

Flavors of Faith: Our breads will help your community to grow

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June 2, 2013 by [David Crumm](#)

THIS IS DELICIOUS!

Why food at ReadTheSpirit?

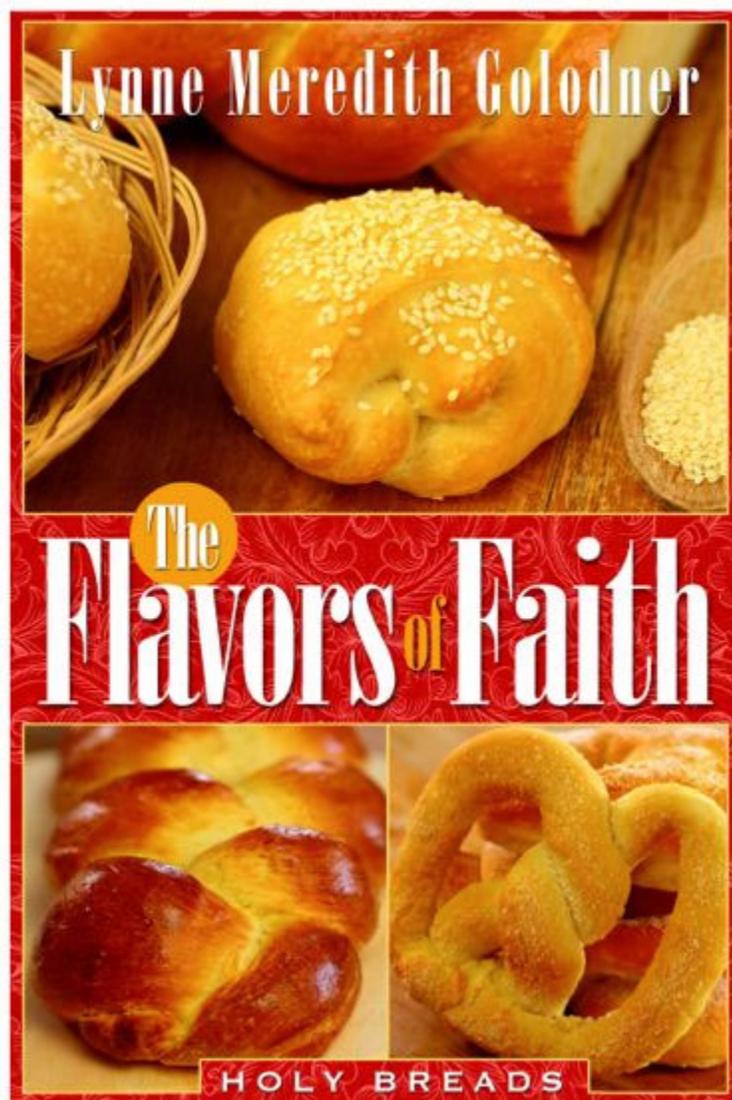
We all love food, but we ignore its spiritual value.

Millions of small groups meet each week, most of them connected with congregations. Nearly every group likes to share an edible treat—but few groups ever focus their discussions on the food itself. With this inspiring (and delicious) new book, groups can proudly focus on the food!

Congregations separate groups by age, yet we all yearn to unite generations.

Coast to coast, men and women tell us they love multi-generational experiences. Now, you can announce a series on *The Flavors of Faith* in your community, and men and women, young and old, will be eager to sign up! Author Lynne Meredith Golodner, who you will meet in today's interview (*below*), already has proven that this works. Before publication, she led pilot groups and found that these stories and recipes engage all ages. There's enough material in this book for an eight-week series, or you could organize a one-day event. *The Flavors of Faith* is a flexible resource.

Millions are attracted to interfaith experiences, but few attend events. Pew research shows a dramatically growing interest in diverse religious experiences, but interfaith events tend to draw a limited number of community leaders. Now, in *The Flavors of Faith*, we help you to re-frame your invitations to explore diverse religious traditions with a question no one can resist: What does your family **love**



Click the cover to learn more about ordering this book.

to eat?

For the 150th anniversary of Thanksgiving, it's time to start new customs!

One group recommending *The Flavors of Faith* is an interfaith council promoting [a Season of Gratitude in November 2013 to celebrate America's Thanksgiving sesquicentennial](#). You could be part of this free *Season of Gratitude* movement by organizing your own group.

ORDER YOUR COPY TODAY by clicking on the book cover, which takes you to a page where you can learn more about the book and purchase a copy through either Amazon or Barnes and Noble. Yes, the book is available in all your favorite formats: paperback, Kindle and Nook. *Just click the book cover.*

And now, meet Lynne in this interview with ReadTheSpirit Editor David Crumm ...

INTERVIEW WITH LYNNE MEREDITH GOLODNER ON THE FLAVORS OF FAITH: HOLY BREADS

DAVID: You're working on a series of books about foods related to religious traditions —foods that have been bringing people together for many centuries. Why start with bread?

LYNNE: Bread is central to all the faith traditions. Bread is so simple; and bread is so profound. It's a Divine symbol in some religions, but it's also the most basic staple of daily life for families around the world. Christians pray for "daily bread" to sustain them. As I say in the opening pages, it's no accident that words "bread" and "dough" became slang for money. Bread is the perfect starting point for the kinds of stories and recipes we want to share in this series of books.

Here's another thing I found: People love to talk about bread! I'm the kind of person who likes to be well organized, so I started this project by trying to map out a number of the subjects that eventually will appear in *The Flavors of Faith* series. One reason we start with *Holy Breads* is that, everywhere I went in my early research and reporting, people said: "I've got to tell you my bread story!" There were so many of them. And those stories about bread almost always relate to faith and family.



In this book, you'll discover why food—especially bread—is a universal connector. Over time, the common thread throughout *The Flavors of Faith* books will be that these are the stories and the flavors that ground us in our traditions. They help us remember who we are and what we believe.

FLAVORS OF FAITH: BREADS IN MANY SHAPES & TASTES

DAVID: Your bread stories and recipes come in all shapes, sizes and flavors. Some breads in this book are more like cakes. Some are round; some are flat; some are woven. Some are sweet; some are savory. What are some of the unusual things you discovered?

LYNNE: A lot of the discoveries are surprises about the traditions behind breads. I love the example of the pretzel, which became an entire chapter in the book. My kids love pretzels as a snack, but would never have guessed that pretzels are part of a religious tradition. I have reported on food for many years, and I have to say: This book is eye-opening in a lot of ways. Until I did the research for this book, I didn't know that pretzels began as a Christian Lenten tradition. The chapter on pretzels is called "Arms Crossed in Prayer." I tell that story of the origins of pretzels, then we give readers a soft-pretzel recipe that's easy to make at home. This is a fun one to make and eat with children.

Then, from the Native American tradition, we learn that talking about bread goes right to the heart of the American Indian experience. That history is complex and includes the conflict between Native people and the Europeans who came here. One example of a bread that carries this story is fry bread. On the advice of Native Americans, I did not include fry bread in this book of *Holy Breads*, although various kinds of fry bread show up everywhere in Indian culture, today. The history of fry bread connects with the history of oppression in which Native people were forced into reservations and were given limited foods to eat. For example, fry bread originally was made with lard and over many years fry bread contributed to a lot of health problems for Native people. The ingredients for fry bread were not native to the Americas. One example is the lard, which came from pigs, and of course pigs were introduced in the Americas by the Spanish explorers.



DAVID: That's a fascinating story and opens up new insights into American Indian culture. I love the choices you made in that chapter. One of my favorite recipes in the book is an incredibly delicious cornbread recipe that includes ingredients common to Indian life for thousands of years: corn, nuts and natural syrup. While the Old World brought foods like the pig over here, the New World sent foods like corn, or maize, back to Europe.



Corn bread with pecan and maple syrup.

LYNNE: That's right, in talking with Native Americans, we made a conscious decision to include corn bread rather than fry bread. Corn and corn bread have very positive associations in Indian tradition.

DAVID: Readers will learn a lot as they read the stories that go with the recipes. I'm inspired by the Muslim women who baked bread, week after week, year after year, to help raise the walls of their mosque. Anyone who reads that story, I think, will be inspired—and likely will think of generations of women in Cristian and Jewish congregations who have worked so tirelessly to prepare foods to nourish their communities. That Muslim chapter is one of my favorites.

LYNNE: The book shows that the depth and breadth of the impact of bread is monumental. This takes so many forms. Bread often is a foundational element in Muslim community centers, where women usually are the bread bakers. The story I tell in that chapter is about a particular group of Muslim women who literally helped to build their mosque and to keep it going through their weekly bread sales.

FLAVORS OF FAITH: BREADS LOVED BY ALL AGES

DAVID: This is a good place to ask about the popularity of these recipes with all kinds of people—all ages, too. We've already described some unusual breads: a wonderfully rich cornbread with nuts and then this Muslim flat bread, which can be made with some unusual spices on top of it. I know that you've already had experience sharing this with groups of people. Some of these recipes are unusual—but people seem to love them, right?

LYNNE: One place I shared the book—complete with samples of some of the breads—was my daughter's fourth-grade class. I included some of the more unusual recipes. I brought some of Emily Dickinson's cocconut recipe, which is included in the book. And I had some of the Muslim bread with those unusual spices on top of it. These kids were **sooo** into tasting these new flavors! We had a row of desks in the classroom, where we could lay out these breads cut up into smaller pieces. The kids walked around and took pieces. They took



everything, ate everything, enjoyed it all. These were very different tastes for them. But they loved the cocoanut loaf and they went crazy for the spiced Muslim bread.

This is a huge opportunity for bridge building, not only between different faiths and cultures, but between the ages as well.

DAVID: You've mentioned Emily Dickinson, so let's talk a little more about that. You've got a slightly adapted version of the poet's most popular recipe. Readers probably aren't aware that she loved baking. Her father declared that he would only eat Emily's bread at his table. She was a recluse as a poet, but she was proud of her bread. Can you tell us a little more?



Emily Dickinson's cocoanut loaf.

LYNNE: In the book, readers will find a new way to connect with one of America's most beloved poets. I love that part of the book and my kids love her recipe. At home, I take her recipe and make it for my kids as mini-cupcakes so kids can pop one into the mouth in a single bite.

FLAVORS OF FAITH: INVITING READERS TO GET INVOLVED

DAVID: You're inviting readers to get involved online, too, in at least three ways: Share a personal story about food; share a recipe; or perhaps ask a question about a food tradition they'd like to learn more about. They can do that in several ways. Right now, the main place to share stories and ideas is on the front page of [the new FeedTheSpirit department](#).

LYNNE: When you get there, look for my book cover, then right below the cover is a convenient place to send us your stories, recipes and questions.

DAVID: If you love food, you'll find new columns in *FeedTheSpirit* every week. People also can keep watching the front page of ReadTheSpirit, where our new food stories will be featured with other front-page headlines each week. We will make it easy for readers to find and share food stories.

LYNNE: I've already started collecting stories for future books. I'd love to hear from people with new stories, positive memories about food, recipes, and their questions. I also hope that readers will help us spread the word about the book itself. Getting this book into the hands of your friends is really the best way to get them excited about it.

DAVID: One way readers can help is to click the Facebook links with our interview today. There's a blue-"f" Facebook icon at the top and the bottom of our interview. Clicking on that blue-"f" icon lets a reader share this news with friends on

Facebook. There's also an email icon at top and bottom—readers could click those email icons and send this story to friends, as well.

LYNNE: This is the beginning of a magnificent journey—for all of us, especially for our readers. I'm proud of how this new book brings people together over something we all share rather than confronting each other about things that divide us.