

**FPC Open Book Group**  
**2023-24 Book Selections and Monthly Schedule**

**September 21 – Led by Kamilla Buddemeier:** The Forty Rules of Love: A Novel of Rumi by Elif Shafak unfolds two tantalizing parallel narratives—one contemporary and the other set in the thirteenth century, when Rumi encountered his spiritual mentor, the whirling dervish known as Shams of Tabriz—that together explore the enduring power of Rumi's work.

**October 19 - Led by Sandy Borman:** The Four Winds by Kristen Hannah is a sweeping novel that stunningly brings to life the Great Depression and the people who lived through it and the enduring battle between the haves and the have-nots. It is an indelible portrait of America and the American dream, as seen through the eyes of one indomitable woman whose courage and sacrifice will come to define a generation.

**November 16 – Led by Kristine Kaiser:** See No Stranger: A Memoir and Manifesto of Revolutionary Love by Valerie Kaur takes readers through her own riveting journey—as a brown girl growing up in California farmland; as a young adult galvanized by the murders of Sikhs after 9/11; as a law student fighting injustices in American prisons and on Guantánamo Bay; as an activist working with communities recovering from xenophobic attacks; and as a woman trying to heal from her own experiences with police violence and sexual assault.

**December 21 – Led by Kay Iwanski:** A Beautiful Mystery: A Chief Inspector Gamache Novel by Louise Penny. No outsiders are ever admitted to the monastery of Saint-Gilbert-Entre-les-Loups. But when the renowned choir director is murdered, Chief Inspector Armand Gamache and Jean-Guy Beauvoir of the Sûreté du Québec discover disquiet beneath the silence, discord in the apparent harmony. Gamache is forced to confront some of his own demons, as well as those roaming the remote corridors.

**January 18 – Led by Linda Hitchman:** Demon Copperhead by Barbara Kingsolver. Set in the mountains of southern Appalachia, this is the story of a boy born to a teenaged single mother in a single-wide trailer, with no assets beyond his good looks and copper-colored hair, a caustic wit, and a fierce talent for survival. Demon braves the modern perils of foster care, child labor, derelict schools, athletic success, addiction, disastrous loves, and crushing losses. Through all of it, he reckons with his own invisibility in a popular culture where even the superheroes have abandoned rural people in favor of cities.

**February 15 – Led by Janet Wolfe:** The Universal Christ: How a Forgotten Reality can Change Everything We See, Hope for, and Believe by Richard Rohr. In his decades as a globally recognized teacher, Richard Rohr has helped millions realize what is at stake in matters of faith and spirituality. Drawing on scripture, history, and spiritual practice, Rohr articulates a transformative view of Jesus Christ as a portrait of God's constant, unfolding work in the world.

**March 21 - Led by Bridget O'Brien:** Dreaming Me: Black, Baptist, and Buddhist — One Woman's Spiritual Journey by Jan Willis is the story of her life, as a child growing up in the Jim Crow South, dealing with racism in an Ivy League college, and becoming involved with the Black Panther Party. But it wasn't until meeting Lama Yeshe, a Tibetan Buddhist monk living in the mountains of Nepal, that she realized who the real Jan Willis was, and how to make the most of the life she was living.

**April 18 – Led by Sandy Borman:** Weaving Sundown in a Scarlet Light: Fifty Poems for Fifty Years by Joy Harjo. A very well-known American poet who writes on a very wide variety of themes including Native American and women's issues, the natural world, spirituality, relationships, and living in the modern world. This volume is a very nice collection of representative works from throughout her career.

**May 16 – Led by Julie Horton:** The 272: The Families Who Were Enslaved and Sold to Build the American Catholic Church by Rachel L. Swarns. In 1838, a group of America's most prominent Catholic priests sold 272 enslaved people to save their largest mission project, what is now Georgetown University. This groundbreaking account follows one family through nearly two centuries of indentured servitude and enslavement. The saga of the Mahoney family illustrates how the Church relied on slave labor and slave sales to sustain its operations and to help finance its expansion.