

Top 27 books recommended by the Missional Leadership Academy
Grand Canyon Synod, ELCA
Posted by Rev. Stewart McDonald
(October 2011)

1. ***Transforming Church*** by Kevin Ford
If you read just one book, this is it! Follows the format of the online assessment instrument.
2. ***Leadership on the Line*** by Ron Heifetz and Marty Linsky
Adaptive leadership for all kinds of organizations.
3. ***A Field Guide for the Missional Congregation*** by Rick Rouse and Craig Van Gelder
A good, easy read for leadership teams.
4. ***Reaching People Under 40 While Keeping People Over 60*** by Edward Hammett and James Pierce
The title says it all. Another good book for leadership teams with lots of good questions.
5. ***Church-Going Insider or Gospel-Carrying Outsider*** by Judith McWilliams Dickhart
This book does a very good job of address the question: are we to be a church for ourselves or are we to be a church for others.
6. ***A Door Set Open*** by Peter Steinke
Helps you understand your church as a system. See also *Congregational Leadership in Anxious Times* by Steinke
7. ***The Millennium Matrix*** by M. Rex Miller
A look at the church from four communications media: oral, print, broadcast and digital. A good exploration of 21st century internet resources and their impact on the church.
8. ***Congregational Leadership in Anxious Times*** by Peter Steinke
Peter is a systems person. He applies systems thinking to the church. Excellent material.
9. ***Leading Change*** by John Kotter
The author teaches at Harvard. This book is the gold standard for change in all kinds of organizations.
10. ***The Evangelizing Church*** by Richard Bliese and Craig Van Gelder
A group of most Luther Seminary professors suggest a whole new way of defining evangelism.
11. ***Leadership and the New Science*** by Margaret Wheatley
This is a foundational book for me. The author takes the principals of Newtonian physics and quantum physics, and uses them to look at how we organize our organizations.
12. ***Reclaiming the "L" Word*** by Kelly Fryer and Timothy Lull
Describing mission for the church, written from a Lutheran theological perspective. Easy to read and certainly appropriate for more than just Lutherans. An easy read packed with good things.

13. ***Reclaiming the "C" Word: Daring to be Church Again*** by Kelly Fryer
If you want to be the same every day, don't read this book. The author dreams about a church that is community of people daring to be spontaneous and passionate as they listen to the Spirit.
14. ***Who Moved My Cheese*** by Spencer Johnson and Kenneth Blanchard
A very small, childlike story about change.
15. ***Our Iceberg is Melting*** by John Kotter, Holger Rathgeber, Peter Mueller and Spencer Johnson
Another small, childlike story about change from the gurus of change.
16. ***Thriving Through Ministry Conflict*** by James Osterhaus, Joseph Jurkowski and Todd Hahn
This book is a story about a church in conflict and how they resolved it.
17. ***Twelve Keys to an Effective Church*** by Kennon Callahan
This book is almost 30 years old, but still has important things to say about how to make a congregation an effective church.
18. ***A Generous Orthodoxy*** by Brian McLaren
The author does a good job of breaking down the labels of opposites (i.e., liberal/conservative)
19. ***A New and Right Spirit*** by Rick Barger and Mark Allan Powell
The author talks about the impact of consumerism on the church and offers some ideas of moving beyond it.
20. ***The Emerging Church*** by Dan Kimball, Rick Warren, Brian McLaren and Howard Hendricks
A very good book about the differences between the modern and postmodern church.
21. ***Christianity for the Rest of Us*** by Diana Butler Bass
What are some of the characteristics that thriving mainline congregations share.
22. ***The Great Emergence*** by Phyllis Tickle
A great little book that looks at the eras of the church in 500 year periods and describes how Christianity is changing in our time and why.
23. ***The Future of Faith*** by Harvey Gallagher Cox
In an earlier book released in the 1960s, Harvey Cox, a Harvard professor of religion, argued that faith was dead. In this book written on the occasion of his retirement from Harvard argues that faith is not dead, but being transformed.
24. ***Reclaiming the Great Commission*** by Claude Payne and Hamilton Beazley
Bishop Payne is the retired bishop of the Diocese of Arizona. The book focuses on moving congregations, judicatories and denominations from the member model to the mission model. Good stuff, but a bit hard to read.
25. ***Transforming Congregational Culture*** by Anthony Robinson
No comment yet on this one. It is the next one on my reading list, but comes highly recommended. Stay tuned.

26. ***The Five Most Important Questions You Will Ever Ask About Your Nonprofit Organization*** by Peter Drucker and Erik Synnестvedt

This is a fabulous little book that would be a great project for a congregation or council. Peter Drucker, was a leading management consultant in the last part of the 20th century. I have used this to guide congregations into discerning mission, vision and core values with excellent success.

27. ***Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations*** by Robert Schnase

A great guide with the companion Five Practices of Fruitful Living for a congregation to develop a healthy sense of discipleship. Bishop Schnase (UMC) provides a host of resources through <http://fivepractices.org>. I know of one congregation that is using this as their parish project in the Missional Leadership Academy. It is somewhat similar to Natural Church Development, but more accessible for the entire congregation, and more of an adaptive process than a fix-it program.