

Crossroads Book Club Selections for 2025

The Crossroads Book Discussion Group meets on the fourth Thursday of each month at 1:00 pm in the Fireside Lounge. We discuss varied and meaningful books both fiction and nonfiction, many of which have won literary acclaim. Please join us for any or all of our book discussions.

- Jan. 23 While You Were Out: An Intimate Family Portrait of Mental Illness in an Era of Silence by Meg Kissinger (2023) Nonfiction, Memoir. The author was a long-time reporter for the MJS. She relates a personal story of one family's struggles detailing a childhood tragedy and catalyzing a journalism career focused on exposing our country's flawed mental health care system. The author narrates the audio book, and she was part of panel discussions at the Tucson Festival of Books, U of A 2024.
- Feb. 27 The Magnolia Palace by Fiona Davis (2022) Historical Fiction. A novel which uses the historical setting of the Henry Clay Frick House. It is based on actual historical figures and explores mysteries surrounding Henry Clay Frick's death. He was a wealthy American industrialist involved in forming the U.S. Steel Corporation and an avid art patron.
- Mar. 27 The Women by Kristin Hannah (2024) Historical Fiction. A story of a woman from a wealthy family who enlists as a nurse in the Vietnam War after her brother is killed in action. She serves in a war-ravaged country in dangerous conditions. She struggles to reassimilate upon returning to an atmosphere hostile to veterans and to women in war.
- Apr. 24 Every Valley: The Desperate Lives and Troubled Times that Made Handel's Messiah by Charles King (2024) Nonfiction. A drama of tangled lives behind the creation of Handel's Messiah, involving famous 18th century personalities. Their stories show that Handel's Messiah is a creation of a musical genius and summarizes the era he lived in.
- May 22 Lady Tan's Circle of Women by Lisa See (2023) Historical Fiction. A story of a woman physician in 15th c. China. The story follows Tan Yunxian, a female physician who lived in the Ming dynasty and whose cases are the earliest surviving Chinese medical text written by a woman. She defies tradition to treat women of all classes and all walks of life.

- June 26 Huckleberry Finn by Mark Twain (1885) YA Fiction, Adult Satire. A story considered by many literary critics to be the greatest American novel ever written. The satire is so subtle it is often misunderstood and has been frequently banned because of its “anti-Negro” remarks. Yet, the passages cited constitute the most devastating speech against slavery and racial prejudices an American has ever written.
- July 24 James by Percival Everett (2024) Fiction. A retelling of Huckleberry Finn from the perspective of Jim. Huck Finn fakes his own death to escape his violent father. Jim overhears he is going to be sold and separated from his family. Thus begins the dangerous journey down the Mississippi toward an elusive freedom. In this rendition Jim, the slave, is really James the literate, compassionate man, who provides the reader with electrifying humor.
- Aug. 28 The Heaven and Earth Grocery Store by James McBride (2023) Fiction. A story of Black and Jewish residents of the Chicken Hill Neighborhood of Pottstown, PA in the 20s and 30s. A human skeleton found under the housing foundation exposes long-kept secrets of the residents. (Recommend prior reading: James McBride’s The Color of Water).
- Sept. 25 Tell Me Everything by Elizabeth Strout (2024) Fiction. A book populated by an abundance of colorful characters like Bob Burgess, who appeared in her previous novels. The book explores many themes but especially the power of stories and of storytelling. Strout’s main protagonists, the flinty Olive Kitteridge and the childlike Lucy Barton, trade pages which reveal foibles and follies of inhabitants of Crosby, ME, who at times live in a soap opera.
- Oct. 23 The Mighty Red by Louis Erdrich (2024) Fiction. A story of a small community in the Red River Valley, ND, dominated by Big Agriculture. Kismet Poe, a teen girl, is caught in a love triangle with a rich town resident and a homeschooled romantic. It’s a story dealing with inheritance, identity, past injustices, and present-day inequalities.
- Nov. 20 The Small and the Mighty by Sherrie McMahon (2024) Nonfiction. Inspiring stories of twelve Americans whose extraordinary heroism in the face of mounting trials created the character of our country. It includes a daughter of enslaved parents who sparked a reformation in Black education, a Japanese immigrant combat survivor who becomes a senator, and an electrician who saved her husband’s life.
- Dec. No Book Club. Merry Christmas!