one last time.

Tonight, she puts up with him.

When Neil is named valedictorian, Rowan has only one chance at victory: Howl, a senior class game that takes them all over Seattle, a farewell tour of the city she loves. But after learning a group of seniors is out to get them, she and Neil reluctantly decide to team up until they're the last players left—and then they'll destroy each other.

As Rowan spends more time with Neil, she realizes he's much more than the awkward linguistics nerd she's sparred with for the past four years. And, perhaps, this boy she claims to despise might actually be the boy of her dreams.

Tomorrow...maybe she's already fallen for him.

March 29, 2021 -- Four Winds by Kristin Hannah Rated 4.5 464 pages

"Through one woman's survival during the harsh and haunting Dust Bowl, master storyteller, Kristin Hannah, reminds us that the human heart and our Earth are as tough, yet as fragile, as a change in the wind." —Delia Owens, author of *Where the Crawdads Sing*

From the number-one bestselling author of *The Nightingale* and *The Great Alone* comes a powerful American epic about love and heroism and hope, set during the Great Depression, a time when the country was in crisis and at war with itself, when millions were out of work and even the land seemed to have turned against them.

"My land tells its story if you listen. The story of our family."

Texas, 1921. A time of abundance. The Great War is over, the bounty of the land is plentiful, and America is on the brink of a new and optimistic era. But for Elsa Wolcott, deemed too old to marry in a time when marriage is a woman's only option, the future seems bleak. Until

the night she meets Rafe Martinelli and decides to change the direction of her life. With her reputation in ruin, there is only one respectable choice: marriage to a man she barely knows.

"*The Four Winds* seems eerily prescient in 2021 . . . Its message is galvanizing and hopeful: We are a nation of scrappy survivors. We've been in dire straits before; we will be again. Hold your people close."—*The New York Times*

April 26, 2022 -- Educated, A Memoir by Tara Westover 352 pages Rated 4.7

Born to survivalists in the mountains of Idaho, Tara Westover was seventeen the first time she set foot in a classroom. Her family was so isolated from mainstream society that there was no one to ensure the children received an education, and no one to intervene when one of Tara's older brothers became violent. When another brother got himself into college, Tara decided to try a new kind of life. Her quest for knowledge transformed her, taking her over oceans and across continents, to Harvard and to Cambridge University. Only then would she wonder if she'd traveled too far, if there was still a way home.

"Beautiful and propulsive . . . Despite the singularity of [Westover's] childhood, the questions her book poses are universal: How much of ourselves should we give to those we love? And how much must we betray them to grow up?"—*Vogue*

May 31, 2022 -- The Thursday Murder Club: A Novel (A Thursday Murder Club Mystery) by Richard Osman 363 pages Rated 4.3

"Witty, endearing and greatly entertaining." —*Wall Street Journal*

"Don't trust anyone, including the four septuagenarian sleuths in Osman's own laugh-out-loud whodunit." —*Parade*

Four septuagenarians with a few tricks up their sleeves -- A female cop with her first big case -A brutal murder -- Welcome to...THE THURSDAY MURDER CLUB.

In a peaceful retirement village, four unlikely friends meet weekly in the Jigsaw Room to discuss unsolved crimes; together they call themselves the Thursday Murder Club.

When a local developer is found dead with a mysterious photograph left next to the body, the Thursday Murder Club suddenly find themselves in the middle of their first live case.

As the bodies begin to pile up, can our unorthodox but brilliant gang catch the killer, before it's too late?

June 28, 2022 -- Better Luck Next time by Julia Claiborne Johnson Rated 4.1 288 pages

"Do you want to read something funny? Let's say, a novel set at a divorce ranch in Reno in the 1930s? A book with memorably eccentric characters, sparkling dialogue, a satisfying plot twist, and some romance and sex? A feel-good literary comedy/western? Here it is, then, the book you've been looking for: Julia Claiborne Johnson's *Better Luck Next Time*."—Julie Schumacher, author of *Dear Committee Members* and *The Shakespeare Requirement*

The eagerly anticipated second novel from the bestselling author of *Be Frank with Me*, a charming story of endings, new beginnings, and the complexities and complications of friendship and love, set in late 1930s Reno.

It's 1938 and women seeking a quick, no-questions split from their husbands head to the "divorce capital of the world," Reno, Nevada. There's one catch: they have to wait six-weeks to become "residents." Many of these wealthy, soon-to-be divorcees flock to the Flying Leap, a dude ranch that caters to their every need.

Twenty-four-year-old Ward spent one year at Yale before his family lost everything in the Great Depression; now he's earning an honest living as a ranch hand at the Flying Leap. Admired for his dashing good looks—"Cary Grant in cowboy boots"—Ward thinks he's got the Flying Leap's clients all figured out. But two new guests are about to upend everything he thinks he knows: Nina, a St Louis heiress and amateur pilot back for her third divorce, and Emily,

whose bravest moment in life was leaving her cheating husband back in San Francisco and driving herself to Reno.

A novel about divorce, marriage, and everything that comes in between (money, class, ambition, and opportunity), *Better Luck Next Time* is a hilarious, yet poignant examination of the ways friendship can save us, love can destroy us, and the family we create can be stronger than the family we come from.

July 26, 2022 -- The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks by Rebecca Skloot – 4.7 stars – 381 pages

Her name was Henrietta Lacks, but scientists know her as HeLa. She was a poor Southern tobacco farmer who worked the same land as her slave ancestors, yet her cells—taken without her knowledge—became one of the most important tools in medicine: The first “immortal” human cells grown in culture, which are still alive today, though she has been dead for more than sixty years. HeLa cells were vital for developing the polio vaccine; uncovered secrets of cancer, viruses, and the atom bomb’s effects; helped lead to important advances like in vitro fertilization, cloning, and gene mapping; and have been bought and sold by the billions. Yet Henrietta Lacks remains virtually unknown, buried in an unmarked grave.

Henrietta’s family did not learn of her “immortality” until more than twenty years after her death, when scientists investigating HeLa began using her husband and children in research without informed consent. And though the cells had launched a multimillion-dollar industry that sells human biological materials, her family never saw any of the profits. As Rebecca Skloot so brilliantly shows, the story of the Lacks family—past and present—is inextricably connected to the dark history of experimentation on African Americans, the birth of bioethics, and the legal battles over whether we control the stuff we are made of.

Over the decade it took to uncover this story, Rebecca became enmeshed in the lives of the Lacks family—especially Henrietta’s daughter Deborah. Deborah was consumed with questions: Had scientists cloned her mother? Had they killed her to harvest her cells? And if her mother was so important to medicine, why couldn’t her children afford health insurance?

Intimate in feeling, astonishing in scope, and impossible to put down, *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* captures the beauty and drama of scientific discovery, as well as its human consequences.

August 30, 2022 -- A Fall of Marigolds by Susan Meissner 4.5 stars 400 pages

A beautiful scarf connects two women touched by tragedy in this compelling, emotional novel from the author of *As Bright as Heaven* and *The Last Year of the War*.

September 1911. On Ellis Island in New York Harbor, nurse Clara Wood cannot face returning to Manhattan, where the man she loved fell to his death in the Triangle Shirtwaist Fire. Then, while caring for a fevered immigrant whose own loss mirrors hers, she becomes intrigued by a name embroidered onto the scarf he carries...and finds herself caught in a dilemma that compels her to confront the truth about the assumptions she’s made. What she learns could devastate her—or free her.

September 2011. On Manhattan’s Upper West Side, widow Taryn Michaels has convinced herself that she is living fully, working in a charming specialty fabric store and raising her daughter alone. Then a long-lost photograph appears in a national magazine, and she is forced to relive the terrible day her husband died in the collapse of the World Trade Towers...the same day a stranger reached out and saved her. But a chance reconnection and a century-old scarf may open Taryn’s eyes to the larger forces at work in her life.