



## My Life as a Prayer: A Multifaith Memoir

**Elizabeth Cunningham**

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Going into the depths of her writer's soul, Elizabeth Cunningham's enchanting memoir *My Life as a Prayer* is a worshipful text.

With a beginning that defines Cunningham's lifelong search for belonging, the book's memories are laid out in a scrapbook format. They capture both the essence of being a priest's daughter and the struggle to make sense of the religious world: Cunningham recalls coming to the painful realization that what worked for her father and the family tradition didn't work for her. She also shares tales from her young adulthood in the Anglican Church, time spent in the Quaker tradition, and interfaith seminary experiences. And because Cunningham is also a children's book lover, she infuses her text with the magic of fairy tales, referencing Narnia and the joy of the written word. Her later chapters highlight her inspiring counseling ministry and close with beautiful prayers.

With its recurrent expressions of yearning to connect to the divine, Cunningham's story is built upon profound observations. Further, it is theologically spacious, full of genuine connections and peace. It highlights moments of inspiration stretched out over a lifetime. Some are painful, as with the case of a miscarriage; in other moments, Cunningham struggles to align inherited wealth with Christian values. And as the book progresses, it transitions from focusing on personal memories of spiritual development to sermonizing on the power of the divine, which helps to connect different lives. Throughout its pages, though, it is consistent in representing Cunningham's spiritual life as versatile and vibrant.

*My Life as a Prayer* is a wise and careful religious memoir written by a sympathetic contemporary spiritual seeker—a prayerful touch point amid a world of difficulties.

JEREMIAH ROOD (November / December 2023)

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