

Scott E. Shaum's 2022 Reads List

Happy New Year friends!

Herein is a mishmash of some of my reads from 2022. They are all mixed together - novels, biographies, memoirs, leadership, pastoral ministry, and other fun stuff. - even a cookbook. I give my top 5 at the very end.

PLEASE, send me some of you favorite reads of late.

Look to Jesus, he will lead you onward to your home!

Scott E Shaum

Feel free to pass this along with no need to ask. Enjoy!

A Life of Listening: Discerning God's Voice and Discovering Our Own Leighton Ford

This is Ford's memoir. What a fascinating life he has had. He marks well the impact of his family of origin and early years of ministry. The section on the middle of his life as he came to grips with his personal history and sense of personal calling are very insightful. An enjoyable, insightful read.

Your Only Human: How Your Limits Reflect God's Design and Why that is Good News

Kelly Kapic

Kapic's sections on humility, identity, our human limits and the dynamic of time are extremely insightful. His reflections on Aquinas' writings on "magnanimity and pusillanimity" is fascinating and envisioning. My only criticism of the book is that it tends toward wordiness. A succinct writer he is not. That being said this is well worth the time.

Overflow: How the Joy of the Trinity Inspires Our Mission Michael Reeves

This small book (four chapters) are compiled from three talks Reeves gave at Moody Bible Institute. Our God is a God who overflows with life, goodness, truth, blessing and thus his people are called to overflow the same. Thus, mission. Grounded relationally and in the identity and person of God, mission is reframed to one of natural relational overflow rather than dutiful, pressured and manipulative messaging.

Wingfeather Saga series Andrew Peterson

On the Edge of the Dark Sea of Darkness

North! Or Be Eaten

The Monster in the Hollows

The Warden and the Wolf King

A light easy read during summer months. This is rated for middle school aged kids, yet I thought some of the content was a bit intense. It could be a great book to read aloud together and talk through subjects such as fear, darkness, death, trust, relationships, etc.

Veneto: Recipes from an Italian Country Kitchen Valeria Necchio

The author grew up in Veneto, a region of N.E. Italy (the region Venice is in). Herein are wonderful stories of family and culture and cuisine. Plus some awesome recipes. Some are from her grandmother and mothers, some are the authors more contemporary versions. A fun regional cookbook. Ah, Italy. There is no place on earth like Italy. My little patch of heaven is going to look, smell, and taste like a chunk of Italy (thank you Jesus!).

Resilient Pastor Glen Packian

Over several years The Barna Group polled pastors across an array of topics. With data in hand they approached Packian to address the main themes. The result is an excellent book forewarning anyone in ministry of areas of their life to take heed.

Consider yourself forewarned. It is sobering the number of pastors who are walking away from ministry, especially as Covid dynamics played out. **Well worth your time.**

Managing Leadership Anxiety Yours and Theirs Steve Cuss

The author (Australian, likely picked on as a kid for that name...) takes Family Systems Theory and applies it to the ministry scenario with insightful results. He did a series of podcasts with Ruth Haley Barton in 2022 that was fascinating to listen to. This is well worth reading to grasp interpersonal dynamics that might get a little funky under stress.

Aging Faithfully Alice Fryling

What a wonderful gift. Fryling writes from the viewpoint of an 80 year old. She looks back at all she has experienced over the past several decades as capacities diminished, passions shifted and opportunities still came her way. This is a short book, yet meaty. It would be wonderful to read in a group of peers. My wife and I read it on vacation which allowed some extra time to ruminate and discuss. **Must read for anyone 55 and over.**

Working from a Place of Rest Tony Horsfall

Tony is a dear friend and one prolific writer. This book came up in a number of conversations so I check it out. Does work and rest sound contradictory to you? Yet, Jesus invites us to rest - not just intermittently, but a constant norm. A thoughtful and needed topic.

Rembrandt is in the Wind: Learning to Love Art through the Eyes of Faith Russ Ramsey

Part biography, part art history, part spiritual life lessons, part...This is a wonderful read, one of my favorites for the year. Chapter one is essential a theology of beauty and is a wonderful chapter on its own. **Highly recommend** this for anyone who has even a remote interested in fine art.

Unfettered: Imagining a Childlike Faith beyond the Baggage of Western Culture
Mandy Smith

This was an intriguing read. At its core, Smith's premise is a wonderful one. She had some fascinating observations and insights. In her introduction she writes that some may think she is being a bit narcissistic but to not go there. Yet....I often thought she was rather narcissistic and indulgent. However, I have a friend who found this book revolutionary. So, this can be one to read if the topic draws you. I found some sections very encouraging. It is certainly a worthing and needed topic.

Monastery Mornings: My Unusual Boyhood Among the Saints and Monks Michael Patrick O'Brien

This is a memoir of sorts as O'Brien recounts childhood memories of interactions with monks in a monastic community in Utah. It is a delightful read. This community no longer exists, yet its impact on many lives is profound. A great look at a monastery from a non-member.

The Flourishing Pastor: Recovering the Lost Art of Shepherd Leadership Tom Nelson

Nelson is a pastor himself. I have spoken to some younger pastors who found this book significantly freeing. How does one live in the ultra-complex world of local church leadership and not lose one's soul? This pastor takes the topic head on.

Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, The Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church N. T. Wright

Typical N. T. Wright, theologically sound, biblical and encouraging. Wright covers the topic of heaven, the future and the resurrection in enlightening ways. One of my take aways is how thin the veil is between this world and eternity/spiritual world. Fascinating.

Three Hours: Sermons for Good Friday Fleming Rutledge

This is a great Holy Week Read. The author is often considered one of the best orators of our time. Indeed, the content of these messages are brilliant, challenging and awe-inspiring of the redemptive work of Jesus.

Gentleman in Moscow Amor Towles

Reputedly the author's best work. This was a long, meandering engaging novel. Fun summer read.

Surrender Bono

I read this, but I have heard repeatedly it is even better on audio. The life of a global rock and roll star.... Sometimes it feels a bit pretentious, but then one remembers who the author is and the fact that he is known the world over and has dinner with nearly any famous person alive - politicians, actors, athletes, other music stars. It's not all gloss, as he describes various times of conflict in the band and elsewhere in life. Bono's faith in Jesus is expressed from beginning to end.

Ruthlessly Eliminate Hurry John Mark Comber

I was skeptical on this title as I was concerned it would be a rehash of Foster, Willard, Ortberg, Barton, so many other others. Indeed, all those authors are quoted. Yet, I thoroughly enjoyed this book and gained some keen insights from it. The author's style is quick, witty, draws from many sources and is very applicable to normative life while being challenging as well. He especially emphasizes how our souls are literally being eaten alive by our phones and tech. **Highly recommended read, one of my favorite reads of the year.**

The Global Church - The First Eight Centuries: From Pentecost to the Rise of Islam Donald Fairbairn

This is a very readable survey of the history of the church from the book of Acts through to the year 800, after the rise of Islam. Fairbairn seeks to emphasize what was going on in the church beyond Europe and Latin speaking Africa throughout this span of the first 800 years of the church. He does a wonderful job of synthesizing the major issues, what the church was struggling with, how it progressed and who the major influencers were. **Well written**, even as an overview.

Discernment, God's Will and Living Jesus: Christian Discernment as a Way of Life

Larry Warner

A wonderfully insightful read. Discernment is not to be merely about major life decisions, but rather an ongoing, abiding walk with God in all matters of life. The author writes on numerous angles on this topic with great insight. If this topic grabs you, this is a title to read.

My Top 5 For the Year

1. Ruthlessly Eliminate Hurry John Mark Cromber
2. Rembrandt is in the Wind: Learning to Love Art through the Eyes of Faith Russ Ramsey
3. Aging Faithfully Alice Fryling
4. The Global Church Donald Fairbairn
5. Veneto: Recipes from an Italian Country Kitchen Valeria Necchio ...ah, Italy!