



Book Discussion Group Reading List 2020-21

July 12, 2020. *Where the Crawdads Sing* by Della Owens. This is an exquisite ode to the natural world, a heartrending coming of age story, and a possible murder.

August 9, 2020. *Deaths of Despair* by Anne Case and Angus Deaton. These Princeton economic professors detail the loss of the American dream for white males without and college degree. It helps understand Trump voters.

September 13, 2020. *The Ghost Map* by Steven Johnson. This is an in-depth study of the 1854 cholera epidemic in London and how it changed science, cities, and the modern world.

October 11, 2020. *The Story of More* by Hope Jahren. This acclaimed geo-biologist discusses global warming in an interesting and engrossing way. She looks at what we can do to keep our planet inhabitable.

November 8, 2020. *The Testaments* by Margaret Atwood. This sequel to *The Handmaid's Tale* is a story that the author says she felt compelled to write. It is the journals of three women who lived in Gilead and report on their surprising experiences and the fall of that society. It's a real page-turner.

December 13, 2020. *Pretty Birds* by Scott Simon. This is searing portrait of resilience of teen-aged girls and their families, acting as sharpshooters in a war-torn land. Memorable characters struggle with issues of ethnicity, survival, friendship and betrayal during the day-to-day reality of war.

January 10, 2021. *The Splendid and the Vile* by Erik Larson. This is a compelling portrait of Winston Churchill during the Second world war. It takes the reader out of today's political dysfunction to a time of true leadership, courage and perseverance.

February 14, 2021. *The Nickel Boys* by Colson Whitehead. The author of *Underground Railroad* has written a new book based on the real story of a reform school in Florida where boys were abused and murdered. It won a Pulitzer prize in 2020.

March 14, 2021. *Spying on the South* by Tony Horwitz. Frederick Law Olmstead, known as a landscape architect, was also a journalist who traveled to the South in the 1850's to report to northern readers on what it was like. The author compares Olmstead's impressions then with what it is like in those same places now. Not a dry history book.

April 11, 2021. *The Second Mountain* by David Brooks. This book is about finding joy in life after getting a degree, establishing a career, having kids, and buying a house. It is a time for shifting to religion or philosophy and to community. It describes fulfillment in moving from being self-centered to other-centered.

May 9, 2021. *Barking at the Choir* by Greg Boyle. The author is the founder of Homeboy Industries, a successful nonprofit to help gang members regain their lives and move forward. The heroism and struggles of former gang members are told truthfully and lovingly.