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Resources for: Exploring the Real Life of Congregations

Our mission is to assist Greater Indianapolis Area congregations in finding and using the very best resources available to address the practical challenges they face. This resource list was developed to supplement a workshop entitled *The Real Life of Congregations*. The workshop was led by Heidi Neumark, pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church in Manhattan and author of *Breathing Space*, and Michael Lindvall, pastor of The Brick Presbyterian Church in New York City and author of *The Good News from North Haven* and *Leaving North Haven*. The workshop focused on the powerful stories behind faith organizations and the inner life that makes each congregation unique. Neumark and Lindvall recommend the following resources for those interested in exploring this topic.

Godwin, Gail. *Father Melancholy's Daughter*. New York, NY: Harper Perennial, 1997.

Godwin writes a powerful novel told from the perspective of Margaret, the daughter of an Episcopalian rector whose wife has abandoned him. The novel is a story of brokenness and nurture within the community of believers in a small Virginia town.

Kozol, Jonathan. *Ordinary Resurrections: Children in the Years of Hope*. New York, NY: Harper Perennial, 2001. Author Jonathan Kozol returns to the South Bronx to spend another four years with the children who have come to be his friends at P.S. 30 and St. Ann's. *Ordinary Resurrections* is a fascinating narrative of daily urban life as seen through the eyes of children.

Lischer, Richard. *Open Secrets: A Memoir of Faith and Discovery*. New York, NY: Broadway Books, 2002. In the tradition of Garrison Keillor, *Open Secrets* captures the friendships, rivalries, and rumors of small-town life by chronicling the lives of the citizens of a small Midwestern community through the eyes of a young minister.

Phifer, Nan. *Memoirs of the Soul: Writing Your Spiritual Autobiography*. Cincinnati, OH: Walking Stick Press, 2001.

This guide to exploring your spiritual life through writing shows a process you can replicate with congregations. It includes tips for facilitating writing groups and suggested reading lists.