

## **Book Club: February Book Review**

### **The Frozen River by Ariel Lawhon**

A whodunnit drama inspired by real-life heroine Martha Ballard, a respected midwife. This book is a fictional story that is brought to life by entries from Martha's dairy that documented births, deaths and going-ons in the close-knit community of Hallowell, Maine, in 1789. When the Kennebec River freezes in the winter of 1789, a man's body is found frozen in the ice. Martha is then summoned to examine the body and to determine the cause of death. She determines the cause of death as murder and identifies the body as Joshua Burgess, accused of allegedly rape of the pastor's wife with another prominent and powerful man a few months earlier. But when a local male physician declares the death an accident, Martha continues to investigate the murder on her own.

Ariel Lawhon got the inspiration for this book from an article she read in *Our Daily Bread* (August 1, 2008) on Martha Ballard while waiting for a doctor's appointment. The article mentioned that Martha delivered over 800 births in her career as a midwife and never lost a mother in childbirth. She was regarded as a respected medical figure in her community.

The book was enjoyed by most members of the book club. There was an excellent discussion during our meeting, and we would recommend this book to others. A copy will be available in the church library.

Respectfully submitted by Jennifer Berwanger