

# Family Fiction

December 2019

## CHRISTMAS AUTHORS

Leslie Gould, Kate Lloyd, Jan Drexler



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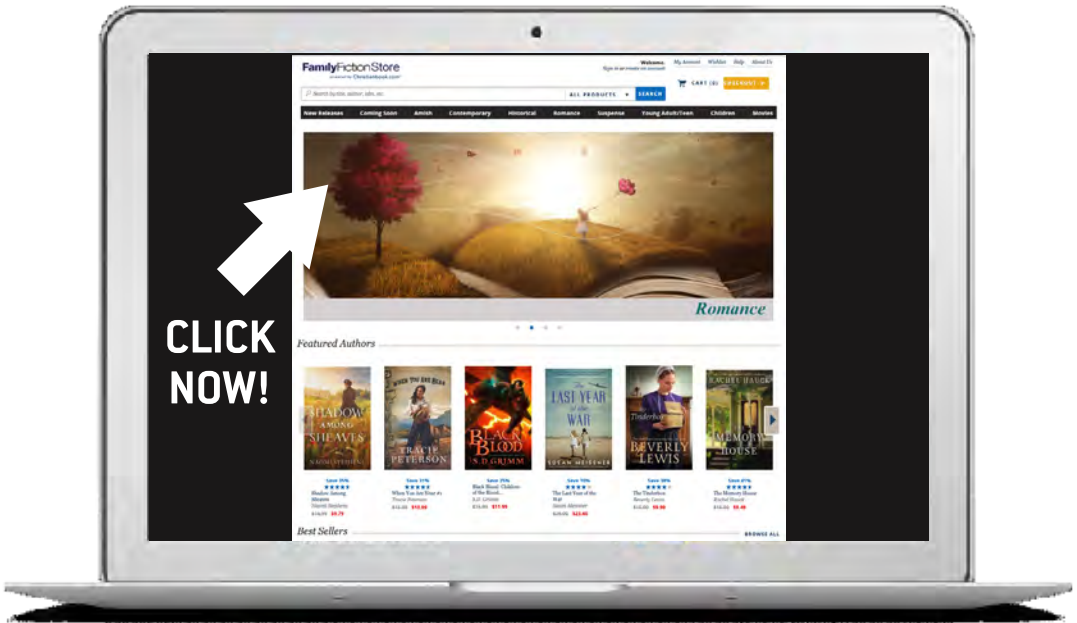
Cindy Woodsmall and Erin Woodsmall

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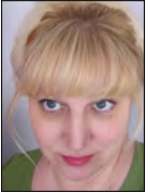
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### AMISH

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Carrie Lighte



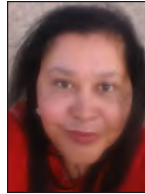
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### **Discover the Heart of *A Beautiful Day In The Neighborhood***

Discover the heart of the Mister Rogers biopic in this NEW vignette. Hear from the cast and crew about Fred Rogers' faith and legacy!

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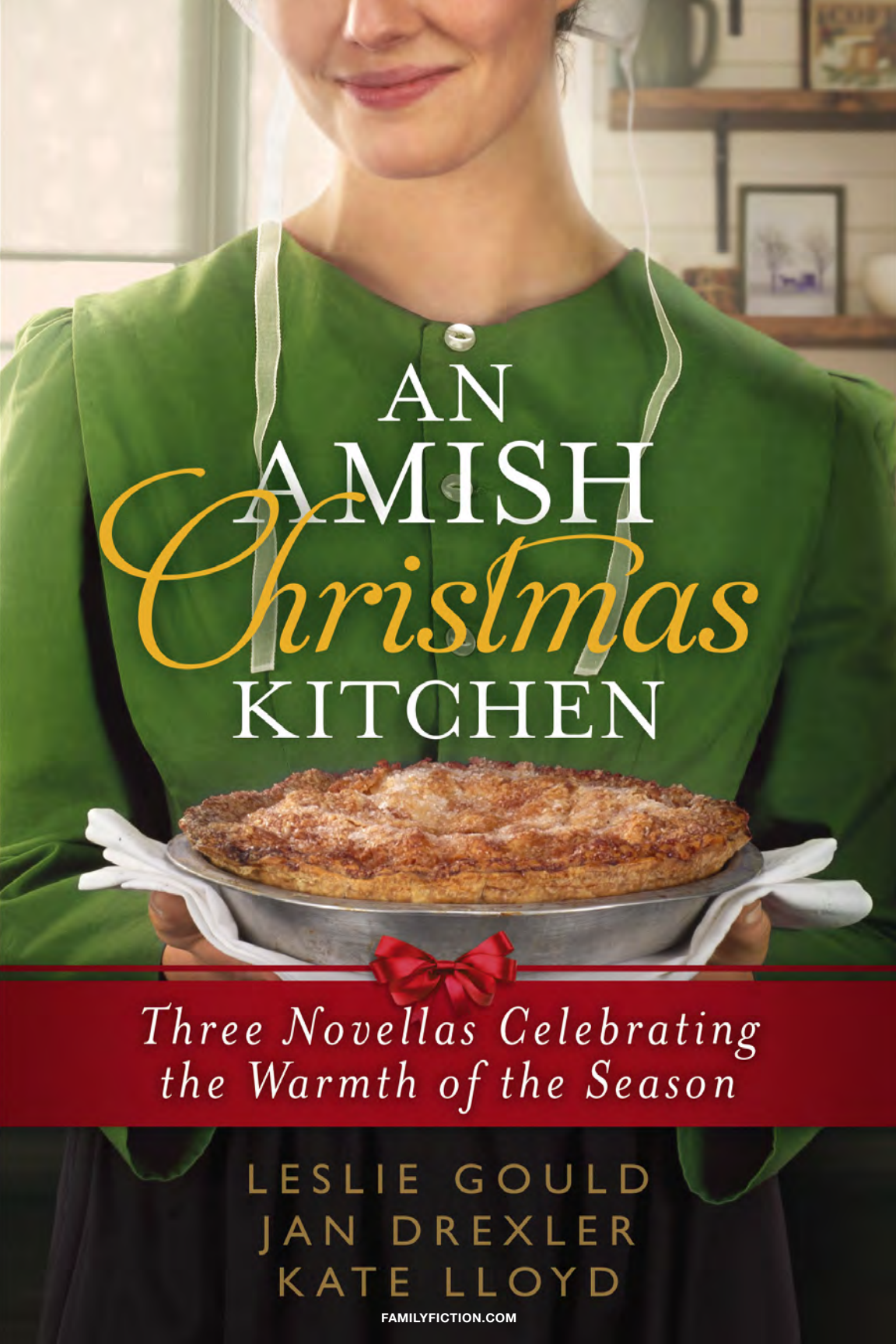
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A woman in a green Amish dress with white ribbons is smiling and holding a large, golden-brown pie in a metal pan. The pie is decorated with a red ribbon. The background shows a kitchen with a window and shelves.

AN  
AMISH  
*Christmas*  
KITCHEN

*Three Novellas Celebrating  
the Warmth of the Season*

LESLIE GOULD  
JAN DREXLER  
KATE LLOYD

# AMISH CHRISTMAS:

## LESLIE GOULD, JAN DREXLER & KATE LLOYD CELEBRATING THE WARMTH OF THE SEASON

The three authors talk about their new Amish Christmas romance collection.

The coziness of a warm kitchen awaits! The new collection ***An Amish Christmas Kitchen*** (Bethany House) pulls together seasonal Amish romance novellas from **Leslie Gould, Jan Drexler, and Kate Lloyd**. Leslie Gould has authored or co-authored several novels, including two Lancaster Amish series. Jan Drexler draws on the experiences of her Amish, Mennonite, and Brethren ancestors to create her stories. Kate Lloyd is the bestselling novelist of the **Legacy of Lancaster Trilogy** and the **Lancaster Discoveries Series**. In this panel interview, we asked all three authors about their contributions to the collection, the recipes they brought to the table, and their favorite parts of the Christmas season.

### **What can you tell us about your particular novella in this collection?**

**Leslie:** My novella, *An Amish Family Christmas*, explores a young, heartbroken Amish woman named Noelle, whose strikes up a friendship with another young woman, seemingly very different than she is, named Holly. The friendship inspires Noelle to take risks out of her comfort zone—in romance, in her family, and in her business.

**Kate:** My novella, “*Unexpected Christmas Gift*,” about my character Maria’s discovery of the secrets of her past at Christmas-time, was an unexpected surprise to me. The storyline, the characters, and the twists and turns were unlike anything I’d

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LESLIE GOULD



JAN DREXLER



KATE LLOYD

ever read or written before. Sometimes books seem to steer themselves on a fun and unique adventure.

**Jan:** My novella, *“An Amish Christmas Recipe Box,”* is about Ada Weaver, the youngest daughter in a family of girls. She has her romantic sights set on Amos, a young man who works in her father’s furniture factory, but he isn’t even aware that she exists.

When her sister comes up with the idea to bake cookies to attract Amos, Ada agrees. But the Great Cookie Campaign attracts the attention of Mattias Yoder instead, her father’s newest employee. Will Ada find that the best Christmas gift might have been the one she almost overlooked?

**How does writing a novella compare to writing a novel? (Easier, harder?) What are the pros and cons?**

**Leslie:** This was the first novella I’ve written, and I was pleasantly surprised with how much I enjoyed it! Before writing



novels, I wrote short stories. The great thing about writing a novella was that I could apply both what I've learned from writing short stories and from writing novels.

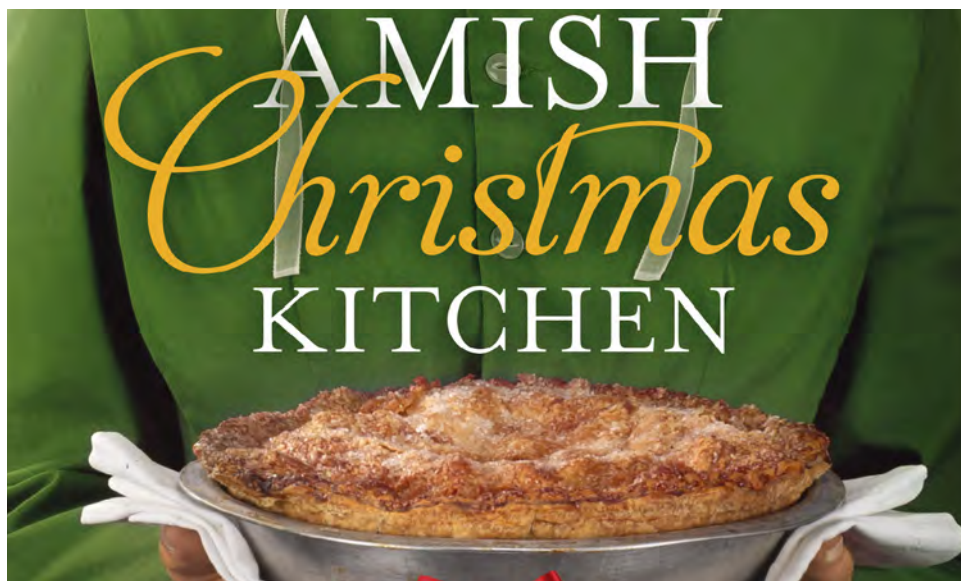
Novellas are easier in that the word count is less than a third of what a novel is. The tricky part is having a full story arc and character arc within the shorter structure. What I learned was to keep the pace moving along and avoid any subplots!

**Kate:** I found writing a novella harder than a full-length novel. I loved the story so much I wanted to keep on writing but was restricted to word length. I made that remark to someone who asked: Why don't you write it as a novel? My answer: Because I've already written it. I like creating new material in which even I don't know the ending. An adventure!

**Jan:** I found that writing a novella is very similar to a novel, except that I needed to keep the number of side characters and secondary plots under control! The biggest surprise for me was how much I enjoyed the experience. The shorter word count gave me the structure I needed to keep my writing tight and the story delightfully simple.

### **The collection also includes recipes. What can you tell us about your contribution?**

**Leslie:** I borrowed a recipe for creamsticks from [amish365.com](https://www.amish365.com) with permission from founder Kevin Williams. I'm a sucker for words—no surprise—and really love the name creamstick, lol. Plus, I haven't read about creamsticks in other Amish stories, nor have I written about them before in mine. I wanted something new! And one last appeal was that my mother made a Christmas treat with a similar filling when I was little.



**Kate:** A dear friend, Old Order Amish author Linda Byler, wrote a terrific Amish recipe book, *Lizzie's Amish Cookbook*. She told me I was welcome to use any of her recipes, but I felt nervous about doing so without her publisher's consent, even though the publisher had gone out of business. Instead I used a talented friend's cake recipe which is very close.

**Jan:** The recipe I included with my story was for Jam Thumbprint Cookies, the final recipe Ada makes in the story. I love baking, so I had a lot of fun taking the traditional recipe and giving it my own method and twist. The development of the recipe took a few tries, much to my family's delight!

### **What kind of research or background do you bring to writing about the Amish?**

**Leslie:** I make frequent visits to Amish communities (in Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Indiana), read constantly about Plain

## Amish Christmas Romance

communities, and brainstorm my stories with a good friend who grew up Amish. She then reads my manuscripts to check for inaccuracies (although all mistakes are mine!). As far as background, I have Mennonite ancestors and all of my four children attended a Mennonite school when they were little.

**Kate:** To say I do extensive research every time I write about the Amish is not an over-statement. I often turn to my Amish friend Linda Byler and other Amish friends as resources to verify my facts, as well as my Mennonite relatives in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania.

In fiction, correct facts are extremely important because if you lose your reader, the story will be dead to them. Speaking of dead, the head of the Seattle Police Department's Crime Prevention helped incredibly, but I don't want to give away the plot. Also, the owner of Zook's Fabrics in Intercourse, Pennsylvania, has often helped me and had even visited me in my home in Seattle.

**Jan:** For me, writing Amish stories has been a natural outgrowth of my genealogy research. As I've learned about my ancestors, both Amish and from other Anabaptist denominations, my imagination has given life to the sometimes-dry details of genealogy.

From there, as I learned about Amish history and contemporary Amish life, I've found that the doctrine and practice of the Amish are very familiar from observing my grandparents and great-grandparents as a child.

## What are your favorite things about the Christmas holiday season?

**Leslie:** Besides the holy moments of celebrating the birth of Christ, I really treasure those unexpected times at church or around the dinner table or playing games or cross-country skiing where nothing matters more than being with my husband, grown children, family, and friends. Those moments are never planned—they just happen. And they're always absolutely magical.

**Kate:** I adore Christmas! I turn into a little girl again. I recall my family's traditions, singing carols, visiting Santa, boxes of ornaments, some of which I still use. My sister and I chuckle when we recall how our mother saved the wrapping paper from year to year, and how she'd buy presents early when they were on sale and then forget to give them to us.

**Jan:** Spending time with family is precious, as well as spending time with our church family. We go into the Black Hills National Forest early in December to hunt for our Christmas tree, and that kicks off the month-long celebration. Christmas baking, early sunsets, Christmas lights, and the Christmas Eve service all bring the season together in a joyful celebration of our Savior's birth. **FF**

**Visit Leslie Gould's page here:**

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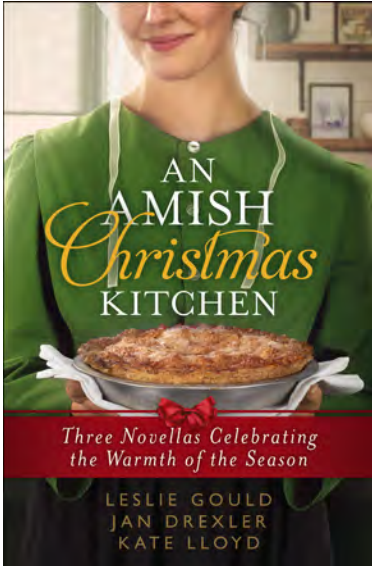
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## ***An Amish Christmas Kitchen***

*Three Novellas Celebrating the Warmth of the Season*

Leslie Gould, Jan Drexler, Kate Lloyd  
Bethany House



As the weather grows cold and the nights grow long, the cheer and warmth of the Christmas season is a comfort for all of us. This collection celebrates the heart at the center of the holiday with three novellas that rejoice in family, faith,

and the fragrant smells of a bustling holiday kitchen.

In *An Amish Family Christmas*, Leslie Gould tells the story of how a young Amish woman finds unexpected comfort and friendship while selling her family's traditional baked goods at the local Lancaster Christmas Market.

Jan Drexler's *An Amish Christmas Recipe Box* gives readers a sweet tale of a shy Amish woman who decides to use her talent in the kitchen to woo a local Amish boy with her beloved Christmas cookies.

And Kate Lloyd offers *An Unexpected Christmas Gift*, a moving tale of a woman's unforeseen discovery about the truth of her past, and the welcoming Amish family table she finds herself invited to on Christmas.

Includes three authentic Amish recipes for your holiday baking!



# CHRISTMAS: CINDY & ERIN WOODSMALL A BEACON OF PROMISE

The writing duo discuss their latest Christmas title—and how wide the divide is between Amish sects.

*New York Times* best-selling author **Cindy Woodsmall** and her daughter-in-law, **Erin Woodsmall**, once again bring the warmth and joy of Christmastime to readers in their new co-authored novella, ***A Christmas Haven: An Amish Christmas Romance*** (WaterBrook). With 24 works of fiction and more than 1.5 million books sold, Cindy Woodsmall remains one of the most beloved authors of Amish fiction. As she has done for her previous works in this genre, she leans on her real-life connections with Amish Mennonite and Old Order Amish communities to infuse her writing with authenticity.

In this interview, the two ladies tell us about the new book, explain how it follows the threads of the previous title, and reveal what inspired them to write about the distinctions between different Amish sects.

## **No spoilers, but what can you tell us about *A Christmas Haven*?**

**Erin:** In the small, picturesque town of Raysburg, Pennsylvania, a young Amish woman, Ivy, is torn between staying true to the Old Ways and the family she loves or following her passion to plan all types of parties for the *Englisch*.

A young man, Arlan, from one of the strictest faiths in the United States—the Swartzentruber Amish—risks his family

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ties in order to get the proper medical help for his sister. All he wants is to get her well and return to the roots of his upbringing.

When Ivy's world collides with Arlan's, neither one understands the other, and yet when near each other, they aren't able to hold on to who they thought they were no matter how firmly they stand for what they believe. Many loved ones—Ivy and her family, Arlan and his family—are at odds with one another.

Clearly, they need a Christmas miracle. Can Christmas in Raysburg open minds and hearts to the true meaning of love, respect, and acceptance?

**This book follows *The Christmas Remedy*.**

**How does it continue with those threads or characters?**

**Erin:** Greene's Pharmacy, with its medicinal help for the Amish and its beautiful Christmas decorations for the *Englisch*, is a part of both books. Holly, the main character in *The Christmas Remedy*, and Ivy, the main character in *A Christmas Haven*, are sisters.

In each book, despite being Amish, the sisters are blazing a trail to follow their heart's desire...except Holly's desires kept her in good standing with the church *and* her family, even though she went to college. Ivy's desire to be a party planner wins no one's favor.

Although the sisters are as different as night and day, in each book they need each other in ways that continually become clear as they navigate the challenges and sacrifices that come with romantic love.



**One of the drivers of this book is the fact that not all Amish are the same. What inspired you to write about these differences?**

**Erin:** When we were brainstorming story ideas, Cindy mentioned how different the Swartzentruber Amish sect was from the Old Order Amish. I thought it was fascinating that the gulf between the Swartzentruber and the Old Order Amish is wider than the gulf between Old Order Amish and the *Englisch* (non-Amish). The differences are pretty fascinating, and we wanted to bring those aspects out while writing this story.

**Cindy:** I always wanted to weave the Swartzentruber Amish into a story, but I had concerns as to how the execution of it would work. While Erin and I were at our favorite coffee shop brainstorming on *A Christmas Haven*, we came up with a thread that worked perfectly in this story.

**Which characters surprised each of you the most as you were writing this book?**

**Cindy:** Ivy surprised me the most. She's spunky and incredibly kind and loving. She doesn't seem to have any rebelliousness in her, but she's very strong willed about what she wants. Despite adoring her beloved sister and widowed mom, she's willing to leave them and the Amish to pursue the party planning business. Who does that?

**Erin:** Arlan surprised me the most. He was deep and interesting in ways I hadn't expected, but he also had a long way to go to get him to accept a broader view of God and life outside of the Swartzentruber ways. He was raised to believe that he needed to keep the Old Testament laws and anyone who didn't was outside of God's will. Seeing him come to a place of



understanding the beauty of God’s grace—that perfect, come-as-you-are, unconditional love that can’t be earned, only freely given—was surprisingly fulfilling.

### **What kind of research or background do you two bring to writing about the Amish?**

**Erin:** Cindy is obviously the expert about all things Amish. She’s been going in and out of Amish homes since she was a child. She had an Amish-Mennonite best friend growing up, and she’s befriended several Old Order Amish women as an adult and taken many visits to Amish country.

Although I’ve gone with her to Amish country and met some of her Old Order Amish friends, my main contribution for this series was bringing a certain amount of “young person” (ha)

insight as well as the experience of having worked in an independent pharmacy as a technician.

**Cindy:** It's always fun to delve into the feelings and insights I first experienced as a child with my Amish-Mennonite friend and her family, and then I add that to what my Amish friends have shared with me as an adult—either through conversations or through vetting my novels prior to them going to print and giving feedback so I could fix what needed to be.

### **What are your favorite things about the Christmas holiday season?**

**Cindy:** My favorite part is actually the internal journey I go on each Christmastime. My mind and heart return to when I was a young married woman and a new Christian. It seemed as if the only thing I possessed was my newfound hope. I felt poorly prepared for life in every possible way, but hope in Christ and in what Christmas stood for was incredibly powerful. Since then, each year Christmas feels like a beacon of absolute promise.

**Erin:** I could list a bunch—the coziness of hot chocolate by the fire, cutting and bringing home a fresh tree, and the amazing pine smell it brings to the house, the Christmas morning “magic” now seen through my children’s young eyes. But most of all I enjoy the reminder that God sent his Son to the most humble of places so that we might all experience His grace. **FF**

**Visit Cindy Woodsmall's page here:**

<https://www.familyfiction.com/authors/cindy-woodsmall>

**Visit Erin Woodsmall's page here:**

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***A Christmas Haven:  
An Amish Christmas Romance***  
Cindy Woodsmall & Erin Woodsmall  
WaterBrook



For fans of holiday romances and Amish life comes a new Christmas tale of surprising expectations and discovering miracles.

Old Order Amish Ivy Zook is wrestling with her need to shed

her community's ways so she can grow the business of her dreams: planning parties. As long as she's stuck living without modernization, she can barely get her business on its feet. But if she leaves too soon, she'd cause trouble for her sister, Holly, who is planning her wedding to Joshua Smucker. All of their plans become twice as complicated when an old car crashes into the storefront of Greene's Pharmacy, carrying a Swartzentruber (ultra-conservative sect) Amish man, Arlan, and his very ill sister.

Cindy & Erin Woodsmall

The Zooks take in Arlan and Madga, tending to the woman's illness and Arlan begins helping around the family farm. Ivy and Arlan are on different tracks, one wanting to leave her community and the other to return to his. But both young people are trying to discover what God has in store for their futures and what miracles might lie around the corner this Christmas season.

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# CHRISTMAS: MELODY CARLSON

## KEEPING IT SIMPLE

The author takes us behind the scenes of her latest Christmas book.

**Melody Carlson** is the award-winning author of more than two hundred books with combined sales of more than seven million. She received a Romantic Times Career Achievement Award in the inspirational market for her many books. She has penned titles in several categories—as well as many Christmas books. Her latest is ***Christmas in Winter Hill*** (Revell): Krista Galloway is the new city manager of Winter Hill, Washington. She's not a fan of Christmas, but the town's annual Christmas celebration isn't an optional part of her job. Conner Harris has lived in Winter Hill all his life—and although the city manager doesn't share his love of the season, Conner has a feeling he can bring her around.

In this interview, Melody reveals the inspiration for the story, shares how she gets ready for Christmas, and explains why she writes a Christmas book every year.

### **Please tell us about *Christmas in Winter Hill*.**

Ready for a fresh start, Krista Galloway accepts a city manager job in a small town. Relocating with an eight-year-old daughter from Arizona to the Northwest in winter comes with its own challenges, including Christmas—and Krista is not a fan. But young Emily is over the moon for all that Winter Hill has to offer. Thanks to the welcome of a friendly family, Krista begins to warm up to the community, but unforeseen troubles threaten to undo everything.

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**Winter Hill, Washington, has a huge annual Christmas celebration. Have you ever lived in a town that celebrates Christmas in a big way?**

I just happen to live in a small town that thoroughly enjoys Christmas. Like Winter Hill, we are located in the mountains and usually have snow. We have our annual Christmas parade and tree- and town-lighting night, as well as things like sleigh rides and winter sports nearby. It really does help to put you in the Christmas spirit.

**Do Krista's feelings about Christmas strike any chords with you personally? Have you ever had a year where it was hard to get into the Christmas spirit?**

I've had a number of difficult Christmases, but that's just life—and family. I've learned to lower expectations and simplify. The most important thing to me is just being with loved ones and remembering the real reason for the season.

**What do you do each year to get ready for Christmas?**

Every year is a bit different. But going out to the woods to cut down our tree (usually about twelve feet tall) tends to put me in the spirit. We often go with friends and make it an event with hot cocoa to celebrate finding the perfect trees.

Afterward we put up the tree, which I love to leave undecorated at first to enjoy the pine smell, then add strings of lights a day or two later... and Christmas music... and then I'm pretty much set.

**What do you love most about Christmas?**

I love that it's the celebration of the greatest gift of all—that God sent his mercy and grace in the form of his Son. That is why, even in trying times, I can still celebrate.

**What was your inspiration for writing *Christmas in Winter Hill*?**

The true inspiration for the town Winter Hill was birthed clear across the country in South Carolina, where a charming town named Rock Hill pulls out all the stops for Christmas. I was the guest there one year to talk about another Christmas book, and all the things Rock Hill does for Christmas are truly amazing.

**What motivated you to write books revolving around the Christmas season?**

I'd written several children's Christmas books and felt like grown-ups needed some uplifting stories to get them into the Christmas spirit too—probably even more so than kids!

But because I realized that many people struggle during the holidays, I didn't want my stories to be all sugary sweetness. I wanted readers to relate to realistic characters and challenges but to ultimately be inspired to embrace their own Christmas festivities with hope and enthusiasm.

My first Christmas novella, *Angels in the Snow*, came out in 2002. It was a story about an artist who'd lost her husband and son and was trying to get back to her art—and her life.

For some reason, it really seemed to connect with readers. At the time, few publishers were releasing holiday novellas, but because it worked, I've done them ever since.

**As a child, did you want to be a writer?**

**What is the first thing you remember writing?**

I actually was a "writer" as a child. At least I thought I was—because from the earliest ages, I attempted to write and illustrate stories.





The first thing I recall writing—probably because my mom saved it—was a story about a cat named Muzette that loved to play the piano by running up and down the keyboard in the middle of the night.

I typed the story on the old Underwood typewriter that sits on my desk now and illustrated it with pencil drawings, then stapled it together with a foil wrapping-paper cover. I was about 7.

### **What do you hope readers gain from *Christmas in Winter Hill*?**

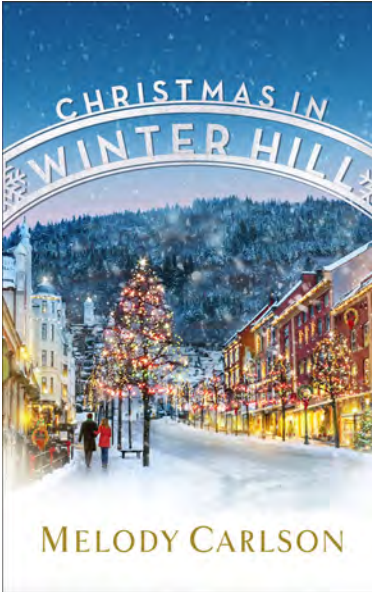
As always, I hope they'll have an enjoyable read, feel uplifted, and be ready to take on Christmas. **FF**



Melody Carlson

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## ***Christmas in Winter Hill***

Melody Carlson  
Revell



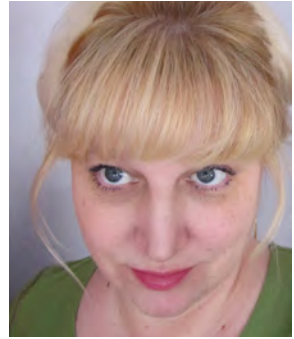
Winter Hill, Washington, is basically Christmasville, USA. Unfortunately, the new city manager, Krista Galloway, is not a fan of Christmas, and the annual town-wide Christmas celebration is not an optional part of her job. She wonders if this move was a mistake for her and her eight-year-old daughter, Emily. Krista will have

to dig deep to find the Christmas spirit she has lost.

Conner Harris and his family have lived in Winter Hill their whole lives, and Christmas is their favorite time of the year. Although the city manager does not share their love of the season, Conner has a feeling he can bring her around. Can he convince the town to see beyond Krista's hard exterior and glimpse her good heart underneath? Will Krista and Emily finally find a home in Winter Hill?

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**Carrie Lighte** enjoys traveling to Amish communities across the United States and she hopes to visit a few in Canada soon, too. Her latest Amish romance is the Christmas treat ***Her Amish Holiday Suitor*** (Love Inspired).



In this exclusive interview, Carrie offers some background details about the novel, details how she researches the Amish, and reveals her favorite things about the Christmas season.

### **No spoilers, Carrie, but what can you tell us about *Her Amish Holiday Suitor*?**

*Her Amish Holiday Suitor* is a romance novel about a young Amish couple who agrees to pretend they're courting for the Christmas season, each for a different reason. Nick needs an excuse to go out at night without his parents finding out about it so he can make repairs to a cabin his brother damaged. Lucy is working on an embroidery project for charity, so she wants time away from her stepsisters, who are always pestering her to participate in pre-holiday festivities.

Nick and Lucy figure the pretend courtship will provide them a perfect cover to accomplish their goals, but what they don't anticipate is that they'll develop a genuine connection along the way, which complicates their temporary arrangement.

### **Tell us about Nick and Lucy. What about these characters made you want to tell their story?**

On the surface, Nick and Lucy are polar opposites. He's got a reputation for being irresponsible and fun-loving, while she's considered uptight and kind of dull.

But over the course of the story, they discover surprising things about each other—and about themselves—that change their perspectives. I wanted to tell their story because one of the most romantic parts of falling in love is getting to know the other person better and allowing them to get to know the real you.

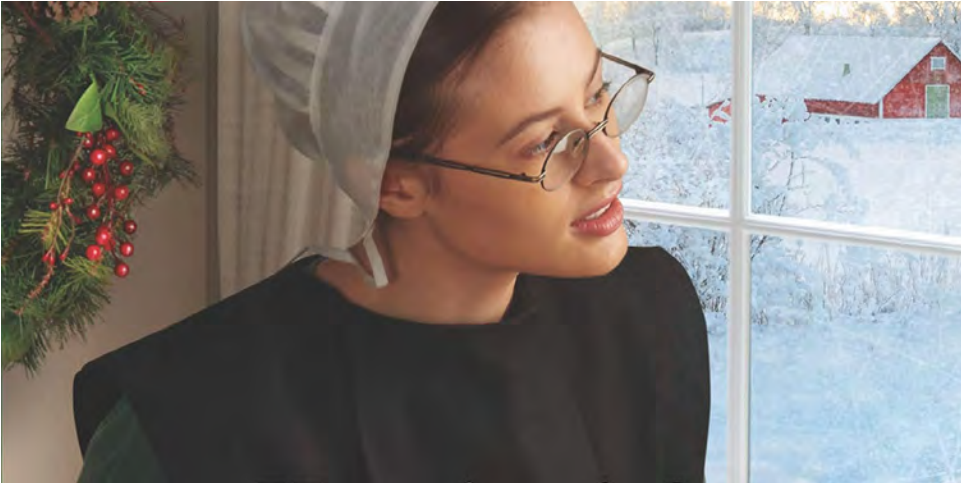
### **What spiritual themes run through *Her Amish Holiday Suitor*?**

Both of the characters in this story have some growing up to do, so there are themes of forgiveness and grace throughout the book. Also, there's the truth that only God knows what's really in our hearts. And, without giving too much away, there's a circumstance in which one of the characters demonstrates sacrificial love for another character, which of course is what Christ did for us in the most important way possible.

### **What kind of research or background do you bring to writing about the Amish?**

My research comes from a combination of traveling to Amish communities and interacting with the Amish in person and from learning about them through websites, documentaries and books. There are so many great resources out there, but one of the best ways to get to know what's important to Amish people is to subscribe to one of their newspapers.

Incidentally, while there currently aren't any Amish settlements



in Massachusetts, I happen to live on a road that's sandwiched between two Mennonite farming families. (Which means I have easy access to fresh eggs and vegetables!)

**What are your favorite things about the Christmas season?**

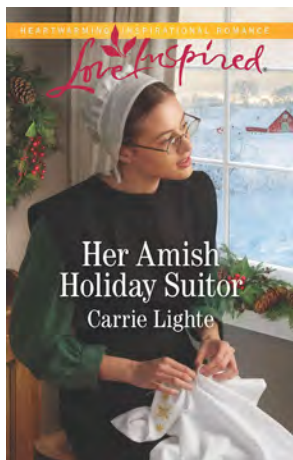
I like baking and giving away special cookies and desserts because people are so appreciative when they receive them. I feel fortunate because my family doesn't put a strong emphasis on gift-giving, so we avoid a world of holiday stress! Instead, we focus on spending time together, eating seasonal treats and worshipping—kind of like most Amish people do.

I especially enjoy our traditional white elephant gift exchange and playing games we make up ourselves. And if there's enough snow, sledding is one of my favorite things to do. You're never too old for fun! **FF**

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Carrie Lighte



## ***Her Amish Holiday Suitor***

Carrie Lighte  
Love Inspired



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# Historical Patrick W. Carr

Acclaimed fantasy author **Patrick Carr** turns his attention toward historical fiction for the epic biblical novel ***The End of the Magi*** (Bethany House). A fast-paced and action-packed journey of the last of the magi, the novel offers a unique look into the true history of the magi—from the historical underpinnings in the book of Daniel to their arrival in Bethlehem.



In this exclusive interview, Patrick shares what inspired him to write the novel, how fantastic the historical details really were, and how he struck a balance between accuracy and imagination.

## **Patrick, what can you tell us about *The End of the Magi*?**

*The End of the Magi* is a biblical historical novel about the magi and how they came to be in Bethlehem and what happened to them afterward. What's really interesting here is that we see them for a few verses in Matthew where the subtext is frightfully tense and then they disappear as mysteriously as they appear.

We know that they came from the east guided by a star and that after encountering the Messiah they return to their own country, but most of us don't have any idea of what that country was or, more importantly, how the magi knew to come to Bethlehem in the first place. There are all these hints, but nothing definitive.

*The End of the Magi* is a serious attempt, in novel form, to bring all the hints together into a plausible narrative.



**The novel has a kind of fantastical sheen about it. Tell us the balance between that and historical fiction.**

Actually, I would classify this novel as straight-up historical fiction. My joke to my wife is that everything in the novel is real except for the parts that aren't. I invested a lot, and I mean a whole lot, of time in getting the history of the time correct, especially those detail that have to do with the Parthian Empire, Rome's rival to the east of Israel.

What's going to amaze most readers is that the more "fantastic" portions of the story are those that are lifted straight from the pages of history. Which of course just goes to show that fact is often stranger than fiction.

**How much of this novel is speculation or imagined vs what's available in the biblical/historical record?**

At every step of the story I endeavored to be as biblically and historically accurate as possible. In fact, when it came time to

edit the story, we always erred in favor of accuracy as opposed to speculation. If the account in the Bible said the event took place a certain way, that's how we portrayed it.

That being said, this is a work of fiction, but it's as close to Bible and history as we could get it. I think *Ben Hur* and *The Ten Commandments* offer a good comparison. Those stories are fictional, but they stick to the biblical/historical record whenever those elements are encountered in the story.

### **What inspired you to write this tale?**

I was listening to a study on tape by a scholar named Chuck Missler, who founded Koinonia House in Idaho. This was back in the early to mid '90s, I think. Anyway, his explanation of the origins of the magi totally exploded in my mind and I kept wondering what that must have looked like historically.

The idea gestated in my head for a couple of decades. After I finished *The Darkwater Saga*, I decided to do some research and see if I could put some characters into the historical narrative.

### **What do you hope readers come away with after reading *The End of the Magi*?**

I hope they come away with the sense that the birth of Christ wasn't just this small localized event, but that it took place in a time of sweeping historical events that affected whole empires. We usually associate that impact with his death and resurrection, but if we look at the record, his birth tilted the empires of the world on their axes and served notice that God had come and nothing would ever be the same. **FF**

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Patrick W. Carr



## ***The End of the Magi***

Patrick W. Carr  
Bethany House



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# Historical Jennifer Delamere

**Jennifer Delamere's** debut Victorian romance, ***An Heiress at Heart***, was a 2013 RITA Award finalist in the inspirational category. Her follow-up novel, ***A Lady Most Lovely***, received a starred review from *Publishers Weekly* and the Maggie Award for Excellence from Georgia Romance Writers. Her latest novel is the Victorian romance ***The Artful Match*** (Bethany House), the heartwarming conclusion to the **London Beginnings Series**. At loose ends in 1881 London after a near tragedy, Cara Bernay begins planning a new life and developing her artistic talent. But soon she finds herself at odds with an artist's brother—a handsome but arrogant earl forcing his brother back to a “respectable” life.



In this interview, Jennifer outlines the inspiration for the book, explains the main takeaway, and reveals the real-life historical figure who appears in the book.

## **What was the inspiration for *The Artful Match*?**

The framework for this story came from the series itself: three sisters who were raised in George Müller's famous orphanage in Bristol come to London at different times and find new lives. The more unique aspects of Cara's story grew out of my interest in Victorian art—which was partly inspired by an excellent BBC miniseries from a few years ago titled *Desperate Romantics*.

Cara wants to become an artist, and in the 1880s that wasn't necessarily an outlandish idea. It was a productive time for artists. Many enjoyed both critical and financial success. I thought





it would be fascinating to visit the Bohemian world of London's artists, who freely take Cara in when she has nowhere else to go.

Several people who befriend Cara are followers of the Aesthetic movement. This was highly popular for a time, influencing paintings, poetry, and dress. Its devotees could be rather eccentric at times, and they were the subject of Gilbert and Sullivan's comic operetta *Patience*. I had fun with a few of their foibles too, but I also enjoyed being able to portray talented artists who were dedicated to their craft.

### **What do you think is a main takeaway from this story?**

I knew early on that Cara's story would be especially fun to write, because her personality is so different from my own. She is free-spirited, impulsive, and wears her heart on her sleeve. She never quite fits in anywhere and is desperate to step out from the shadow of her more grounded and successful sisters. Surprisingly, she finds her answers in the place she least expects. A big theme in this book is the joy of discovering the real purpose for the gifts and talents God has given you.

**Cara and Henry seem an unusual pairing for a romance. She grew up in an orphanage, and he is a member of the aristocracy. Do you see this as a kind of Cinderella story?**

On one level it might appear that way, but I think there are some twists. For one, although Henry is an earl, he's not living a life of carefree ease. He's grappling with serious financial challenges and a family that today we might describe as dysfunctional.

Nor does Cara come to this match with empty hands. She has a great capacity for love and kindness and bringing out the best in others. She can bring joy and emotional healing to a family that desperately needs it. They have very different personalities that complement each other in interesting ways.

**Which character was the most fun to write?**

That would have to be seven-year-old Amelia, Henry's ward. There is some question about her parentage, and although she is well treated, she has no real emotional bonds with anyone. Her caretakers are not equipped to give her the kind of love a child craves.

Amelia's frustrations make her stubborn and unruly, but she is also clever and resourceful. Her bravado is a cover for her insecurity about where she belongs in the world. Cara's heart immediately goes out to the girl, for she understands what it is like to grow up without parents. Although Amelia begins the story as an emotional outcast, she will ultimately be the catalyst that brings the family together.

Jennifer Delamere

### **Did you include any real historical characters in your story?**

Yes! Early in the book, Cara pays a visit to the Grosvenor Gallery, an art gallery that was famous for being unique and very forward-thinking in its approach to choosing and displaying art. Cara meets Lady Blanche Lindsay, who co-owned the gallery with her husband, Sir Coutts Lindsay. Both Lady Lindsay and Sir Coutts loved art and were painters themselves. In addition, Lady Lindsay played the violin, wrote music, and even had a song copyrighted. Later in life, she wrote novels, too. A woman of many talents!

Unfortunately, her marriage to Sir Coutts was not a happy one, and eventually they separated. But while they were together, the gallery had a huge impact on the art world and is still remembered today for its many innovations. **FF**

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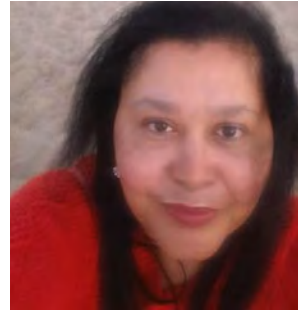


***The Artful Match***  
*London Beginnings #3*  
Jennifer Delamere  
Bethany House



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After a thirteen years as a Federal Investigator, **Belle Calhoun** chose to pursue a writing career. An avid lover of romance novels since she was a teen, she enjoys writing love stories and reading them. Her latest romance novel is ***Her Secret Alaskan Family*** (Love Inspired), the first book in the **Home to Owl Creek Series**.



In this exclusive interview, Belle offers details about her characters, reveals the spiritual themes running through the book, and explains how it fits into the larger picture of the series.

## **No spoilers, but what can you tell us about *Her Secret Alaskan Family*?**

*Her Secret Alaskan Family* is about one woman's quest to find answers about her heritage and the way in which she finds her happily ever after with a lovelorn Alaskan sheriff. It's about family and finding a place to call home. It's about love and loyalty. And ultimately, it's about finding a soft place to fall in the unlikeliest of places.

## **Tell us about your main characters. What about these two made you want to tell their story?**

Sage Duncan is a woman at a crossroads. She's come to Owl Creek after discovering on her mother's death bed that she had been stolen as a baby from her biological family. Upon arriving in Alaska, Sage is thrust into a whole new world and forced to unravel the mystery of her past without revealing her true identity.

Hank Crawford is the sheriff of Owl Creek, a quaint and heart-warming Alaskan hamlet. Having been burned before by a woman who lied to him, Hank is cautious about falling in love again. Yet he can't help but feel a pull in Sage's direction, even though he fears she's keeping secrets.

I've always been fascinated by stories about kidnapped babies or individuals who track down their birth parents later in life. I really wanted to explore how terrifying it would be for someone to suddenly find out they're not who they always thought they were. There is something so powerful about biology and family connections and Sage is very brave to journey to Alaska to find answers.

### **What spiritual themes run through the book?**

There is a theme of forgiveness that runs through the book. The heroine's mother has done a really terrible thing that causes pain for a great number of people. That pain lasts for decades.

Forgiveness is something that can be such a difficult concept, but it is such a tremendous gift to bestow on someone. All the main characters in one way or another are forced to grant forgiveness.

### **How does this fit into the larger picture of the Home to Owl Creek Series?**

This book is the first in the Home to Owl Creek series. It lays the foundation for the charming Alaskan town and introduces the reader to many of the main characters. I will be writing stories for Hank's best friends, Gabriel and Connor, as well as his sister, Piper. They will all be introduced in *Her Secret Alaskan Family* so there is an interconnectedness between the books. I want readers to look forward to hearing more about these characters when they are introduced in the first book.





**What do you hope readers will take away after reading *Her Secret Alaskan Family*?**

I want readers to appreciate Sage's journey from her shocking discovery to the exploration of her Alaskan roots. I hope they root for Sage and Hank as secrets emerge and loyalties are tested. **FF**

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Belle Calhoun



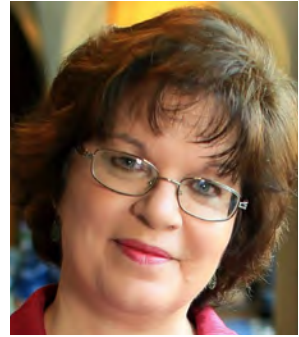
***Her Secret Alaskan Family***  
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Author **Laurel Blount** lives on a small farm in middle Georgia, where she divides her time between farm chores, homeschooling and writing. Her new romance title is ***A Rancher to Trust*** (Love inspired).



In this interview, Laurel shares about the book, reveals the spiritual themes, and explains what she hopes readers take away.

## **No spoilers, but what can you tell us about *A Rancher to Trust*?**

After learning his ex-wife isn't so ex after all, rebel turned rancher Dan Whitlock is determined to prove he's a changed man—but Bailey Quinn is just as set on finally ending their marriage. When tragedy makes Dan the guardian of little orphaned twins, he and Bailey are drawn back together. But can she forgive the past and open her heart to the family she's always wanted?

## **Tell us about your main characters. What about these two made you want to tell their story?**

When I was revising my debut novel for Love Inspired, *A Family for the Farmer*, my editor suggested that the heroine needed a best friend. I sat down at my keyboard—and Bailey Quinn strolled into the barn.

Direct to the point of bluntness, professionally driven, with a wry sense of humor and a doggedly loyal heart, Bailey turned out to be just the kind of friend I'd like to have myself! That's when I knew this organic grocery store owner needed a story of her very own.

Laurel Blount

Dan Whitlock, the prodigal brother of the mild-mannered hero from my first book, also caught my attention early on. I was intrigued by the idea of two brothers who shared a tough upbringing but whose reactions to it were worlds apart.

In Dan's case, his stubbornness drove him a long way down the same dangerous path his alcoholic father had taken. But God caught up with him and turned him around with spectacular results. As an author, I have a soft spot for reformed rebels. I think they make fantastic heroes!

### **What spiritual themes run through the book?**

The central theme in this story is one of redemption—its possibilities and its price. Dan has, with the help of God and a faithful old rancher, turned his life around. Now he's given an unexpected opportunity to make amends to the person he hurt most deeply—the girl he talked into an ill-advised elopement when they were both in their teens.

I explored the difficulties Dan faces when he returns to the small Georgia town that remembers him only as the town troublemaker—and the woman who still sees him as the young man who humiliated her by leaving her after their hasty wedding. Dan struggles to walk out his faith as he copes with gossip, distrust and personal tragedy.

Meanwhile, Bailey struggles to recognize God's answer to her prayers—not too surprising, since that answer showed up wearing a Stetson and the face of the man who broke her heart!

Almost all my books highlight the fact that God's plans often unfold in unexpected ways—and that faithfully trusting Him during



life's twists and turns can be very challenging! But, of course, so very well worth it.

### **How does your faith impact how you approach storytelling?**

I hope my faith flavors my storytelling like a tea bag flavors hot water, that it spreads thoroughly throughout it. I have two goals with my writing—to honor God, and to entertain my reader with all the excellence I can muster.

I think our entertainment—even our light reading—matters because what we fill our minds with influences us so profoundly. So, writing, for me, is in itself an act of faith.

### **What do you hope readers will take away after reading *A Rancher to Trust*?**

I hope they come away with that warm glow you have when you've spent some quality time among good friends. I hope they feel uplifted and encouraged—and that their stomachs hurt just a little bit from laughing so hard!

Laurel Blount

And I hope they take away a sense of joyful satisfaction—the way we feel when we see God work out a difficult situation in the best possible way! **FF**

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## ***A Rancher to Trust***

Laurel Blount

Love inspired



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**Andrew Huff** is the product director at **Igniter Media**, one of the largest church media companies in the nation. He has also spent ten years in church ministry as both a youth pastor and creative arts pastor. His debut novel, ***A Cross to Kill*** (Kregel), pits a man of God against terrorists—and his own deadly past.



In this exclusive interview, Andrew shares about the **Shepherd Suspense Series**, reveals how his church background informs his fiction, and explains how his faith impacts his stories.

### **Andrew, what can you tell us about John Cross and *A Cross to Kill*?**

The character of John Cross was created out of my love for classic action thriller film and novel heroes such as Jason Bourne, James Bond, and Jack Ryan. The storyline for *A Cross to Kill* came to life when I simply asked the question, “What would a character like that do if they came to know Christ?”

I struggle with forgiving myself for past mistakes, as do all Christians that I know, and it became easy to imagine a former spy/assassin would have a lot of guilt over his former life. The conflict for John is that while he’s running from what he sees as the unforgivable sins of his past he’s also very good at what he did and can’t seem to turn off the training.

To write *A Cross to Kill*, I took a guy like that and put him in an environment I was very familiar with—rural evangelical church!



### **What is the theme or overarching concept of the Shepherd Suspense Series?**

While forgiveness is a dominate theme for the first book in the series, the overarching concept of my Shepherd Suspense Series is what are you supposed to do after committing your life to Christ? John's not the only character asking this question, and while he's found what he thinks is the answer as he follows the path before him, he will learn that God's will and calling is not always exactly what we think it is.

This theme is of course wrapped up in nail-biting action and international intrigue. While I have very deep theological questions threaded through the series, I also want it to be exciting and hard to put down.

**You transitioned from local church ministry into storytelling and church media production. How much did the former inform the latter—and how much is it completely new territory?**

There were so many ways in which my time in local church ministry prepared me for storytelling and church media production, but one of the biggest was getting to know people in a ministry context. Good storytelling is always about the characters, and there's honestly less I could dream up that would be more compelling than the stories and experiences of real people. (Quick note: John Cross is not based on a real person—maybe.)

Even generational conflict, something common in local church context and with which I have a lot of experience, can still be present as we seek to set trends while also honoring traditional preferences. But there's also been a lot to learn about craft and business.

While I'm fortunate to work with a company that takes spiritual care seriously, there are key differences between operating a for-profit business versus a non-profit ministry. Finding the balance between striving for business growth but also demonstrating a servant heart can be challenging but also deeply rewarding.

**How does your faith impact how you approach telling stories?**

My faith plays a critical role in how I tell stories, so much in fact that I don't think I would be as effective without it. Understanding who God is and what my place in His creation is not only informs my own sense of identity and purpose, but also opens my eyes to the ways in which we deal with the fallout of sin's curse.

Any time I sit down to write, the story is going to be informed by my theological perspective on the world and the people in it.

That's what I love about the craft. I get to create a character, place them in a situation, then imagine how it might turn out based on who they are for better or for worse. I believe we get our love of stories from our Creator because He loves stories, so the more I get to know Him the better stories I'll be able to tell!

**What do you want readers to come away with after reading *A Cross to Kill*?**

First and foremost, I want readers of *A Cross to Kill* to walk away from the book with a smile on their face because of the fun they had in the same way they might walk out of a *Mission: Impossible* film. But I would also want them to think about how they might identify with John Cross's struggle against guilt over past sin and, hopefully, understand that nothing they've done is beyond the forgiveness offered by God through Jesus Christ. It took me a long time in my own life to truly believe God's forgiveness is infinite, and even today I'm not fully convinced. But He's reminding me every single day, and my hope is that my book is just one more such reminder for you. **FF**

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***A Cross to Kill***  
*Shepherd Suspense #1*  
Andrew Huff  
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hacker. But before he can even get started, the first witness is targeted and barely escapes with her life. Sean believes Phantom, an obsessed hacker who previously outwitted the top minds in the field, is behind the attack, and Sean needs this witness's help, as she's the person who has come closest to discovering Phantom's identity.

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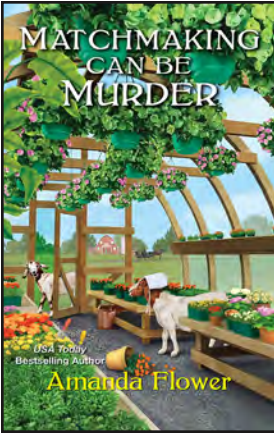
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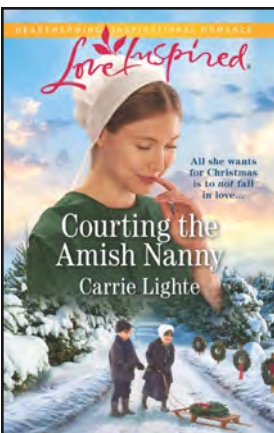
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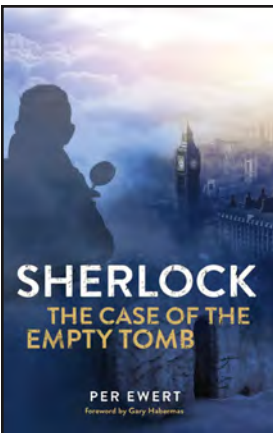
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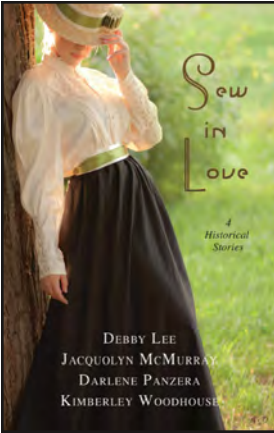
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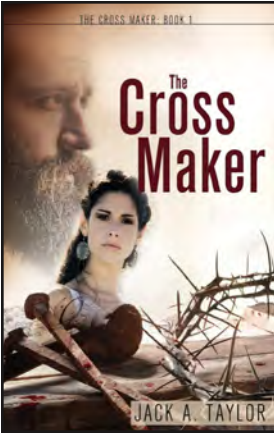
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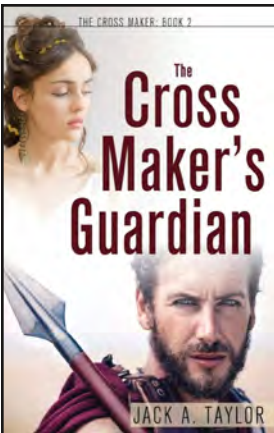
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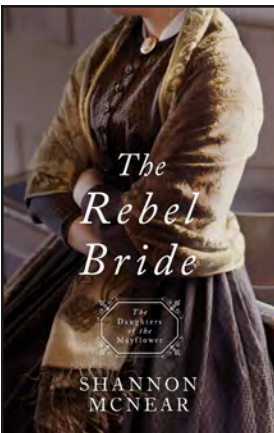
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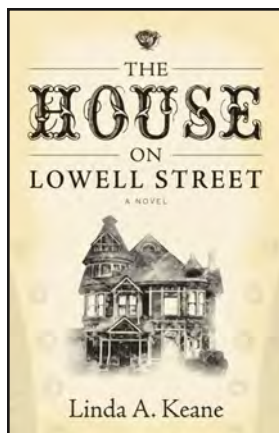
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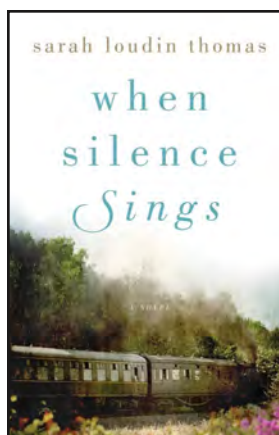


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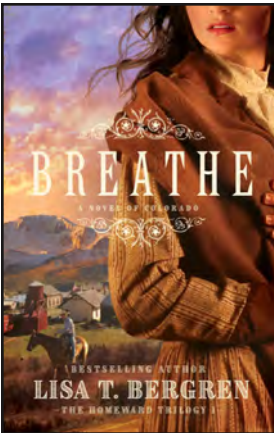
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Brenda Minton

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***Breathe***

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Lisa T. Bergren

Bethany House

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***Sing***

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Lisa T. Bergren

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**Genres:** Romance, Historical



New Releases: December 2019



**Claim**

*Homeward Trilogy #3*

Lisa T. Bergren

Bethany House

**Genres:** Romance, Historical



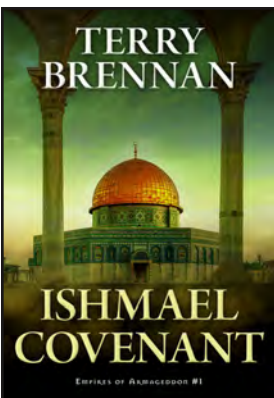
**Seconds to Live**

*Homeland Heroes #1*

Susan Sleeman

Bethany House

**Genres:** Suspense, Romance



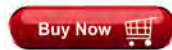
**Ishmael Covenant**

*Empires of Armageddon #1*

Terry Brennan

Kregel Publications

**Genres:** Suspense



New Releases: December 2019



***Christmas Witness Pursuit***

Lisa Harris

Love Inspired Suspense

**Genres:** Suspense, Romance, Christmas

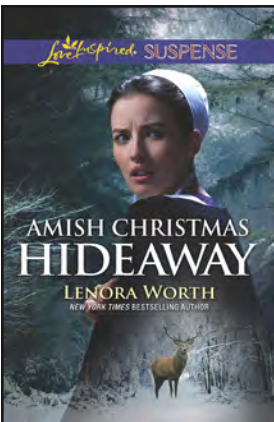


***Echoes Among the Stones***

Jaime Jo Wright

Bethany House

**Genres:** Suspense



***Amish Christmas Hideaway***

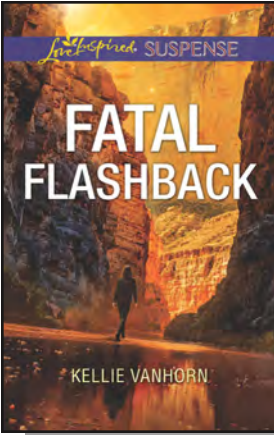
Lenora Worth

Love Inspired Suspense

**Genres:** Suspense, Romance, Christmas, Amish



New Releases: December 2019



***Fatal Flashback***

Kellie VanHorn

Love Inspired Suspense

**Genres:** Suspense, Romance



***Holiday Homecoming Secrets***

Lynette Eason

Love Inspired Suspense

**Genres:** Suspense, Romance, Christmas



***Silent Night Suspect***

Sharee Stover

Love Inspired Suspense

**Genres:** Suspense, Romance, Christmas





New Releases: December 2019



**True Blue K-9 Unit Christmas**

*True Blue K-9 Unit*

Laura Scott, Maggie K. Black  
Love Inspired Suspense

**Genres:** Suspense, Romance



**The Pilgrim's Progress**

Vision Video

**Genres:** Animation, Movies, Children's



**Lukas**

*Storyteller Series*

Season 1

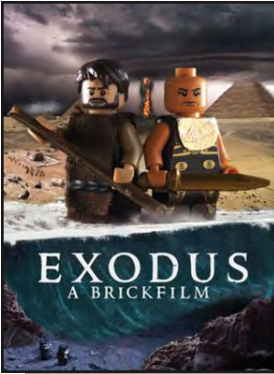
BMG

**Genres:** Animation, Movies, Children's





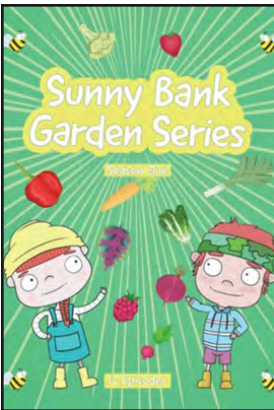
**New Releases:** December 2019



**Exodus**

BMG

**Genres:** Animation, Movies, Children's



**Sunny Bank Garden Series**

Season 1

BMG

**Genres:** Animation, Movies, Children's



**We Are the Gardeners**

Joanna Gaines

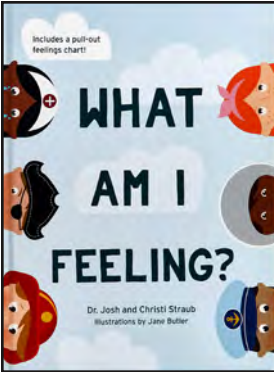
Illustrated by: Julianna Swaney

Tommy Nelson

**Genres:** Children's



New Releases: December 2019



***What Am I Feeling?***

Dr. Josh Straub, Christi Straub

Illustrated by: Jane Butler

B&H Kids

**Genres:** Children's



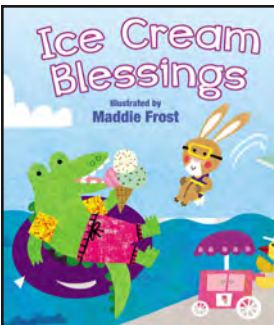
***God Made the Ocean***

*God Made Series*

Sarah Jean Collins

Tyndale House

**Genres:** Children's



***Ice Cream Blessings***

Illustrated by: Maddie Frost

Thomas Nelson

**Genres:** Children's



New Releases: December 2019



***The Piper's Pursuit***

Melanie Dickerson

Thomas Nelson

**Genres:** YA, Historical, Romance



***Overcomer***

Provident Films

**Genres:** Movies, Contemporary



***Love on the Slopes***

Hallmark

**Genres:** Movies, Romance



## New Releases: December 2019



### **Only One Way**

BMG

**Genres:** Movies, Contemporary



### **Full Count**

Lionsgate

**Genres:** Movies, Contemporary



### **Epiphany**

BMG

**Genres:** Movies, Contemporary







2019  
*Christmas*  
Gift Guide

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Peg Luke

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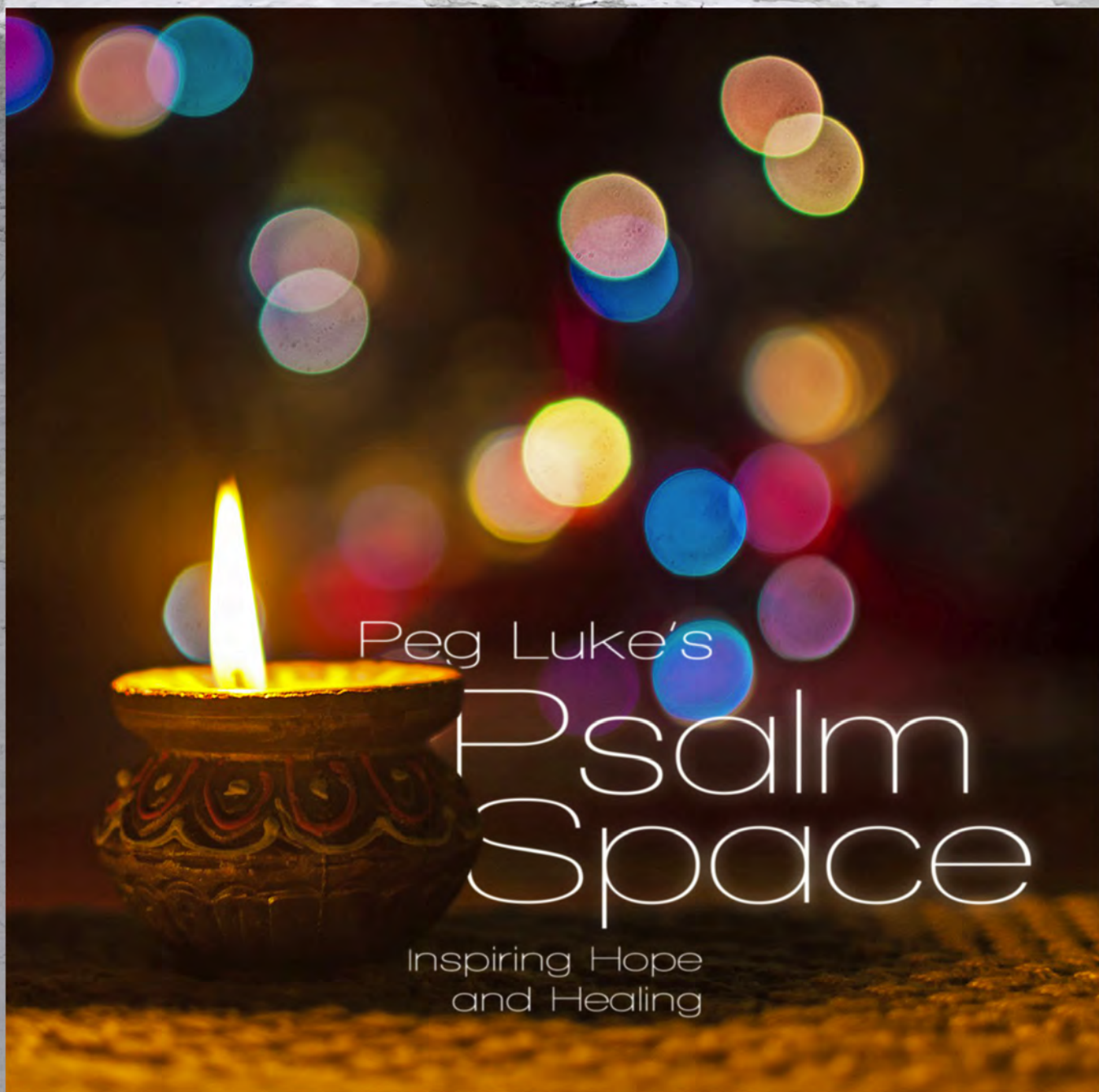
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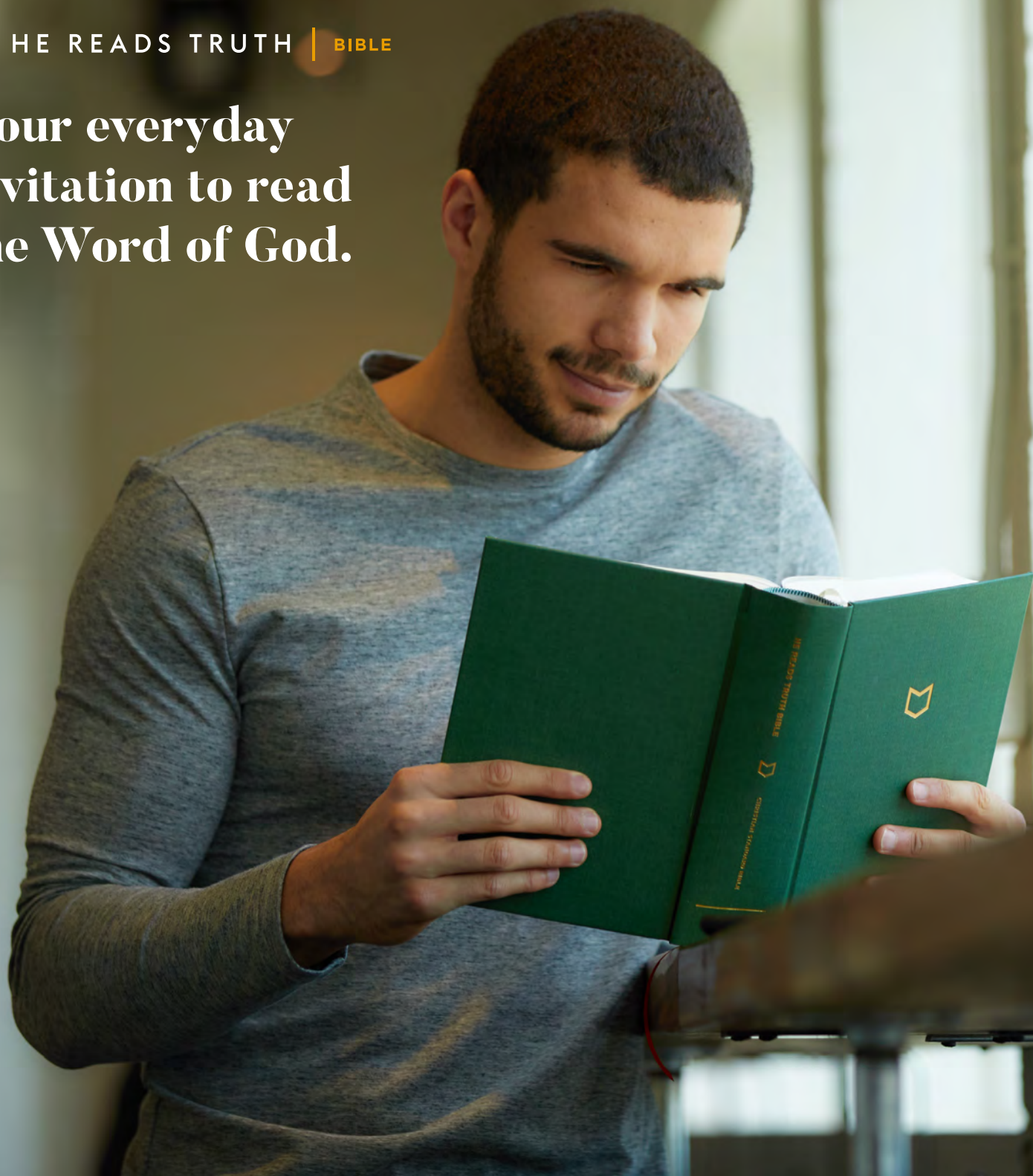
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### *TONY EVANS STUDY BIBLE*

Tony Evans

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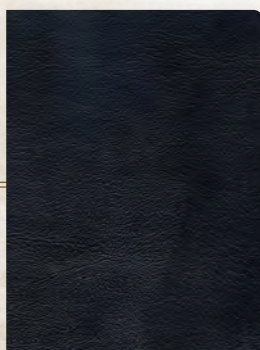
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SHARE THE VALUES OF GOD'S KINGDOM.

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The *Tony Evans One Volume Bible Commentary* also releasing 10/1/19



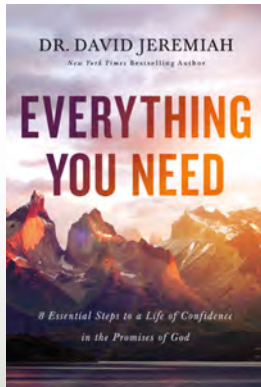
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## Discover God's Power To Meet Your Deepest Needs



### IN EVERYTHING YOU NEED

**Dr. David Jeremiah**

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In *Everything You Need*, **Dr. David Jeremiah** uses 2 Peter 1:3-11 to show you the path to spiritual and personal transformation. Dr. Jeremiah also highlights the extraordinary resources God has already provided for your growth: His divine power and precious promises.

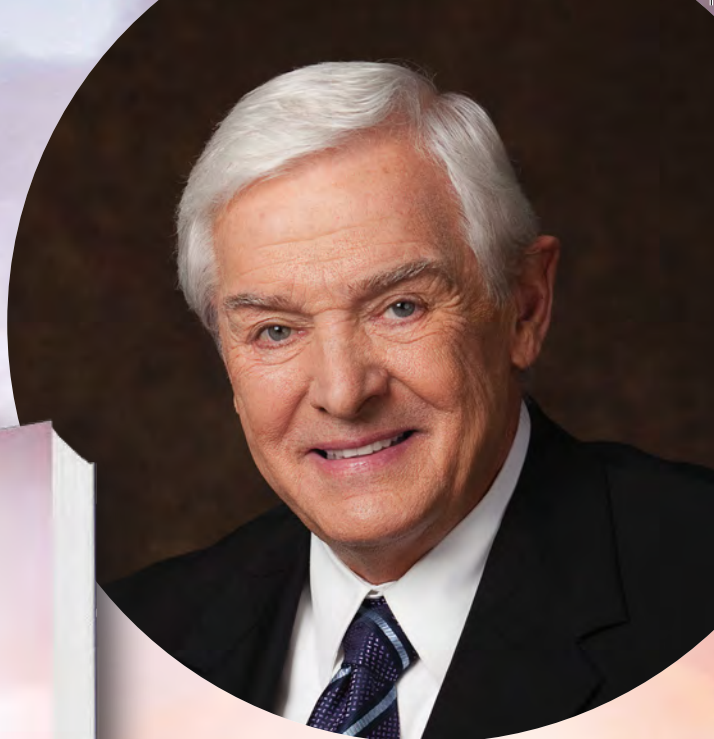
Indeed, as you'll see throughout the pages of this book, when God's power is unleashed in you it enables you "to tread upon the heights" (Hab. 3:19). As His power is transmitted to you through His great and precious promises, you'll be increasingly transformed into the person you were created to be—someone who can successfully navigate the pressures of life with confidence and grace.

This book assures you of this truth to take with you throughout your life: God is able to provide everything you need because He is everything you need. What a promise. And what a gift!

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Our world is full of greater pressures and demands than ever before: relational pressure, time pressure, financial pressure, political pressure, and more.

**But there is an answer to those pressures!!**

In *Everything You Need*, author and beloved Bible Teacher, Dr. David Jeremiah, uses 2 Peter 1:3-11 to show you a path to spiritual and personal transformation. It's time to unpack all that God has provided and take your next step toward a life of confidence in His promises. You already have

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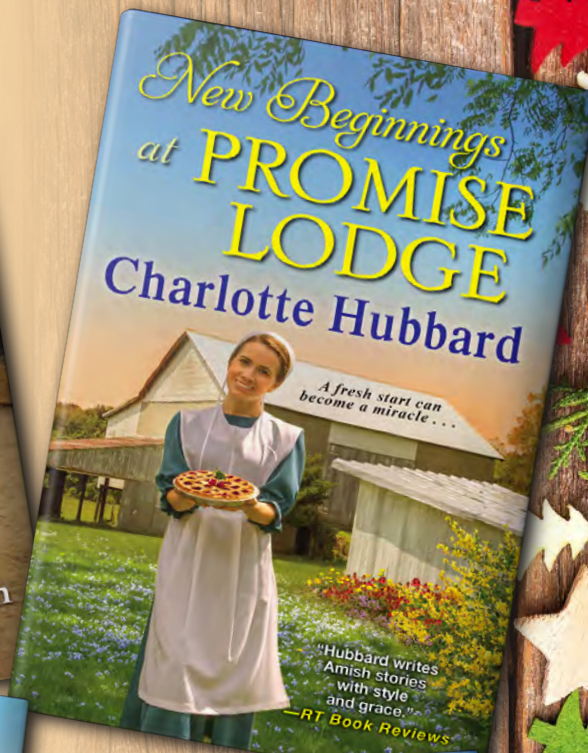
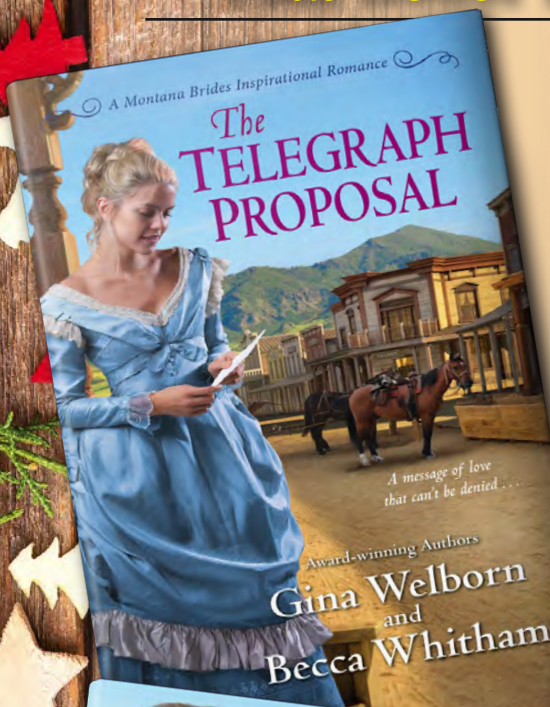
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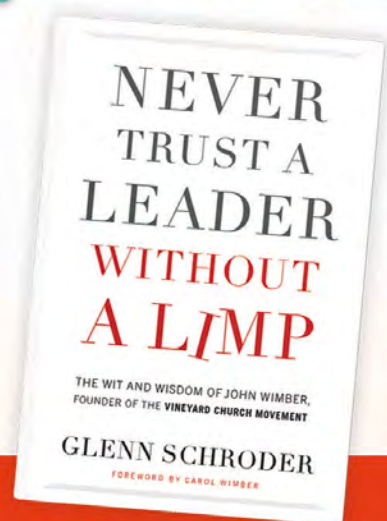
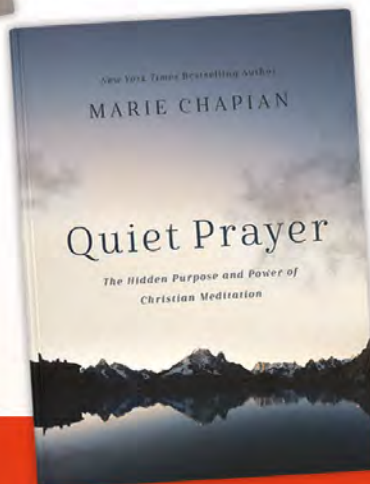
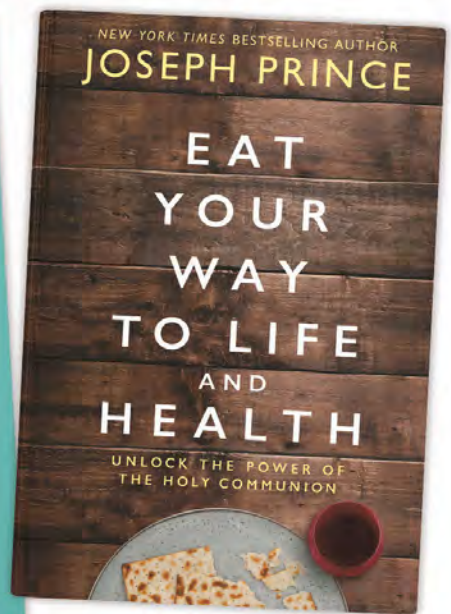
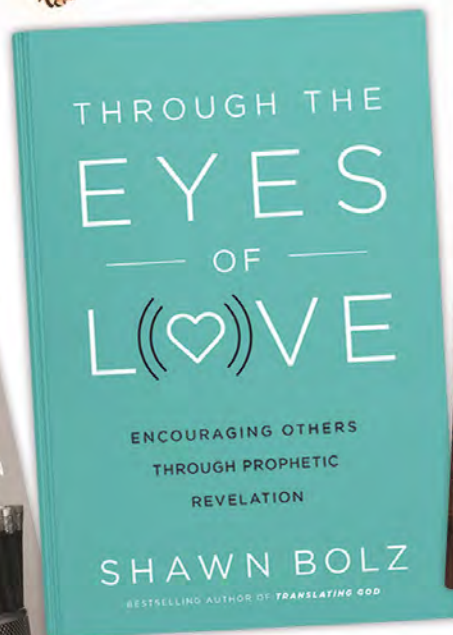
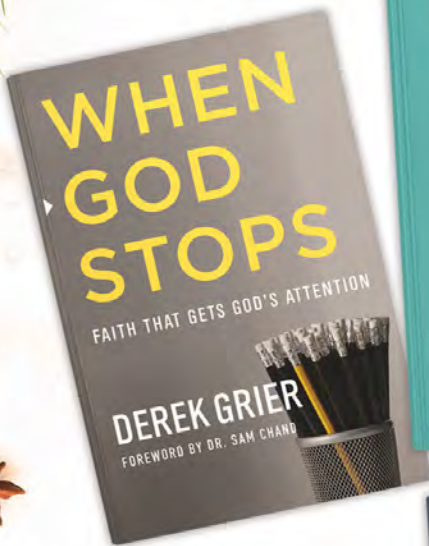
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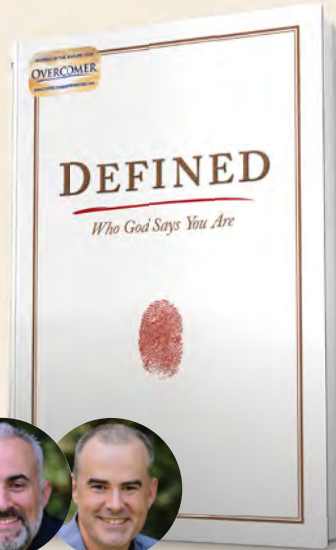
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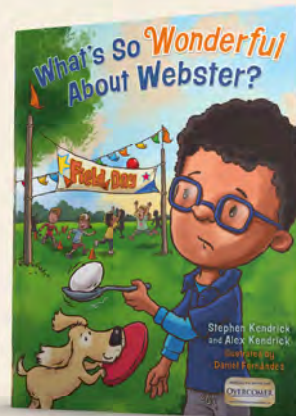
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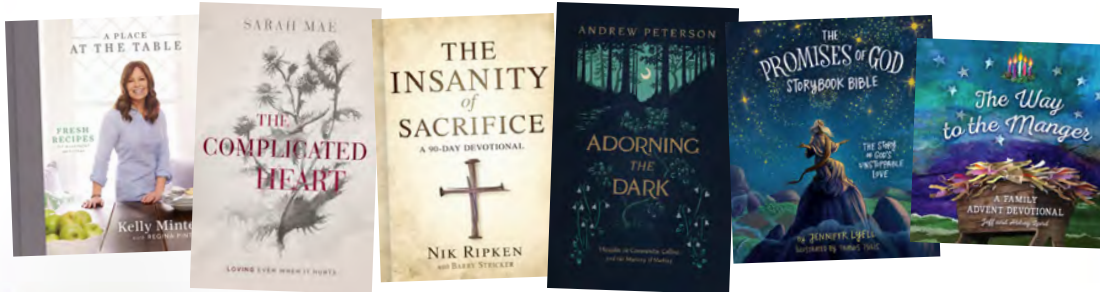
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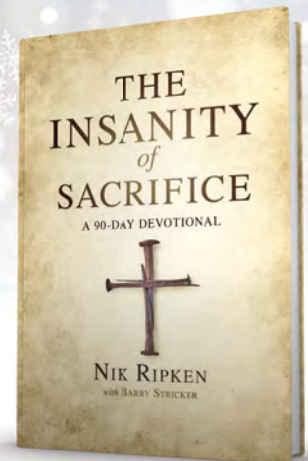
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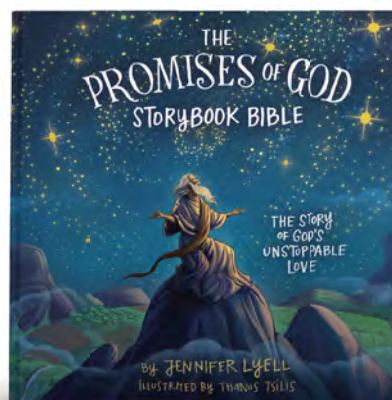
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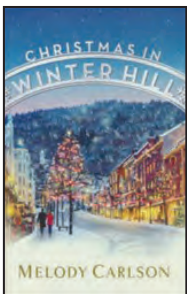


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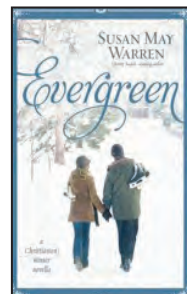
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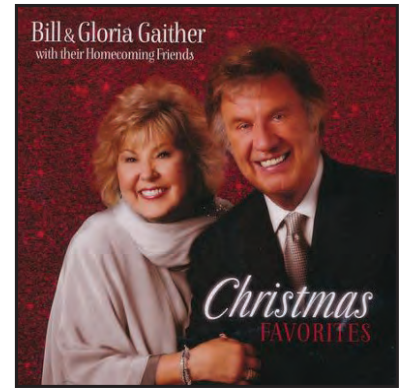
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