

"*Fire of Grace* is the true account of forgiveness and reconciliation. The Trinity Lutheran church building in Lynwood, Washington, was burned to the ground by fire. The story chronicles the journey of this community, led by Pastor Rouse, of forgiving the arsonist. Rouse identifies the steps in the process of forgiveness and associates those steps with the various times in the catechumenal process. This is a wonderful resource to teach about forgiveness and reconciliation at some point in the catechumenal process."

— The North American Association for the Catechumenate

"It is so easy in today's violent and conflicted world to hate. It takes courage and faith to be willing to forgive and take up Christ's ministry of healing and reconciliation. Pastor Rouse's simple yet profound story of his own journey illustrates that those who hate consume themselves but those who forgive are baptized into the Fire of Grace and healing that we experience at the cross when Jesus says: 'Forgive them for they do not know what they are doing.' This is the true power of forgiveness and reconciliation that we need in our world today that Christ calls us to follow.

This book would be an excellent choice for a class or reading group for people in their personal lives and for faith leaders wanting to awaken people to the need for this invaluable skill of forgiveness in our broken world today.

We will only find peace in our world when we are each able to stand in our own worlds of pain and have the strength and conviction to make peace with our enemies. When we learn to see Christ in the other — whether they are friend or foe, stranger or beloved — and accept their humanity, we understand that Christ loves and redeems each of us equally and wants us to live in that abundant love. This book helps us to understand and practice this important gift of forgiveness."

— Bishop Dr. Munib Younan, The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land

"When the attacks of September 11, 2001 devastated our city, as well as the rest of the country and the world, our lives changed radically. Our spiritual journeys received a drastic new context. Questions of justice, vengeance, and forgiveness bubbled up. We had to learn a new way of being a witnessing church and practicing Christians in the world. Such was the radically changed landscape for Pastor Richard Rouse, Trinity Lutheran Church, and the Seattle Washington metropolis in the wake of scores of church arsons in 1992. In his wonderful account of these events, *Fire of Grace: The Healing Power of Forgiveness* we join this pastor and the people of Trinity on their Emmaus walk. Partly a chronicle of a pastor's soul, partly gripping coverage of an historical event, and partly a primer on the stages of forgiveness, this book is compelling on many levels. I read my own post 9/11 experiences into it and was illumined on my journey of comfort, renewal and forgiveness."

— Bishop Stephen P. Bouman, Metropolitan New York Synod

"*Fire of Grace* is a moving story of violation and forgiveness. Richard Rouse weaves the tale of his own personal struggle to forgive together with an insightful commentary on the nature of forgiveness and the power of the Christian story."

— David J. Livingston Ph.D., Department of Religious Studies, Mercyhurst College

"A touching and timely story of crime, grief, anger, and finally, forgiveness and healing. This book teaches all of us how to walk the difficult path of pardon and reconciliation."

— Daniel Erlander, pastor, writer, illustrator Whidbey Island, Washington

"[In this book] Rouse gives compelling evidence that forgiveness is not just a concept, but a way of life...not just an ideal, but a reality that can be lived out with grace."

— The Very Rev. Bob Libby, Trinity Episcopal Cathedral, Miami, Florida, author of *The Forgiveness Book*

"Pastor Richard Rouse takes us on a journey with him from his own burn-out, through a devastating fire to healing, forgiveness, and renewal. His personal story is interwoven with the story of his church, his congregation, and community as they struggle with forgiving the arsonist who set fire to the historical church building. His story brings the reader to understand one's own need for forgiveness. He shows us that unforgiveness can make us stuck in a prison of anger and resentment whereas, even the arsonist in this story is set free as a child of God through receiving forgiveness and through forgiving himself. This is the intricately and interestingly woven story of many lives that were touched by one person's choice to forgive. It was very inspiring and brought tears, joy, and hope as I, myself, became woven into the story."

— Joann Nesser, founder of Christos Center for Spiritual Formation in Lino Lakes, MN., and author of *Prayer Journey from Self to God* and *Journey into Reality*.

"This book is a God-send. I have been blessed to find an open door and that open door is Pastor Rick Rouse's book *Fire of Grace*. Before reading this book I didn't realize that being a victim is a choice. Reading Pastor Rouses's words allowed me to immediately drop the status of victim. I now have peace. When I ordered the book I thought I would be reading about a Pastor whose church was burned down and how he forgave the arsonist. Little did I know that throughout the whole book Pastor Rouse was talking straight to my heart, as if he wrote the book just for me, and I can't thank him enough. I am going to suggest to our weekly Bible study group that sometime this year we choose *Fire of Grace* as our classwork."

— Patricia Goodwin