

Food for Thought Book List 2020-2021

September 3, 2020 **World Alzheimer's Day..... 9/21**

Sweetness of Forgetting By Kristin Harmel F

Hope McKenna-Smith struggles to run the family bakery on Cape Cod after her divorce with her preteen daughter, Annie, and a grandmother, Rose, who has Alzheimer's. Rose—in a rare moment of lucidity—gives Hope a list of 7 relatives whom she last saw in WWII-era France, and begs her to track them down. Urged by Annie, Hope abandons the bakery and jets to Paris. She unearths family secrets, and comes face to face with the people and places of her grandmother's past. This is a tale of generations struggling to survive. Recipes sprinkled throughout the book allow readers to experience the sweetness of Hope's journey.

October 1, 2020. **Blindness Awareness Month**

Have you seen Louis Velez? By Catherine Ryan Hyde. F

Hyde has created a heartwarming story about how people treat one another badly but also how surprising human connections might fix the world. At 17, Raymond Jaffe is uncomfortable in his skin and doesn't fit in at school or in his two homes with either of his divorced parents. Mildred Gutermann, a 92-year-old blind neighbor, calls for help in his New York City walk-up, and, unlike everyone else, Raymond comes to her aid. He starts by rescuing a stray cat and is soon traveling all over the city meeting people while he's trying to find the old lady's former caretaker, Luis Velez. When he discovers Luis's fate, his life opens up in new directions with people who become his chosen family. Hyde asks questions about how we care and judge one another before we know people based on race, stereotypes, and prejudice.

November 5, 2020. **Make a Joyful Noise Unto the Lord!**

Gratitude. By Oliver Sacks. NF

A series of heart-rending and uplifting essays....A lasting gift to readers....unlike other writers who have reported from the front lines of mortality, Sacks did not focus on his illness, his medical ordeal or spirituality, but on "what is meant by living a good and worthwhile life—achieving a sense of peace within oneself. Sacks not only achieved that peace but managed to convey it beautifully in these essays. He found positive ways to think about everything, including his growing frailty: Perhaps, he suggests in the book's final pages, he was in the Sabbath of his life, "when one can feel that one's work is done, and one may, in good conscience, rest."

December - No Meeting

January 7, 2021. New Beginnings.....

Imagine That. By Mark Fins F

Big-hearted, eight-year-old Mark Leonard lives on the brink of two worlds: one steeped in the hardship of post-World War II America, where his father is consumed by financial woes; the other where he's buoyed by his exceptionally vivid imagination. In his imagination, Mark is a heroic soldier, a surgeon, and a daredevil striving to live up to the ideals of the 1950s. When his family uproots from Queens, New York, to start afresh in Massachusetts, Mark finds refuge from loneliness in an unlikely friendship with an eccentric, wealthy, elderly neighbor who has shut out the world following a debilitating accident. Their mutual gift for conjuring up imaginary worlds to cope with reality—which for Mark includes the confusing teachings of his Jewish faith—leads them to push the boundaries between these two realms, exploring the fine line between love, imagination, and the existence of God.

March 4, 2021. Women's History Month

The Giver of Stars. By Jojo Moyes. Historical Fiction

Alice Wright marries handsome American Bennett Van Cleve hoping to escape her stifling life in England. But small-town Kentucky quickly proves equally claustrophobic, especially living alongside her overbearing father-in-law. When a call goes out for a team of women to deliver books as part of Eleanor Roosevelt's new traveling library, Alice signs on. The leader, and Alice's greatest ally, is Margery, a smart-talking, self-sufficient woman who's never asked a man's permission for anything. They will be joined by three other women who become known as the Packhorse Librarians of Kentucky. What happens to them—and to the men they love—becomes a drama of loyalty, justice, humanity and passion. These heroic women refuse to be cowed by men or by convention. Though they face all kinds of dangers, they're committed to their job: bringing books to people who have never had any.

April 1, 2021 Focusing on Foster Care - read two!!

This Tender Land. William Kent Kruger. F

1932, Minnesota - the Lincoln School is a place where hundreds of Native American children, forcibly separated from their parents, are sent to be educated. It is also home to an orphan named Odie O'Banion, a lively boy whose exploits earn him the superintendent's wrath. Forced to flee, he and his brother Albert, their best friend Mose, and a brokenhearted little girl named Emmy steal away in a canoe, heading for the mighty Mississippi and a place to call their own. Over the course of one summer, these four orphans will journey into the unknown and cross paths with others who are adrift, from struggling farmers and traveling faith healers to displaced families and lost souls of all kinds.

CinderGirl, a Memoir. By Christina Meredith. NF.

Born into a large working-class family in upstate New York, Christina Meredith endured years of abuse before entering the foster care system as a teenager. With nowhere to turn after she graduated from high school, Christina lived in her car for almost a year, working three jobs to survive. As she prayed in her car every day, Christina had no idea that in just a few years, she would be crowned Ms. California. She had no idea that her suffering would one day help others find healing. But she did know that she was destined for more, and she would not give up hope no matter the circumstance. In *CinderGirl*, Christina tells her story of leaving behind homelessness to become Ms. California and the founder of a nonprofit organization that provides advocacy for foster care children. Christina invites us into her childhood home and the heart of a child longing to be loved. She asks us to journey with her across the country and deep into a growing faith.

May 6, 2021. Military Appreciation Month

Beyond the Point: a Novel. By Claire Gibson. F

Duty. Honor. Country. That's West Point's motto, and every cadet who passes through its gates vows to live it. But on the eve of 9/11, as Dani, Hannah and Avery face four grueling years ahead, they realize they'll only survive if they do it together. Everyone knows Dani is going places. With athletic talent and a brilliant mind, she navigates West Point's male environment with wit and confidence, breaking stereotypes and embracing new friends. Hannah's grandfather, a legendary Army general, offers a warning about the dangers that lie ahead, but she moves forward anyway, letting faith guide her path. When she meets her soul mate at West Point, the future looks perfect. Wild child Avery moves fast and doesn't mind breaking a few rules along the way. But she can't outpace her self-doubt, and the harder she tries, the further it leads her down a treacherous path. The world—of business, love, and war—awaits Dani, Hannah, and Avery beyond the gates of West Point.

June 3, 2021. Coffee Time! ☕

Miracle at the Higher Grounds Cafe. By Max Lucado. F

What if you could ask God anything? What would you ask, and how would He answer?

Chelsea Chambers is on her own. After a public split from her NFL superstar husband, Chelsea takes a step out of the limelight to the counter of the Higher Grounds Café, an old-fashioned coffee shop in dire need of reinvention. When her courage, expert planning, and out-of-this-world cupcakes fail to pay the bills, this single mom finds herself desperate for help. Then a curious stranger lands on Chelsea's doorstep, and with him, an even more curious string of events. Soon, customers are flocking to the Higher Grounds Café, and not just for the cupcakes and cappuccino. They've come for the internet connection to the divine. Now the café has become the go-to place for people in search of answers to life's biggest questions. When a catastrophe strikes and her ex comes calling, Chelsea begins to wonder if the whole universe is conspiring against her quest to make it on her own.

July 1, 2021. 🙏. Grief Awareness

From Scratch, a Memoir of Love, Sicily, and Finding Homes. By Tembi Locke. NF

A poignant and transporting cross-cultural love story set against the lush backdrop of the Sicilian countryside, where one woman discovers the healing powers of food, family, and unexpected grace in her darkest hour. It was love at first sight when Tembi met professional chef, Saro, on a street in Florence. There was just one problem: Saro's traditional Sicilian family did not approve of him marrying a black American woman, an actress no less. However, the couple, heartbroken but undeterred, forges on. They build a happy life in Los Angeles, with fulfilling careers, deep friendships and the love of their lives: a baby girl they adopt at birth. Eventually, they reconcile with Saro's family just as he faces a formidable cancer that will consume all their dreams.

August 5, 2021. Honey Bee Appreciation Month.

The Honey Bus, a Memoir of Loss, Courage, and a Girl Saved By Bees, By Meredith May. NF

May writes of her childhood, learning about life and bees from her beekeeper grandfather. After her parents' divorce, five-year-old May, her younger brother, and her mother move from the east to her grandparents' house in California. Once there, her mother abdicates her parental responsibilities, refusing to get out of bed, believing life is unfair. May's grandmother enables her daughter and is critical of her grandchildren, seeing them as an obligation. The one bright spot in this dysfunctional household is May's grandfather, a beekeeper who shares his love of his charges with May, who longs for a family. As she learns about bees and their lives, May comes to admire their cooperation, loyalty, hard work, and bravery, taking those lessons with her as she moves forward, attending college and becoming a writer.

September 2, 2021. Faith Practices

The Dearly Beloved. By Cara Wall. F

Charles and Lily, James and Nan. They meet in Greenwich Village in 1963 when Charles and James are jointly hired to steward the historic Third Presbyterian Church through turbulent times. Their differences, however, threaten to tear them apart. Charles is destined to succeed his father as an esteemed professor of history at Harvard, until an unorthodox lecture about faith leads him to ministry. How then, can he fall in love with Lily—fiercely intellectual, elegantly stern—after she tells him that she will never believe in God? James spent much of his youth angry at his alcoholic father and avoiding his anxious mother. Nan grew up in Mississippi, the devout and beloved daughter of a minister. James's escape from his desperate circumstances leads him to Nan and, despite his skepticism of hope, her gentle, constant faith changes the course of his life. This novel follows these couples through love, friendship, jealousy and understanding, forgiveness and commitment.