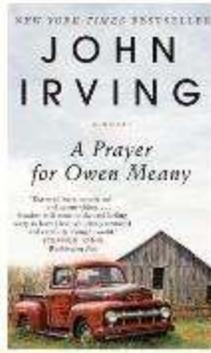


To Members and Friends of Oakland-Cambridge Presbyterian Church,

EASTER AT OCPC





BOOK STUDY AT OCPC... JOIN US THIS SUNDAY, APRIL 15 AT 12 NOON AS WE BEGIN

OUR BOOK DISCUSSION OF “A Prayer for Owen Meany” by John Irving. Irving writes: “I am doomed to remember a boy with a wrecked voice—not because of his voice, or because he was the smallest person I ever knew, or even because he was the instrument of my mother's death, but because he is the reason I believe in God; I am a Christian because of Owen Meany.” In the summer of 1953, two eleven-year-old boys—best friends—are playing in a Little League baseball game in Gravesend, New Hampshire. One of the boys hits a foul ball that kills the other boy's mother. The boy who hits the ball doesn't believe in accidents; Owen Meany believes he is God's instrument. What happens to Owen after that 1953 foul ball is extraordinary. (Good Reads)

We will also share in a meal of pizza and salad. **Please let Pastor Scott or Ruth Poole know if you will be attending.**

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Though he's portrayed as an instrument of God, Owen Meany causes the death of John's mother. What other deaths was Owen indirectly involved with? Do you find Owen's close relationship with death to support or undermine his miraculous purpose?
2. Owen speaks and writes in capital letters, emphasizing the potency of his strange voice. At the academy, he is even referred to as the Voice. Why is Owen's voice so important? What other occasions can you think of in which Owen's voice played an especially meaningful role?
3. Reverend Merrill always speaks of faith in tandem with doubt. Do you believe that one can exist without the other or that one strengthens the other? Was your opinion about Merrill's views on faith and doubt affected by the revelation of his relationship to John Wheelwright?
4. Merrill experiences a bogus miracle and resurgence of faith when John stages his mother's dressmaker dummy outside the church. Later, John's involvement in Owen's rescue of the Vietnamese children spurs John's own faith: "I am a Christian because of Owen Meany," he says. Do you think the genuineness of Owen's miracle makes the birth of John's faith more valid than the faith engendered by Merrill's bogus miracle?

5. The Meanys claim that, like Jesus, Owen was the product of a virgin birth. Owen dislikes the Catholic Church for turning away his parents, but Owen himself makes the Meanys leave the Christmas Pageant. Name other instances when Owen's feelings toward his family seem conflicted. Do you think Owen ever considers himself Christlike?

6. An observer necessary to the Christmas Pageant but seldom an active participant, John plays Joseph to Owen's baby Jesus. John refers to himself on other occasions as "just a Joseph." Do you see John's role as Joseph-like throughout the story? Are there other biblical characters with whom you identify John?

7. Did Irving's references to the armless Indian and the pawless armadillo prepare you for Owen's sacrifice? What other clues did Irving give about Owen's final heroic scene?

8. Throughout the novel, John gives hints to the forthcoming action, adding, "As you shall see." Did you find this to be an effective way to keep you reading and engaged in the story?

9. Owen Meany taught John that "Any good book is always in motion--from the general to the specific, from the particular to the whole and back again." Do you think Irving followed his own recipe for a good book? Supply examples in support of your position.

10. Given John's dislike of Gravesend Academy, which expelled Owen, did you find it interesting that John later taught at an academy in Toronto? In what other ways does John, as an adult, embrace issues or events that he was indifferent or hostile to as an adolescent?

11. John assists Owen in rescuing the children, but John always plays the supporting part in Owen's adventures. Based on the scenes in Toronto in the 1980s, do you think John ever escaped his support-ing role? How do you think John's retained virginity reflects on his sense of self?

12. Did your feelings about the U. S. involvement in Vietnam change after reading Irving's portrayal of the peace movement, the draft dodgers, and Owen's involvement in the army? Were you surprised by Owen's efforts to get to Vietnam?

13. John's reactions to and obsession with the Iran-Contra affair of the 1980s reflect his position as neither a true Canadian nor a true American. Do you think that non-Americans have a clearer vision of the machinations and deceptions within American politics? What did John's focus on American politics tell you about his adult character?

14. Irving frequently foreshadows tragedy; for example, hailstones hit John's mother on the head during her wedding day, providing a glimpse of her later death by a baseball. What other events does Irving foreshadow?

15. Several reviews call *A Prayer for Owen Meany* "Dickensian," and Irving himself incorporates scenes from Dickens in the story. In what ways does Irving's writing remind you of Dickens? What other writers would you compare Irving to?
(Questions issued by publisher.)

Reclaiming Jesus: A Confession of Faith in A Time of Crisis (ReclaimingJesus.org)

Over the past weeks we explored in worship The Declaration of Barmen written at a time of great political and theological crisis in Nazi Germany. The Declaration of Barmen sought to reaffirm Jesus as the only head of the Church and where the loyalty and allegiance of Christians lay. As a nation, we find ourselves again in a time of theological and political crisis. Similar to the writers of the Declaration of Barmen, a group of Biblical Scholars gathered to write a new Confession of Faith. We will begin to explore their Affirmation of Faith over the coming weeks.

They write: WE ARE DEEPLY CONCERNED for the soul of our nation, but also for our churches and the integrity of our faith. The present crisis calls us to go deeper— deeper into our relationship to God; deeper into our relationships with each other, especially across racial, ethnic, and national lines; deeper into our relationships with the most vulnerable, who are at greatest risk. The church is always subject to temptations to power, to cultural conformity, and to racial, class, and gender divides, as Galatians 3:28 teaches us. But our answer is to be “in Christ,” and to “not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable, and perfect.” (Romans 12:1-2) The best response to our political, material, cultural, racial, or national idolatries is the First Commandment: “You shall have no other gods before me” (Exodus 20:3). Jesus summarizes the Greatest Commandment: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, your soul, and your mind. This is the first commandment. And the second is like unto it. You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these commandments hang all the law and the prophets” (Matthew 22:38). As to loving our neighbors, we would add “no exceptions.” We commend this letter to pastors, local churches, and young people who are watching and waiting to see what the churches will say and do at such a time as this. Our urgent need, in a time of moral and political crisis, is to recover the power of confessing our faith. Lament, repent, and then repair. If Jesus is Lord, there is always space for grace. We believe it is time to speak and to act in faith and conscience, not because of politics, but because we are disciples of Jesus Christ—to whom be all authority, honor, and glory. It is time for a fresh confession of faith. Jesus is Lord. He is the light in our darkness. “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life” (John 8:12).

Signers: Bishop Carroll A. Baltimore, President and CEO, Global Alliance Interfaith Network; Rev. Dr. Peter Borgdorff, Executive Director Emeritus, Christian Reformed Church in North America; Dr. Amos Brown, Chair, Social Justice Commission, National Baptist Convention USA, Inc.; Rev. Dr. Walter Brueggemann, Professor Emeritus, Columbia Theological Seminary; Dr. Tony Campolo, Co-Founder, Red Letter Christians; Dr. Iva Carruthers, General Secretary, Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference; The Most Rev. Michael B. Curry, Presiding Bishop and Primate, The Episcopal Church; Rev. Dr. James Forbes, President and Founder, Healing the Nations Foundation and Preaching Professor at Union Theological Seminary; Rev. Wesley Granberg-Michaelson, General Secretary Emeritus, Reformed Church in America; Rev. Dr. Cynthia Hale, Senior Pastor, Ray of Hope Christian Church, Decatur, GA; Rev. Dr. Richard Hamm, former General Minister and President of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ); Rev. Dr. Joel C. Hunter, Faith Community Organizer and Chairman, Community Resource Network; Rev. Dr. Jo Anne Lyon, General Superintendent Emerita, The Wesleyan Church; Bishop Vashti McKenzie, 117th Elected and Consecrated Bishop, AME Church; Rev. Dr. Otis Moss, Jr., Co-Convener National African American Clergy Network; Dr. John Perkins, Chair Emeritus and Founding Member, Christian Community Development Association; Bishop Lawrence Reddick, CEO, Christian Methodist Episcopal Church; Fr. Richard Rohr, Founder, Center for Action and Contemplation; Dr. Ron Sider, President Emeritus, Evangelicals for Social Action; Rev. Jim Wallis, President and Founder, Sojourners; Rev. Dr. Sharon Watkins, Director, NCC Truth and Racial Justice Initiative; Dr. Barbara Williams-Skinner, Co-Convener, National African American Clergy Network; President, Skinner Leadership Institute; Bishop Will Willimon, Bishop, The United Methodist Church, retired, Professor of the Practice of Ministry, Duke Divinity School

PASTOR SCOTT WILL BE SERVING AS A LONG-TERM SUBSTITUTE

TEACHER – (Political Science, US History, and AP Psychology) at McFarland High School through the end of April if not until the end of the school year. He is covering for a teacher whose mother is dying. Please hold the teacher and her family in your prayers. While he will be here on Sunday mornings, his week day presence will be in the late afternoon. If you need pastoral care, please let Ruth know in the church office. He will be available to make hospital calls and for emergencies.

OUR CHURCH CALENDAR:

(If you are able to volunteer to fill an opening, please call the church 608-423-3001. Thank you!)

- **Wednesday, April 11**
7:30-9:30 a.m. Grace Lutheran Church will be offering a free hot breakfast for all Cambridge High School students the second Wednesday of each month. This is open to all high school students. Come socialize with your friends while getting a free hot yummy breakfast before school starts.
6:00 p.m. Session.

- **Sunday, April 15 –**
9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. Children’s Library open.
10:00 a.m. Worship and Sunday School
Liturgist: Jenine Spack
Ushers/Greeters: Larry & Sylvia Jensen
Fellowship Hosts: Mare Stewart
11:00 a.m. Children’s Library open. Last day for check-out
11:00 a.m. Deacons
12 Noon Book Study discussing “A Prayer for Owen Meany”

- **Sunday, April 22 – Earth Day**
9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. Children’s Library open.
10:00 a.m. Worship and Sunday School
Liturgist: Cathy Thiltgen
Ushers/Greeters: OPEN
Fellowship Hosts: Kari & Trent Bettenhausen; Sue & Derek Bettenhausen
11:00 a.m. Last Day Children’s Library open. Returns only.

- **Sunday, April 29 –**
10:00 a.m. Worship and Sunday School
Liturgist: Open
Ushers/Greeters: OPEN
Fellowship Hosts: Cheryl Stitz

MILESTONES

Birthdays

Renee Roland Johnson..... April 10
 Sylvia Jensen April 14
 Michael Rumpf..... April 16
 Dale Febock..... April 19
 David Gunnulson..... April 22
 Al Bettenhausen April 26

Marilyn Schuster April 27
 Lori Peterson..... April 30

Anniversaries

Neal & Cori Traeder April 10
 Mike & Cheryl Stitz April 20

PLEASE HOLD THESE MEMBERS AND FRIENDS IN PRAYER THIS WEEK —

Sandy Berge (sister of Charleen Janus)
 Ken Bilstad
 Griffin Clark (grandson of Bill & Patty Strohbusch)
 David Gunnulson
 Don Hawkins (husband of Margaret
 Jayne Kilian (daughter of Judy & Monty Pearson)
 Scott Kramer family (friends of Charlie Porter)
 Wade Kubina (son of Jo Kubina)
 Richard Nye (son-in-law of Ann & Dale Febock, Tara’s husband, deploying to Iraq)
 Andy Schieffer (Rose Ann West’s nephew-in-law)
 Shawn Spack (son of Jenine & Jack Spack)
 Joan Spaulding
 Mary Trailer
 Betty Willmore
 Jim Willmore

The family of Rosemary Mandli (Jerry Mandli’s mother—family Karin, Jake, Conner, Matthew and Luke); Jim Fergusson (Nancy Kristiansen’s brother); Donald Rumpf; Egil Kristiansen (Jan Kristiansen’s brother); Carl Martin (Meg’s husband Bob Stilling’s uncle); Lawrence Janus (Charleen’s husband); Corinne Hommen (mother of Kris Runge), and other families who are grieving the loss of loved ones.

If you would like to be added to our weekly prayer list, please leave word in the church office or contact the pastor. Permission to be included in this publicly posted list has been obtained from those listed or their families.

STANDING DATES – These are regularly scheduled events

- Pastoral Office Hours – Call for his weekly schedule until the end of April
- Business Office Hours – 8:00 a.m. to Noon Monday through Thursday
- Sundays – 10:00 a.m. Worship;
 Communion first Sunday of each month
 Sunday School 10:00 a.m. from September through May
 Fellowship & Refreshment following worship service each week.
- Monday and Friday mornings at 8:30 a.m. – OA
- Thursday evenings at 7:30 p.m. – AA

Oakland-Cambridge Presbyterian Church

April 10, 2018

- Second and fourth Wednesdays of each month at noon – Community Activities Program Senior Meal

TELEPHONE/FAX: 608-423-3001 EMAIL: Office@OCPChurch.com or Pastor@OCPChurch.com

WEB: www.OCPChurch.com

 Visit us on Facebook: Oakland-Cambridge Presbyterian Church