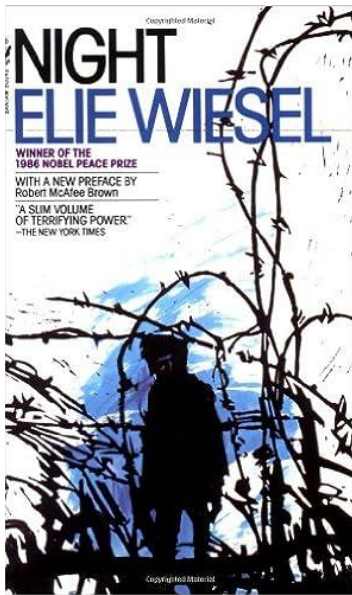


# BOOK GROUP DISCUSSION SCHEDULE

2023-2024

Oct. 26, 2023

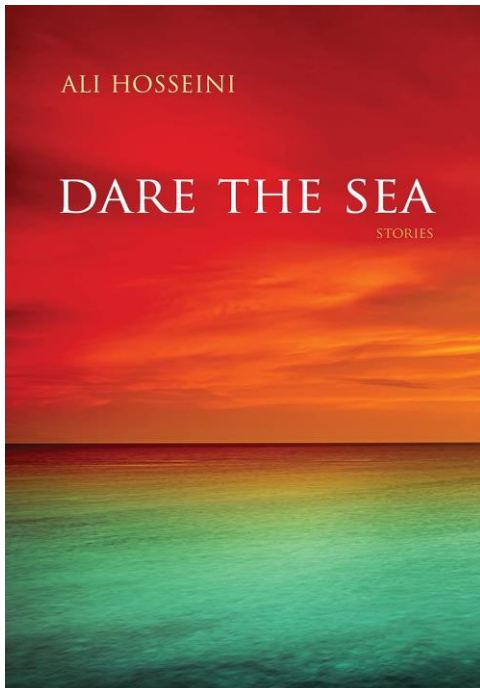


Wiesel, Elie, *Night*, 1958 (120 pages)

A chance to reread (from an older and perhaps wiser perspective)

Weisel's classic account of his Nazi death camp experience and his agonized witness to the death of his family... the death of his innocence... and the death of his God.

Nov. 30, 2023



Hosseini, Ali, *Dare the Sea*, 2023, (200pages).

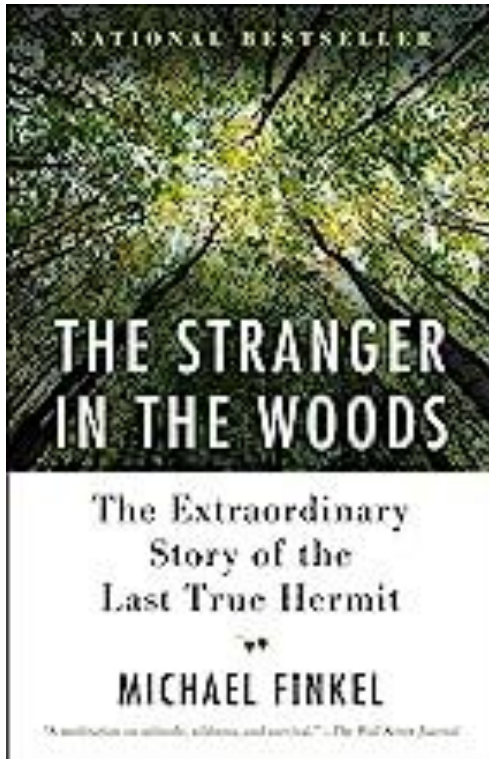
*Dare the Sea* is a collection of short stories, loosely connected by reappearing characters. They explore Iran's landscape, culture, and the undercurrent of change affecting its people—both in Iran and the United States. The stories in the first half of the collection are set in Iran in the time before and just after the Iranian Revolution of 1979. Each tale discloses the obstacles rural Iranians lived with every day and the exigencies of survival: petty theft, corruption, drug trafficking, religion, and love. Stories in the second half take place in exile, where characters are seemingly dropped into American locales like the Midwest or Hawaii, with only the survival skills they've learned in their own land and enduring the hardships of being strangers in a new country.

The book is in line with our church's commitment to better understand the lives of refugees, getting to know them and aiding them as we can.

# BOOK GROUP DISCUSSION SCHEDULE

2023-2024

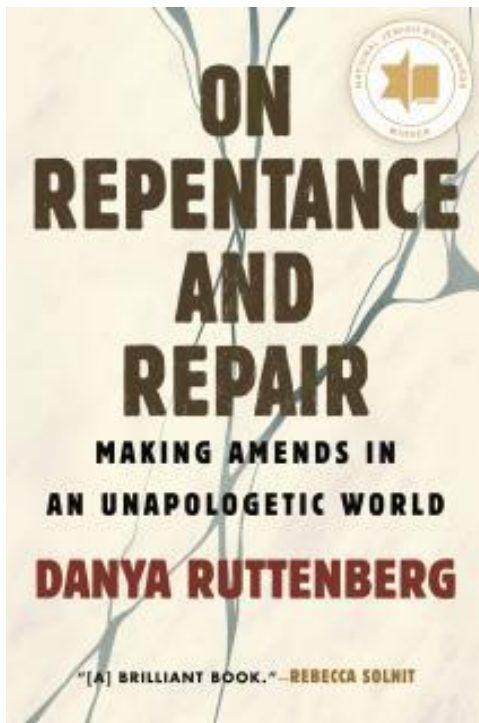
Dec. 28, 2023



Finkel, Michael, *The Stranger in the Woods*, 2017, (203 pages).

In 1986, twenty-year old Christopher Knight drove into rural Maine, abandoned his car, and disappeared into the woods. He would not have a conversation with another person for the next twenty-seven years. The book compels us to reexamine our assumptions about what makes a good life, and what makes a moral life. Finkel shows how Knight lived in a tent (he never constructed a more permanent structure even in the depths of 27 Maine winters) in a secluded encampment, developing ingenious ways to store provisions and stave off frostbite. He does break into nearby cottages for food, books and supplies taking only what he needs.

Jan 25, 2024



Ruttenberg, Danya, *On Repentance and Repair: Making Amends in an Unrepentant World*, 2022, (205 pages) (UU common read).

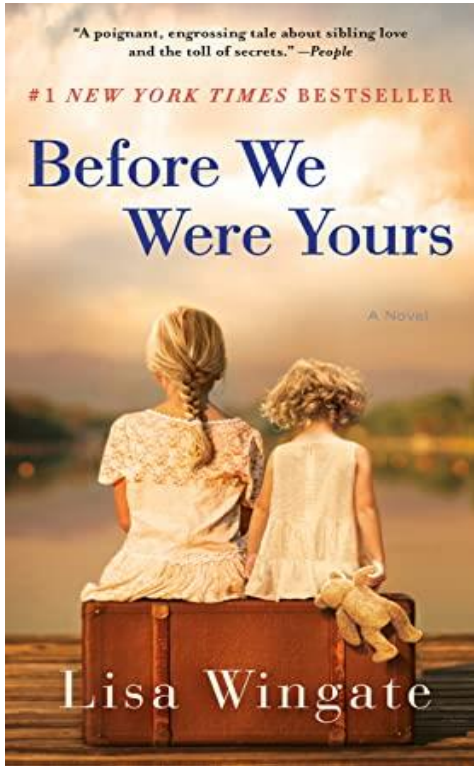
Ruttenberg, drawing on the work of medieval philosopher Maimonides, offers a new lens on repentance, atonement, forgiveness, and repair from harm. Our culture focuses on letting go of grudges and redemption narratives instead of the perpetrator's obligations or recompense to harmed parties. For Maimonides, forgiveness is less important than the obligation of the person who caused the harm to repair it as best they can.

Rooted in traditional Jewish concepts, the book is accessible to people from any, or no, religious background, *On Repentance and Repair* is a book for anyone who cares about creating a country and culture that is more whole than the one in which we live, and for anyone who has been hurt or who is struggling to take responsibility for their mistakes.

# BOOK GROUP DISCUSSION SCHEDULE

2023-2024

Feb 29, 2024



Wingate, Lisa, *Before We Were Yours*, 2017, pp 354.

We have read a later historical novel by Wingate, “The Book of Lost Friends.” “Before We Were Yours” is also based on one of America’s notorious real-life scandals. Georgia Tann, director of a Memphis-based adoption organization, kidnapped and sold poor children to wealthy families all over the country.

**Memphis, 1939.** Twelve-year-old Rill Foss and her four younger siblings live a magical life aboard their family’s Mississippi River shantyboat. Their father must rush their mother to the hospital one stormy night, and he leaves Rill in charge—until strangers arrive in force. Wrenched from all that is familiar and thrown into a Tennessee Children’s Home Society orphanage. Orphanage staff assure the Foss children that they will soon return to their parents—but the children quickly realize the dark truth. At the mercy of the facility’s cruel director, Rill fights to keep her sisters and brother together in a world of danger and uncertainty.

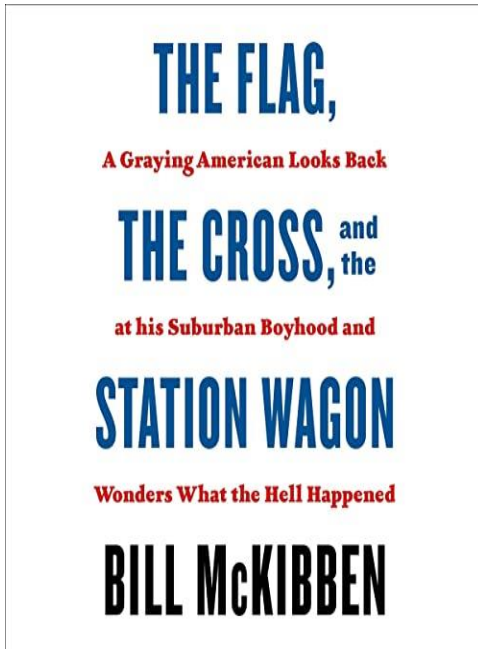
**Aiken, South Carolina, present day.** Born into wealth and privilege, Avery Stafford has it all: a successful career as a federal prosecutor, a handsome fiancé, and a lavish wedding on the horizon. But when Avery returns home to help her father weather a health crisis, a chance encounter leaves her with uncomfortable questions and compels her to take a journey through her family’s long-hidden history, on a path that will lead either to devastation or redemption.



# BOOK GROUP DISCUSSION SCHEDULE

2023-2024

March 28, 2024



McKibben, Bill, *The Flag, the Cross, and the Station Wagon*, 2022, (226 pages).

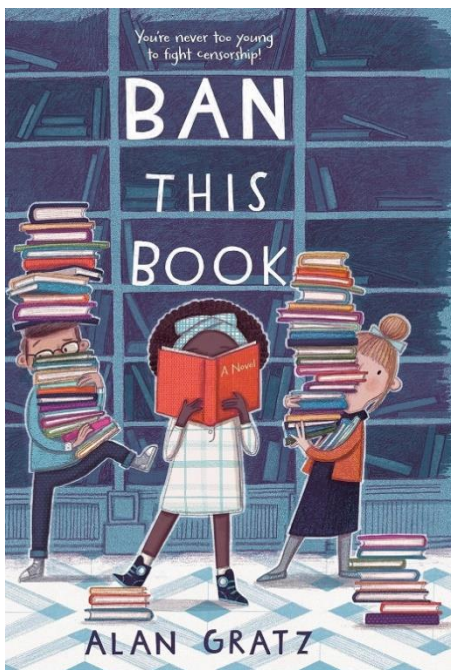
McKibben, like I did, grew up believing that the United States was the greatest country on earth. As a teenager, he cheerfully led American Revolution tours in Lexington, Massachusetts. He sang “Kumbaya” at church. And with the remarkable rise of suburbia, he assumed that all Americans would share in the wealth.

But fifty years later, he finds himself in an increasingly doubtful nation strained by bleak racial and economic inequality, and an ecological crisis. He wonders, “What the hell happened?”

Seeking answers he digs deep into our history (and his own well-meaning but not all-seeing past) and into the latest scholarship on race and inequality in America, the rise of the religious right,

and our environmental crisis. He finds that he is not without hope. And he wonders if he, or any of us, can or should reclaim any of that trinity of his youth—*The Flag, the Cross, and the Station Wagon*—in the fight for a fairer future.

April 25, 2024



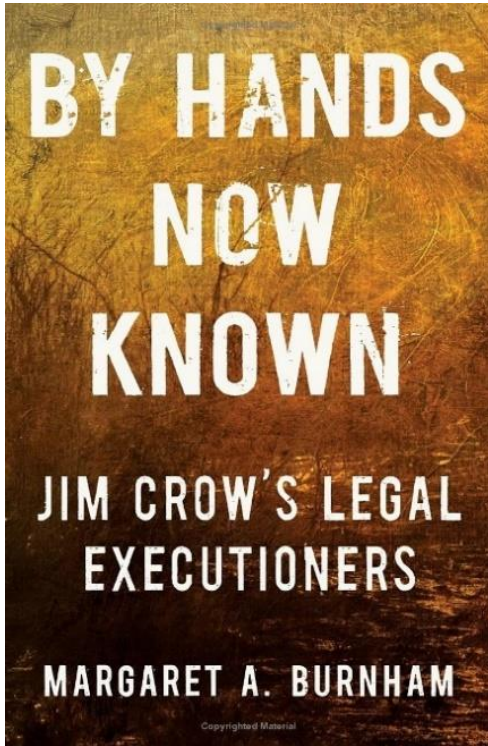
Gratz, Alan, *Ban this Book*, 2018, (256 pages).

In *Ban This Book*, a fourth grader fights back when a well-meaning parent challenges *From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler* by E. L. Konigsburg and succeeds in removing it from the shelves of her school library. Amy Anne is shy and soft-spoken, but don't mess with her when it comes to her favorite book in the entire world. Amy Anne and her lieutenants fight back for their books. They wage a battle that will make you laugh and pump your fists as they start a secret banned books locker library, make up ridiculous reasons to ban every single book in the library to make a point, and take a stand against censorship. The book demonstrates that no matter how shy or how seemingly limited your power, anyone can fight back against censorship.

# BOOK GROUP DISCUSSION SCHEDULE

2023-2024

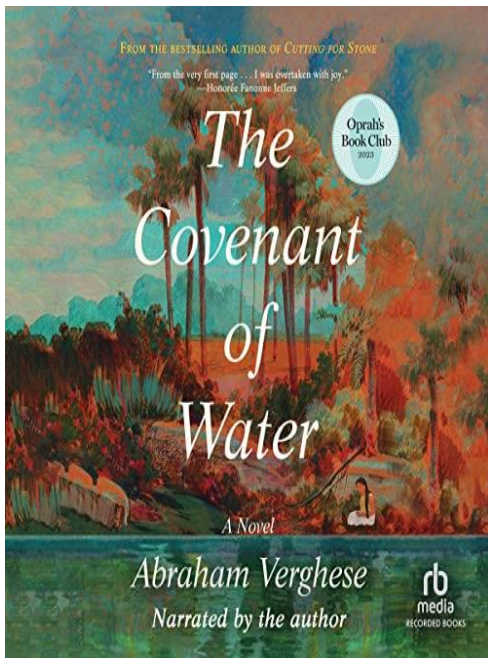
May 30, 2024



Burnham, Margret A. *By Hands Now Known*, 2022, (326 pages). If the law cannot protect a person from a lynching, then isn't lynching the law?

Burnham, director of Northeastern University's Civil Rights and Restorative Justice Project, challenges our understanding of the Jim Crow era by exploring the relationship between formal law and background legal norms in a series of harrowing cases from 1920 to 1960. From battles over state and federal jurisdiction (sound familiar today?) to the outsize role of local sheriffs in enforcing racial hierarchy, Burnham maps the criminal legal system in the mid-twentieth century South and traces the unremitting line from slavery to the legal structures of this period through to today. Our own Roxanne's hand helped in the creation of this book. It draws on over 1,000 cases of racial violence, revealing the Jim Crow legal system and capturing memories of those whose stories have not yet been heard.

## Summer Reading



Verghese, Abraham, *The Covenant of Water*, 2023, (736 pages).

At the turn of the twentieth century, a twelve-year-old girl from Kerala's long-existing Christian community, grieving the death of her father, is sent by boat to her wedding, where she will meet her forty-year-old husband for the first time. From this dramatic beginning, we will witness unthinkable changes through the eyes of this young girl (and future matriarch). We will witness progress in medicine and human understanding and experience a testament to the difficulties undergone by past generations for the sake of those alive today.