As part of the Bishop Payne Library's monthly series highlighting faculty book recommendations, this month we feature works authored by two of the new faculty members at VTS. Welcome to the Rev. Dr. Melody Knowles and the Rev. Dr. Justin Lewis-Anthony. Abstracts prepared by Karen Madigan, Public Services Librarian at Bishop Payne Library.

During the time of the Old Testament period, many Jewish worshippers associated YHWH with the temple in Jerusalem. When the Babylonians destroyed the temple, they “tampered with YHWH’s link to Judaism” (Knowles, 1). In this book, Dr. Knowles discusses the choices that the community was forced to make when “after the exile, the boundaries of sacred geography were again open for renegotiation” (p. 2). Should YHWH be re-centered in Jerusalem? Centered to some other location? Or should YHWH be unattached to any specific location? The author examines the concept of “centrality” by studying various religious practices through the use of religious texts and archaeological evidence.

This is a one-volume commentary that puts the best of biblical scholarship in conversation with the theological claims of the biblical text. The contributors reflect on the Bible as a whole, not just on selected passages or selected themes. The authors of the entries represent a variety of faith traditions. This commentary does not “presuppose any single use or any particular reading community” (O’Day and Petersen, viii). Each entry can be read on its own or the volume can be read across the canon for a more complete picture of the theological perspective of the Bible. VTS is represented by Dr. Knowles, who is the author of the article on 1 and 2 Chronicles, and Dr. Stephen Cook, who is the author of the article on Ezekiel.

Dr. Lewis-Anthony looks at Bosch’s painting, Christ Mocked, to reveal a depth of understanding that is shown of both the Passion and of human nature that can continue to speak to us today. The author discusses this painting through the use of five circles: ‘Politics,’ in which we see Bosch’s exploration of the part that power played in Jesus’ death; ‘Elements,’ where Bosch’s scientific understanding of the universe shows the cosmic significance of the Passion; ‘Temperaments,’ a vision of the complexity of human character; ‘Devo tions,’ the call to renewal of faith, spirituality, and Church; and ‘Quiddity,’ where we reach our beginning and our end” (Lewis-Anthony, x). This book was selected as the 2009 Mowbray Lent Book.

Lewis-Anthony, Justin. You are the Messiah and I Should Know: Why Leadership is a Myth (and Probably a Heresy). London: Bloomsbury, 2013.
Every human endeavor, from corporations to churches, needs leadership. This book questions presumptions that go along with “leadership.” First, “why do we think that leadership can be the universal solution to any number of social problems?” Second, “Even if leadership can work that way in secular society, why should it be something that is encouraged within the church?” (Lewis-Anthony, xiii). The book is written in three sections: the way leadership has been understood in the Church of England, how leadership has been portrayed in the movies, and a possible solution. This book should be read by those who are seeking leadership roles within the church.