

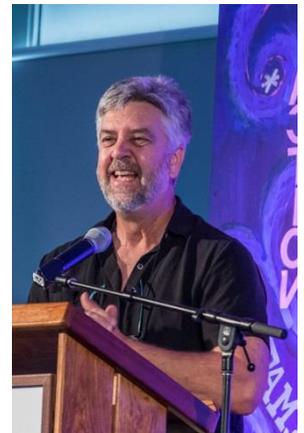


## Wisconsin Conference United Church of Christ

### **Gleanings and Gifts**

*by Rev. Rob MacDougall*

It's nearly Christmas and I have to say there are lots of things stirring my spirit and rambling around in my mind. I imagine many of you have all kinds of thoughts and delights keeping you occupied also. Waiting, preparing, hoping, serving, and the all-important matter of presents keep dancing in my thoughts. I have been thinking about presents I could offer all of our churches and pastors. I really want to have something to give to all of you, but I had to eliminate monetary gifts after I looked at my bank account (sorry). I know my simple words of gratitude for who you are, what you offer the world and how you receive the Christ Child would be more than enough, but I have wanted to give you something else. Then it came to me! I have been reading stacks of those returned information review forms that clergy joyfully fill out each year—those who didn't return them will no doubt find coal in their stocking—and in those forms there was a gift waiting to be offered.



You are now seriously wondering where this is going—and rightly so—but among the questions on the form was an inquiry about what clergy are reading these days and many pastors responded. This list of books seems to me a great gift, both as a source of recommendations, but also as an insight into the mind and spirit of our clergy. So, my present to you is the compilation of many of the book titles noted on the forms. I hope you too find something of value in what has been cited. Remember: gifts are more about the heart of the giver than the gift itself.

May you know the fullness of God's heart this Advent/Christmas season.

The Courage to Be – Paul Tillich

Sabbath as Resistance – Walter Brueggemann

Seven Practices of Effective Ministry – Andy Stanley

Christian Crisis, Why We Need to Reclaim Jesus – Jim Wallis

Waking Up White, Janesville: An American Story – Debby Irving

Between The World and Me – Ta Nehisi Coates

Small Great Things – Jodi Picoult

Pope Francis' Encyclical on Climate Change and Inequality  
Letters to The Church – Francis Chan  
Courageous Faith: How to Rise and Resist in a Time of Fear – Emily Heath  
Grounded – Diana Butler Bass  
Blessed Unwar – Hawken  
Active Hope – Mary Johnson  
Creating a Spiritual Legacy – Taylor  
The Intelligence Trap – David Robson  
The Universal Christ – Richard Rohr  
Understanding Scripture – David Lose  
Spirituality of Fundraising – Henri Nouwen  
Practicing Your Faith – Holly Whitcomb  
Being Mortal – Atul Gawande  
Knowing God – Deepak Chopra  
What Shall We Say? – Thomas G. Long  
Short Stories by Jesus – Amy-Jill Levine  
Gift and Task – Walter Brueggemann  
Called For Life – Clayton  
Pilgrimage to Eternity – Timothy Egan  
Playing Big – Tara Mohr  
Braiding Sweetgrass – Robin Wall Kimmerer  
Be Still: Designing and Leading Contemplative Retreats – Jane Vennard  
Four Vision Quests of Jesus – Steven Charleston  
Evicted – Matthew Desmond  
Canoeing the Mountains – Tod Bolsinger