

## **Scott E. Shaum's 2025 Reads List**

Here is my list for 2025. Sorry for slow delivery. Hope you find something to enjoy and stimulate. Please forgive any and all typos....

*PLEASE, send me some of your favorite reads of late. I am especially on the hunt for beautiful literature and novels if you have them. Thanks!*

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

*Scott E Shaum*

*Epiphany 2025*

### **Inklings, C.S. Lewis, JRR Tolkien and related books**

I attended the CS Lewis Summer Institute in Belfast, North Ireland in July, so I read much on and by the authors of the inklings.

#### **The Myth Makers John Hendrix**

This is a historical graphic narration of Lewis and Tolkien's relationship. Super well done. Of all the biographies I have read this one provided angles not recorded elsewhere and done in an artistic, creative way. Excellent read.

#### **Bandersnatch Diana Pavlov Colyer**

The author shows how the Inklings had a direct impact on one another's works in significant ways - not only encouraging each other to write, but also challenging each other in quality and content. A compelling read with recommendations of how to seek out such input into one's own works.

#### **The High Hallow: Tolkien's Liturgical Imagination Ben Reinhard**

The author shows how Tolkien's saturation in the Catholic church liturgy worked its way into his writings. Tolkien daily attended mass. As a Philologist (study of languages) Tolkien had most of the Latin masses memorized - and there are many different liturgies through the church calendar year (Advent, Epiphany, etc.). This was a fascinating read. Loved it.

#### **Once Upon A Wardrobe Patti Callahan**

Novel. A delightful read of an imaginary story of a young college student who befriends the Lewis brothers and carries stories home to her bedridden younger brother.

### **Becoming Mrs. Lewis Patti Callahan**

A novel based on various sources of Joy Davison's life toward becoming C.S. Lewis' wife.

### **Spiritual Life Reads**

#### **The Familiar Stranger: (Re)Introducing the Holy Spirit to those In Search of an Experiential Spirituality Tyler Stanton**

On the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Stanton handles the topic with grace and in a compelling manner. This was a personally meaningful read for me this year - timely.

**Highly recommended.** This could stretch some of you significantly.....

#### **The Art of Vine Making: Bette Dickinson**

This book was gifted to me by my friend Dan at the very end of my sabbatical. It was very timely and meaningful for me. Dickinson does a fantastic job bringing to bear in our spiritual lives the elements of the life and work of a vine dresser. Lovely applications. The Spirit used this book significantly in my life to name and clarify his work. A well conceived and executed book. **Highly recommended.**

#### **Insane for the Light: A Spirituality for the Wisdom Years Ronald Rolheiser**

I have long looked forward to this book. It is hard to find meaningful books on this topic - what the spiritual life can/ought be like in the final 1/3rd of life. Rolheiser is a Catholic theologian. There will be some of that dynamic to sort through. He relies heavily on the works of St. John of the Cross and Henri Nouwen. Insightful. Compelling.

#### **Decenter Everything: The Unconventional Approach to Eldering in an Age of Immaturity David Tensen**

I had the opportunity to give feedback on early manuscripts of this book. There are chapters that are brilliantly prophetic, others a bit out there and too abstract. Tensen is arguing for the role and place of an elder in the faith. The chapter on giving up being listened to is worth the price of the book. An essential read. Don't let the flaky parts deter you. There is a prophetic tone to sections of this book.

#### **Becoming by Beholding Lanta Davis**

This is a beautiful book. The author looks at both orthodoxy and orthopraxy (right belief and right practice) via the means of various mediums of beauty and art. The book can be a bit slow at times but some wonderful content within.

#### **Ask of Old Paths Medieval Virtues and Vices for a Whole and Holy Life Grace Hamman**

Listen to this author's interview by Nathan Foster on the Renovare podcast. Lovely conversation. The book itself is very engaging on a topic that sounds frumpy at best.

## Theology

### **The Blood and Water: How the Sacraments Shape Christian Identity Kevin P Emmit**

This was a dense read. I found it insightful on the topic of sacraments and its impact on our formation. A great read on the topic.

### **The Theological Imagination Judith Wolfe**

Another dense read with words I had to look up....Brilliant unfolding on the topic though. I wanted to read on the imagination during sabbatical. This was the 5 or 6th book on the topic and the culmination. Only recommended if you want to take a deep dive on the topic.

## Biography

### **Footsteps of Faith Tony Horsfall**

I provided a preview and recommendation for this latest offering by a prolific author and a dear friend. This is Tony's biography of sorts. He provides narrative of his life story but does so while providing developmental insights along the way. Very unique and an absolutely excellent read and resource. **Highly Recommended** (when it is released - 2026?).

### **All My Knotted Up Life Beth Moore**

A well written memoir. At times sad (think family dynamics), other times maddening (think church leadership). Lots of humor through out.

## Poetry

### **100 Poems Seamus Heaney**

Famous, award winning Irish Poet. Not my favorite poetry.

### **George Herbert: 100 Poems**

This one I loved. Lovely poems throughout from this Anglican Priest, poet. Herbert is oft quoted. He is worth reading at poetry speed.

## NOVELS

### **Lord of the Rings JRRT**

Never read them before!

### **The Secret Book of Flora Lea Patti Callahan**

Another Callahan read. Well written novel with wonderful threads and twists. Recommended.

### **This is Happiness Niall Williams**

Such a great read. A novel of a small Irish village facing the stunning change of electric coming to the area. The pace of the plot moves at the speed of a small village! Williams description of everything from Irish rain to the people who made up this community had me laughing out loud at times. Delightful. There were some beautifully poignant scenes as well.

### **The Unhiding of Elijah Campbell Kelly Flanagan**

A troubling novel of a man's life who slowly comes unraveled. It is a prophetic look at what happens when we opt to not deal with the "stuff" in our life's stories - family of origin dynamics, sin patterns, etc. Well written, if not a little "happily ever after" at the end. It is written by a therapist and thus has some great insight within the narrative that will cause personal reflection.

### **By the Rivers of Babylon Michael O'Brien**

This is a novel that fills in the story of the Old Testament prophet Ezekiel's life that lead him from his home in Jerusalem to exile in Babylon up to the point of the Old Testament book Ezekiel chapter 1. This is a great read giving an idea of what it was like for Israelites to be taken into captivity and setting up life in Babylon.

### **Letter to the Future Micheal O'Brien**

O'Brien is a Catholic, Canadian writer and iconographer. I have read most of his books. This novel is not his best offering. Only recommended to big O'Brien fans.

**[YOU MUST READ Micael O'Brien's BOOK *FATHER ELIJAH* IF YOU HAVE NOT YET!!!!]**

### **Other Stuff**

#### **Wilding: The Return of Nature to a British Farm**

An Inspiring true account of an English dairy farm being returned to a historical (as much as possible) wild setting and the return of endangered and rare butterflies, bats, birds and plants. Wow.

#### **Pilgrim Walks in Franciscan Italy Johannes Jorgensen**

Interesting narrative of the author's personal pilgrimages of some of St. Francis' journeys in Central Italy and the monasteries that have been erected at key locations.

#### **The Tucci Cookbook Stanley Tucci**

Yes, I read cookbooks. And then cook from them.....Want some?

#### **Time and Tide: Recipes and Stories from My Coastal Kitchen Emily Scott**

I am serious about reading cookbooks. Awesome roasted chicken recipe in here. I have already made it three times....British chef from way SW England.

### **Wilderness Gerald Mays**

This book was a little flaky in my estimation. My least favorite of all Mays' books I have read.

### **How the Irish Saved Civilization Thomas Cahill**

A rather slow read. It came with high praise but not my favorite read.

### **Some Rereads from Years past**

**In Search of God and Guinness Stephen Mansfield** I was headed to Dublin after all.

This is a very fun and deeply encouraging read of the faith in the Guinness family.

**Lifting the Veil: Imagination and the Kingdom of God Malcolm Guite** - short, weighty read. Guite's works are excellent.

**Rest Alex Soojung-Kim Pang** - this is a challenging and great read.

**Cal Newport's Deep Work and Slow Work** if you struggle with not getting to meaningful projects in your work, these are brilliant books to help.

**Chronicles of Narnia CSL** It has been decades since I read these.

### **Most Meaningful reads of 2025**

- Insane for the Light: A Spirituality for the Wisdom Years Ronald Rolheiser
- The Art of Vine Making: Bette Dickinson
- The Familiar Stranger: (Re)Introducing the Holy Spirit to those In Search of an Experiential Spirituality Tyler Stanton
- Footsteps of Faith Tony Horsfall