



Community of Christ

GREATER PACIFIC NORTHWEST USA MISSION CENTER

Library Fundamentals for Preachers and Teachers

List developed by Anthony and Charmaine Chvala-Smith (updated April 2017)

Choosing scripture study resources for personal or congregational use requires discernment. A good practice is to see how a particular resource aligns in its assumptions and approach with the church's official statement, "Scripture in Community of Christ." This list of study tools has good overall alignment with the church's theology and its approach to scripture.

When looking to purchase texts for your congregational library in support of preachers and teachers, check these online shopping sources:

- www.directtextbook.com - This site will link to multiple sellers (such as Amazon, Alibris, textbookrush.com, and Powells.com) and show best prices
- www.Christianbook.com - Not included in the site above but will often have discounted prices with free shipping
- www.Powells.com - Located in Portland OR, may be helpful if shopping locally

Bibles

- *Discipleship Study Bible*, NRSV – Good scholarship made very accessible; top choice for congregations
- *HarperCollins Study Bible*, NRSV – Brilliantly done: clear, affordable, and up-to-date
- *New Interpreter's Study Bible*, NRSV – Clear, solid, sound, easy to use, and good for preaching
- *Oxford Annotated Bible with Apocrypha*, NRSV – The gold standard; used in colleges and seminaries
- *Oxford Access Bible*, NRSV – A somewhat simplified version of the *Oxford Annotated*
- *Spiritual Formation Bible*, NRSV or NIV (from Zondervan) – Good source of exercises and questions

Bible Dictionaries

- *Anchor Bible Dictionary* – Scholarly but accessible (multi-volume)
- *Eerdmans' Dictionary of the Bible* (2000) – An excellent work (one volume)
- *HarperCollins Bible Dictionary*, Revised Edition (1996) – A fine, older dictionary with easy to read entries (one volume)
- *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* – The old standard scholarly reference dictionary (five volumes)
- *New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* – The new standard reference tool, available on CD (five volumes)
- *Oxford Bible Companion* – An excellent reference tool: clear, solid, and easy to use

Scholarly Introductions

- *Reading the Bible Again for the First Time* (M. Borg) – A clear and readable introduction to the Bible as understood in modern historical scholarship
- *An Introduction to the New Testament* (R. Brown) – A solid, balanced textbook, very accessible
- *A Short Introduction to the Hebrew Bible* (J.J. Collins) – Clear, scholarly, and readable
- *An Introduction to the Bible*, Revised Edition (C. Fant, et al.) – Best one-volume intro to the whole Bible available
- *The New Testament: A Student's Introduction* (S.L. Harris) – A standard, informative undergraduate text
- *History and Literature of Early Christianity* (H. Koester) – An introduction that interprets New Testament writings in the wider literary context of the development of early Christianity (more advanced)



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- *An Introduction to the Bible* (R. Kugler and P. Hartin) – A comprehensive and accessible intro to the whole Bible
- *The Writings of the New Testament*, Third Edition (L. Johnson) – Superb analysis of each book of the New Testament as literature reflecting early Christian experience

One Volume Commentaries

- *The Cambridge Companion to the Bible*, Second Edition – Excellent source of background information, plus many pictures
- *Eerdmans' Commentary on the Bible* – The 2000 edition is one of the best one-volume commentaries
- *Global Bible Commentary* – An excellent way to get commentary from many cultural perspectives
- *Harper's Bible Commentary* – Basic and affordable
- *HarperCollins Bible Commentary* – Simple and useful
- *International Bible Commentary* – Reflects many cultural perspectives
- *New Interpreter's Bible One Volume Commentary* – Outstanding, readable, and recent (2010)
- *Oxford Bible Commentary* – Superbly done, though a bit more technical
- *The People's New Testament Commentary* – Detailed, readable, and one of the best for preaching/ teaching

Multi-volume Commentary Series

- *Abingdon New Testament Commentaries* – Solid volumes by reputable scholars
- *Belief Series* (Westminster/John Knox) – This series on books of the Bible is distinctive for its focus on theological issues
- *Interpreter's Bible* (Old Series) – Though somewhat dated, still a valuable tool
- *New Interpreter's Bible* – This multi-volume set is a mainstay of preachers and teachers. A masterpiece of scholarship and relevant interpretation
- *Interpreter's Concise Commentary* – Out of print jewel, small paperback volumes in a case (often available in used bookstores or alibris.com)
- *Interpretation series* (Westminster/John Knox) – For pastors and teachers
- *Sacra Pagina* (Liturgical/Michael Glazier Press) – Excellent commentaries by world-class scholars; can be a bit more technical
- *Westminster Bible Companion Series* – Volumes in this series translate good contemporary scholarship in readable and congregationally useful ways
- *Wisdom Commentary Series* (Liturgical/Michael Glazier) – A new series that plans to offer feminist commentary on every book of the Bible. For more information, see wisdomcommentary.org/Home/About.

Lectionary-Based Resources

- *Feasting on the Word: Preaching on the Revised Common Lectionary* – This resource is invaluable for preaching and teaching. The volumes follow years A, B, and C of the lectionary cycle and provide a wealth of theological and exegetical information on weekly texts. Each text is explored from theological, exegetical, pastoral, and preaching angles (12 volumes)
- *Feasting on the Gospels* – Superb companion volumes to the outstanding *Feasting on the Word* series



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Lectionary-Based Websites

- *Seasons of the Spirit*: www.seasonsonline.ca – Highly recommended Christian education material that gives useful background on weekly texts

Sermon Helps

- *The Living Pulpit*: www.pulpit.org – Commentary for preachers on weekly texts, from a variety of perspectives. A free service to individuals, but free-will donations accepted
- *Text this Week*: www.textweek.com – Go to “Link of the Week” for good background on weekly texts
- *Alive Now*: <http://alivenow.upperroom.org/category/daily-reflections> – Lectio divina on weekly lectionary gospel texts from the Upper Room
- *Vanderbilt University*: <http://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/> – Gives the readings from the *Revised Common Lectionary*, but no commentary

Denominational Sites

- *Anglican*: <http://montreal.anglican.org/comments/> – Helpful, brief comments on each of the weekly texts

Lectionary texts

- *Lutheran*: http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=2209 – Offers good commentary for preaching
- *Methodist*: <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship> – Click on Lectionary Planning Helps for commentary on weekly texts

Useful Study Series (or Volumes)

- *Barclay's Daily Study Bible* – Still a gem after many decades of use, but needs supplementing with up-to-date resources
- *For Everyone* series (Westminster/John Knox) – Simple, relevant guides by scholar Tom Wright; a kind of 21st century *Barclay's Study Bible*; mildly evangelical
- *Books of the Bible* (Abingdon) (John Hayes and Keith Schoville) – An easy, clear, sound survey of the whole Bible with study questions and a user-friendly format. Out of print, but used copies can be found online
- *Interpretation Bible Studies* (Westminster/John Knox) – Companions to the *Interpretation Commentaries*, very sound scholarship, good theology
- *The Pastor's Bible Study* (Abingdon) – Excellent companion volumes to the *New Interpreter's Study Bible*
- *Push It!* series (United Church Press) – Thought-provoking, young adult-oriented Bible studies
- *20/30 Series Bible Study for Young Adults* (Abingdon) – Nicely designed, young adult-oriented, Community of Christ-compatible theology
- *3V* series (Abingdon) – Excellent series for senior high school students

Scholarly Journals

- *Interpretation* – Many helpful articles, short sermons, and book reviews in each volume
- *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* – Excellent, the flagship journal of the Catholic Biblical Society, featuring superb scholarship



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- *Journal of Biblical Literature* – Standard journal of recent Biblical scholarship, advanced and technical
- *Word and World* – Each issue focuses on a single topic; includes solid Biblical exegesis useful for preaching (a Lutheran journal)

Method

- *Introduction to Scripture* (Anthony J. & Charmaine Chvala-Smith) – A course in Community of Christ's Ministry and Priesthood series. Textbook and videos on a flash drive give a comprehensive introduction to scripture and introduce basic interpretation
- *Interpreting the New Testament* (D. J. Harrington) – Excellent, straightforward guide to exegetical method; out of print, but available used
- *Biblical Exegesis* (3rd edition) (J. Hayes and C. Holladay) – Single best guide to the craft of biblical interpretation
- *Living Jesus* (L. Johnson) – Blends excellent New Testament scholarship with Christian spiritual formation
- *The Oxford Handbook of Biblical Studies* (J.W. Rogerson & Judith M. Lieu) – A superb survey of the current field of biblical scholarship

Miscellaneous

- *The Unfolding Drama of the Bible* (Bernhard W. Anderson) – A clear and beautiful overview of the theological meaning of the whole Bible by one of the premier 20th century American Old Testament scholars
- *The Birth of the Messiah* (Raymond Brown) – A masterful and exhaustive study of the nativity texts in the New Testament
- *The Death of the Messiah* (Raymond Brown) – Thorough, characteristically clear, and theologically thoughtful analysis of the Gospel narratives of Jesus' crucifixion
- *The Bible Makes Sense* (Walter Brueggemann) – A clear, reflective introduction to making sense of difficult texts in the Bible, by one of the premier contemporary Hebrew Bible scholars
- *Breaking the Code* (Bruce M. Metzger) – One of the finest short studies of the Book of Revelation available: simple, inexpensive, comes with leader's guide and is based on sound scholarship
- *The Fortress Introduction to the Gospels* (Mark Allan Powell) – A valuable, thoughtful volume on the background and message of the four Gospels
- *The Apostle Paul* (Paulist) (Marion Soards) – An older but excellent intro to the Pauline letters
- *What Paul Meant* (Garry Wills) – A clear and energetic introduction to Paul and his writings