

OFF THE SHELF



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

Summer 2025

SPRING MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

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We gathered at Messiah United Methodist Church in Plymouth on May 10 to learn about The Ministry Lab. See inside for copies of the slides from the presentation.



Evie Severyn, Messiah UMC librarian, welcomed us and gave us a brief history of her church.



There was time during the morning to tour the church, visit the library, and check out 3 tables of free books.

Heather Felt, Director of Community Engagement, led us in devotions.



Continued on page 5

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

01/01/2025	\$1,437.91	Beginning Balance
	\$375.00	Membership Renewals
	\$315.00	Meeting Registration
	-\$150.70	<i>Off the Shelf</i> Expenses
	-\$296.67	Meeting Expenses
	-\$22.17	Website Fee
	-\$400.00	Insurance
07/25/2025	\$1,258.37	Ending Balance



We need to elect a new Vice President and a new Treasurer for 2026-2027. A full-page document that describes the duties of these positions and the time involved was distributed at the Spring meeting. Another copy is attached to the email with this newsletter.

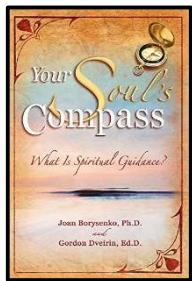
You (and perhaps with a friend) are encouraged to volunteer for one of these positions. See these words from co-President Jeanne Schleh in 2022 when her term expired: "I can assure you, based on my own history, that NO experience is required. What is needed is a love of libraries and enjoyment of brainstorming with other board members to come up with two programs a year that will intrigue church librarians. We meet (very efficiently) by Zoom and email, so this is not a time-consuming job."

WHAT CHURCHES ARE READING

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

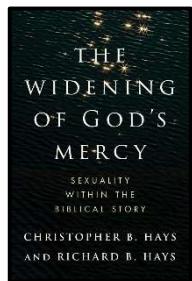
“Do not mess with librarians. The inner strength required to meticulously care for history’s greatest works of literature and then just let total strangers borrow them willy-nilly is Jedi level stuff.” — Jonathan Edward Durham

YOUR SOUL’S COMPASS; What is Spiritual Guidance? by Joan Borysenko, Hay House, 2008.



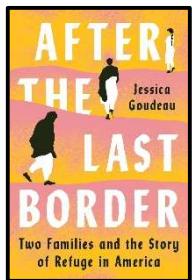
Sacred texts ranging from the Torah to the New Testament, the Tao Te Ching to the Buddhist scriptures, the Vedantas to the Koran, speak of making life-enhancing choices where a force greater than the individual flows through us and informs our thoughts and actions. This book focuses on the three classic aspects of living such a spiritually guided life: (1) alignment: maintaining a direct and personal connection to the Source of our Being; (2) discernment: distinguishing the movement of Spirit in our lives from our own wants, fears and social conditioning; and (3) action: making our best, most inspired contribution to the evolution of life.

THE WIDENING OF GOD’S MERCY; Sexuality Within the Biblical Story by Christopher and Richard Hays, Yale University Press, 2024.



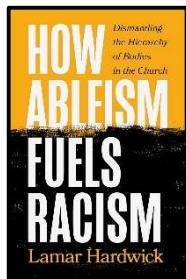
Richard and Christopher Hays explore a more expansive way of listening to the overarching story that scripture tells. They remind readers of a dynamic and gracious God who is willing to change his mind, consistently broadening his grace to include more and more people. Those who were once outsiders find themselves surprisingly embraced within the people of God, while those who sought to enforce exclusive boundaries are challenged to rethink their understanding of God's ways. The book begins with the authors' personal experiences of controversies over sexuality and closes with Richard Hays's epilogue reflecting on his own change of heart and mind.

AFTER THE LAST BORDER; Two Families and the Story of Refuge in America by Jessica Goudeau, Viking, 2020.

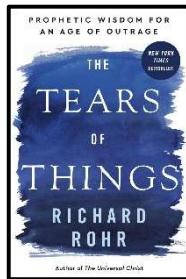


Goudeau offers an intimate look at the lives of two women as they struggle for the 21st-century American dream as refugees in Austin, TX. Mu Naw, a Christian from Myanmar struggling to put down roots with her family, was accepted after decades in a refugee camp at a time when the US was at its most open to displaced families. Hasna, a Muslim from Syria, agrees to relocate as a last resort for the safety of her family, only to be separated from her children by a sudden ban on refugees from Muslim countries. The book is hailed as a dramatic, character-driven story within a larger history - the evolution of modern refugee resettlement in the United States.

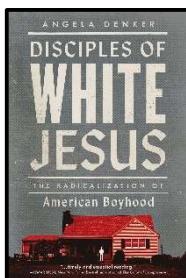
HOW ABLEISM FUELS RACISM; Dismantling the Hierarchy of Bodies in the Church by Lamar Hardwick, Brazos Press, 2024.



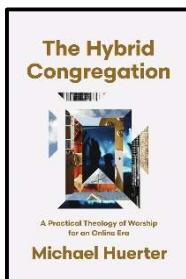
THE TEARS OF THINGS; Prophetic Wisdom for an Age of Outrage by Richard Rohr, Convergent Books, 2025.



DISCIPLES OF WHITE JESUS; The Radicalization of an American Boyhood by Angela Denker, Broadleaf Books, 2025.



THE HYBRID CONGREGATION; A Practical Theology of Worship for an Online Era by Michael Huerter, IVP Academic, 2025.



Hardwick, a Black autistic pastor and disability scholar, believes that ableism - the idea that certain bodies are better than others - and the disability discrimination fueled by this perspective are the root causes of racial bias and injustice in American culture and in the church. He uses historical records, biblical interpretation, and disability studies to examine how ableism in the US has led to the creation of images, idols, and institutions that perpetuate both disability and racial discrimination. Calling the church into action, he offers practical steps to help readers dismantle ableism and racism both in attitude and practice.

How do we live compassionately in a time of violence and despair? Biblical scholar Rohr turns to the writings of the Jewish prophets, revealing how some of the lesser-read books of the Bible offer a crucial path forward today. In almost every case, their initial rage and their accusatory words evolve into a profound pathos and lamentation about our shared human condition and the world's suffering. This approach to confronting evil and injustice acknowledges the interconnectedness of every living being and the reality of a divine and universal love.

A comprehensive look at the rise in radicalization among young white men in America, especially focused on the role of right-wing Christianity in the increase of religious-based hatred and violence. Casting her journalist's eye across the US, Denker retraces the steps of a racist South Carolina mass shooter and a Phoenix skinhead turned Evangelical pastor, interviews middle school teachers and coaches in the Midwest, and introduces readers to young men across the country who will both confirm and confound our ideas about American boyhood -- boys and men who are forging new identities grounded in kindness, grace, respect, and even joy.

With the rise of online platforms, including social media and video conferencing tools, the concept of a physical church space is being redefined. The virtual world is now an extension of our physical reality. Huerter, a seasoned church musician and scholar, guides readers through a detailed account of how congregations are adapting to digital mediatization, enriched by interviews with leading scholars and practitioners.

THE MINISTRY LAB PRESENTATION

THE MINISTRY LAB TOOLS, TOOLKITS, TRANSFORMATION



theministrylab.org

WHO IS THE MINISTRY LAB?

MEMBER SUPPORTED:
ECUMENICAL MEMBERS
SUBSCRIPTION MEMBERS



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THE MINISTRY LAB GROUND IN GRATITUDE



theministrylab.org

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WHY IS THE MINISTRY LAB?

The Ministry Lab curates and creates resources to generate experimentation and innovation in diverse ministry settings.



Three Transformational Tools



Innovation Culture Index
cymt.org/innovation-culture-index



Community Discovery Package
cymt.org/community-discovery-package



cymt.org/mlt/

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WHAT IS UP AT THE MINISTRY LAB?

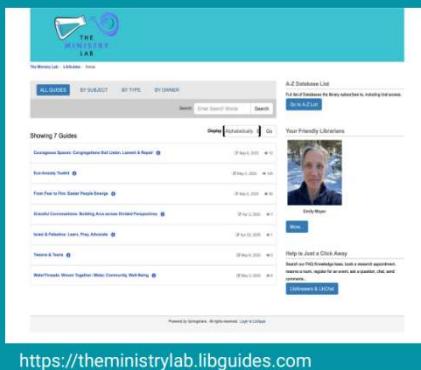
The Ministry Lab is experimenting and innovating to better serve diverse ministry settings.



Lib Guides

https://theministrylab.libguides.com/Tweens_Teens

https://theministrylab.libguides.com/Childrens_Books



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SIX NEW THINGS



SCAN ME

theministrylab.org/six-new-things

theministrylab.libguides.com/Tweens_Teens



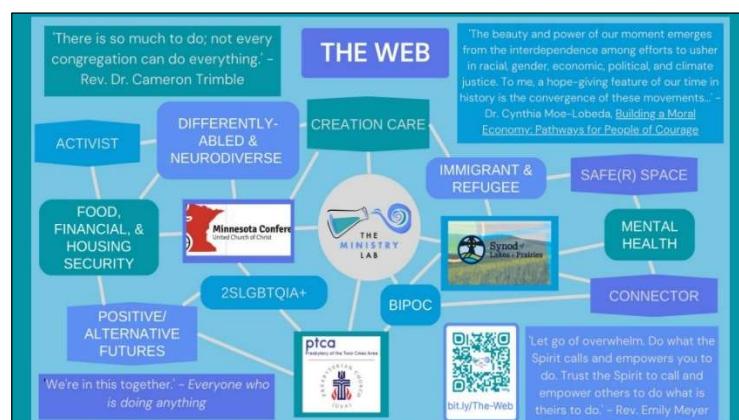
Toolkits



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The beauty and power of our moment emerges from the interdependence among efforts to usher in racial, gender, economic, political, and climate justice. To me, a hope-giving feature of our time in history is the convergence of these movements. - Dr. Cynthia Moe-Lobeda, *Building a More Moral Economy, Pathways for People of Courage*

WHERE TO FIND EVERYTHING:

Contact: Rev. Emily Meyer @ The Ministry Lab

Website: theministrylab.org

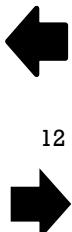


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FREE & NOT-SO-FREE

Membership:

~FREE for MN UCC & PCUSA

~sliding scale annual fees for all others

Currently FREE for all through the website:

~Six New Things - all listings

~All Lib Guides

~All Toolkits



SCAN ME

FREE & NOT-SO-FREE

ICI

~FREE for all current members
(soon half-price for all members)

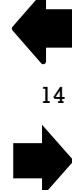
CDP & Ministry Transformation Labs

~sliding scale and set fees through MLC
(regardless of membership)



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FREE & NOT-SO-FREE

Consultations:

Resourcing:

~FREE for all current members

~fee scale on the horizon for non-members

Program, System, Mission/Vision:

~currently FREE for all members

~sliding scale fee on the horizon

~fee scale on the horizon for non-members



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New addresses!!!

- email: ministrylab@uccmn.org
- post: The Ministry Lab / 122 W Franklin Ave Ste 200 / Minneapolis, MN 55404-2451



FREE & NOT-SO-FREE

Labyrinth

- ~\$25/PCUSA; \$50/other members
- ~not available to non-members



SCAN ME

Singing Bowl

- ~\$15 - members
- ~not available to non members

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INTRODUCTION TO INNOVATION



Toolkits



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What's A Toolkit?

Toolkit Definition

A toolkit is a curated collection of resources designed to help readers of different age groups or life experiences explore a common topic or theme. Toolkits may come with discussion questions intended to create conversation between readers of different demographics and encourage personal reflections on the toolkit's subject.

Why Toolkits?

Foster community discussion

- Communities do better when everyone, regardless of age or demographic, can explore the mission, passions, values, and faith a community shares.
- Discussion questions help facilitate targeted discussion around a topic or theme regardless of age.

Align with your Church's mission

- Toolkits give a congregation a point of reference to learn more about the Church's mission, initiatives, or passions.
- Do you know your church's mission or passions?
 - These are usually determined by your church's lay leadership committee and / or ministry team.
 - Discernment questions: What is the church for? What are our gifts? What are our values?

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Courageous Spaces: Congregations that Listen, Lament & Reconcile



theministrylab.libguides.com/CourageousSpaces

theministrylab.org

Graceful Conversations Building Arcs across Divided Perspectives



A 5-part series of self-reflection and toolkit-development to build safe(r) spaces for difficult discussions.

<https://theministrylab.libguides.com/GracefulConversations>

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Toolkits

WATERTHREADS



WOVEN TOGETHER:
WATER,
COMMUNITY,
WELL-BEING

- Books, videos & discussion questions for all ages
- Water & faith curricula
- Prayer & Worship resources
- Engage Indigenous climate care leaders
- Support Indigenous-led climate-related businesses

<https://theministrylab.libguides.com/WaterThreads>

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Toolkits



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Eco-Anxiety Toolkit

Multi-media resources to support noticing, naming, and addressing climate-related mental health concerns in children, youth, adults, and elders.

theministrylab.org



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Design Your Own Toolkit

Pick a theme

- A passion or question that's important to your church
- Faith formation
- Discernment
- Creation Care
- Homelessness and poverty
- LGBTQ+
- Racial justice & equality
- Hope
- Forgiveness
- Grief

Pick a book

Using the *Suggested Titles* booklist and knowledge of your library's collection, write down 1 thematically relevant book or resource per age demographic on your worksheet.

Pick a demographic

Select at least 2 of the following demographics:

- Adults
- Care givers
- Teens
- Kids
- Young children
- Another demographic

Pick a discussion question

What would you like your readers to reflect on as they read your books? This discussion question may be simple or complex.

Write the discussion question down on your worksheet.

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Emily Hoch created the slides with a dark blue background. After Emily Meyer's formal presentation, they facilitated a workshop on *Toolkit Power – Aligning the Library with Your Church's Mission*. Participants at each table worked on designing their own toolkit.



Current Members of the Twin Cities Area Church Library Association

Cathedral Church of St. Mark - Minneapolis
First Lutheran Church - Duluth
Glen Cary Lutheran Church - Ham Lake
Gloria Dei Lutheran Church - St. Paul
Gustavus Adolphus Lutheran Church - St. Paul
Hennepin Avenue United Methodist Church - Minneapolis
Highview Christiana Lutheran Church - Farmington
Holy Trinity Lutheran Church - Minneapolis
House of Hope Presbyterian Church - St. Paul
Lord of Life Lutheran Church - Ramsey
Maternity of Mary Catholic Church - St. Paul
Messiah United Methodist Church - Plymouth
Newport Lutheran Church - Newport
Plymouth Congregational Church - Minneapolis
Prince of Peace Lutheran Church - Brooklyn Park
Richfield United Methodist Church - Minneapolis
St. Michael's Lutheran Church - Bloomington
St. Peder's Lutheran Church - Minneapolis
St. Philip's Lutheran Church - Fridley
Westwood Lutheran Church - Minneapolis
Zion Lutheran Church - Anoka



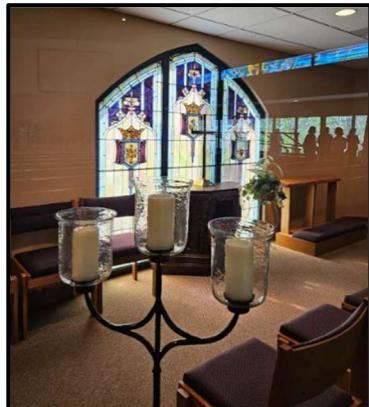
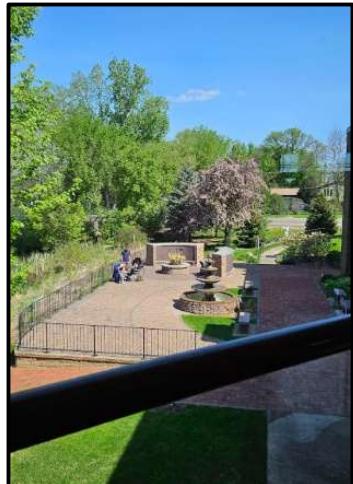
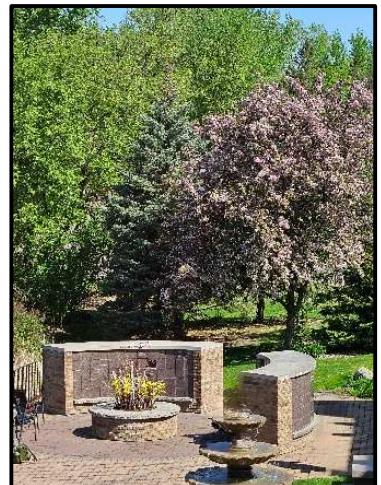
TCACLA has its roots in a national organization that began in 1958. In that year, Erwin John, librarian at Mount Olivet Lutheran Church in Minneapolis, with the support of 3 Lutheran publishers, created the Lutheran Church Library Association (LCLA) and became its first president.

The goal of LCLA was to provide a forum where church librarians nationwide could share ideas, learn about new resources, and have access to multiple book reviews. Over time, it grew to 50 local chapters, including the Twin Cities Area Chapter, which began in 1966. In 2004, LCLA's members voted to change the organization's name to National Church Library Association (NCLA) to better reflect the ecumenical nature of its membership. Sadly, NCLA dissolved at the end of 2012 when it was no longer financially viable. When the Twin Cities Area Church Library Association was created on January 1, 2013, we became one of a few NCLA chapters that successfully continued as a separate legal entity.

Through all these changes the mission remains the same: To energize church library ministry through education, resource sharing, spiritual encouragement and fellowship.

Secular Books Do you have secular books in your church library? There is an interesting discussion about this topic on the Church Librarians Network website: <https://churchlibrarians.ning.com/QandA/secular-books>

MESSIAH UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



Special thanks to Susan Ohnesorge for her contributions to this section.



Our Fall meeting will be on Saturday, October 4, at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church. Our keynote speaker that morning is Shari Seifert, author of ***Ashes to Action: Finding Myself at the Intersection of the Minneapolis Uprising***. Her book recounts her personal experience and her church's ministry in their community following the death of George Floyd.

