

# EXPLORING OUR FAITH

## HALF THE SKY

TURNING OPPRESSION  
INTO OPPORTUNITY  
FOR WOMEN WORLDWIDE

Nicholas D. Kristof  
and Sheryl WuDunn



## UNPROTECTED TEXTS

The Bible's  
Surprising  
Contradictions  
about Sex and Desire

Jennifer Wright Knust

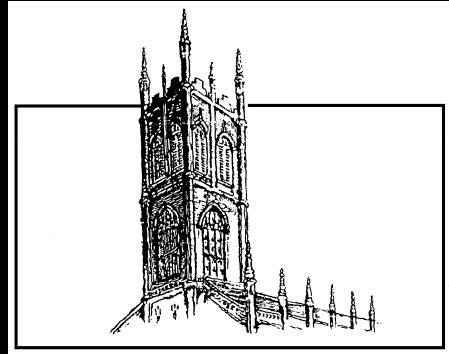
"An explosive, fascinating book that  
reveals how the Bible cannot be used  
as a rulebook when it comes to sex.  
A terrific read by a top scholar."  
— BART EHRMAN,  
author of *Misquoting Jesus*

## FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

## EDUCATIONAL MINISTRIES

*Learning Opportunities  
for Seekers,  
Questioners  
and Everyone in Between*

WINTER-SPRING  
2012



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## The Presbyterian Hymnal Project

### THE NEW PRESBYTERIAN HYMNAL PROJECT

Sunday, January 15 at 9:45 a.m.

*David Eicher*



The biblical narrative contains many references to singing joyfully to our God. In every generation we are called to claim our song and bear witness to what God is doing in the world. In 2004, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) authorized the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation, the Presbyterian Association of Musicians and the Office of Theology and Worship to begin work on a new Presbyterian hymnal.

This January, please join **David Eicher**, Hymnal Editor with the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation, for a discussion on the New Presbyterian Hymnal Project, an undertaking that will result in *Glory to God: The Presbyterian Hymnal* (2013). The new hymnal intends to make available a wealth of hymns and spiritual songs that have arisen since the 1990 hymnal, to acquaint worshipers with resources from Christian communities around the world and to review the great heritage of congregational songs that have been passed on to us from past generations. David will discuss the process used by the Presbyterian Committee on Congregational Song for selecting hymns, the reasons for a new hymnal now, the challenges of publishing a modern hymnal in an electronic age, how the new hymnal will be organized and the influence praise music, global music and contemporary hymns have had on the selection.

### POLITICS AND RELIGIOUS LIFE

Sundays, February 12, February 26 and March 4, at 9:45 a.m.

*The Rev. Dr. Mark Hostetter*



As we gear up for national elections next fall, this discussion series will explore the intersection of religion and politics. What role does religion and the personal religious life of our leaders play in politics? What insight does our Reformed theology provide about political involvement? Just what is it about Mormonism that gets Mormons so passionate about political involvement and puts so many others on edge? How should people of faith responsibly respond to the seeming domination of national politics by religious agendas? Please come and be part of these lively discussions.



## READING THE QUR'AN FOR CHRISTIANS

### THEOLOGY OF THE QUR'AN

Sundays at 12:30 p.m.

January 15 and 22, February 5 and 19, March 4 and 11

*Imam Khalil Abdur-Rashid*

This is a six-week course on the six essential pillars of faith in Islam—belief in God, His angels, His books, His messengers, the Day of Judgment and Divine Destiny—as explained in the Qur'an. Each class session will be devoted to an examination of one of the pillars of the Qur'anic theology. Students will learn what it means to believe in each pillar, why such a belief is necessary, the benefit of having such a belief and how maintaining such a belief is relevant to being a believer in the Qur'anic sense. The content of this course will consist of readings from several verses from the Qur'an, occasionally excerpts from Qur'anic commentary, and class discussions.

**Recommended Text:** *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an* (Amana Publications), translated by Abdullah Yusuf Ali—available online at Amazon.com as well as in major bookstores such as the Strand and Barnes & Noble.

**Khalil Abdur-Rashid** serves as Imam and Executive Director of Iqra Mosque in Brooklyn, New York and as Columbia University's Muslim Religious Life Advisor. A native of Atlanta, Georgia, Imam Khalil received his BSW degree in social work from Georgia State University; completed a specialization program in Islamic Law at the Dar al-Mustafa Institute in Yemen; and earned an MA in Islamic law at Marmara University and a doctorate in Islamic law from the Mirani Seminary, both in Turkey. He is currently a PhD student at Columbia University, specializing in Islamic Law and Bioethics; and an adjunct assistant professor at NYU's Wagner School of Public Service.





**BREAKFAST REPRISE**  
**LUNCH 'N LEARN FOR SUNDAY MORNINGS**  
**Sundays at 9:45 a.m.**  
**January 22 and 29**

***The Rev. Barbara E. Senecal-Davis and Ms. Sarah Cairatti***



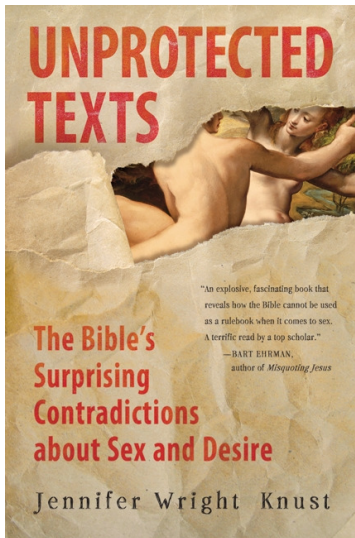
This past fall, participants in our Friday Lunch 'n Learn program watched selected interviews from Bill Moyers's *Faith and Reason* series and then discussed the issues raised in the interviews. This Friday lunch series has been so powerful and nourishing, we had to bring a few sessions to Sunday mornings! Join us as we watch fantastic interviews from Bill Moyers's *Faith and Reason* series on PBS followed by a discussion. **On January 22, we'll watch the interview with Mary Gordon and on January 29 the interview with David Grossman.**

*"With the buzz around the book and then the film version of THE DA VINCI CODE reaching a fever pitch and The PASSION OF THE CHRIST ranked among the 10 highest-grossing movies ever, what is it about religion that's got America hooked? It's an old debate between absolutes, the contrasting viewpoints of belief and disbelief that stirs the passions.... What could be more salient to the discussion of faith and reason in a time of polarized passions than to ask our creative minds from the world of literature for guidance through the absolutes and ambiguities of our age? In negotiating our way into the gray world between faith and reason, we need all the help we can get." —Bill Moyers*



In 2006, Bill Moyers talked with some of the voices at the PEN World Voices Festival about how they struggle with issues of faith and reason. While much has transpired in the public conversation about faith and reason in the last five years, the writers Mr. Moyers talked to then continue to write and wrestle with these issues.

To learn more about "Bill Moyers on Faith and Reason" or to watch the interviews online, please go to [www.pbs.org/moyers/faithandreason](http://www.pbs.org/moyers/faithandreason).



***UNPROTECTED TEXTS:  
THE BIBLE'S SURPRISING CONTRADICTIONS  
ABOUT SEX AND DESIRE***  
**Sunday, February 5 at 9:45 a.m.**  
***The Rev. Dr. Jennifer Wright Knust***

Is premarital sex a sin? When, and in what contexts, is sexual desire appropriate? With whom can I legitimately have sex? Are same-sex relations permissible? In an era where the phrases, “the Bible says” and “God says” are so often exploited, Bible scholar Jennifer Wright Knust’s book, *Unprotected Texts*, addresses what the Bible actually does—or does not—say about monogamy, polygamy, homosexuality, gender roles, and sex.

*Unprotected Texts* directly and pointedly takes on widely shared misconceptions about sex, arguing that the Bible cannot—and should not—serve as a rulebook for sexual morality, despite popular claims to the contrary. From the Song of Songs’ lyrical eroticism to the rigid sexual rules of Leviticus—and everything in between—Knust parses the Bible’s contradictory, often surprising messages. Skillfully revealing the latest insights from critical scholarship, Knust provides a compassionate and liberating model for navigating these deeply personal issues that affect us all.

**Jennifer Wright Knust** is Assistant Professor of New Testament and Christian Origins at Boston University. A graduate of the University of Illinois, Urbana, she earned her Master of Divinity from Union Theological Seminary and her Master of Philosophy and Doctorate of Religion from Columbia University. Her publications include a study of sexualized name-calling among ancient writers (*Abandoned to Lust: Sexual Slander and Ancient Christianity*, Columbia University Press 2005) and a forthcoming volume on sacrifice in the ancient Mediterranean world (*Ancient Mediterranean Sacrifice*, edited with Zsuzsanna Varhélyi, Oxford University Press). Professor Knust has been the recipient of fellowships from the Association of Theological Schools-Henry Luce III Foundation, the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, the American Council of Learned Societies, the National Endowment for the Humanities and the American Association of University Women.





## THE FUTURE OF FAITH: A FILM SERIES

**Tuesdays at 7:00 p.m.—February 7, March 13 and April 17**

*Auburn Media in partnership with Brick Presbyterian Church, First Presbyterian Church in the City of New York and Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church*

Church attendance and membership are falling fast. More and more people claim to be “spiritual but not religious.” Religion and the state have never been more at odds. *What is the future of faith?* Join us for a special film and speaker series featuring author and filmmaker Irshad Manji, media contributor and community organizer Ari Wallach, and Sundance Film Festival-nominated filmmaker Macky Alston. Each session will feature a film excerpt, lecture and discussion.

**February 7: Film and Conversation with Irshad Manji (Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church).** Author, filmmaker and speaker Irshad Manji speaks about her Muslim faith and efforts throughout the world to promote Muslim reform and moral courage. Irshad will share a selected clip from her PBS film *Faith Without Fear* and discuss her new book, *Allah, Liberty and Love*.

**March 13: Conversation with Ari Wallach (Brick Presbyterian Church).** Media contributor Ari Wallach is an organizer at the intersection of business, politics and technology and speaks about upcoming trends in identifying as religious versus spirituality. Wallach was the co-founder of “The Great Schlep” with Sarah Silverman, organizing young adult Jews to persuade their grandparents vote for Barack Obama in the 2008 presidential campaign.

**April 17: Film and Conversation about *Love Free or Die* (First Presbyterian Church).** Filmmaker Macky Alston will premiere a selected clip from his upcoming Sundance Film Festival-nominated film that will premiere on PBS in fall 2012. *Love Free or Die* is about a man whose two defining passions are in direct conflict: his love for God and his partner Mark. The film follows Bishop Gene Robinson’s personal story as American churches debate whether or not lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people are equal to heterosexuals in the eyes of God.



*In 2002, Auburn Media was launched by the Auburn Theological Seminary to give religious leaders the resources and skills to use media in their congregation- and community-based work as well as for public witness. To learn more, visit [www.auburnseminary.org/religion-and-media](http://www.auburnseminary.org/religion-and-media).*



## SEASONS AND SACRAMENTS

**Sunday, February 19 at 9:45 a.m.**

**Sunday, March 25 at 12:30 p.m.**

***The Rev. Barbara E. Senecal-Davis***

**February 19: The Season of Lent**

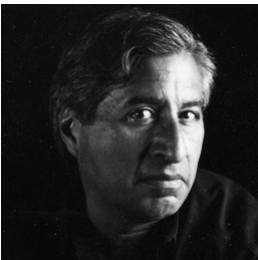
**March 25: The Sacrament of Communion**

Have you ever wondered why the hangings on the pulpit change colors? When you are asked during baptism to remember your own baptism do you have questions about the meaning of the sacrament? Two of the most important aspects of our worship life are the seasons of the church year and our sacraments. This on-going series is designed especially for church school teachers, parents, new members, and to any interested in the meaning of these vital parts of our community life.

## LUNCH 'N LEARN: BILL MOYERS ON FAITH AND REASON

Fridays, January 20, February 10 and March 16 at 12:00 p.m.  
*The Rev. Barbara E. Senecal-Davis*

In 2006, Bill Moyers talked with some of the voices at the PEN World Voices Festival about their struggles with faith and reason. While much has transpired in the public conversation about faith and reason in the last five years, the writers Mr. Moyers talked to then continue to write and wrestle with these issues. During this lunchtime series, participants will watch one of Bill Moyer's interviews with a selected writer and then discuss the issues of faith and reason raised in the interview. **Please bring your own lunch. The group meets in the library for these adventurous discussions.**



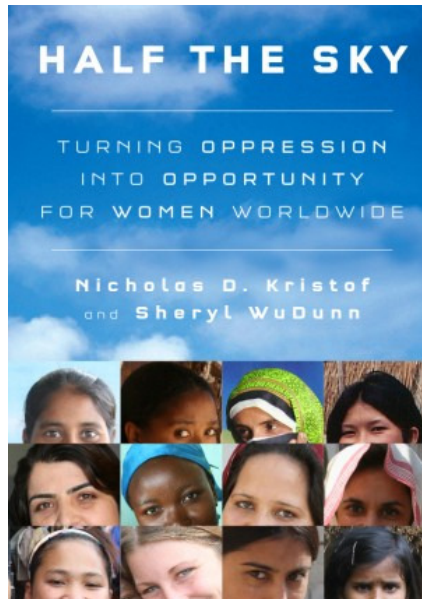
**January 20: Richard Rodriguez** writes about the intersection of his personal life with America's most vexing cultural and political issues. The son of Mexican immigrants, Rodriguez described his struggles to assimilate into American society in *Hunger for Memory: The Education of Richard Rodriguez*, an autobiography that remains controversial today for its criticism of bilingual education and affirmative action. Rodriguez is also the author of *Days of Obligation: An Argument with My Mexican Father* and *Brown: The Last Discovery of America*, a series of essays on art, culture and racial politics. Rodriguez is a contributing editor to *Harper's* magazine and commentator on *The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer* on PBS.

**February 10: Margaret Atwood** has published more than 40 books of fiction, nonfiction, criticism and poetry over the past four decades, including her first novel, *The Edible Woman* (1969), which addressed themes of gender relations and women's social roles that would inform much of her work; and her most famous novel, *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985), which won both the Los Angeles Times Prize for Fiction and the Arthur C. Clarke Award for science fiction. Her latest work, *The Tent*, a collection of mini-fictions, was published in 2006.



**March 16: Will Power** is an actor, rapper, composer, playwright and educator whose work fuses traditional drama, African storytelling and hip-hop. His critically acclaimed one-man show *Flow* and his off-Broadway production *The Seven* (an adaptation of Aeschylus's *Seven Against Thebes*) combine original tunes, rhymed language, DJ music, innovative set design and dynamic choreography. Power has received the Theater Communication Group's Peter Zeisler Memorial Award; a New York Foundation for the Arts fellowship; the Jury Award for best theater performance at HBO's 2004 US Comedy Arts Festival; and the Trailblazer Award from The National Black Theater Network. Power also lectures on the social roots and spiritual influences of hip-hop theater.

## INTERFAITH BOOK GROUP



***HALF THE SKY:  
TURNING OPPRESSION  
INTO OPPORTUNITY  
FOR WOMEN WORLDWIDE***

**Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m.  
January 18, February 8,  
March 21 and April 18**

***Led by the Rev. Barbara E. Senecal-Davis  
in conjunction with Fellows from Faith Acts Group\****

*Please contact The Rev. Barbara E. Senecal-Davis for information. The group is very limited in size and participation is at the discretion of the leadership.*

From two of our most fiercely moral voices, *Half the Sky* is a passionate call to action against our era's most pervasive human rights violation: the oppression of women and girls in the developing world. Pulitzer Prize winners Nicholas D. Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn guide us on an odyssey through Africa and Asia to meet the extraordinary women struggling there, among them a Cambodian teenager sold into sex slavery and an Ethiopian woman who suffered devastating injuries in childbirth. Drawing on the breadth of their combined reporting experience, Kristof and WuDunn depict our world with anger, sadness, clarity, and, ultimately, hope.

Led by the Rev. Barbara E. Senecal-Davis and this year's NYC Faiths Act Fellows,\* the Interfaith Social Justice Book Group will begin by reading *Half the Sky*, Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn's eye-opening book on oppression of women and girls around the world. Over the course of 4 sessions, individuals from a wide variety of faith backgrounds will come together to reflect on the book and share how their own religious traditions shape their reading of the text as well as their commitment to social justice.

\*For more information about Faiths Act, please visit [www.faithsact.org](http://www.faithsact.org).



**THE 60+ WEDNESDAY CIRCLE  
WEEKLY LUNCH PROGRAM FOR SENIORS**

- January 4:** No lunch, no program
- January 11:** FPC member Virginia Baron on “**Searching for Peace in Bethlehem: Stories of Nonviolence**”
- January 18:** Nicole Berger, Site Coordinator of P.S. 226 at FPC, on **Autism**
- January 25:** Tour of the newly renovated **New York Historical Society** including the film “New York Story”

**PLACE:** Mezzanine of the South Wing

**LUNCH** (\$5.00) at 12:15 p.m.

**PROGRAM:** 1:00 to 2:00 p.m.

**ENTER** through the main door of the church.

**SIGN UP** by the preceding Monday on poster in lobby of the Mellin-Macnab Building or by phoning the FPC receptionist at (212) 675-6150.

**ORGAN RECITAL:** If you arrive between noon and 12:15, please sit and enjoy the organ recital by Dr. Entriken.

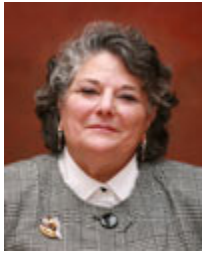
**THE MARIE SIBILLA “AGING WELL” LECTURE SERIES**

**END-OF-LIFE ISSUES**

**(INCLUDING SPECIFICS APPLICABLE TO NEW YORK STATE)**

**Thursday, January 19  
in the Mellin-Macnab Parlor, 2nd floor**

**Light Supper—6:00 p.m. (\$5.00 charge)  
Program and Discussion—6:45 to 8:15 p.m.**

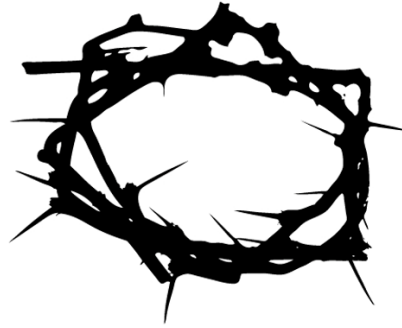


***The Rev. Martha R. Jacobs,  
author and certified Chaplain since 1998***

Information & reservations at reception desk  
or by calling (212) 675-6150.

If you plan to eat with us, please make a reservation  
by Tuesday, January 17.

**ALL AGES AND COMMUNITY WELCOME**



**LENTEN SERIES**  
**THE EMOTIONAL LIFE OF JESUS**  
**Sundays at 9:45 a.m.**  
**March 11, 18 and 25**  
*Various Leaders, TBA*

As Lent is about baptismal preparation for dying and rising with Jesus—or contemplating raising from trauma, suffering and death into new life—human resiliency is an important Lenten theme, and a theme that has gotten a lot of attention from the medical and social science fields. In this three-part series we will explore human resiliency as it relates to the Gospel of Mark.

## WHO ARE OUR PROGRAM LEADERS?

**Khalil Abdur-Rashid** serves as Imam and Executive Director of Iqra Mosque in Brooklyn, New York and as Columbia University's Muslim Religious Life Advisor. A native of Atlanta, Georgia, Imam Khalil received his BSW degree in social work from Georgia State University; completed a specialization program in Islamic Law at the Dar al-Mustafa Institute in Yemen; and earned an MA in Islamic law at Marmara University and a doctorate in Islamic law from the Mirani Seminary, both in Turkey. He is currently a PhD student at Columbia University, specializing in Islamic Law and Bioethics; and an adjunct assistant professor at NYU's Wagner School of Public Service.

**Macky Alston** is an award-winning documentary filmmaker, an educator on issues of media and religion, an organizer within the worlds of philanthropy and media-making and a regular writer and reviewer on film and religion. A graduate of Union Theological Seminary (M. Div.), Alston is a partner at River Films, a documentary film company in New York City. At Auburn Media, Alston has developed and directs programs to support responsible, engaging religious voices and create multifaith understanding. He has taught courses on documentary film at Union and Auburn Theological Seminaries.

**Sarah Cairatti** is the Seminary Intern this year. She is in her final year at Union Theological Seminary earning a Master of Divinity degree. Sarah grew up in Franklin, TN, and graduated from Presbyterian College in South Carolina. This past summer she worked as a chaplain at Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Nashville.

**David Eicher** is Hymnal Editor with the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation, Louisville, Kentucky. Prior to his current position, David was a church musician in Northwest Indiana for almost 30 years. He has served as Accompanist/Assistant Director of the South Bend Chamber Singers and Accompanist for the Northwest Indiana Symphony Orchestra Chorus. David holds degrees in organ and church music from Manchester College and Valparaiso University and is a past president of The Hymn Society in the United States and Canada.

**Mark Hostetter** is a third-generation Presbyterian minister, currently serving as First Presbyterian's Pastor for Stewardship and Mission to the Corporate World. Mark is also the chief executive officer of Vinik Asset Management, a Boston-based money management firm.

**Martha R. Jacobs**, DMin, BCC, is the author of *A Clergy Guide to End of Life Issues*. She teaches at New York Theological Seminary, where she coordinates the Doctor of Ministry in Pastoral Care. Martha was the founding managing editor of *PlainViews* and director of pastoral care at New York United Hospital in Port Chester, New York. An ordained minister of the United Church of Christ, she is the president of the New York Metropolitan Association of the UCC, and is immediate past president of the UCC Professional Chaplains and Counselors, the national association for UCC chaplains.

**Jennifer Wright Knust** is Assistant Professor of New Testament and Christian Origins at Boston University. A graduate of the University of Illinois, Urbana, she earned her Master of Divinity from Union Theological Seminary and her Master of Philosophy and Doctorate of Religion from Columbia University. Her publications include a study of sexualized name-calling among ancient writers (*Abandoned to Lust: Sexual Slander and Ancient Christianity*, Columbia University Press 2005) and a forthcoming volume on sacrifice in the ancient Mediterranean world (*Ancient Mediterranean Sacrifice*, edited with Zsuzsanna Varhélyi, Oxford University Press). Professor Knust has been the recipient of fellowships from the Association of Theological Schools-Henry Luce III Foundation, the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, the American Council of Learned Societies, the National Endowment for the Humanities and the American Association of University Women.

**Irshad Manji** is director of the Moral Courage Project at the Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service at New York University. She is also founder and president of Project Ijtihad, a charitable organization promoting a critical thinking, debate and dissent in Islam, among a network of reform-minded Muslims and non-Muslim allies. Manji's most recent book is *Allah, Liberty and Love*, and her previous book, *The Trouble with Islam Today*. Manji's documentary, *Faith Without Fear* was nominated for a 2008 Emmy Award. Her articles have appeared in many publications, and she has appeared on television networks around the world, including Al Jazeera, the CBC, BBC, MSNBC, C-SPAN, CNN, PBS, the Fox News Channel, CBS, and HBO.

**Barbara E. Senecal-Davis** currently serves First Presbyterian Church as the Minister of Christian Education. She gives oversight to the educational programming for the children, youth, and adults along with other pastoral responsibilities.

**Ari Wallach** holds a B.A. from the University Of California, Berkeley and has been working at the intersection of business, politics and communications for over 12 years. He is currently on leave from the consulting firm of studioBenZion (sBZ) and was formerly VP of Corporate Development at Seed Media Group, where he was responsible for strategic alliances and business development. He serves on the board of the American Jewish Committee's ACCESS program and has been a past participant of the Hillel Spitzer Forum, The Bronfman Reboot initiative and The Jewish Week's "The Conversation."



## **ADULT EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

Cynthia McCaffrey, Chair

Thomas Cathcart, Sally Fu, John Harpole, Rita Johnson,  
Margo Lundell, Richard Marmet, David Wilson

The Rev. Barbara E. Senecal-Davis, Minister of Education

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