

OFF THE SHELF



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

Winter 2026

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE FALL 2025 MEETING

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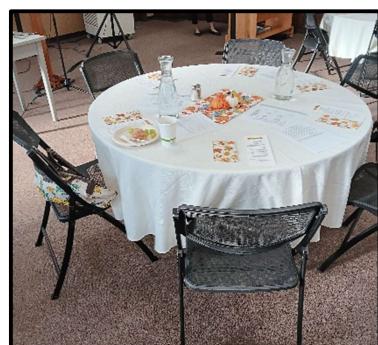
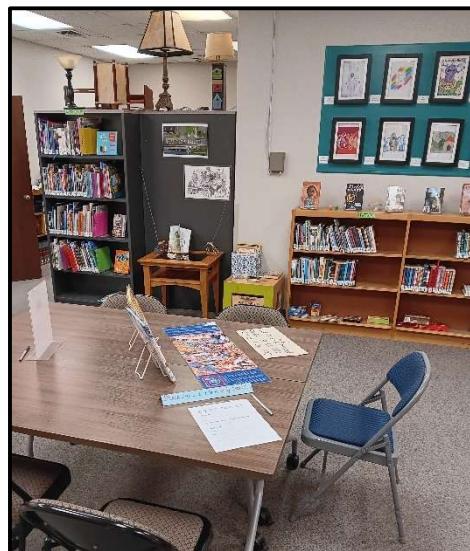
Roberta Shaw welcomed us to Holy Trinity Lutheran Church and read a devotion written by Thich Nhat Hahn. It is included in the book, ***Earth Prayers: 365 Prayers, Poems, and Invocations from Around the World***.



At the annual business meeting, led by President Janet Howard, Bethany Hyde was elected as Treasurer for 2026-27. There were no nominations for the open Vice President position. In accordance with our bylaws, the board elected Evie Severyn as the Vice President for 2026-27 at its November 15 meeting.



Lisa Kloskin provided an overview of the products offered by Augsburg Fortress and talked about trends in religious book publishing. Books are currently "having a moment," especially religious books.



Continued on p. 5

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: 21 Churches

01/01/2025	\$1,437.91	Beginning Balance
	\$375.00	Membership Renewals
	\$627.00	Meeting Registration
	-\$706.08	Meeting Expenses
	-\$238.40	<i>Off the Shelf</i> Expenses
	-\$400.00	Insurance Premium
	-\$35.17	Website Fee
12/31/2025	\$1,060.26	Ending Balance



Protecting book covers in libraries is essential for maintaining their longevity and appearance. Here are some effective methods from Demco, a provider of library supplies.

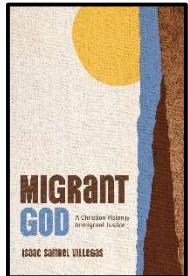
- **Plastic Covers:** Use adjustable or exact-size plastic covers for both hardcover and paperback books. Polyester covers are highly durable and safe for archival materials.
- **Dust Jacket Covers:** For hardcover books with dust jackets, transparent covers with paper liners can protect the graphics while adding durability.
- **Tape Reinforcement:** Reinforce the spine and corners of paperback books with clear, acid-free tape to prevent wear and tear.
- **Lamination:** Laminate paperback covers to make them more resistant to damage. Ensure the lamination material is acid-free to avoid deterioration over time.
- **Storage Practices:** Store books upright and avoid overcrowding shelves to prevent bending or warping.
- **Regular Maintenance:** Inspect books periodically for damage and repair them promptly to extend their lifespan.

WHAT CHURCHES ARE READING

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

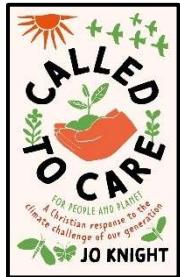
“The only thing you absolutely have to know is the location of the library.” – Albert Einstein

MIGRANT GOD; A Christian Vision for Immigrant Justice by Isaac Samuel Villegas, Eerdmans, 2025.



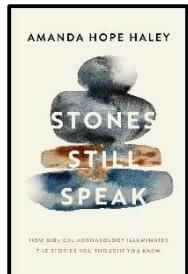
Centering the stories of people who have been transformed through their dedication to the work of collective wholeness, Villegas begins each chapter “on the ground”—with protests in the streets, hospitality in migrant shelters, and shared meals in home kitchens. He then engages in biblical, theological, and political reflection to explore the significance—for our faith and our world—of these sites of collective work. A stirring read for anyone who wants to shift conversations about immigration toward a more holistic Christian vision of life lived in solidarity with migrants.

CALLED TO CARE; A Christian Response to the Climate Challenge of Our Generation by Jo Knight, IVP, 2026.



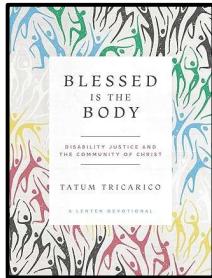
Stories from our global neighbors clarify the challenge of global warming. This book invites Christians to take climate justice seriously. Through inspiring stories, creative reflection and biblical teaching, readers will come to understand and connect creation and justice to their faith. As a climate justice leader and campaigner, mother and pastor's wife, Jo Knight also shares her own story. This is a story of God growing a passion for caring for His creation and how Christians play an essential part.

STONES STILL SPEAK; How Biblical Archaeology Illuminates the Stories You Thought You Knew by Amanda Hope Haley, Revell, 2025.

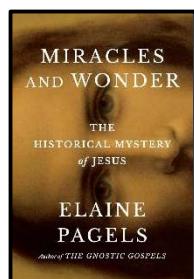


A Harvard-trained archaeologist and theologian scrapes back 2,000 years of misguided cultural interpretations to reveal God's Word in its historical, archaeological, and literary contexts. Far from a dry academic exercise, this process explains how misunderstandings developed and revitalizes the Scripture you thought you knew, with the greater purpose of encouraging a more intentional, rigorous study of the Bible in your daily life.

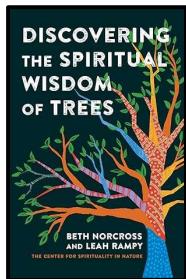
BLESSED IS THE BODY; Disability Justice and the Community of Christ by Tatum Tricarico, Herald Press, 2025.



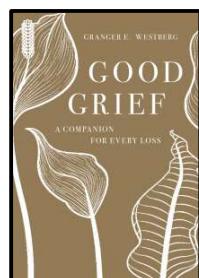
MIRACLES AND WONDER; The Historical Mystery of Jesus by Elaine Pagels, Doubleday, 2025.



DISCOVERING THE SPIRITUAL WISDOM OF TREES by Beth Norcross and Leah Rampy, Broadleaf Books, 2025.



GOOD GRIEF; A Companion for Every Loss by Granger Westberg, Fortress Press, 2019.



Disabled people have always known that their bodies and actions don't fit into boxes marked "perfect" or "endless." Every day, they encounter ableist, discriminatory practices that spell out the limits of bodies, minds, and human connection. Tricarico invites to readers to expand their understanding of God, themselves, and community with reflections and practices for considering disability justice, history, and culture alongside stories from the bible about disabled individuals like Moses and the woman with a flow of blood.

Pagels sheds light on Jesus's enduring power to inspire and attract. In this new account of the life of Jesus, she explores the mystery of how a poor young man inspired a religion that reshaped the world. Each chapter addresses a fascinating question and answers it based on the gospels Jesus's followers left behind. Why is Jesus said to have had a virgin birth? Why do we say he rose from the dead? Did his miracles really happen and what did they mean?

An exploration of the knowledge held within the living world of trees and planted within each of us. If we pay attention, trees have much to offer as soul friends and their millennia of growth and loss provides deep wisdom. The co-authors, who have extensive experience in both forest ecology and spirituality, encourage readers to revel in the beauty and wonder of trees as they increase our capacity to bear witness to loss and grief and model adaptation and resilience.

After more than 50 years, *Good Grief* is still a best-seller at Fortress Press. Millions of readers have found comfort, understood their emotions, and regained hope after loss. This classic text identifies ten stages of grief--shock, emotion, depression, physical distress, panic, guilt, anger, resistance, hope, and acceptance--but, recognizing that grief is complex and deeply personal, defines no "right" way to grieve.

MORE HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE FALL 2025 MEETING



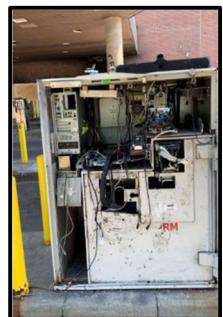
The youth and children have a library space all their own in a room adjacent to the adult library.



In 2007, librarian Sandra Thornby did the amazing feat of converting 3500 titles from the card catalog system to Surpass computer software. Six years ago, the library converted the shelf organization from Dewey to a bookstore-style subject system. Social justice, fiction, and spirituality are the most borrowed books.



Our keynote speaker was Shari Seifert, author of the book, ***ASHES TO ASHES; Finding Myself at the Intersection of the Minneapolis Uprising***. Copies of her slides are available here. Read across the rows.



Mouth House

- By amplifying voices for change, these books
- compel readers to move beyond the written word
- into deeper conversations
- and meaningful action in their communities.

A photograph of the book cover for "ASHES TO ACTION" by Shari Seifert. The cover is dark with the title in large, white, serif capital letters. Below the title, it says "FIND MYSELF AT THE INTERSECTION OF THE MINNEAPOLIS UPRISING". The Mouth House logo is at the bottom.

A photograph of two women smiling. The woman on the left is wearing a purple beanie and a dark jacket. The woman on the right is wearing glasses and a red and black plaid shirt. They are standing outdoors in front of a brick building.

Why did I write this book?

- Important story
- Starting to forget
- Page 89

A photograph of a street scene. In the foreground, there is a large, dark, abstract metal sculpture. In the background, there is a church with a tall steeple and a traffic light.

Why it was hard

- White supremacist came to town

A photograph of a group of people gathered outside a building. The building has a large, light-colored mural on its side. Some people are standing near a white car.

We're not done yet!

- Community still meets at 8:00 am and 7:00 PM every day
- We are still working on the 24 demands for justice
- Racism is still very much a thing and is deadly

A photograph of a protest or community gathering. In the background, there is a banner that reads "WHERE THERE'S PEOPLE THERE'S POWER". There are several people and a small structure in the foreground.

The early days

- Beginning of the community table

A photograph of a group of people gathered around a table outdoors. One person is holding a large sign that reads "BLACK LIVES MATTER". The background shows a brick building and some trees.

Why did I write the book the way that I did

- To provide an accessible first-person account
- To communicate the emotions of the situation
- Encouraged to write about white supremacists being in town
- Wrote “my story” as confession for increased receptivity
- To start a conversation

Use in congregational life

- Provide opportunity to discuss a difficult time in our city
- Gain more understanding about this historic event
- Springboard for conversation about becoming actively antiracist and “getting ready”
- Explore the idea of being “a missional church” of joining God’s mission in the world

How were you in the early days?

- Were you isolated due to COVID?
- Did you have access to food?
- Were you scared?
- Were you shocked?
- What did you do in the early days?

Why Calvary was ready?

- Years of work we did
- Close community
- Pastor understood his place was not front and center



My Story

- Felecia – Churchwide Assembly 2011
- Stop hurting my friends
- Page 66 - 68



Grounded and Surrounded

- Cross and the lynching tree
- Luther on the neighbor
- Baptismal promises
- Lean into grace
- Missional church
- Tensile strength from resilient relationships



How do we move without a catalyzing event?

- Build resilience for conversations about race
- Talk to your neighbors
- Find your lane
- Make space for lament
- Get comfortable being uncomfortable



Be Public/Visible

- In this City for Good
- Black Lives Matter
- George Floyd
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lu5q9fnxi2Q>
- (10:22 – 14:54)



How Calvary moved

Relationships over programs
Showed up and listened
Met in intersection
Kitchen
Stage pieces
Sanctuary plan



Be a tent pole/pillar

- Vigils were deeply meaningful
- Be a public witness
- Serve the neighbor
- Join God’s mission



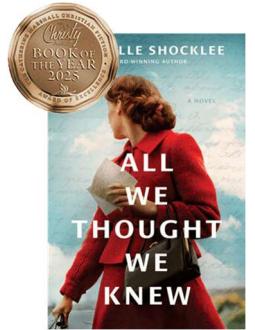
What is your lane?

- Finding my lane
- We’re different people
- Belong to different churches
- What is your lane?
- What is your congregation’s lane?
- Page 89



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 2025, The Book of the Year was awarded to **ALL WE THOUGHT WE KNEW** by Michelle Shocklee - Historical fiction with a dual timeline set in World War II and the Viet Nam War. It includes a discussion guide for book groups. For complete information on the finalists in each category, see www.christyawards.com.



The TCACLA Spring 2026 meeting will be on Saturday, April 18, at St. Michael's Lutheran Church in Bloomington. Per its website: "The vision St. Michael's Lutheran Church began in June 1962 when the mission board of the MN South District, Missouri Synod purchased 17.5 acres at 9201 Normandale Blvd. in anticipation of establishing a mission congregation. The first official worship service was in March of 1964 at Ridgeview Elementary School. Starting with 12 families, it has grown over the past 50 years into a dynamic, outreach-oriented congregation made up of 100's of families all across the southwest metro and beyond. Our desire is to be a Christian congregation that impacts not only our community, but also the world, for Jesus Christ. We strive to love our neighbor in response to God's love."

Your 2026 membership form is enclosed with this issue. For just \$15.00, any number of people from your church can receive emailed copies of *Off the Shelf*. If you would like more than 1 paper copy with your membership, the cost for each additional subscription is \$10.00.

Please complete both sides of the form. It should be mailed, along with your check(s), by no later than March 31. **Please note the new information on where this should be mailed.** Since Roberta Shaw has been our Treasurer for the past 4 years, some church offices have her information locked into their accounting system.



Editor's note: After I saw this in the Trinity Lutheran Church library, I asked the woman on the library team at Hennepin Avenue United Methodist Church who makes all of our posters and signs to make something similar for us. It's been great! It gives very clear directions on how to check out a book when a library team member isn't present, plus it's stopped people from walking away with our pens since they're now tucked away in a desk drawer!



Mark
your
calendar!

TCACLA Spring Meeting April 18, 2026



Librarian Humor

Samantha Sparrow · 14h ·



Karen A. Romanko · Follow

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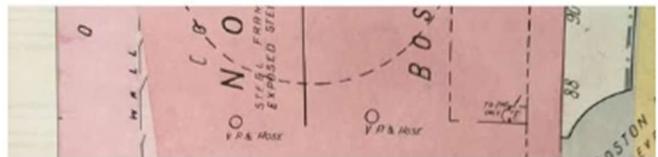


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ChatGPT vs. Reference Librarian. Who won? I needed to know for my novel in progress how many elevators there were in Boston's Hotel Manger (later Madison), long ago demolished. I found several brochures on the web, but none answered my question. As an experiment, I posted my query to ChatGPT, which wasn't able to answer the question, and even misspelled the hotel's name as "Manager" in its answer. I then submitted my question to the Boston Public Library's reference department, and not only did I get a prompt answer, but the librarian sent a fire insurance map (photo), which gave me the layout of the elevators and the lobby. Even more helpful! As a former reference librarian, I have always known that librarians are awesome, and, obviously, indispensable. 😊 #Librarians

#ReferenceLibrarians #ChatGPT

#BostonPublicLibrary



OFF THE SHELF

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