

## The Hebrew Congregation of St. Thomas Book Club List

Choose a book and you get to host our meeting!

Meetings are Monthly, Wednesday Evenings, 6:00pm-7:30pm

We read one book per month, and meet once a month to discuss.

### Religion Explained: The Evolutionary Origins of Religious Thought

Pascal Boyer

*Many of our questions about religion, says renowned anthropologist Pascal Boyer, are no longer mysteries. We are beginning to know how to answer questions such as "Why do people have religion?" Using findings from anthropology, cognitive science, linguistics, and evolutionary biology, Religion Explained shows how this aspect of human consciousness is increasingly amenable to coherent, naturalistic explanation. This brilliant and controversial book gives readers the first scientific explanation for what religious feeling is really about, what it consists of, and where it comes from.*

330 Pages

### The Road to Character

David Brooks

*Brooks focuses on the deeper values that should inform our lives. Responding to what he calls the culture of the Big Me, which emphasizes external success, Brooks challenges us, and himself, to rebalance the scales between our "résumé virtues"—achieving wealth, fame, and status—and our "eulogy virtues," those that exist at the core of our being: kindness, bravery, honesty, or faithfulness, focusing on what kind of relationships we have formed.*

295 Pages

### The Home We Build Together

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks

*Arguing that global communications have fragmented national cultures and that multiculturalism, intended to reduce social frictions, is today reinforcing them, Sacks argues for a new approach to national identity. We cannot stay with current policies that are producing a society of conflicting ghettos and non-intersecting lives, turning religious bodies into pressure groups rather than society-building forces.*

273 Pages

### Tattoos on the Heart: The Power of Boundless Compassion

Father Gregory Boyle

*For twenty years, Gregory Boyle has run Homeboy Industries, a gang-intervention program located in the Boyle Heights neighborhood of Los Angeles, the gang capital of the world. In *Tattoos on the Heart*, he distills his experience working in the ghetto into a breathtaking series of parables inspired by faith.*

*Arranged by theme and filled with sparkling humor and glowing generosity, these essays offer a stirring look at how full our lives could be if we could find the joy in loving others and in being loved unconditionally*

217 Pages

Five Chimneys: A Woman's Survivor's True Story of Auschwitz

Olga Lengyel

*Olga Lengyel tells, frankly and without compromise, one of the most horrifying stories of all time. This true, documented chronicle is the intimate, day-to-day record of a beautiful woman who survived the nightmare of Auschwitz and Birchenau. This book is a necessary reminder of one of the ugliest chapters in the history of human civilization. It was a shocking experience. It is a shocking book.*

232 Pages

The God Who Hates Lies: Confronting & Rethinking Jewish Tradition

Rabbi David Hartman

*In this deeply personal look at the struggle between commitment to Jewish religious tradition and personal morality, Dr. David Hartman, the world's leading Modern Orthodox Jewish theologian, probes the deepest questions at the heart of what it means to be a human being and a Jew. Dr. Hartman draws on a lifetime of learning, teaching and experience as a social activist to present an intellectual framework for examining covenantal theology as it is applied to religious life. As much an expression of his impassioned commitment to Jewish law as it is testament to a lifetime of intellectual questioning and courage, this bold examination of the halakhic system offers fresh insights into Judaism and the quest for spiritual nourishment.*

208 Pages

Where Justice Dwells: A Hands-On Guide to Doing Social Justice in Your Jewish Community

Rabbi Jill Jacobs & Rabbi David Saperstein

*Jewish tradition compels us to protect the poorest, weakest and most vulnerable among us. But discerning how to make meaningful and effective*

*change through social justice work—whether in community or on your own—is not always easy.*

*Each chapter includes a set of discussion questions to prompt reflection and conversation, as well as tips, tools, processes and forms for getting your social justice project off the ground.*

288 Pages

### The Swerve: How the World Became Modern

Stephen Greenblatt

*One of the world's most celebrated scholars, Stephen Greenblatt has crafted both an innovative work of history and a thrilling story of discovery, in which one manuscript, plucked from a thousand years of neglect, changed the course of human thought and made possible the world as we know it.*

356 Pages

### When Bad Things Happen to Good People

Rabbi Harold S. Kushner

*When Harold Kushner's three-year-old son was diagnosed with a degenerative disease and that he would only live until his early teens, he was faced with one of life's most difficult questions: Why, God? Years later, Rabbi Kushner wrote this straightforward, elegant contemplation of the doubts and fears that arise when tragedy strikes. Kushner shares his wisdom as a rabbi, a parent, a reader, and a human being.*

176 Pages

B

### Fighting Back the Right: Reclaiming America from the Attack on Reason

David Niose

*The political scene is changing rapidly in America. The religious right is on the defensive, acceptance of gay rights is at an all-time high, social conservatives are struggling for relevance, and more Americans than ever identify as nonreligious. What does this mean for the country and the future? With these demographic shifts, can truly progressive, reason-based public policy finally gain traction? Or will America continue to carry a reputation as anti-intellectual and plutocratic, eager to cater to large corporate interests but reluctant to provide universal health care to all its citizens?*

256 Pages

For more information on the book club go to:

<http://synagogue.vi/study/adult-education/>

Questions? Want to reserve a meeting?

Contact us at [info@synagogue.vi](mailto:info@synagogue.vi) or 340-774-4312