



*Book review by CSMSG parishioner Jeannette Thompson*

*Of Mess and Moxie; Wrangling Delight out of this Wild and Glorious Life* by Jen Hatmaker, Nelson Books 2017

I discovered Jen Hatmaker from an article on Politico that popped up on my phone one day in December. Intrigued by the headline about an evangelical leader who was denounced for her more liberal views, I clicked on the article. While the politics lost me by paragraph three, the article led me to a treasure trove of wisdom, truths and humor that have been a wonderful source of comfort, inspiration and hope, and a new ‘companion’ in my journey as a mother.

*Of Mess and Moxie*, Jen Hatmaker’s 12th book, is a series of short essays influenced by Christianity and a big love for Jesus, yet relatable in many ways to people of all faiths and in all stages of their faith, from devout to agnostic and everywhere in between.

From word one, her conversational style pulls you in and disarms even your most skeptical inclinations. Her introduction concludes with “Welcome. You are loved here.” Who wouldn’t want to read more? In the following 23 chapters, she intersperses biblical verses and famous quotes with her own ironic recipes for life (e.g. How to Ensure People Feel Compelled to Pop in For a Visit, step 1. Don’t do dishes for a day and a half) and real recipes of her favorite foods to make. She shares her mistakes, her struggles and her successes with humor and grace. She reminds us to take the long view, a greater vision; that everything has its season and every season has its purpose.

Ultimately, the theme that runs through it all is Love. Loving ourselves, our children, our neighbors and our world as God does, despite the mess and havoc we wreak. In her words, “Love makes us brave, pulls up seats to the table, defuses bigotry, and attacks injustice.”

From her closing remarks, “No one came to these pages unscathed; we are learning and unlearning and figuring out what to hold on to and what to release. Sometimes life is great and sometimes it is painful beyond recognition, and yet here we all are: still standing.” In this, and throughout the entire book, I found the permission and the freedom I didn’t even know I needed to love more, judge less. For this and for her, I am truly grateful!