

MissionNorthwest

Resourcing and developing churches that connect people with Jesus Christ

2023 Resource List for Leadership Learning Communities

JANUARY

Leaders Who Last: Sustaining Yourself and Your Ministry by Margaret Marcuson. Part One – Pages 1-65. Practical insights and advice from Scripture, family systems theory and experience for the purpose of fostering healthy, long-term vocational ministry.

Online Description: Margaret Marcuson introduces the notion of “sustainable ministry,” which trains and empowers pastors to focus on their inner resources for proactive leadership, instead of trying harder to help, fix or change others. *Leaders Who Last* draws upon the author’s own pastoral experience and leadership, plus a significant analysis of leadership in both families and churches over generations. Interviews with current church leaders punctuate chapters on stress, spiritual practice, church triangles, relationships, self-awareness, money, and creating a climate where true change can take place.

Available through Amazon on Kindle and Paperback. Used copies are significantly reduced in price.

FEBRUARY

Leaders Who Last: Sustaining Yourself and Your Ministry by Margaret Marcuson. Part Two -- Pages 66 - 145

MARCH

You Gotta Ask: How to Have Meaningful Conversations With Anyone Using Compelling Questions by Jon and Pam Strain. 134 Pages with lots of space for interaction. A very practical evangelism book which can equip Christ followers with questions for pursuing spiritual issues within relational connections. “*You Gotta Ask* is about using compelling questions to create meaningful conversations that begin transformation in people’s lives by steering them towards Christ. This book is a roadmap, and the end goal is to populate God’s kingdom with people and make friends for the eternal future.” (from the introduction, p. 9)

Note: Jon and Pam, the authors of the book, reside in Meridian, ID and may be available to attend a LLC meeting or speak at a local LLC sponsored gathering for training. Contact Lance Zagaris for more details.

For those who would rather listen than read check out this overview:
<https://941thevoice.com/a-message-from-jon-strain-part-2/>

Web site: <https://www.yougottaask.org/>

Leader's Guide and *The Adventure Dinner Guide* are also available either on Amazon or the web site.

APRIL

No resource selection for April. Use this month to catch up with each other, pray for Holy Week & Resurrection Sunday preparation, discuss a short leadership article, a chapter in a book or podcast. **Mentor Pastors will need to plan in advance for this meeting.**

MAY

The Church of Us vs Them: Freedom from a Faith That Feeds on Making Enemies by David Fitch. Chair of Evangelical Theology at Northern Seminary. 211 pages (published 2019). Divide in half for reading and discussion.

Subject: Exploring how to become a church centered in Jesus, resisting making enemies out of people with whom we disagree. Casting a vision for a church that is a Christ-centered with wide-open arms embracing people of wildly different perspectives.

Online Description: Claiming that the church has lost itself in the grip of an antagonistic culture, David Fitch takes a close look at what drives the vitriol in our congregations. He traces the enemy-making patterns in church history and diagnoses the divisiveness that marks the contemporary evangelical church. Fitch shows a way for the church to be true to itself, unwinding the antagonisms of our day and making space for Christ's reconciling presence in our day-to-day lives. He offers new patterns and practices that move the church beyond making enemies to being the presence of Christ in the world, helping us free ourselves from a faith that feeds on division.

Alternate Selection: *Christians In An Age of Outrage: How to Bring Our Best When the World Is At Its Worst* by Ed Stetzer 306 pages (published 2018).

SEPTEMBER

Complete the second half of the book chosen in May.

OCTOBER

LLC chooses between one of these two:

CHOICE #1 *Taking Your Church to the Next Level: What Got You Here Won't Get You There* by Gary McIntosh. Choose this book to review insights based on studies of organizational lifecycles and church growth barriers. Although this book was a past LLC pick it is worth reviewing with an eye towards practical application as churches are rebuilding after the pandemic disruption.

Online Description: All local churches experience a predictable life cycle of growth and decline. But if a church is on a downward trend, how can it turn around? *Taking Your Church to the Next Level* explains the impact of age and size on churches and outlines the improvements that must be made at each point for a church to remain fruitful and faithful to its mission. McIntosh deftly describes the cycles of fruitfulness and the importance of continual improvement to diminish destructive forces that keep a congregation from its mission. Church leaders, pastors, and all who care about the church and desire to see it experience biblical growth will benefit from the sage wisdom offered in these pages.

CHOICE #2 *Lessons in Leadership: A Weekly Reading of the Jewish Bible* by Jonathan Sacks. Leadership lessons from O.T. stories coupled with insights gleaned from modern practices of leadership. This book is outstanding. This is an excellent choice for sharpening leadership skills and learning to lead courageously. Could form the basis for a sermon series on leadership development or for study with a leadership training pool within the local congregation. Each chapter is short, based on an O.T. passage and concludes with one or two practical applications.

Kindle \$7.99 | Hardcover \$24.95

Online Description: Jonathan Sacks mines the weekly Torah portions for insights into the nature of power, authority, and leadership. Based on the understanding that no man is born a leader, the book explores the principles, and perils, of becoming one. Profound, eloquent, and deeply inspiring, *Lessons in Leadership* reveals the biblical secrets of influence, as relevant now as they were three thousand years ago.

NOVEMBER

LLC chooses the resource to study together. Or, complete one of the resources that was only partially covered earlier in the year.

DECEMBER

No resource selection for December. Use this month to complete a book that took longer to read than expected, or catch up with one another and reflect back on the year that has passed.

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDED RESOURCES FOR 2023

Boundaries for Your Soul: How to Turn Your Overwhelming Thoughts and Fears into Your Greatest Allies, by Alison Cook and Kimberly Miller. Topic: Developing a healthier, spiritual inner life by setting boundaries in your internal world just as you are wise to do in interpersonal relationships.

The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind and Body in the Healing of Trauma by Bessel Van Der Kolk. Topic: Understanding the physiology of trauma and how it is treated. With so many people suffering from PTSD and other traumas this would be good knowledge for pastors ministering to hurting people.

The Coddling of the American Mind: How Good Intentions and Bad Ideas Are Setting Up a Generation For Failure by Greg Lukianoff and Jonathan Haidt. Topic: Challenging the culture of “safetyism” that has developed around three bad ideas that are supposed to shelter young adults from trauma, but actually turn them into snow flakes. Excellent insights into present cultural trends, especially in educational environments.

People To Be Loved: Why Homosexuality Is Not Just an Issue by Preston Sprinkle. This is one of the best and most current books addressing issues that surround the church and people struggling with same-sex attraction. While holding to a traditional biblical understanding of human sexuality (also affirmed in M/NW’s “Resolution on Humans Sexuality”) the book “challenges those on all sides of the discussion to lay aside their assumptions and genuinely seek to not only know what the Bible actually says about homosexuality, but evaluate how we treat the people behind the word. Through listening to the stories of his LGBT friends and humbly considering their viewpoints, what emerges is a rare book on homosexuality from a Christian perspective—a book filled with radical, unconditional grace worthy of even the most heated of topics.” (taken from the back cover of the book).

20 Myths About Religion and Politics in America by Ryan Burge. There are many popular assumptions about what is true and false in our culture today. Using rigorous analysis based on collected data Dr. Burge gives readers the resources to adopt an empirical view of the world that can help us get past some of the unsupported beliefs that divide us. Here are some of the topics he addresses through examination of the data: 1) People return to religion late in life. 2) White Christians have always been conservative Republicans. 3) The growth of the nones is largely from people leaving church. 4) Abortion is the most important issue for evangelical voters (spoiler: it isn’t).