

OFF THE SHELF



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

Winter 2025

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Wayne Albertson led us in devotions. During a brief business meeting, he was elected to a second term as our Secretary and Janet Howard was elected to a second term as our President.



Jeanne Schleh moderated a discussion about the role controversial books can play in church libraries.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE FALL 2024 MEETING

Our keynote speaker was J. R. Genett, a Deputy Director of Hennepin County Library. Her topic was banned books.



The book swap was so popular that two tables were needed to display all the books that were available.



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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	Beginning Balance
	\$375.00	Membership Renewals
	\$957.00	Meeting Registration
	\$310.00	Book Sales
	-\$1,410.38	Meeting Expenses
	-\$14.21	TCACLA Notepaper
	-\$213.31	<i>Off the Shelf</i> Expenses
	-\$400.00	Insurance Premium ¹
	-\$22.17	Website Fee
12/31/2024	\$1,437.91	Ending Balance

¹Many host churches now require that we have liability insurance for our meeting.

NEW SOCIAL MEDIA ADMINISTRATOR NEEDED



After many years as our Social Media Administrator, Dulcie Campana would like to retire. She currently posts information on Facebook about our organization, our meetings, and our newsletter, along with sharing others' posts about libraries. She also posts some of the same information on our website, www.tcacla.com, and maintains the archives of *Off the Shelf* that are stored there.

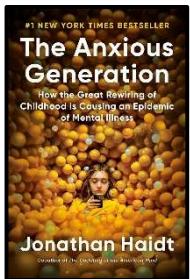
If you're a user of Facebook and possibly other social media apps, please consider volunteering for this position job by contacting otseditor@gmail.com. It's a great way to become involved with TCACLA. You'll work closely with Laura Dirks, Dulcie will train you, and Emily Hoch has volunteered to be our photographer at meetings.

WHAT CHURCHES ARE READING

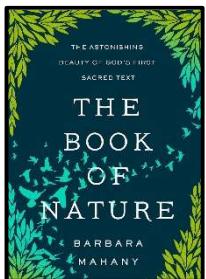
Everyone is encouraged to contribute to this section. Please send book titles and authors to otseditor@gmail.com.

“Without libraries, what have we? We have no past and no future.” – Ray Bradbury

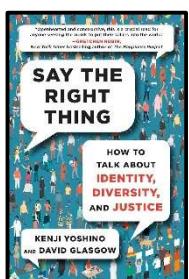
THE ANXIOUS GENERATION: How the Great Rewiring of Childhood is Causing an Epidemic of Mental Illness by Jonathan Haidt, Penguin Press, 2024.



THE BOOK OF NATURE; The Astonishing Beauty of God's First Sacred Text by Barbara Mahany, Broadleaf Books, 2023.



SAY THE RIGHT THING; How to Talk About Identity, Diversity, and Justice by Kenji Yoshino and David Glasgow, Simon Element, 2023.

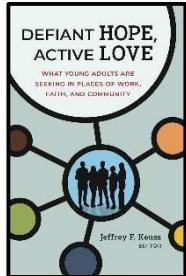


After more than a decade of stability or improvement, the mental health of adolescents plunged in the early 2010s. Rates of depression, anxiety, self-harm, and suicide rose sharply, more than doubling on many measures. Why? An investigation into the collapse of youth mental health in the era of smartphones, social media, and big tech. “With tenacity and candor, Haidt lays out the consequences that have come with allowing kids to drift further into the virtual world while also offering suggestions and solutions that could help protect a new generation of kids.” —Shannon Carlin, **TIME**, *100 Must-Read Books of 2024*.

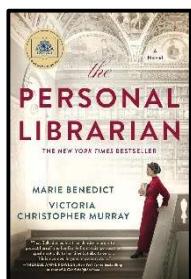
Weaving together the astonishments of science; the profound wisdom of thinkers, poets, and observers who have come before us; and her own spiritual practice and gentle observation, Mahany introduces readers to The Book of Nature, an experiential framework of the divine. God's first revelation came to us through an ongoing creation, one that--through stillness and attentiveness to the rumblings of the heavens, the seasonal eruptions of earth, the invisible pull of migration, of tide, and of celestial shifting--draws us into sacred encounter. We needn't look farther for the divine.

The fear of saying the wrong thing sometimes prevents us from speaking up at all, thus depriving people from marginalized groups of support and stalling progress toward a more just and inclusive society. Through stories drawn from contexts as varied as social media posts, dinner party conversations, and workplace disputes, the authors offer 7 user-friendly principles that teach skills such as how to avoid common conversational pitfalls, engage in respectful disagreement, offer authentic apologies, and better support people in our lives who experience bias.

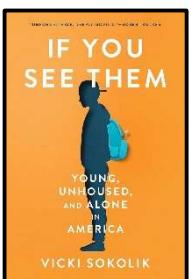
DEFIANT HOPE, ACTIVE LOVE: What Young Adults Are Seeking in Places of Work, Faith, and Community by Jeffrey Keuss, Eerdmans, 2024.



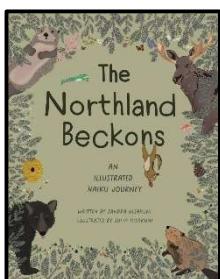
THE PERSONAL LIBRARIAN by Marie Benedict and Victoria C. Murray, Berkley, 2021.



IF YOU SEE THEM: Young, Unhoused, and Alone in America by Vicki Sokolik, Spiegel & Grau, 2024.



THE NORTHLAND BECKONS; An Illustrated Haiku Journey by Sandra Hisakuni, Beaver's Pond Press, 2024.



Keuss, a professor of Christian ministry, theology, and culture, and a multigenerational team of scholars investigated how faith communities can make themselves more hospitable to the next generation of Christians. Backed by 5 years of qualitative and quantitative research, the Pivot NW research team offers practical recommendations for involving young adults in the community, including loosening demands for church membership, involving young adults in leadership earlier, addressing the economic difficulties of millennials, and understanding religious trauma.

A historical novel based on the life of Belle Marion Greener. While in her 20's, she is hired by J. P. Morgan to curate a collection of rare manuscripts, books, and artwork for his newly built Pierpont Morgan Library. Belle becomes a fixture in New York City society and one of the most powerful people in the art and book world. But she has a secret that she must protect at all costs. Her dark complexion isn't because of her alleged Portuguese heritage; she's actually African American.

A moving exploration of the crisis of homeless youth. Hiding in plain sight, they survive on free school breakfasts and lunches; join school sports teams to shower; and sleep on friends' couches, in parks, or on the streets. Sokolik wakes readers up to this issue through her own story of advocacy and through the voices of the kids themselves. Her grassroots action demonstrates the world-shifting power of compassion, acceptance, belonging, and self-determination, and the capacity each of us has to change our communities for the better.

A collection of haiku poetry written by a Minneapolis author and illustrated by her sister. It allows young readers to explore nature and meet the animals who call this wilderness home. "Sandra's use of poetry to describe the BWCA is captivating and Sofia's illustrations are authentic and heart-warming. A smiling frog never looked so good." - Joe Friedrichs, award-winning journalist and podcaster. Ages 4-8

MORE HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE FALL 2024 MEETING



Hennepin County Library's Experience with Banned Books

- A patron's book challenge may lead to a book being banned by the library but the author's first amendment rights also must be considered.
- Challengers aren't always conservatives as is commonly believed.
- Most of the challenged books are books for children and teens that have an LGBTQ+ storyline.
- The library wants to make these books available to people who want to read them to see what the controversy is all about. They also feel a responsibility to represent all points of view. This can be hard on the library staff.
- The Hennepin County Library typically receives 6-12 challenges in a year, but there were only 2 in 2023. They are considering ignoring challenges that are made by non-Hennepin County residents.

- Some publishers no longer print copies of their older books that are now controversial. Most notably, at the request of the Dr. Seuss estate, 6 titles that include racial and/or ethnic stereotypes are no longer available.
- While 46% of book challenges are made at public libraries, school libraries are also dealing with this issue. Parents are trying to control what other parents' children read; they reach out to their local school boards and county commissioners. Many parents organized over this issue during the COVID 19 epidemic when schools were closed.
- Book challenges aren't new. The first one was when the post office began delivering books by mail!
- During the McCarthy era, on June 25, 1953, the American Library Association adopted its Freedom to Read Statement: "We trust the people of this nation to make their own decisions about what they read and believe."
- County commissioners and school board members who oversee libraries are elected positions. **Your vote counts.**

The Library Ministry at Westwood Lutheran Church began in 1955. It is funded by a grant and has over 5,000 books in 2 distinct spaces.



Living Room

By Door 1

Schedule a meeting space.

Table & Coffee Maker

Quiet Worship with Screen

Book Collections

Adult Fiction

Religion

Biographies

Art

And more...



Reading Room

Next to the Commons

Enjoy a welcoming reading space.

Children & Youth Books

Adult Non-fiction Books

Books on Current Themes

Parenting

Retirement

Racial equity

Environment

And more...

Carol Sandberg, Gustavus Adolphus Lutheran Church, shared her church's experience participating in Read Brave, a citywide book club hosted by Mayor Carter and the St. Paul Public Library. The theme in 2024 was "Celebrating Identities." The book selected was a young adult novel, ***Man o' War*** by Cory McCarthy. A Stonewall Honor Book, ***Man o' War*** is a candid and emotional coming-of-age story that follows the journey of an Irish Lebanese American trans teen navigating the challenges and joys of self-discovery and love amid the confines of a small, midwestern town. It is recommended for older teens and adults.



Laura Dirks talked about the book club at Hennepin Avenue United Methodist Church deciding to spend a year reading banned books. There was a lot of support from the church, including the creation of a bookmark to publicize the group. Group members were surprised to see so many of the classic books that they'd read in high school and college are now being banned. Conclusions: (1) Books that appear on lists of banned books also appear on lists of books that have won awards. (2) People who want to ban a book haven't always read the entire book. This can lead to a misunderstanding of what's being challenged. (3) Banning a book can have the effect of increasing its sales. Many of the banned books had depressing themes. A humorous book was selected to start 2025.

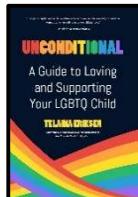
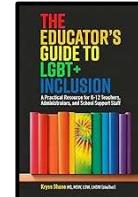
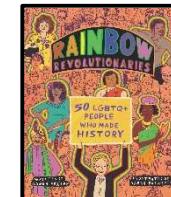
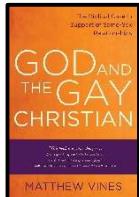
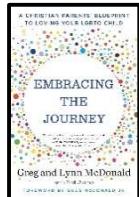
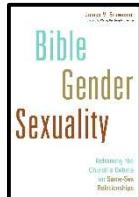


- ⇒ Jeanne Schleh talked about the biographical book, ***IN THE MARGINS: A Transgender Man's Journey with Scripture*** by Shannon T. L. Kearns.
- ⇒ Roberta Shaw presented the Treasurer's Report and talked about banned books discussions at Trinity Lutheran Church.



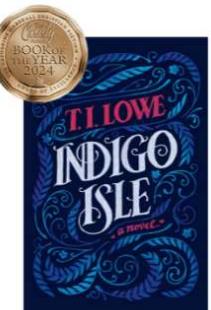
THANKS TO MARY ANDERSON FOR THIS LIST OF CHRISTIAN BOOKS THAT HAVE BEEN BANNED

- ***BE AN INCLUSION ALLY: The ABCs of LGBTQ+*** by Lisa Koenecke
- ***BIBLE, GENDER, SEXUALITY: Reframing the Church's Debate on Same-Sex Relationships*** by James V. Brownson
- ***EMBRACING THE JOURNEY: Christian Parents' Blueprint to Loving Your LGBTQ Child*** by Greg McDonald
- ***GOD & THE GAY CHRISTIAN: The Biblical Case in Support of Same-Sex Relationships*** by Matthew Vines
- ***PRIDE: An Inspirational History of the LGBTQ+ Movement*** by Stella Caldwell and Layton Williams
- ***RAINBOW REVOLUTIONARIES: 50 LGBTQ+ People Who Made History*** by Sarah Prager
- ***THE EDUCATOR'S GUIDE TO LGBT+ INCLUSION: A Practical Resource for K-12 Teachers, Administrators, and School Support Staff*** by Kryss Shane
- ***UNCONDITIONAL: A Guide to Loving and Supporting Your LGBTQ Child*** by Telaina Erickson & Eric Rosswood



ODDS 'N' ENDS

The Christy Award™ was established by the Evangelical Christian Publishers Association in 1999 to acknowledge the value and impact of the novel of faith in contemporary culture. Awards in several categories, including mystery, young adult, historical, and romance, honor and promote the best accomplishments of writers who write from a perspective of faith and who create stories with matters of belief at their core. In 2024, The Book of the Year was awarded to ***INDIGO ISLE*** by T. I. Lowe. For complete information on the finalists in each category, go to www.christyawards.com.



The TCACLA Spring 2025 meeting will be on Saturday, May 10, at Messiah United Methodist Church in Plymouth. Per its website: "Messiah is an inclusive community of people who come alongside each other to love as Jesus did: loving God, loving each other, and putting that love to work in the world. Since our beginning in 1868, change has been a recurring theme. What was a small country church has become a large suburban congregation. We have changed buildings, locations, and even names. But the one thing that has not changed is a commitment to following Jesus. Today, we are a congregation of 900 members with a worship attendance of 500 in person and online. We have a strong Faith Group ministry with groups for children, youth, and adults. We started Bloom Early Learning & Child Care to make childcare available for families unable to afford childcare. Messiah is actively involved in projects in the west suburban area, Minneapolis, and Kenya."



Your 2025 membership form is enclosed with this issue. For just \$15.00, any number of people from your church can receive e-mailed copies of *Off the Shelf*. If you would like more than 1 paper copy with your membership, the cost for each additional subscription is \$7.50.

Please complete both sides of the form. It should be mailed, along with your check(s), by no later than March 31.

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 this fall or in 2026. Whether your library has 200 books or 2,000, we'd love to see it. TCACLA pays all expenses and the board plans the program.

If you would like a copy of the list of interesting book banning websites that was distributed at the Fall meeting, send your request to otseditor@gmail.com. It will be sent to you via a PDF attachment in an email or a paper copy can be mailed to you.



A Little Free Library in Washington Terrace, Utah. (Photo courtesy of Little Free Library; photo illustration by Ron Charles/The Washington Post)



TCACLA Spring Meeting May 10, 2025

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.tcacla.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.

OFF THE SHELF

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