

Whether cracked open on a beach blanket, on a park bench or at a vacation home, a summer read can enlighten and inspire as well as entertain. This week's clergy discuss spiritually enriching books they have read or plan to read this summer.

Cantor Irene Failenbogen

The New Synagogue of Long Island, Brookville

I recommend "Maybe You Should Talk to Someone" (Harper, 2019), a book by Lori Gottlieb. On the book cover, a depiction of a tissue box and the words, "a therapist, her therapist, and our lives revealed" signal that this will be an exploration, through stories, of the spiritual depths of each one of us.

The book challenges readers to see each story as an opportunity to examine the wonders within our world.

Because I experienced therapy as more of a spiritual journey than a curing of illness in my native Buenos Aires, where my spirituality was formed, I appreciate this book as a guiding light. I recommend it to anyone who wants to expand the range of personal spirituality.

Many times in the summer, I go to the ocean to experience an expansion of my spirit. Witnessing the beauty of the sea and sky opening to a horizon of possibilities fills my soul. If you want to expand your spirit further and explore the treasures beneath life's surface, I

DO YOU HAVE QUESTIONS you'd like Newsday to ask the clergy? Email them to LILife@newsday.com. Find more LI Life stories at newsday.com/LILife.



LINDA ROSIER

Irene Failenbogen



ALEX M. WOLFF

Natalie M. Fenimore



HOLY TRINITY EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Winfred Vergara

ASKING THE CLERGY

What enriching books do you recommend for summer?

recommend reading this book.

The Rev. Natalie M. Fenimore

Lead minister and minister of Lifespan Religious Education, Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Shelter Rock, Manhasset

As you might imagine, a minister reads a lot of books with a spiritual component. But what is great about summer reading is the leisure of it — the time that can be given to reflect on the content, to ask questions of the text and relate it to the year past and the year ahead.

This summer, I will be reading "Accidental Gods: On Men Unwittingly Turned Divine" (Metropolitan, 2021), by writer, critic and independent scholar Anna Della Subin. Subin studied the history of religion at Harvard Divinity School. In her book, she tells the stories of mortal men, like Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia, who were deified because of their race, money or power. She explores the symbolic power of religion and our own god-making to build systems of oppression and colonization — or to try to subvert oppression and liberate.

I am also keeping these books of poetry in my bag: "The Path to Kindness: Poems of Connection and Joy" (Storey Publishing, 2022), edited by James Crews, and "Spilling the Light: Meditations on Hope and Resilience" (Skinner House Books, 2019), by Theresa I. Soto.

Each of us individually, and our collective communities, needs resources for healing after such a trauma-filled year.

The Rev. Canon Winfred Vergara

Priest-in-charge, Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, Hicksville, and National Asian Missioner of the Episcopal Church

Pace Is Every Step: The Path of Mindfulness in Everyday Life" (Random House, 1992) is a balm for your soul in challenging times.

The author, Thich Nhat Hanh, a leading scholar in mindfulness practice, explains that life is full of ups and downs. Some experiences are meant to mature us, but most are attempts to rob us of the ability to find joy in the present moment — the brand-new reality that we receive every day, a gift of 24 hours to enjoy happiness and share it with others.

According to the author, we may long for the cherished past, but we cannot live in it, for then we do not recognize the present moment for what it is: something new altogether.

Or, as he writes in the book: "Peace is present right here and right now in ourselves and in everything we do and see. The question is whether or not we are in touch with it."

He continues, "We don't have to travel far away to enjoy the blue sky. We don't have to leave our city or even our neighborhood to enjoy the eyes of a beautiful child. Even the air we breathe can be the source of joy."