

# OFF THE SHELF



**Mission Statement:** To energize church library ministry through education, resource sharing, spiritual encouragement, and fellowship.

Fall 2020

## A Letter from Our TCACLA Co-Presidents

Dear Fellow Members of TCACLA,

Although we cannot, in light of the ongoing Covid 19 pandemic, have our usual in-person fall meeting, our members responded favorably to our offer to have a virtual meeting via Zoom instead. **This meeting will take place on Saturday, October 24, at 9 a.m.** You will need to register in advance so that a Zoom invitation can be sent to you. Please register by Wednesday, October 21. If you have not participated in Zoom before and would like assistance, please indicate that with your registration, using the form at the end of this newsletter. You will be contacted ahead of time and walked through a practice Zoom.

All our churches—and our church libraries—have had to adapt to these unsettling times, sometimes with great creativity and success, and sometimes not so much. The answers you provided to the questionnaire sent last month suggest our Zoom meeting can provide an opportunity for sharing of experiences and ideas on how best to maintain a sense of community in our congregations when we cannot meet in person and what books and the church library can do to enrich the life of the church. We have a lot to learn from each other, including what has worked well as well as what hasn't.

The fall meeting would normally include the election of TCACLA officers. This fall, Vice President and Treasurer would be up, next fall, President and Secretary. Because we have had no in-person meetings this year, all current office holders have agreed to extend their terms one year, if the membership agrees. We will therefore also have a short business meeting on October 24 to ask for a vote from attending members to make 2020 a pause year for all the positions, i.e., to approve or disapprove this extension of terms. The other effect of 2020 being a pause year is that all 2020 membership dues paid for 2020 will be applied to 2021.

We look forward to seeing you virtually and having an enlightening discussion on October 24.

In the meantime, stay safe and well—and keep on reading!

Sincerely,  
Grace Kurtz and Jeanne Schleh

### General Information

**The Twin Cities Area Church Library Association (TCACLA)** is a non-profit support organization serving church librarians. Membership is open to individuals and churches of all denominations that desire to network with others on church library development and enrichment.

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# **TREASURER'S REPORT**

Members: 23 churches, 2 individuals

01/01/2020	\$3,240.38	<b>Beginning Balance</b>
	\$310.00	Membership Dues
	-\$400.00	Fall 19 Meeting Expenses
	-\$23.95	New Checks
	-\$102.62	<i>Off the Shelf</i> Printing & Postage
	<u>-\$31.17</u>	Website Expenses

09/30/2020 \$2,992.64 **Ending Balance**

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### **The Human Library**

The Human Library concept was originally developed in Copenhagen in 2000. Inside certain libraries, you can choose to "borrow" a person - instead of a book - to listen to the history of their life for about 30 minutes. The point? Limiting prejudice. Everyone has a "title" such as "Unemployed," "Refugee," "Bipolar" - but once we listen to their story, we will always realize why we should "never judge a book by its cover." This project is now active in more than 80 countries.

(<https://humanlibrary.org/>)

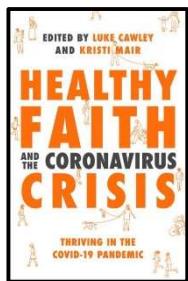


## WHAT ARE CHURCHES READING?

I'm looking forward to hearing your answers to this question at the gathering on October 24. My church library has started a curbside pickup service, but no one has wanted to use it so far. While the books listed on the following pages are mostly new books on serious subjects, the members of the Zoom book club in my church recently decided they were more in the mood to read light escapist fiction these days.

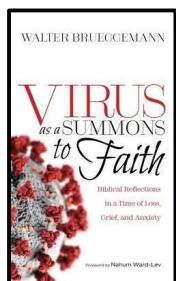
*"A library is a good place to go when you feel unhappy, for there, in a book, you may find encouragement and comfort. A library is a good place to go when you feel bewildered or undecided, for there, in a book, you may have your question answered. Books are good company, in sad times and happy times." — E. B. White*

### **HEALTHY FAITH AND THE CORONAVIRUS CRISIS; *Thriving in the Covid-19 Pandemic*** edited by Kristi Mair, InterVarsity Press, 2020.



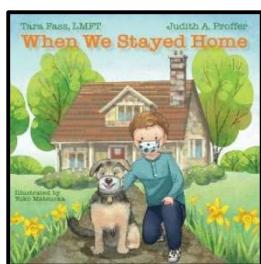
COVID-19 has transformed our everyday lives. It's as if another world has arrived in the blink of an eye. Yet life is not on pause. In this book, twenty leading Christian thinkers have come together to help readers navigate life in a new world of restrictions. Each contributor writes on his/her area of expertise. Topics covered include prayer, work, loneliness, singleness, marriage, parenting, grief, imagination, death, humor, conversations, and more. The authors offer practical advice as well as helpful perspective from Scripture.

### **VIRUS AS A SUMMONS TO FAITH; *Biblical Reflections in a Time of Loss, Grief and Anxiety*** by Walter Brueggemann, Wipf & Stock, 2020.



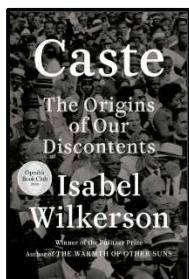
Per the forward: "The summons that Professor Brueggemann hears in the devastation caused by the Covid-19 virus is the same summons that all prophets hear in the midst of calamity: the call into right relationship with Living Presence...In the biblical language that has long been at the core of Brueggemann's thinking, the devastating effects of the virus summon us to renew our covenantal relationship with God and to renew our responsibilities within that relationship."

### **WHEN WE STAYED HOME** by Tara Fass (Licensed Family & Marriage Therapist) and Judith Proffer, Huqua Press, 2020.



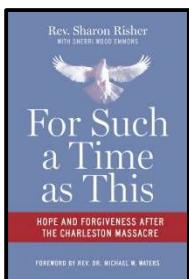
With whimsical illustrations and relatable prose, *When We Stayed Home* was written to help children ages 3-8 navigate their feelings and cheer themselves on during the upheaval of a pandemic, honoring their role as "super-helpers" by washing their hands, wearing masks, social distancing and staying home. As they see a young boy and his dog doing various activities, children will recognize their own experiences and emotions as they miss school, playgrounds, and friends and family while staying at home in their own houses.

**CASTE; The Origins of Our Discontents**  
by Isabel Wilkerson, Random House, 2020.



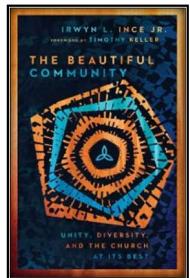
Wilkerson believes that America has been shaped by a hidden caste system throughout its history. This system influences people's lives and behavior and the nation's fate. She explores eight pillars that underlie caste systems across civilizations, including divine will, bloodlines, stigma, and more using stories about people—Martin Luther King, Jr.; baseball's Satchel Paige; a single father and his toddler son; and Wilkerson herself among others. She concludes by suggesting ways America can move beyond the artificial and destructive separations of human divisions toward hope in our common humanity.

**FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS; Hope and Forgiveness After the Charleston Massacre** by Sharon Risher, Chalice Press, 2019.



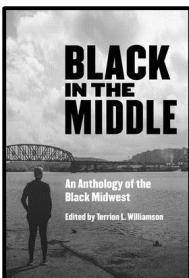
When Reverend Risher's mother and 2 cousins were murdered by a white supremacist, she could have wallowed in the pain. Instead, she chose the path of forgiveness and hope. In this memoir, she recounts how an anonymous hospital chaplain was thrust into the national spotlight, joining survivors of other gun-related horrors as reluctant speakers for a heart-broken social-justice movement. In doing so, Risher learns to trust God's timing and lean on God's loving presence to guide her steps and finds a renewed purpose in her life.

**THE BEAUTIFUL COMMUNITY: Unity, Diversity, and the Church at Its Best** by Irwyn L. Ince Jr., InterVarsity Press, 2020.



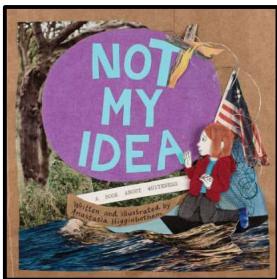
Our world has been torn asunder by racial, ethnic, and ideological differences. It is seen in our politics, felt in our families, and ingrained in our theology. The author discusses the reasons for our divisions while gently guiding us toward our true hope for wholeness and reconciliation. God reveals himself to us in his trinitarian life as the perfection of beauty, and essential to this beauty is his work as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The gospel imperative is to pursue the beautiful community, unity in diversity across lines of difference.

**BLACK IN THE MIDDLE; An Anthology of the Black Midwest** edited by Terriion L. Williamson, Belt Publishing, 2020.



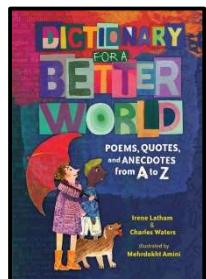
*Black in the Middle* brings the voices of Black Midwesterners front and center. Filled with compelling personal narratives, thought-provoking art, and searing commentaries, this anthology explores the various meanings and experiences of blackness throughout the Rust Belt, the Midwest, and the Great Plains. Bringing together people from major metropolitan centers like Detroit and Chicago as well as smaller cities and rural areas where the lives of Black residents have too often gone unacknowledged, this collection is a corrective to the narrative of the region.

**NOT MY IDEA; A Book About Whiteness** by Anastasia Higginbotham, Dottir Press, 2018.



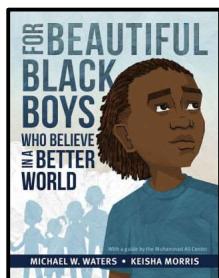
A picture book about racism and racial justice, inviting white children and parents to become curious about racism, accept that it's real, and cultivate justice. Inspired by her own children's curiosity, Higginbotham sets the story in present-day America, where a white child sees news coverage of a police shooting. The book empowers kids to seek an education in both white supremacy and those who have always fought against it. Ages 8-12. *Named one of School Library Journal's Best Books of 2018*

**DICTIONARY FOR A BETTER WORLD; Poems, Quotes, and Anecdotes from A to Z** by Irene Lathan and Charles Waters, Lerner Publishing, 2020.



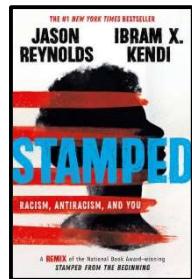
Each entry in this beautifully illustrated dictionary presents a positive word related to creating a better world, such as *ally*, *empathy*, or *service*. The words are accompanied by a poem, a quote from an inspiring person, a personal anecdote from the authors, and a "try it" prompt for an activity. This book builds upon themes of diversity and inclusiveness from the authors' previous book *Can I Touch Your Hair? Poems of Race, Mistakes, and Friendship*. Ages 9-12.

**FOR BEAUTIFUL BLACK BOYS WHO BELIEVE IN A BETTER WORLD** by Michael Waters, Flyaway Books, 2020.



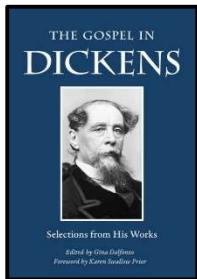
An intimate look at one family's response to racism and gun violence. The shootings keep coming, and so do Jeremiah's questions. Dad doesn't have easy answers, but that doesn't mean he won't talk about it—or that he won't act. But what if Jeremiah doesn't want to talk anymore? None of it makes sense, and he's just a kid. Even if he wants to believe in a better world, is there anything he can do about it? Includes a discussion guide. Ages 6-10.

**STAMPED: Racism, Antiracism, and You** by Jason Reynolds and Ibram X. Kendi, Little Brown, 2020.

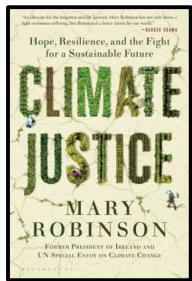


This reimagining of *Stamped from the Beginning*, Kendi's National Book Award-winning adult book, reveals the history of racist ideas in America and inspires hope for an antiracist future. It takes readers on a race journey from then to now, showing them why we feel how we feel and why the poison of racism lingers. It also demonstrates that while racist ideas have always been easy to fabricate and distribute, they can also be discredited. "Highly recommended for libraries serving middle and high school students." *School Library Journal starred review*.

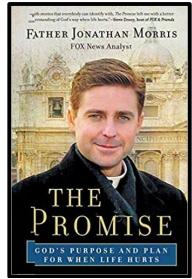
**THE GOSPEL IN DICKENS: Selections from His Works** by Charles Dickens, Plough, 2020.



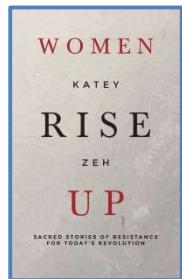
**CLIMATE JUSTICE: Hope, Resilience, and the Fight for a Sustainable Future** by Mary Robinson, Bloomsbury, 2019.



**THE PROMISE: God's Purpose and Plan for When Life Hurts** by Jonathan Morris, HarperOne, 2009.



**WOMEN RISE UP: Sacred Stories of Resistance for Today's Revolution** by Katey Zeh, Fair Press, 2019.



Dickens' legacy endures because of his power to stir consciences with the humanity of his characters and their predicaments. While he could be ruthless in his characterization of greed, injustice, and religious hypocrisy, again and again the hope of redemption shines through. In spite of – or perhaps because of – his own failings, Dickens never stopped exploring the themes of sin, guilt, repentance, redemption, and restoration found in the gospel.

Former President of Ireland Robinson's mission is to bring together the fight against climate change and the global struggle for human rights. She has met with ordinary people whose resilience and ingenuity have led to extraordinary change: from a Mississippi matriarch whose campaign began in her East Biloxi hair salon and culminated in her speaking at the United Nations to a Ugandan farmer who transformed the fortunes of her ailing community. These stories are part of a manifesto on one of the most pressing humanitarian issues of our time, and a lucid, affirmative, and well-argued case for hope.

In his work as a priest, Father Morris has traveled to the troubled spots of the world, meeting with Muslim youth during the rioting in Paris, sitting down with populists at odds with the Church in Venezuela, and investigating human trafficking in Germany. In this book, he peels back the layers of questions that arise when someone asks, "Why me?" in response to human suffering and leads readers through each step of suffering from doubt and anger to healing and acceptance.

Part memoir and part Bible study, *Women Rise Up* pairs stories of women in the Bible with essays on current issues facing women today. The essay titles are Endure: Hagar; Remember: Rachel; Resist: the Exodus Midwives and Mothers; Challenge: Hannah; Shift: Ruth; Sustain: the Widow of 2 Kings; Mary: Risk; Advocate: Martha of Bethany; Heal: the Hemorrhaging Woman; and Proclaim: Mary Magdalene. Zeh is an ordained Baptist minister as well as a nationally known advocate for gender justice.

## SHARING WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING IN OUR CHURCHES AND OUR LIBRARIES

Ten churches responded to some or all the questions that were e-mailed to everyone. Listed below are brief summaries of the responses. For more complete information and a stimulating conversation, join us at the Zoom gathering on October 24. See the next page for registration information; Zoom training is available prior to the meeting.

**Our libraries:** Some of our church buildings remain closed to non-staff members, which means that the library is not accessible. Other churches now have limited office hours which makes the libraries open for self-service. Two of us have tried curbside pickup but there hasn't been any interest in it. Some book buying and team meetings have occurred on a limited basis. Sadly, the wonderful library at Calvary Lutheran Church in Golden Valley has closed permanently. The church management decided that the space was needed for another purpose. The collection been divided and displayed in 3 areas; books are checked out on the honor system; and the library team has resigned.

### Our churches:

- While one church is now open for socially distanced worship on Sundays, most of us are relying on parking lot services, livestreaming, and pre-recording.
- Music is provided in a variety of ways – small socially distanced choirs, soloists, Zoom choirs, music from third party sources, live bands, and recordings of the church choir singing in previous years.
- Small weddings, funerals and baptisms have been held in churches that aren't otherwise open for Sunday worship.
- Worshippers either provide their own communion elements at home or receive packets at their churches.
- Many of you commented on the creative work being done by the person responsible for children's education at your church. Vacation Bible School, Sunday School, confirmation classes, children's time in the Sunday services, and other activities have continued in new ways.



- Book studies have included *Dialogues on: Race* (Sparkhouse) and *Raising White Kids* by Jennifer Harvey.

- Zoom has allowed many existing groups to continue meeting and has led to many new groups forming – most notably coffee hours on Sundays.
- New communications include daily e-mails of devotions, groups who gather on Zoom with a pastor each weekday, special newsletters and e-mails, and archived services and musical events on church websites.

- Outreach groups have been active, particularly in providing food.
- With all the Zoom activities, e-mails, and websites, one area where we may not be as successful is connecting with church members who do not have Internet access and/or cell phones. One church has recently begun providing a local phone number that people can use to listen to the Sunday service.



**REGISTRATION FORM  
TCACLA Fall Meeting Via Zoom  
October 24, 2020 @ 9:00 a.m.**

Although there is no fee, completion of a registration form is required. Only those who register by October 21 will be sent information on how to access Zoom and then be "admitted" to the meeting. Please fill out the following information and mail it to Jan Nordin, 941 Hidden Meadow Ln, Lake City, MN 55041-9588. You can also register online by typing this address into the address bar: [tinyurl.com/y6uzfmkp](https://tinyurl.com/y6uzfmkp)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

e-Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Church: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

Zoom meetings have options to join by phone or by computer. You can participate according to your technology and privacy preferences. If you would like help in setting up your Zoom account prior to the meeting, enter your phone number here:

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"When this is over,  
may we never again  
take for granted  
A handshake with a stranger  
Full shelves at the store  
Conversations with neighbors  
A crowded theater  
Friday night out  
The taste of communion  
A routine checkup  
The school rush each morning  
Coffee with a friend  
The stadium roaring  
Each deep breath  
A boring Tuesday  
Life itself.

When this ends,  
may we find  
that we have become  
more like the people  
we wanted to be  
we hoped to be  
and may we stay that way –

Better for each other  
because of the worst."

Laura Kelley Fanucci