Elizabeth M. Kimball, Ph.D., Director of the Center for the Ministry of Teaching and Professor of Christian Formation and Congregational Leadership at Virginia Theological Seminary, recommends the following books as part of the Bishop Payne Library’s monthly series highlighting a faculty member’s “picks”:

An Ivy League scholar with piercings who respects teenagers has written a fabulous book about the digital worlds inhabited by today’s young people. With extensive research and her keen mind, boyd resists infantilizing or romanticizing kids, addresses the moral panic of parents surrounding their children’s apparent addiction to social media, and indict public policies that in the name of physical safety confine young people to virtual worlds. Through her brilliant use of youth voice and nuanced, systematic interdisciplinary analysis boyd does more to transform anxious non-digital natives into confident advocates for healthy youth development than anyone else I’ve read.

If anything, I am making a confession. I started reading Wilkerson’s 622 page narrative epic of the historically under-reported migration of six million African-Americans from the states of the Old Confederacy between 1915 and 1970, when it was first published. I was appropriately in awe of the courage and resilience oozing from the rugged lives of Ida Mae Brandon Gladney, George Swanson Starling, and Robert Joseph Pershing Foster the three Southern blacks Wilkerson profiles throughout the book. But I stopped there. As the seismic awakening of the American public to festering generational issues surrounding racism and immigration shook me at my core, I reached for Wilkerson’s insight and finished the book. It alone is not the answer to our crisis but as a white woman of significant privilege, I am better prepared to enter the public discourse grounded in history and compelled by my faith.

For anyone considering confirmation or responsible for nurturing the lifelong faith formation of others this is a must read. Ever since the Constantine era the church has wrestled with the role of confirmation in relationship to baptism. This theological muddiness resulted in contentious debates between liturgical theologians and bishops as the “new” Book of Common Prayer moved toward authorization. Their resulting compromise left confirmation as a non-repeatable pastoral rite of baptismal reaffirmation that requires the laying on of hands by a bishop, and only increased confusion and inconsistencies of practice. Sharon’s succinct history of confirmation and collection of essays by leading liturgists, theologians and educators invites a coherent conversation and catalyzes curiosity.

Marilyn Chandler McEntyre, *Caring for Words in a Culture of Lies* (Eerdmans Publishing 2004)
I found this gem lying on my mother’s coffee table. With an elegant and hopeful tone, McEntyre (an English professor and active Episcopalian) describes the pollution and trivialization of the language, the broken promises, and the lies rampant in American culture today. With humility and grace she mines twelve stewardship strategies – everyday practices such as “stay in conversation” – to inspire those of us who already love words to use language more effectively to heal and restore human wholeness. “What is our task as a logocentric people if not to cherish the word?” I am converted. Caring for language is indeed a moral issue. If we are not attentive we will “become more confined to the kinds of broad strokes that make us careless and so make us care less.”