

# OFF THE SHELF



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

Summer 2024

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Dear friends:

I hope you are all enjoying our summer with time with family, friends, and vacations to cool places.

I would like to thank everyone who attended our April 27<sup>th</sup> event at Richfield United Methodist Church. Our speaker, Dr. Nancy Koester, provided us with an engaging presentation about Sojourner Truth and the work she did over a period of eight years to create her new book: ***WE WILL BE FREE: The Life and Faith of Sojourner Truth***.

We also had an interesting discussion about how libraries can support the mission of the church, priorities, and goals of the congregation. Part of our discussion also included the topic of banned books, which could be a topic for a future presentation.

I happened to pick up a book titled ***SACRED COMPASS: The Way of Spiritual Discernment*** by J. Brent Bill, at our swap table that morning. It opened me up to some other Quaker authors such as Parker Palmer and Richard Foster. I would like to thank whoever shared that book; it led me to some other books on the same topic.

Our fall event is planned for Saturday, October 12<sup>TH</sup> at the Westwood Lutheran Church in St. Louis Park. Please plan to hold that day on your calendars. Further information will be forthcoming in the fall newsletter.

On that note, please have an enjoyable summer season!

*Janet Howard, President*

## 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: 21 Churches

01/01/2024	\$1,855.98	<b>Beginning Balance</b>
	\$375.00	Membership Renewals
	\$492.00	Meeting Registration
	\$310.00	Book Sales
	-\$1,047.93	Meeting Expenses
	-\$14.21	TCACLA Notepaper
	-\$140.54	<i>Off the Shelf</i> Expenses
	-\$22.17	Website Fee
07/15/2024	\$1,808.13	<b>Ending Balance</b>

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## **SOURCES OF GOOD QUALITY USED BOOKS**



If you can't find what you're looking for in one of the 6 stores in the Twin Cities area, check out the website at [hpb.com](http://hpb.com). The family-owned retailer has been a proponent of eco-friendly internal operations since 1972.

A surprising number of religious books can be purchased at [ebay.com](http://ebay.com), some without shipping fees. Sellers include Goodwill stores that have very good quality used books that may have been read by just one person before being donated.



At [abebooks.com](http://abebooks.com), you'll find trusted independent sellers from over 50 countries who offer millions of new, used, and rare books. A subsidiary of Amazon.com, Inc.



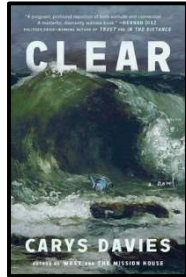
The world's largest online independent used book seller, ThriftBooks.com offers books in a variety of formats and conditions. The ReadingRewards loyalty program provides customers with free books as they accumulate points earned on their purchases.

## WHAT CHURCHES ARE READING

Everyone is encouraged to contribute to this section. Please send book titles and authors to [otseditor@gmail.com](mailto:otseditor@gmail.com).

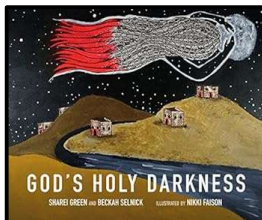
*"I'm of a fearsome mind to throw my arms around every librarian who crosses my path, on behalf of all of the souls they never knew they saved."* — Barbara Kingsolver

**CLEAR; a Novel** by Carys Davies, Scribner, 2024.



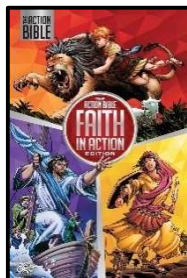
John, an impoverished minister, has accepted a job evicting the lone remaining occupant of an island north of Scotland—Ivar, who has been living alone for decades, with only the animals and the sea for company. Unfolding during the final stages of the infamous Scottish Clearances—a period of the 19th century which saw communities of the rural poor driven off the land in a program of forced evictions—this singular novel explores what binds us together in the face of insurmountable differences, the way history shapes our deepest convictions, and how the human spirit can endure despite all odds.

**GOD'S HOLY DARKNESS** by Sharei Green and Beckah Selnick, Beaming Books, 2022.



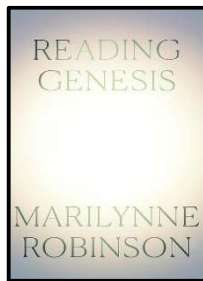
In this beautifully illustrated picture book, the authors deconstruct anti-Blackness in Christian theology by celebrating instances in the story of God's people when darkness, blackness, and night are beautiful, good, and holy. From the darkness at the beginning of creation to the blackness of the sky on the day when Christ's birth was announced to the shepherds, children learn that blackness is something to celebrate as an important element of the life of faith. *Ages 4-7*

**THE ACTION BIBLE: FAITH IN ACTION EDITION** by Sergio Cariello, David C. Cook, 2024.



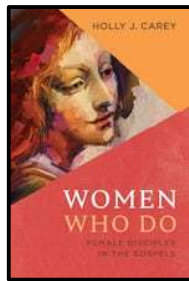
This reimagining of the mega-selling Action Bible combines 230 stories of biblical heroes with vibrant comic-book-style illustrations and an immersive online experience. Readers will explore seven dynamic attributes of God's story, earn Faith in Action Badges representing those qualities, and discover even more through a QR code in each story that takes them to a safe online adventure of games, playlists, Bible studies, activities, and a complete devotional designed to increase their time with God. *Ages 8-12*

**READING GENESIS** by Marilyn Robinson, Farrar Strauss, 2024.



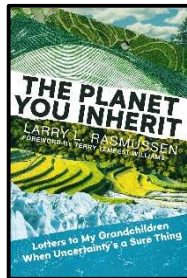
A powerful consideration of the profound meanings and promise of God's enduring covenant with humanity. Academic interpretation of Genesis has centered on the question of its basic coherency, just as fundamentalist interpretation has centered on the question of the appropriateness of reading it as literally true. Both approaches preclude an appreciation of its rich articulation and exploration of themes that resonate through the whole of Scripture. Here, the award-winning novelist and essayist focuses on the literary quality of the text. Her book radiates gratitude for the constancy and benevolence of God's abiding faith in Creation.

**WOMEN WHO DO; Female Disciples in the Gospels** by Holly Carey, Eerdmans, 2023.



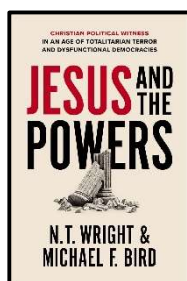
Carey examines what it means to be a disciple and contends that it's the women who best embody discipleship in the Gospels. She first describes the expectations and social roles for women in first-century Greco-Roman and Jewish contexts. Then she offers a close reading of each of the four Gospels, as well as Acts of the Apostles. "Carey's carefully researched and attractively written book is not just a collection of helpful information; it implicitly trains readers to see everything that is in scripture—and everyone." *The Christian Century*

**THE PLANET YOU INHERIT; Letters to My Grandchildren When Uncertainty's a Sure Thing** by Larry L. Rasmussen, Broadleaf Books, 2022.



As a grandfather invested in a green earth and climate justice as well as a scholar of faith-based earth ethics, Rasmussen bridges the gap between generations to write to the future about climate change, global citizenship, democracy, and legacy. In topics ranging from "A Viable Way of Life" and "Democracy" to "Where We've Come From" and "Who We Are Now," Rasmussen explores the large questions of justice, meaning, and faith, encouraging us to speak to and look to the future generations and their future world.

**JESUS AND THE POWERS: Christian Political Witness in an Age of Totalitarian Terror and Dysfunctional Democracies** by N. T. Wright and Michael T. Bird, Zondervan, 2024.



Part political theology, part biblical overview, and part church history. The authors call Christians everywhere to discern the nature of Christian witness. In an age of ascending autocracies, in a time of fear and fragmentation, amid carnage and crises, Jesus is king, and Jesus's kingdom remains the object of the church's witness and work. They reflect on the relevance of this kingdom-oriented approach to current events, including the Russian-Ukraine conflict, the China-Taiwan tension, political turmoil in the USA, UK, and Australia, and the problem of Christian nationalism



## HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE SPRING MEETING



President Janet Howard and Richfield United Methodist Church Librarian Wayne Albertson welcomed everyone to the meeting. The church is celebrating its 170<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year.



The Mission of Richfield UMC is for all people to be able to live in faith, justice, and joy. The library is arranged around these three themes.



Rev. Nate Melcher talked about the importance of church libraries and the power of storytelling. A favorite of his is ***Before the Ever After*** by Jacqueline Woodson.



Author Nancy Koester talked about the importance of Sojourner Truth even today. In ***We Will Be Free***, she chronicles Truth's spiritual journey as an enslaved woman, a working mother, and an itinerant preacher and activist.



"Life is a hard battle anyway. If we laugh and sing a little as we fight the good fight of freedom, it makes it all go easier. I will not allow my life's light to be determined by the darkness around me."  
— Sojourner Truth



Dr. Koester's earlier book, ***Harriet Beecher Stowe; a Spiritual Life***, was also available for purchase. This volume is the first biography of the famous abolitionist and author to focus on her religious background, with particular attention paid to how her beliefs influenced her life and her life's work

## WORKSHOP: LET'S BRAINSTORM ON HOW LIBRARIES CAN SUPPORT YOUR CHURCH'S MISSION

Moderator Roberta Shaw led a lively discussion that included presentations by Leslie Kallas, Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, and Kay Elliasen, Westwood Lutheran Church, as well as contributions from attendees, including Carol Sandberg, Gustavus Adolphus Lutheran Church.

Here are some of their ideas:



- Prominently display your library's mission statement that illustrates how the library supports the mission of the church. The goal is to be relevant and current. A formal weeding policy can head off challenges to withdrawals of "old favorites" that haven't been checked out in years

- Get book recommendations from your pastors - what would they like library to stock? Pay attention to books mentioned in sermons. If possible, get information on long-range plans so you'll have advance notice on books you can get that support them.

- Reach out to every special interest group, committee, task force, etc., in your church. Ask what they need. What books would they like in the library? Display books that would be of interest to them in the places where they meet.



- If your library isn't in a highly visible area in your church, set up special exhibits, featuring current areas of interest, around the church in places where people congregate. Can you strategically relocate some bookcases in high traffic areas outside the library? Can you write a short regular feature about what's new in the library in the church newsletter or other media?

- "Grab them while they're young." Incorporate the library into Sunday School, read to kids in the library, introduce them to what's there, solicit their input. Get a teen-aged advisor to recommend materials for that group.

- Keep ahead of the curve with leaders of book studies and book clubs. What books are they considering for future study? Invite them to meet in the library.

- Sponsor in-person events with local authors (Colleen Baldrica, Heid Erdrich) or Zoom events with others. Most are delighted to have an opportunity to promote their books.



*Special thanks to Jeanne Schleh for her contribution to this page and to Emily Hoch for all the great pictures of the event.*



Some interesting facts about books, courtesy of Bookish Chronicles:

1. Iceland tops the world in per capita book reading.
2. People who read books are less likely to develop Alzheimer's disease.
3. In Brazilian prisons, reading a book can reduce a prisoner's sentence by four days.
4. Virginia Woolf wrote all her books while standing.
5. **The most stolen book is the Bible.**
6. Theodore Roosevelt read an average of one book per day.
7. There are over 20,000 books written about chess.
8. Victor Hugo's ***Les Misérables*** contains a sentence with 823 words.
9. The words "hurry" and "addiction" were invented by William Shakespeare.
10. If all the books in the New York Public Library were lined up, they would stretch 8 miles.
11. Leo Tolstoy's wife hand-copied the manuscript of ***War and Peace*** seven times.
12. Noah Webster took 36 years to write his first dictionary.
13. ***The Mahabharata*** is the only book in the world with over 1,200 characters.



**The library at Hennepin Avenue United Methodist Church keeps a supply of donated Bibles on hand because every few months, someone asks if the library has a Bible they can keep.**

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## FALL MEETING - OCTOBER 12



We'll be gathering at Westwood Lutheran Church in St. Louis Park. Per its website, the church is "a vibrant, caring, and progressive community that welcomes all who seek God. We gather as broken and beloved people to worship God, serve our neighbors, share our gifts, and find support from each other on our spiritual journey."

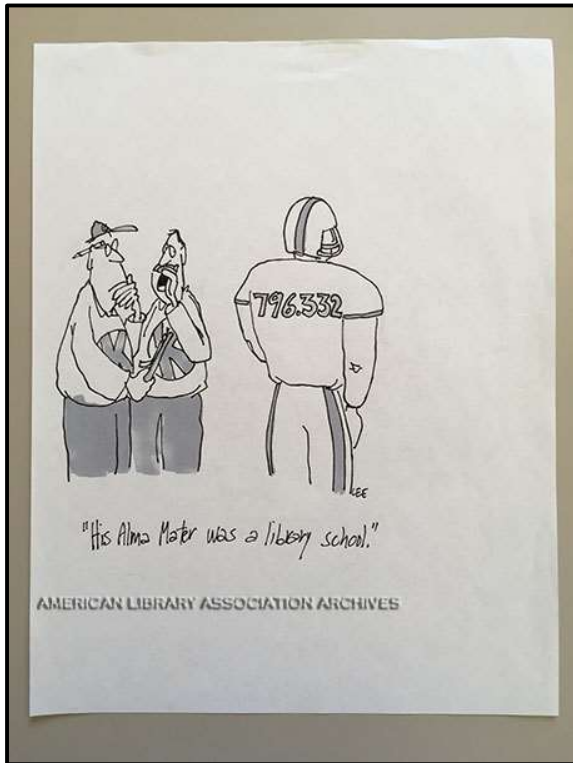
The church was designed in 1969 by Edward Anders Sövik, a son of Lutheran missionaries who arrived at St. Olaf College from China. He started a Northfield architectural firm that specialized in designing churches and became one of the most influential liturgical architects of his time. Sövik was a pioneer in a movement that transformed the way churches were designed. He and others replaced the standard Gothic plan that separated parishioners from the clergy in favor of a more open design in which congregants partly encircle a minister, like the way families and friends gather. Westwood Lutheran Church was one of his favorites among the over 400 churches Sövik designed.



The sanctuary was renovated in 2013. Today it is a beautiful, modern, and welcoming space that seats 500 people on the main floor and 85 in the choir loft. With the natural light coming through the floor to ceiling windows, the sanctuary is an ideal place to worship and envision the majesty of God. The church is located on a small lake with a deck, many beautiful gardens, and a private courtyard.



**TCACLA Fall Meeting  
October 12, 2024**



One of the missions of TCACLA is to provide a forum for church librarians to exchange information with each other. In addition to our meetings and our newsletter, we do this via our Facebook page, Twin Cities Area Church Library Association, and our website at [www.tcaccla.com](http://www.tcaccla.com).



Dulcie Campana is our social media administrator. She is always looking for input from you. If you have an upcoming book event at your church, have had a special promotion for your library, want to recommend a new book, or have any other news that would interest our members, please send the information to [livingoutfaith@hotmail.com](mailto:livingoutfaith@hotmail.com).

**"Few things are better in the world than a room full of librarians. I consider them literary heroes. The keepers and defenders of the written word."**  
*Author Louise Penny*

