

2020 Book Reviews

***Near the Exit: Travels with the Not-So-Grim Reaper* by Lori Erickson (WJK Books)**

Released 13 Aug 2019

Lori Erickson is an Episcopal deacon and travel writer who documents her journey around the world to explore death and funeral customs in *Near the Exit: Travels with the Not-So-Grim Reaper*. Egyptian pyramids, Mayan temples, Day of the Dead celebrations, Victorian cemeteries, Maori marae, and a pyre in Colorado are each visited and described in lush detail with spiritual insights from a minister who is reflecting on loss in her own life following the death of a brother and her mother's move to a long-term care facility. Beginning and ending with All Saints, this 2019 book is a fast-paced read that is sure to offer some inspiration for the preacher and worship planner in October/November as well as a bit of an escape for those who miss travelling farther afield than their bubble. 4/5 (Review written by Rev. Heather Ferrier, based on electronic advanced reading copy.) <https://www.amazon.ca/Near-Exit-Lori-Erickson/dp/0664265677>

***Part-Time is Plenty: Thriving Without Full-Time Clergy* by G. Jeffrey MacDonald (WJK Books)**

Released 7 April 2020

Part-Time is Plenty: Thriving Without Full-Time Clergy by G. Jeffrey MacDonald may be the book you've been waiting for if you're a Regional Liaison, Pastoral Charge Supervisor, or otherwise providing leadership to a charge that's in the process of shifting from full to part-time ministry personnel. A journalist and part-time pastor, MacDonald has used a qualitative approach to interview churches that are doing part-time ministry well (vibrant, sustainable, humane to ministry personnel). He addresses the shame that congregations can feel when a full-time minister is no longer affordable, the importance of making the decision before there's a crisis, and the critical need for strong lay leadership to be developed and supported. MacDonald provides a range of models for vibrant part-time ministry that may be useful for working with church leaders who view part-time as only a stop on the way to closure. As the many benefits of empowering lay leaders is a central message of this book, consider recommending it to your board and committee members. 4/5 (Review written by Rev. Heather Ferrier, based on electronic advanced reading copy.) <https://www.amazon.ca/Part-Time-Plenty-G-Jeffrey-MacDonald/dp/0664265995>

***Diary of a Pastor's Soul* by M. Craig Barnes (Baker Academic / Brazos Press).**

Released 19 May 2020

This portrait of a year in the life of a minister preparing for retirement rings true to life in every detail and could only have been written by someone who has spent many years behind the pulpit himself. From the rhythms of the church calendar, to the nuances of church politics, clergy

picking up this book will see their own lives, frustrations, and joys reflected almost too accurately (such as arriving at the hospital to visit someone who has just left!). For those serving in a role that can often be isolating, Barnes provides the encouraging voice of a veteran of the church who has seen it all and continues to love God and God's people. This book is a gift to clergy, a glimpse behind the curtain for laypeople, and should be made mandatory reading for anyone who has ever questioned why the minister gets paid so much for only working one hour a week! 5/5 (Review written by Rev. Heather Ferrier, based on electronic advanced reading copy.) <http://bakerpublishinggroup.com/books/diary-of-a-pastor-s-soul/400730>

***For All Who Hunger: Searching for Communion in a Shattered World* by Emily M. D. Scott**
(Convergent Books).
Released 12 May 2020

Lydia, Lydia, have you met Lydia? St. Lydia's Dinner Church? This unique and inclusive ministry was begun in New York City by minister Emily M.D. Scott (ELCA) whose honest reflections on the struggles of planting an unconventional church are shared in her new book *For All Who Hunger*. After graduating from Yale Divinity School, Emily felt called to something other than conventional congregational life, and pursued her dream of creating a church built around cooking and sharing a weekly sacramental meal with those who felt equally lonely in the big city. This is a great read for anyone dreaming of creating a new ministry, in the thick of trying to get a new group off the ground, or meditating on the theology of communion. Emily shares the emotional rollercoaster of preparing services where no one shows up, the awkwardness of trying to keep the conversation rolling in a gathering of strangers, and the trials of operating a ministry out of storage bins while simultaneously discovering that no one on Tinder is looking to date a minister. 4/5 (Review written by Rev. Heather Ferrier, based on electronic advanced reading copy.) <https://www.penguinrandomhouse.ca/books/612032/for-all-who-hunger-by-emily-m-d-scott/9780593135570>