

Book Club Gathering

Monday, February 13, 2023

7:00 p.m.

St. Martins United Church Lounge

Take My Hand

by Dolen Perkins-Valdez

Montgomery, Alabama, 1973. Fresh out of nursing school, Civil Townsend intends to make a difference, especially in her African American community. At the Montgomery Family Planning Clinic, she hopes to help women shape their destinies, to make their own choices for their lives and bodies.

But when her first week on the job takes her along a dusty country road to a worn-down one-room cabin, Civil is shocked to learn that her new patients, Erica and India, are children—just eleven and thirteen years old. Neither of the Williams sisters has even kissed a boy, but they are poor and Black, and for those handling the family's welfare benefits, that's reason enough to have the girls on birth control. As Civil grapples with her role, she takes India, Erica, and their family into her heart. Until one day she arrives at their door to learn the unthinkable has happened, and nothing will ever be the same for any of them.

Decades later, with her daughter grown and a long career in her wake, Dr. Civil Townsend is ready to retire, to find her peace, and to leave the past behind. But there are people and stories that refuse to be forgotten. That must not be forgotten.

Because history repeats what we don't remember.

Inspired by true events and brimming with hope, *Take My Hand* is a stirring exploration of accountability and redemption.

All are Welcome