

Social Justice Book Group Reading List 2018

The Social Justice Book Group formed in September of 2017 because a few of us wanted to read the remarkable and inspiring book, *Becoming Ms. Burton*. After that meeting, we decided to keep reading books that inspired us, informed us, made us think, and made us more aware of the world around us.

It's not necessarily easy to read these books. Some of us are new to these topics; some of us live the reality described in the books we've read every day. Sometimes we find a cause or issue that makes us want to dig deeper, but the focus of the group is on the book at hand and our discussions. We hope that reading these books will make us more compassionate and will lead to deeper relationships. Personally, I'm just glad to have people to read with and not be alone with these important works. I am so grateful for the perspectives of others - most of whom do not belong to St. Thomas and may not be religious at all.

I will say that our last book, *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City* by Matthew Desmond, has influenced me recently. I, not infrequently receive requests for rental assistance from people on the verge of eviction. These requests are almost never from parishioners. And when I was a new priest I was scammed out of some discretionary money by a man who was not facing eviction. I started to tune out these requests. There are so many people in need; I'm not qualified to make decisions about how best to help; if I give money this month, what's going to happen next month? These are just a few of the excuses I used to put the people who looked to me for help out of my mind. But after reading *Evicted* with the group, I was made aware of the overwhelming frequency of evictions; how landlords take advantage of vulnerable renters; how difficult it is to find housing if you have made a mistake or two in life; and finally the constant requests for help and the constant denials of help. I can't help everyone who reaches out to me for aid, but I can take each of them seriously and I have learned more about where

people can go when they are facing the forced removal of all their possessions and a long search for a safe place to live. I can show compassion.

That's just one small example of how this group has enriched my life and broadened my perspective.

Join us, 7 pm in the Upper Room for discussion and snacks!

-Justi

Social Justice Book Group Reading List 2018

February 21 -*The Fire Next Time*- James Baldwin

March 21 -*Between the World and Me*- Ta-Nehesi Coates

April 18 -*The Impossible Will Take a While: Perseverance and Hope in Troubled Times*- Edited by Paul Rogat Loeb

May 16 -*Real American: A Memoir*. - Julie Lythcott-Haims

June 20 -*Americanah*- Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

July 18 -*Their Eyes Were Watching God*- Zora Neale Hurston

August 15 -*Underground Railroad*- Colson Whitehead

September 19 -*Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria: And Other Conversations About Race*- Beverly Daniel Tatum

October 17 -*Waking Up White, and Finding Myself in the Story of Race*- Debby Irving

November 21 -*Just Mercy*- Bryan Stevenson

December 19 -*Bad Feminist*- Roxane Gay