

2025

A Book & A Prayer Book Club Selections



Date	Book Title	Author	Pages	Summary
Jan. 9	The Heaven and Earth Grocery Store	James McBride	385	Chicken Hill was where Moshe and Chona Ludlow lived when Chona ran the Heaven & Earth Grocery Store, which served the neighborhood's quirky collection of blacks and European immigrants, helped by her husband, Moshe, a Romanian-born theater owner who integrated the town's first dance hall. When the state came looking for a deaf black child, claiming that the boy needed to be institutionalized, Chicken Hill's residents—roused by Chona's kindness and the courage of a local black worker named Nate Timblin—banded together to keep the boy safe.
Feb. 13	The Absolute True Diary of a Part-Time Indian	Sherman Alexie	230	Bestselling author Sherman Alexie tells the story of Junior, a budding cartoonist growing up on the Spokane Indian Reservation. Determined to take his future into his own hands, Junior leaves his troubled school on the rez to attend an all-white farm town high school where the only other Indian is the school mascot.
Mar. 13	The Midnight Library	Matt Haig	288	When Nora Seed finds herself in the Midnight Library, she has a chance to make things right. Up until now, her life has been full of misery and regret. She feels she has let everyone down, including herself. But things are about to change. The books in the Midnight Library enable Nora to live as if she had done things differently. With the help of an old friend, she can now undo every one of her regrets as she tries to work out her perfect life. But things aren't always what she imagined they'd be, and soon her choices place the library and herself in extreme danger.
Apr. 10	The Personal Librarian	Marie Benedict	341	The remarkable, little-known story of Belle da Costa Greene, J. P. Morgan's personal librarian—who became one of the most powerful women in New York despite the dangerous secret she kept in order to make her dreams come true.
May 8	Night Watch	Jayne Anne Phillips	276	In 1874, in the wake of the War, erasure, trauma, and namelessness haunt civilians and veterans, renegades and wanderers, freedmen and runaways. Twelve-year-old ConaLee, the adult in her family for as long as she can remember, finds herself on a buckboard journey with her mother, Eliza, who hasn't spoken in more than a year. They arrive at the Trans-Allegheny Lunatic Asylum in West Virginia, delivered to the hospital's entrance by a war veteran who has forced himself into their world. There, far from family, a beloved neighbor, and the mountain home they knew, they try to reclaim their lives.
June 12	How to Read a Book: A Novel	Monica Wood	283	Violet Powell, a twenty-two-year-old from rural Abbott Falls, Maine, is being released from prison after serving twenty-two months for a drunk-driving crash that killed a local kindergarten teacher.

				<p>Harriet Larson, a retired English teacher who runs the prison book club, is facing the unsettling prospect of an empty nest.</p> <p>Frank Daigle, a retired machinist, hasn't yet come to grips with the complications of his marriage to the woman Violet killed.</p> <p>When the three encounter each other one morning in a bookstore in Portland—Violet to buy the novel she was reading in the prison book club before her release, Harriet to choose the next title for the women who remain, and Frank to dispatch his duties as the store handyman—their lives begin to intersect in transformative ways. <i>How to Read a Book</i> is an unsparingly honest and profoundly hopeful story about letting go of guilt, seizing second chances, and the power of books to change our lives. With the heart, wit, grace, and depth of understanding that has characterized her work, Monica Wood illuminates the decisions that define a life and the kindnesses that make life worth living.</p>
July 10	The Extraordinary Life of Sam Hell	Robert Dugoni	448	<p>Sam Hill always saw the world through different eyes. Born with red pupils, he was called "Devil Boy" or Sam "Hell" by his classmates; "God's will" is what his mother called his ocular albinism. Her words were of little comfort, but Sam persevered, buoyed by his mother's devout faith, his father's practical wisdom, and his two other misfit friends. Forty years later, Sam, a small-town eye doctor, embarks on a journey that will take him halfway around the world. This time, his eyes are wide open—bringing into clear view what changed him, defined him, and made him so afraid, until he can finally see what truly matters.</p>
Aug. 14	The Berry Pickers	Amanda Peters	307	<p>A four-year-old Mi'kmaq girl goes missing from the blueberry fields of Maine, sparking a tragic mystery that haunts the survivors, unravels a community, and remains unsolved for nearly fifty years.</p>
Sept. 11	The Last Ballad	Wiley Cash	416	<p>Set in the Appalachian foothills of North Carolina in 1929 and inspired by actual events, this is a chronicle of an ordinary woman's struggle for dignity and her rights in a textile mill. Intertwining myriad voices, Wiley Cash brings to life the heartbreak and bravery of the now forgotten struggle of the labor movement in early twentieth-century America—and pays tribute to the thousands of heroic women and men who risked their lives to win basic rights for all workers.</p>
Oct. 9	A Council of Dolls	Mona Susan Power	304	<p>From the mid-century metropolis of Chicago to the windswept ancestral lands of the Dakota people to the bleak and brutal Indian boarding schools, <i>A Council of Dolls</i> is the story of three women, told in part through the stories of the dolls they carried. A modern masterpiece, <i>A Council of Dolls</i> is gorgeous, quietly devastating, and ultimately hopeful, shining a light on the echoing damage of Indian boarding schools, and the historical massacres of Indigenous people.</p>

Nov. 13	Wandering Stars	Tommy Orange	315	The follow-up to Tommy Orange's <i>There There</i> , <i>Wandering Stars</i> traces the legacies of the Sand Creek Massacre of 1864 and the Carlisle Indian Industrial School through to the shattering aftermath of Orvil Red Feather's shooting in <i>There There</i> .
Dec. 11	The Frozen River	Ariel Lawhon	432	A gripping historical mystery inspired by the life and diary of Martha Ballard, a renowned 18th-century midwife who defied the legal system. Martha's diary is a record of every birth and death, crime and debacle that unfolded in her close-knit Maine community. Martha documented the details of an alleged rape committed by two of the town's most respected gentlemen—one of whom, months later, is found dead. When a local physician declares the death to be an accident, Martha is forced to investigate the shocking murder on her own.