

Cross Currents

Newsletter of the Haydenville Congregational Church
September 2010 *Open Hearts & Open Minds & Open Doors*

FROM THE PASTOR

Sandy Blackmon has a ministry. She does not like it when I call it that, but it is true. She has a ministry, with a small "m." She calls it a job. But it seems to me that she is ministering to people every day. Sandy is a Parking Enforcement Officer in Northampton. You may have seen her downtown or on one of the streets near downtown. She is in her official uniform, with her badge and an electronic thing that writes tickets. And Sandy does her job...she checks meters and tickets people's cars that have run out of time, and she keeps handicap parking spaces clear. But, she tells me, she also has the opportunity (surprisingly often!) to minister to people. It turns out that people sometimes get upset when they get a ticket and they grab Sandy when they can and tell her an abbreviated version of their life story. They explain where they were and why they were delayed in getting back to their car or why they forgot to put money in the meter in the first place. Some of the stories Sandy hears are heart-wrenching.

One woman told Sandy that she had just learned her husband has cancer—the woman was so distracted she did not even think about putting money in the meter. Another woman told Sandy a story about a loved one's suicide. That woman was so distressed and preoccupied she could not remember where she had parked her car. Sandy's response was true ministry; she told the woman, "Don't worry, I will walk with you until we find your car."

Sandy has heard deeply moving stories, has offered kind words of support, and has ministered to people in a variety of ways. Sometimes, she tells me, when someone is very upset about a difficult situation in their lives, Sandy says to them, "I am sorry, and I will pray that God comforts you during this time." And when she says that and the person drives off—soothed and relieved—Sandy prays for them, right then and there on the street, or in her car, or in an

alley-way. Sometimes, Sandy tells me, it is just a few words, but she and I both believe that her few words make a difference in that person's day. People thank Sandy for her kindness and when they do, Sandy often tells people to "Pay the kindness forward. Do something nice for someone else today." Days after saying that to someone, Sandy was on the street doing her job and the person drove by and yelled to her, "Thank you for your kind words the other day!" Someone else once yelled from a passing car, "I did as you asked, I paid the kindness forward." These responses have made Sandy's day!



Every week in church when you are handed a Bulletin there are some important words on the back of the program. Every week. Under the words "Church Leadership" it says:

*Ministers: All of Us
The Rev. Dr. Andrea Ayvazian,
Pastor and Teacher.*

Without focusing on it intentionally or meaning to lift up her "ministry," Sandy is in fact ministering to people who are troubled, distracted and near (or in) tears. She truly provides comfort—right there on Main Street, or Green Street, or South Street, or wherever she is when someone breaks down.

Sandy's calming words and caring behaviors made me think about the rest of us. Are we "ministering" to those we meet day in and day out, on the street, in the hair salon, at the auto body shop, in Big Y? Are we reaching out, listening with care and intention, offering a kind word? I worry that I am too busy sometimes and fly right past these opportunities to aid, listen, and help. Thank you Sandy for reminding your church family...."Ministers: All of Us."

Love and Blessings,

NOTE FROM MATILDA

Children's Church and Youth and Family Ministries

There is no perfect church to be found. Church is for the search. Wouldn't it be better if we said we were going to "search?" When you understand third grade math you don't belong in third grade math classes. If we understood what parenthood has to teach us we wouldn't belong in parenthood...If we understood our oneness with God we wouldn't need churches or temples or mosques. Jeremiah envisioned such a day--"When no one shall teach his neighbor saying. 'Know ye the lord,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest." But meanwhile, thank goodness for the learning.

-Polly Berrien Berends, Gently Led

The above quotation comes from a book I am devouring called, Gently Led: How to Teach Your Children about God While Finding God for Yourself. It is by Polly Berrien Berends, author of Whole Child, Whole Parent, a book I also read and deeply appreciated in the hazy first month after my son Olin was born. (It didn't help with diaper changing or sleeplessness, but it helped with the more important things!) I am similarly enjoying Gently Led so much that I hope to share it via reading and discussion with the Children's Church Committee and/or interested parents this upcoming year.

But the quotation above in particular grabbed me because it speaks to what our Children's Church Program is, and what we strive to be—a place to "search." Our Godly Play Curriculum is all about asking questions, and it is truly a way of *living out* the notion that "God is still speaking." For in the unique and complex depths of each child's individual imaginations, *new* ways of hearing God's voice through the *ancient* Bible Stories are found.

Berrien Berends, like many of us, tried many different churches with her children and found there was no perfect church. Well, we do like to think we *are* the perfect church, and to be completely honest, in my best moments I like to think our CC program is *truly innovative* and special—because we teach our children the most radical interpretation of Jesus' message—that the Kingdom of God is not elsewhere but within you. But we are of course, in actuality, by no means perfect; we are in fact a fairly new program struggling to establish ourselves and develop the resources, traditions, and infrastructure present in bigger, wealthier churches in the Valley and beyond. And each CC year brings with it new challenges. So, we are not the perfect church. But when I picture our children—the wide-eyed toddlers, the eager six year olds, the somewhat reticent-on-the-surface but deeply engaged pre-teen boys, when I think of the beings that face me in the children's messages, who "circle up" for their story time, even those

that love to respond with a twist of irreverence and irony to our queries about the most serious of subjects, and yet that eagerly and with truly unprecedented curiosity and sincerity, take communion—I picture us all engaged together "on the search." And it is for pilgrims, those searching, that the greatest bonds are forged and some of the greatest memories laid down... The Sunday morning routines so cherished by the youngest, the special events, worship services, service projects, the overnights, the singing, the chaotic and sometimes desperate and funny moments along the way ... So while there may be no *perfect church*, it is not to the place perhaps, but to the journey—the roads we go down together-- that we form our deepest and most formative attachments. The good news about this is the path goes on no matter where we are, and that the fact we don't have the largest rooms or the most outfitted Sunday School Program in the Valley (yet!!) is not what matters... So, parents, teachers, CC committee members, parishioners and friends, all of you who participate either directly or indirectly in our Youth and Family Ministries, let us usher in with joy a new year of "Children's Search." (Due to three-year-old pronunciation, for my son Olin this sounds pretty much like what it is called anyway!)

IT'S THAT "WONDERFUL" TIME AGAIN!

By Lynn Fogg

Often times the word "Committee" denotes for many, some of these thoughts.... meetings (lots of them), to-do lists and follow-up homework, letter writing and envelope stuffing and so many more menial tasks. And as members of the HCC Stewardship Committee, in particular, we have the unenviable job of asking others for money – ugh!

But for me – I have found this committee to actually be a far cry from the above scenario. For a second year now, I have gathered with a group of women who have, with great ease, gotten into deep theological discussions about what Stewardship is for us, both individually and as a congregation. And interestingly enough, in the midst of our introspection, there has been little discussion about the money/giving part.

Rather, we have talked at length about what this church offers us, what motivates us to want to give; how God has touched our lives, what church community has meant and continues to mean to us. And it is these deep spiritual dialogues that make this Committee participation so easy and so rich for me; and also so clear that giving some of our monetary resources to this Church, and asking all of you to do the same is such the right thing to do. So stay tuned – our 2010 Stewardship Campaign is just around the corner!

CATHOLICS IN THE UCC

By Annie Turner



A new group, called Catholics in the UCC, started meeting in late spring at the Haydenville UCC Church, facilitated by Andrea Ayvazian and using as a base text for the discussion, **Catholics**

in the UCC, by J. Mary Luti and Andrew B. Warner. Having met several times already, the participants have had a chance to share some of their stories about being brought up in the Catholic Church and all that has meant to them, including: rich rituals, wonderful music, reverence and silence, and also many deep wounds. We've had a chance to talk about the relief some of us experience in being in a church without strict creeds and repressive teachings, but at the same time, we've shared some of the things we miss from our childhood church. Tears, laughter, anger, and more have accompanied our first meetings. We plan on continuing this group with another meeting in September (to be announced), with Annie Turner facilitating. Anyone with a history in the Catholic Church--whether long or short--who would like to be part of this group, please come. You are more than welcome! You can contact Annie Turner at: annwtturner@aol.com for further information.

OPEN LETTER RECEIVED IN JULY FROM THE NORTHAMPTON SURVIVAL CENTER

Dear Friends at the Haydenville Congregational Church,



Thank you so much for your June donation of 141 pounds of food to the Northampton Survival Center. We depend on generous donations like yours to our annual campaign to help keep the Center running every day. With your help, we are able to feed and support 600-800 local families or more every month. Thank you for working with us to ensure that nobody in our community goes hungry.

Warm regards,
Heidi Nortonsmith
Executive Director

Addendum from Pastor Andrea:

Letters from the Survival Center indicate that we have contributed these amounts over the last several months:

March 2010: 102 pounds of food

April 2010: 69 pounds of food

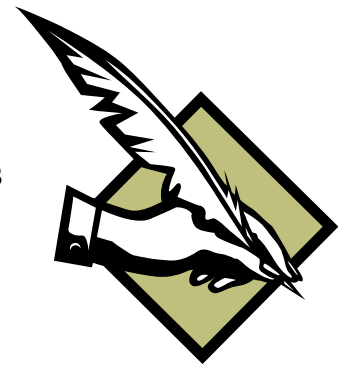
May 2010: 53 pounds of food

June 2010: 141 pounds of food

FRIDAYS AT FOUR

By Sally Lemaire

We will begin our fall 2010 writing series on Friday, September 3 at 4 PM in the Church Dining Room. All are welcome to join this group which meets from 4-5:30 most Fridays between September and June.



I will be facilitating the sessions with the help of members of the group. For five years, this writer's group has been a creative success for the participants. Our pieces make us laugh, others make us cry, and always the writing surprises us.

Come discover the challenge and the joy of writing in a welcoming, non-competitive environment. Each year we hear "Well I don't think I can write but...." and then someone shares what is beautiful writing straight from their heart and pen.

We look forward to an exciting season of new surprises coming from our hearts and our pens.

"I love you a lot. And there is nothing you can do about it!"
Wyatt Myers

OPEN LETTER TO OUR CHURCH FROM THE PODOLSKES

To Annie and Linda's Church,

Sincere thanks to all the generous souls who are part of the Haydenville Congregational Church that made Annie and Linda feel so welcome and who offered them another family they could be comfortable being part of. While being with Annie over the last few months of her life was often disheartening, seeing all the wonderful generous people who gave so generously of themselves to help Annie was also uplifting. While we are sorry beyond belief that she had to go, we feel she was blessed to have so many wonderful people to help her on her way. To us, the Haydenville Congregational Church epitomizes the true Christian spirit our mother had exemplified during her life.

Thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

The Podolskes

**FROM THE STILLS PEAKING DAILY DEVOTIONAL
REMEMBER ME?**

Excerpt from Isaiah 49:14-18

"Can a woman forget her nursing child, or show no compassion for the child of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you."

Reflection by Martin B. Copenhaver

I remember the first time my grandmother was not able to recognize me. I was in high school at the time. The look on her face revealed that she had no idea who had just walked into her room. "It's me, Grandmother. It's Martin." The expression on her face—if one could call it that—did not change.

When my father died quite suddenly, we went to tell my grandmother the news, news that she was not able to comprehend. In a sense, dementia saved her from grief, so there was some comfort in that. Yet, still, her only child had died and it seemed unspeakably sad that she could not remember him, or recognize his name, or mark the loss. The prophet, Isaiah, asked, "Can a woman forget her nursing child, or show no compassion for the child of her womb?" In the case of my grandmother, the answer would have to be, "Yes." But then, Isaiah follows those words with these words of God's own assurance, "Even these will forget, yet I will not forget you."

Our memories are so much a part of who we are that it can be hard to imagine who we would be without them. But we are more than our memories. As God loves the infant who does not yet have any memories, God holds the person at the other end of life whose memories have deserted her. In the end, what is most important, what ensures our personhood, is that we are remembered by God.

You see, we are so much more than what we remember. We are what God remembers.

Prayer

God, thank you for the promise that you will never forget me—that, indeed, you have inscribed me and those I love on the palms of your hands. Amen.

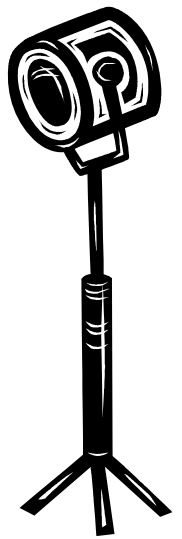
About the Author



Martin B. Copenhaver is Senior Pastor, Wellesley Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, Wellesley, Massachusetts. His new book, *This Odd and Wondrous Calling: the Public and Private Lives of Two Ministers*, co-authored with Lillian Daniel, has just been published.

THURSDAY NIGHT LIVE!!!!

Pastor Andrea and the Church Deacons are delighted to announce a new monthly program at the Church! The second Thursday of every month (September through June), there will be a special program in the Church Dining Room. We anticipate a variety of offerings including speakers, films, community dinners and other diverse educational, entertaining and lively programs. The first THURSDAY NIGHT LIVE will be on September 9 at 6:30 PM. Topic: Willot's report on his trip to Haiti, his homeland. All welcome!



COFFEE HOUR GOODIES IN SEPTEMBER

Here is the line-up for Coffee Hour goodies in September. Please remember: when it is your turn to bring something to share, you also help set up and clean up! Thank you!



September 5: T, U, V, W, X, Y, Z

September 12: A, B, C

September 19: D, E, F, G

September 26: H, I, J, K

"Church is God's answer to what's wrong with the world."

William Willimon

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO ALL THOSE WHO CELEBRATE IN SEPTEMBER!

- | | |
|--------------|-----------------------------------|
| September 1 | Ashlee Cancio-Bello & Judy Bowker |
| September 2 | Ruth Loomis |
| September 9 | Marcelle Walters |
| September 10 | Melany Thompson-Wheeler |
| September 14 | Jessy McCarthy |
| September 17 | Helen Symons |
| September 22 | Anne Harrison |
| September 23 | Ann Loomis |
| September 26 | Kyla McMahan & Laurie Walhovd |
| September 28 | Mary Sheehan |
| September 30 | Tobias Davis |



AN OPEN LETTER TO OUR CHURCH FROM JULIANNA DONOFRIO



Dear Church Family,

I am writing to share some very good news with you. I will be ordained by The National Spiritual Alliance (TNSA) an affiliation of the National Association of Spiritualist Churches on September 18, 2010

at 2pm in Lake Pleasant, MA. Many of you know that this journey has been a long one for me. Discernment for a denominational fit, as my professors at Andover Newton had once told me, is a challenge, especially for those of us who think outside the boxes of convention. Many of you know I was brought up Italian Roman Catholic but study and experiences of the major world religions and Feminist theology, deeply molded and transformed my beliefs.

Some of you also know that I was once a candidate for ordination with the *Woman Priest Movement* of the Roman Catholic Church. For many reasons my lesbian body/mind and my shamanistic healer/spirit could not justify that union. So I waited patiently (well not always so), while a beloved dragged me (literally) to services at Thomson Temple, Lake Pleasant where the TNSA meets on Sunday afternoons at 2pm. There, I quickly graduated from member congregant to officiating as healer and then to preaching monthly. I also offer pastoral care to members. No one was more surprised than I when this spring; a board member approached me with the request to apply for ordination.

The Spiritualist tradition which defines itself as religion; philosophy, and science got started from early roots in the Swedenborgian tradition. The Lake Pleasant camp meeting, the oldest and one of three Spiritualist associations in the country was established in the late 19th century. In 1913 The National Spiritual Alliance was formed. Spiritualism has quite a history; see their web site <http://thenationalspiritualallianceinc.org> or the publication, *Spirit and Spa* by Louise Shattuck, which I will donate to the Haydenville Church Library.

Spiritualism strives to be nonjudgmental and studies the values found in all sacred teachings; believes in an infinite intelligence many call God; views this intelligence as present in both nature and human form, and professes the golden rule. Additionally Spiritualism sees the value of personal responsibility for one's life, and assigns redemptive potential to all souls living and transitioned. Pretty inclusive! Its tenants mirror many of those of the Unitarian tradition and I have found this a good fit for my own beliefs and my perspective on sacred ritual.

I consider the means by which this call was orchestrated by spirit to be a pure blessing. Andrea has kindly agreed to present me with my stole and Carol Rinehart will present my robes. All clergy/seminarians are invited to *vest and process*. So with deep love and gratitude to you all for your prayers for my journey, I cordially invite you to attend. I also would appreciate your continued prayers over the next weeks as I prepare spiritually to receive this honor and as I discern how this new part of my life will unfold.

THE HAYDENVILLE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH FAIR WANTS YOU!

Save the date: October 23rd

The Ladies Aid Society of the Haydenville Congregational Church has been hosting the annual Church Fair for longer than most of us have been coming to church. It is perhaps their largest fundraiser of the year, and it ranks among the largest community events of the year. Ladies Aid may organize it, but it takes all of us to make it happen!

The Fair itself consists of many individual events including a craft sale, a bake sale, a tag sale, a book sale, a major raffle, and even a lunch. New ideas and contributions are always welcome!

As you can see, this is a major undertaking and we definitely need your help.

If you are handy with yarn, wood, arts, or anything else, please consider contributing to the craft sale.

If you can bake, mark the date and plan to bake something – we specialize in pies, cakes, cookies, brownies and more. Even a single pie or batch of cookies helps tremendously!

Almost all of us have two of something, where one would suffice. Could you donate lightly-used items to the tag sale or books you've read to the book sale?

Even if you cannot bake; have two left thumbs when it comes to anything 'crafty;' completely cleaned out your attic, cellar and closets last year; and don't own a book you could give away, we still want you!

We need help the day before the fair, October 22nd to setup tables, arrange items, price items, etc. In addition the organizers of each sub-event will be looking for folks to help staff the tables during the Fair. As October approaches be sure to look for the sign-up sheets in the Dining Room and volunteer a half hour of your time – a very precious commodity, indeed!

Let's all pitch in to make this year's Fair not only a success financially, but also loads of fun for all of us!

**NEWS FROM OUT BACK: THE HAYDENVILLE
INTERGENERATIONAL GARDEN**

By Lee Satterfield



*"Help us to the always hopeful
gardeners of the spirit who
know that without darkness
nothing comes to birth, as
without light nothing flowers."
-May Sarton*

Thanks to over a dozen church members and friends—elders, children, and those in between, and the Holy Spirit—our *Intergenerational Garden* has been planted! This is a joint project between the Town of Williamsburg's "Fertile Ground" organization and the Haydenville Church. The project is designed to draw upon the wisdom and skill of the older generations to teach the arts of gardening and growing food to the young, and then to use the gardens as a tool for religious education. On Thursday, August 5th we built two raised beds—thanks to the skill of Ellie Loomis and others. We filled the raised beds with two shovels-full of topsoil to one-shovel full of compost up to the brim. We planted one bed with dill, basil starts and later on—pepper plants. The following Sunday we planted one of the beds with seeds of chard, lettuce, and kale---things that we hope will give us one harvest as the fall goes forward. We trust that With God's loving care, water, and soil, these seeds will sprout just like our children!

In early September we will construct our third raised bed with the children in CC time, and we will have various workdays to plant fall bulbs and harvest. All are welcome! See Pastor Matilda or me for more information.

**"Where we stand,
in all our
mistakes and imperfection,
is holy ground."**

***From Tattoos on the Heart
by Gregory Boyle***

PSALMS WRITTEN BY PARISHIONERS

On August 8, 2010, Pastor Andrea preached a sermon on the Psalms. At the end of that sermon, she invited congregants to write their own Psalms and give them to her. She said that the Psalms she received would be published in the Church Newsletter and/or made into a little book. The Psalms, written by Kathleen Kent and Lisa Hall, are part of this new series.

Psalm

by Kathleen Kent

Sometimes I feel your eyes on me God, but then you slowly shut them.
As if it's okay to go to sleep now.
My new cat looks like an owl. She has huge, round, golden eyes.
When I'm feeling abandoned she suddenly appears and stares at me.
She's appeared in places she cannot possibly fit, which are many, considering her size.
Not sure why I'm telling you this God, I think you know her.
And was that you under my brother's apple tree yesterday?
You were so close - my brother and I gazed at you in disbelief...
a fawn with no mother in broad daylight without a lick of fear.
My brother said he thought the Fisher cat that was chasing you killed you.
You did a little jig for us and ate another apple.
My brother said the apples were probably fermented.
Maybe so, but I know it was you.
When I left I looked back and you were still there.
You were still watching me.
As if I was the apple of your eyes.

Psalm

by Lisa Hall

Dearest Mother and Father God,

Help me to remember it is not me,
doing my jobs in life.

Help me to surrender to You,
(since You are always in charge, anyway).
Help me to get out of the way.

Then I can be Your hands and feet in this world,
And Your heart and mind.

Your will be done.

SEPTEMBER CALENDAR

Wednesday, September 1	5:30 PM	Crop Walk organizational meeting, Church Dining Room
Friday, September 3	4 PM	Fridays at Four begins again and will meet most Fridays until the end of June
Sunday, September 5:	10 AM	Worship Service with Communion
Tuesday, September 7:	6 PM	Joint Trustees and Diaconate Meeting to discuss accessibility issues and our Church. This is an OPEN MEETING, everyone is welcome. Church Dining Room.
Wednesday, September 8:	7:00 PM	Shepherds' Meeting, Church Dining Room
Thursday, September 9:	6:30 PM	THURSDAY NIGHT LIVE! A special program hosted by Pastor Andrea and the Church Deacons. WILLOT JOSEPH will tell us about his trip this summer to Haiti, his home land. There will be time for questions and answers. Refreshments provided. All welcome.
Friday, September 10:	4 PM 4 - 7 PM	Fridays at Four Children's Church Committee Retreat (parents and interested parties encouraged to attend; please see Pastor Matilda for more information). Meeting place: Children's Church. Supper and child care provided.
Saturday, September 11:	10 AM	Church Book Group Meeting, Church Dining Room
Sunday, September 12:	10 AM	Worship Service~~Children's Church begins. CC Registration and Parent Orientation following worship, in Children's Church*
Tuesday, September 14:	6:30 PM	Trustees Meeting, Church Dining Room
Thursday, September 16:	7:00 PM	Ladies Aid, Church Fair planning meeting
Sunday, September 19:	10 AM 1:30 PM	Worship Service Children's Church Parent Orientation following worship, in Children's Church (*Please note: all parents should plan to attend ONE of the two orientation sessions) Helen Warner's Memorial Service
Monday, September 20:	6 PM	"Pure Euphoria" Celebration Dinner and Silent Auction at Bread Euphoria in Haydenville~~Benefit for the Capital Campaign
Tuesday, September 21:	5:30 - 7 PM	First Light DVD Series and Discussion, Session #1; HCChurch Dining Room
Sunday, September 26:	10 AM	Worship Service BRING A FRIEND TO CHURCH SUNDAY! UCC Youth Gathering in Northampton~~All CC Youth 6th grade and up are welcome. Meet in Church parking lot following worship to carpool. See Pastor Matilda for more information.
Monday, September 27:	5:30 PM	Peace and Justice Steering Committee Meeting, Church Dining Room
Tuesday, September 28:	5:30 - 7 PM	First Light DVD Series and Discussion, Session #2; HCChurch Dining Room
Tuesday, October 5:	5:30 - 7 PM	First Light DVD Series and Discussion, Session #3; HCChurch Dining Room



Haydenville Congregational Church

United Church of Christ

143 Main Street, PO Box 257

Haydenville, MA 01039

OPEN LETTER FROM CHERYLANN RICHARDS

Dear Friends,

Thank you for the wonderful going away gifts; The Stole, The Pen, The Stationery. Most all, Thank you for the fantastic year that you gave me as your Intern. Your warmth and welcome is incredible. I learned a lot. Your patience was much appreciated and all the times you went out of your way to give me feedback and support was a real blessing.

You are a special group!

Love to all,
Cherylann

BOOK GROUP'S NEW YEAR

By Paula Spencer



Our church Book Group offers a wonderful opportunity for those who love books and reading to get together. We are a welcoming group so please speak with me if you have questions or are curious about what we've read and plan to read

When we meet on Saturday, September 11 we'll choose our selections for the year from a list we've put together, with possibly some new additions. That first meeting will be held in the Church Dining Room at 10 a.m. Bring coffee/tea and any goodies you care to share. During the year, in addition to our monthly meetings, we may plan a potluck meal, or attend films, plays or literary readings as a group.

To tempt you a bit, here are samples from our list of "possibles" :

[A People's History of Christianity: The Other Side of the Story](#) by Diana Butler Bass

[Tattoos on the Heart: The Power of Boundless Compassion](#) by Gregory Boyle

[Dorothy Day: A Radical Devotion](#) by Robert Coles

[A Year of Living Biblically: One Man's Humble Quest to Follow the Bible as Literally as Possible](#) by A. J. Jacobs

[Why God Won't Go Away: Brain Science and the Biology of Belief](#) by Andre Newberg (and others)

Fiction possibilities include works by Elizabeth Berg, Gail Godwin, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Marilynne Robinson and Wallace Stegner.