SAINT MARY’S SCHOOL

2016 Summer Reading Program

The Summer Reading Committee is excited to announce book selections for our 2016 program. There will be no limit to the number of people who can read a particular book. You are welcome to read as many as you wish.

- You will be responsible for obtaining a copy of your selected book. It can be in either print or e-reader format. Note: A book marked with a red asterisk [*] has occasional strong language.

- Please sign up here for your book choice.

- You will not be required to write a formal essay on your book, but two weeks before orientation, you will be required to participate in a book discussion group via Canvas to share what you liked/disliked about your book, what characters you found interesting, etc. This will help prepare you for the classroom book discussions during orientation. A reminder about Canvas book group discussions will be sent by early August to new and returning students.

-- All book descriptions are from Amazon.com

Station Eleven, Emily St. John Mandel: Kirsten Raymonde will never forget the night Arthur Leander, the famous Hollywood actor, had a heart attack on stage during a production of King Lear. That was the night when a devastating flu pandemic arrived in the city, and within weeks, civilization as we know it came to an end. Twenty years later, Kirsten moves between the settlements of the altered world with a small troupe of actors and musicians. They call themselves The Traveling Symphony, and they have dedicated themselves to keeping the remnants of art and humanity alive. But when they arrive in St. Deborah by the Water, they encounter a violent prophet who will threaten the tiny band’s existence. And as the story takes off, moving back and forth in time, and vividly depicting life before and after the pandemic, the strange twist of fate that connects them all will be revealed.

Dead Wake: The Last Crossing of the Lusitania, Erik Larson: On May 1, 1915, with WWI entering its tenth month, a luxury ocean liner as richly appointed as an English country house sailed out of New York, bound for Liverpool, carrying a record number of children and infants. The passengers were surprisingly at ease, even though Germany had declared the seas around Britain to be a war zone. For months, German U-boats had brought terror to the North Atlantic. But the Lusitania was one of the era’s great transatlantic “Greyhounds”—the fastest liner then in service—and her captain, William Thomas Turner, placed tremendous faith in the gentlemanly strictures of warfare that for a century had kept civilian ships safe from attack. Germany, however, was determined to change the rules of the game, and Walther Schwieger, the captain of Unterseeboot-20, was happy to oblige. Meanwhile, an ultra-secret British intelligence unit tracked Schwieger’s U-boat, but told no one. As U-20 and the Lusitania made their way toward Liverpool, an array of forces both grand and achingly small—hubris, a chance fog, a closely guarded secret, and more—all converged to produce one of the great disasters of history.
**Night Circus**, Erin Morgenstern: The circus arrives without warning. No announcements precede it. It is simply there, when yesterday it was not. Within the black-and-white striped canvas tents is an utterly unique experience full of breathtaking amazements. It is called Le Cirque des Rêves, and it is only open at night. But behind the scenes, a fierce competition is underway: a duel between two young magicians, Celia and Marco, who have been trained since childhood expressly for this purpose by their mercurial instructors. Unbeknownst to them both, this is a game in which only one can be left standing. Despite the high stakes, Celia and Marco soon tumble headfirst into love, setting off a domino effect of dangerous consequences, and leaving the lives of everyone, from the performers to the patrons, hanging in the balance.

**True Grit**, Charles Portis: True Grit is his most famous novel--first published in 1968, and the basis for the movie of the same name starring John Wayne. It tells the story of Mattie Ross, who is just fourteen years of age when a coward going by the name of Tom Chaney shoots her father down in Fort Smith, Arkansas, and robs him of his life, his horse, and $150 in cash money. Mattie leaves home to avenge her father's blood. With the one-eyed Rooster Cogburn, the meanest available U.S. Marshal, by her side, Mattie pursues the homicide into Indian Territory. True Grit is eccentric, cool, straight, and unflinching, like Mattie herself. From a writer of true cult status, this is an American classic through and through. This new edition, with a smart new package and an afterword by acclaimed author Donna Tartt, will bring this masterpiece to an even broader audience.

**Eleanor & Park**, Rainbow Rowell*: Set over the course of one school year in 1986, this is the story of two star-crossed misfits—smart enough to know that first love almost never lasts, but brave and desperate enough to try. When Eleanor meets Park, you'll remember your own first love—and just how hard it pulled you under. *A New York Times Best Seller; A 2014 Michael L. Printz Honor Book for Excellence in Young Adult Literature; Eleanor & Park is the winner of the 2013 Boston Globe Horn Book Award for Best Fiction Book; A Publishers Weekly Best Children's Book of 2013; A New York Times Book Review Notable Children's Book of 2013; A Kirkus Reviews Best Teen Book of 2013; An NPR Best Book of 2013*

**A Tree Grows in Brooklyn**, Betty Smith: The beloved American classic about a young girl's coming-of-age at the turn of the century. Betty Smith's *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* is a poignant and moving tale filled with compassion and cruelty, laughter and heartache, crowded with life and people and incident. The story of young, sensitive, and idealistic Francie Nolan and her bittersweet formative years in the slums of Williamsburg has enchanted and inspired millions of readers for more than sixty years. By turns overwhelming, sublime, heartbreaking, and uplifting, the daily experiences of the unforgettable Nolans are raw with honesty and tenderly threaded with family connectedness— in a work of literary art that brilliantly captures a unique time and place as well as incredibly rich moments of universal experience.
The Martian, Andy Weir*: Six days ago, astronaut Mark Watney became one of the first people to walk on Mars. Now, he's sure he'll be the first person to die there. After a dust storm nearly kills him and forces his crew to evacuate while thinking him dead, Mark finds himself stranded and completely alone with no way to even signal Earth that he’s alive—and even if he could get word out, his supplies would be gone long before a rescue could arrive. Chances are, though, he won't have time to starve to death. The damaged machinery, unforgiving environment, or plain-old "human error" are much more likely to kill him first. But Mark isn't ready to give up yet. Drawing on his ingenuity, his engineering skills—and a relentless, dogged refusal to quit—he steadfastly confronts one seemingly insurmountable obstacle after the next. Will his resourcefulness be enough to overcome the impossible odds against him?

Jane Eyre, Charlotte Bronte: A novel of intense power and intrigue, Jane Eyre has dazzled generations of readers with its depiction of a woman's quest for freedom. Having grown up an orphan in the home of her cruel aunt and at a harsh charity school, Jane Eyre becomes an independent and spirited survivor—qualities that serve her well as governess at Thornfield Hall. But when she finds love with her sardonic employer, Rochester, the discovery of his terrible secret forces her to make a choice. Should she stay with him whatever the consequences or follow her convictions, even if it means leaving her beloved?