The Rev. Melody Knowles, Ph.D., Vice-President for Academic Affairs and Associate Professor of Old Testament at Virginia Theological Seminary, recommends the following books as part of the Bishop Payne Library’s monthly series highlighting a faculty member’s “picks”:


If you haven't read much on the Psalms since leaving seminary, I would recommend this collection of essays. The volume covers everything from ancient Near Eastern backgrounds through poetic analysis and culturally based interpretations in 42 essays all by different authors. This book is an excellent place to find out what is engaging scholars in the field today.


This latest text from Brueggemann is full of the bold and poignant analysis that captures the mind and the imagination. The author (who likes to point out that his honorary degree from VTS makes him an alum of this institution) has put out a book that includes sharp new analyses for those already familiar with his writings while providing a helpful entree into his thought for those who have not yet read his earlier works. A thoughtful and exuberant read.


This book gives the Psalms some Persian-period political grit. For any reader tired of interpreting these biblical prayers in the context of timeless dewy pastoral landscapes, Tucker takes the ancient context of Pss 107-150 seriously and highlights the text’s anti-imperial ideology that aims to counter the power of empire. **Constructing and Deconstructing Power** is well worth the sustained and serious attention that it demands.

**Miller, Patrick D. The Lord of the Psalms. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2013.**

Who is God in the Psalms? In a book where most of the text is directed towards God, what picture emerges of God? Through study of particular Psalms as well as focused lines of inquiry with several psalms in view, Miller uncovers something new on every page. This is a poetic and profound study by one of the giants in the field.