

# OFF THE SHELF



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

Fall 2024

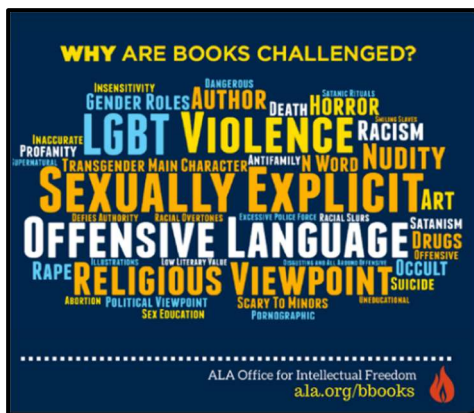
## TCACLA Fall Meeting Westwood Lutheran Church October 12, 2024 8:30-12:30

| Inside This Issue                          |     |
|--|-----|
| Treasurer's Report<br>Host Churches Needed | 2   |
| What Churches Are Reading                  | 3-4 |
| More About the Fall Meeting                | 5   |
| Directions to Westwood Lutheran Church     | 6   |
| Meeting Schedule<br>Registration Form      | 7   |

Have you ever debated whether or not to add a book to your church's collection? How did you come to a decision? How have you responded to questions from church members or others about your collection? Does your church have a statement or process in place to respond to a request that a book be banned?

Please join J.R. Genett, deputy director at Hennepin County Library, to discuss book bans in libraries. J.R. will explain what is a book challenge versus a ban, how public libraries handle these situations, and trends happening around the United States on this topic. She will also discuss the importance of intellectual freedom and the First Amendment.

J.R. Genett is the deputy director of support services at Hennepin County Library, a 41-library system serving Minneapolis and the surrounding county. She is actively involved with the American Library Association, serving on a number of committees and round tables focused on intellectual freedom.



Per the American Library Association, a record 4,240 unique book titles were targeted for censorship in 2023, a 65% increase over the 2,571 unique titles targeted in 2022 and a staggering 128% increase over 2021 numbers. 47% of the books targeted for censorship were titles representing the voices and lived experiences of LGBTQIA+ and BIPOC individuals. Multi-title challenges from groups and individuals comprised about 89% of all book challenges in public libraries in 2023. In 2019, multi-title challenges made up only 5% of book challenges.



### 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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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                   |
|            | -\$400.00   | Insurance Premium             |

09/15/2024 \$1,408.13 **Ending Balance**

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### **HOST CHURCHES NEEDED**

If it's been a while since your church hosted a TCACLA meeting or you've never hosted one, the board encourages you to consider doing so in 2025. Whether your library has 200 books or 2,000, we'd love to see it. TCACLA pays all expenses and the board members plan the program. Here's an endorsement from a previous host: "I have to say that hosting this meeting is so well supported by this board."

## 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).

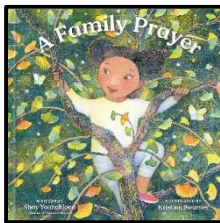
*"I stepped up to the big librarian and asked for a book on stars...It was in that library, reading that book, that the scale of the universe opened up to me."* – Carl Sagan

**JESUS FOR EVERYONE; Not Just Christians** by Amy-Jill Levine, HarperOne, 2024.



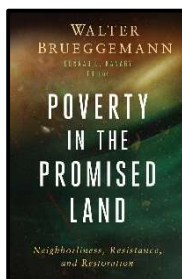
Even for those who reject faith, Jesus's life and his philosophy are important to study because of the insights they hold for us today, writes Levine, a renowned biblical scholar and author. Poring through scripture, analyzing what historical scholarship has revealed about Jesus's views on a number of subjects—including women—reveals surprising messages sure to be fascinating to all readers. Levine invites everyone from faithful Christians, agnostics, and the most committed nonbelievers to appreciate his lasting impact on the modern world.

**A FAMILY PRAYER** by Shay Youngblood, Convergent Books, 2023.



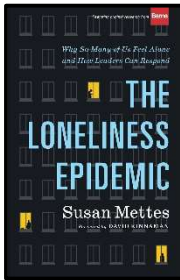
An acclaimed novelist brings to life the prayer of a little brown girl who finds joy in asking God to keep her family safe. Young readers will celebrate every auntie, cousin, and grandmother in their life – biological and chosen. A beautifully illustrated children's book that champions the age-old wisdom that raising a family takes a village and that the love of a community runs soul deep. *Ages 3-7*

**POVERTY IN THE PROMISED LAND; Neighborliness, Resistance, and Restoration** by Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press, 2024.



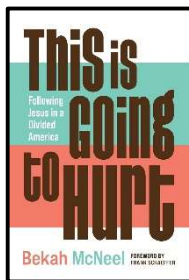
People of God have often believed that individuals are poor because of personal choice. This absolves the social institutions of society, including the church, from responsibility to address structural forces, including within the church itself. Charity and benevolence become the antidote for such a diagnosis of poverty, rather than the deeply rooted change that God intended for the Year of Jubilee and that the early church reflected. This book supports the biblical mandate of neighborliness as both a personal and a corporate response to systemic poverty, a mandate that is the second of the two great commandments.

***THE LONELINESS EPIDEMIC; Why So Many of Us Feel Alone and How Leaders Can Respond***  
by Susan Mettes, Brazos, 2021.



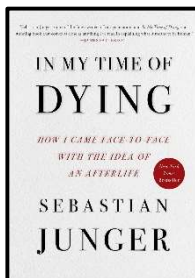
Mettes, a behavioral scientist, illustrates the profound physical, emotional, and social toll of loneliness in the United States, especially among the youngest adults. She highlights the role that belonging, friendship, closeness, and expectations play in preventing it. She also offers meaningful ways the church can minister to lonely people, going far beyond simplistic solutions--like helping them meet new people--to addressing their inner lives and the God who understands them.

***THIS IS GOING TO HURT; Following Jesus in a Divided America*** by Bekah McNeel, Eerdmans, 2024



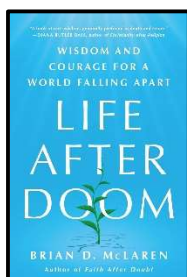
A journalist analyzes the narratives surrounding 6 hot-button issues—immigration, COVID, abortion, critical race theory, gun violence, and climate change. For each topic, she exposes how “us versus them” thinking leads us to turn a blind eye to injustice. Amid culture wars that goad us to take up arms, McNeel reminds readers that Christ calls us to take up our cross. Humorous and insightful, the book offers a nuanced and authentically Christian mode of political engagement.

***IN MY TIME OF DYING; How I Came Face-to-Face with the Idea of an Afterlife*** by Sebastian Junger, Simon & Schuster, 2024.



In 2020, crippled by abdominal pain, Junger was rushed to the hospital. As he began slipping away, he was visited by his dead father, inviting Junger to join him, telling him there is nothing to be afraid of. When he came to, he was told he had suffered a ruptured aneurysm that he should not have survived. This experience spurred Junger, a confirmed atheist, to undertake a scientific, philosophical, and deeply personal examination of mortality and what happens after we die. Part medical drama, part searing autobiography, and part rational inquiry into the ultimate unknowable mystery.

***LIFE AFTER DOOM; Wisdom and Courage for a World Falling Apart*** by Brian D. McLaren, St. Martins, 2024.



In his newest book, activist McLaren engages with the catastrophic failure of both our religious and political leaders to address the dominant realities of our time: ecological overshoot, economic injustice, and the increasing likelihood of civilizational collapse. Blending insights from philosophers, poets, scientists, and theologians, he explores the complexity of hope, the necessity of grief, and the need for new ways of thinking, becoming, and belonging in turbulent times.



Dear friends:

At our fall meeting on October 12, we will hold elections for president and secretary of the TCACLA board. Wayne and I are completing our two-year terms and are eligible to serve another two years. However, we would like to encourage any member who might be interested in serving on the board, now or in the future, to contact any current officer. In my own experience, I have found our board to be very collaborative. Everyone contributes to finding speakers and addressing issues of interest to church librarians and their congregations for our spring and fall meetings. Service on the board is neither onerous nor time-consuming (4-5 meetings per year, usually via Zoom and email communication in between). Some of us would even say it's the most fun board we've served on! It's particularly important to the vitality of TCACLA to continually inject new ideas and perspectives by rotating board membership and expanding participation to the next generation. Please thoughtfully consider whether you or someone you know might like to step up.

*Janet Howard, President*



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### Most Frequently Challenged Books in 2023

1. ***Gender Queer; a Memoir*** by Maia Kobabe
2. ***All Boys Aren't Blue*** by George M. Johnson
3. ***This Book is Gay*** by Juno Dawson
4. ***The Perks of Being a Wallflower*** by Stephen Chbosky
5. ***Flamer*** by Mike Curato
6. ***The Bluest Eye*** by Toni Morrison
7. ***Me and Earl and the Dying Girl*** by Jesse Andrews
8. ***Tricks*** by Ellen Hopkins
9. ***Let's Talk About It*** by Erika Moen
10. ***Sold*** by Patricia McCormick

Source: American Library Association. Tie for #7 and #8.

How many of these books are in your church library? Did you know that they are banned in some libraries? Following J.R. Genett's presentation on October 12, Jeanne Schleh will moderate what is sure to be a lively discussion about banned books and church libraries, beginning with some of our members sharing their experiences.

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The most banned book of all time is **1984** but the reasons for the banning have varied over time.

The United Church of Christ has developed a "Banned Books Blessing" worship resource that is available for download on its website.

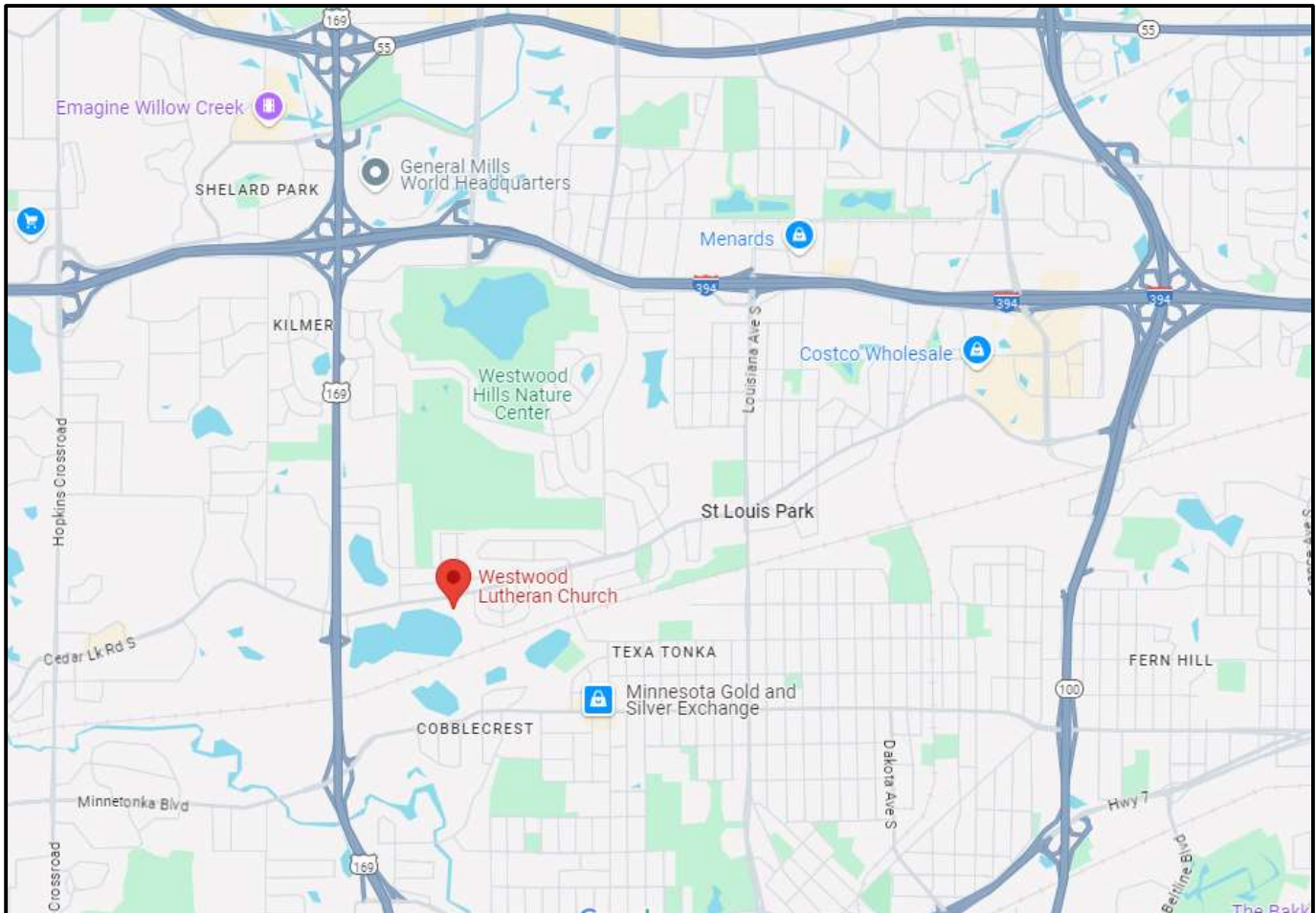
***Charlotte's Web*** is banned in a few schools because some religious people believe that only human beings should be portrayed with the ability to communicate through speech.

Book banning has been around for a long time. In 213 BCE, a Chinese emperor banned every book that wasn't concerned with agriculture, medicine, telling the future, or the emperor himself.

A California school district once banned ***The Lorax*** because it "criminalized the foresting industry" and would encourage children to oppose logging.

# WESTWOOD LUTHERAN CHURCH

9001 Cedar Lake Road  
St. Louis Park



## Directions:

- Because of the road construction in the area, your best route is to approach the church from U.S. Highway 169.
- Take the east exit to Cedar Lake Road.
- Ignore signs that say that Cedar Lake Road is closed. You can still get through to the church.
- The church will be on your right after a short distance. Watch for the signs.
- As you enter the parking lot, look for the second door, the one under the awning.



**Twin Cities Area Church Library Association Meeting  
Saturday, October 12, 2024**

*The book swap and church library will be open all morning.*

|       |   |
|-------|---|
| 8:30  | Registration  |
| 9:00  | Welcome and Devotions                               |
| 9:15  | Business Meeting: Election of President & Secretary |
| 9:30  | Banned Books  |
| 10:30 | Break; Library and Church Tours                     |
| 10:45 | Workshop – Controversial Books & Church Libraries   |
| 11:30 | Break   |
| 11:45 | Lunch   |

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**TCACLA Fall Meeting  
October 12, 2024  
MEETING REGISTRATION FORM**

**Please pre-register by October 8.**

Your church name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) of person(s) attending: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

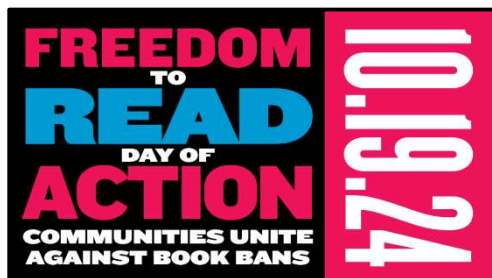
Number of registrants: \_\_\_\_\_ x \$15.00 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_.

Make checks payable to TCACLA. Mail the completed form and check(s) to:

Roberta Shaw  
940 Franklin Ter Apt 404  
Minneapolis MN 55406-1136



**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 her at [livingoutfaith@hotmail.com](mailto:livingoutfaith@hotmail.com).

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