

# OFF THE SHELF

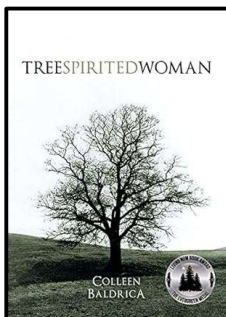


**Mission Statement:** To energize church library ministry through education, resource sharing, spiritual encouragement, and fellowship.

Spring 2026

**TCACLA Spring Meeting**  
**St. Michael's Lutheran Church**  
**April 18, 2026**  
**8:30-12:30**

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Our keynote speaker is Colleen Moran Baldrica PhD, author of the book *Tree Spirited Woman*. An official Chipewewa (Ojibwe) Tribe member of the Pembina Band, from the White Earth Reservation in Northern Minnesota, she has worked for more than 28 years in public education and holds advanced degrees with an emphasis in School Counseling. She has lived her entire life in the St. Croix River Valley, and currently resides in Stillwater with her husband. Colleen presently mentors new authors, leads drumming circles, does presentations, and is always available for questions.



She will be talking about her book, including the events and motivations that led her to writing it, the creative process, feedback she has gotten in the 20 years since it was first published, and what she has learned from it. She has a particular interest in the power of words.

Autographed copies of *Tree Spirited Woman* will be available for sale that morning for \$10. Payment can be made by cash or credit card.

Prior to Colleen's presentation, there will be a Q&A session where you'll have a chance to ask your fellow church librarians how they handle specific situations in their libraries. Your editor, Laura Dirks, will be the moderator. I've prepared some questions in 5 categories, some of which come from the forms that are always on the tables at our meetings. See p. 5 for some samples. I'd love to get more questions from all of you too. Send them to [otseditor@gmail.com](mailto:otseditor@gmail.com) in advance or ask them on the day of the meeting.

## AWARDS

- 2025 Gold Medal Winner (International Impact)
- Spirited Woman Top 12 Best Books
- 2014 Silver Medal Winner (Living Now – Evergreen)
- 2012 Favorite Book Minnesota Women's Press
- 2008 Award Finalist (National Indie Excellence)
- 2007 Bronze Medal Winner (IPPY)
- 2006 Awards Finalist (Best Books)
- FIVE Stars (Midwest Book Review)

**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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Twin Cities Area Church  
 Library Association

# TREASURER'S REPORT

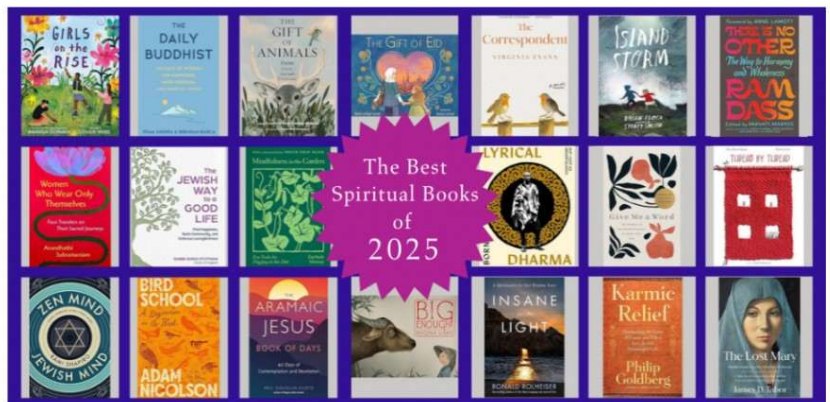
Members:	20 Churches	
01/01/2026	\$1,060.26	Beginning Balance
	\$245.00	Membership Renewals
	-\$94.58	Off the Shelf Expenses
	-\$22.19	Website Fee
03/15/2026	\$1,188.49	Ending Balance

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## The Best Spiritual Books of 2025

*Our roundup of the best books of the year.*



Go to <https://tinyurl.com/yjfv4z66> for detailed information on each of the 50 adult books and 20 children's books.

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If Bethany Hyde has not received a completed 2026 Membership Form from your church, you have received another copy with this newsletter. Please return it by March 31.

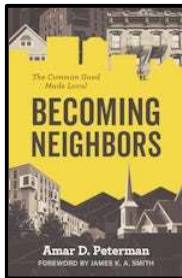


## WHAT CHURCHES ARE READING

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

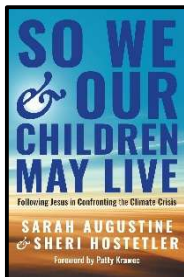
*"The very existence of libraries affords the best evidence that we may yet have hope for the future of man."*  
- T. S. Eliot

### ***BECOMING NEIGHBORS; The Common Good Made Local*** by Amar Peterman, Eerdmans, 2026.



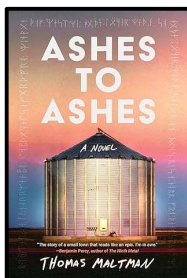
Peterman explores how the common good can be cultivated through the practice of neighbor love by illuminating the faith-based insights that Christians can bring to the table, such as the biblical call to love others, seek goodness, and build communities of belonging. He also offers tangible practices of neighbor love—including compassion, resonance, lamentation, and accompaniment—that translate across diverse populations and demonstrates how Christ’s example as prophet, priest, and king serves as a guide for how Christians might live faithfully in their communities today.

### ***SO WE AND OUR CHILDREN MAY LIVE; Following Jesus in Confronting the Climate Crisis*** by Sarah Augustine, Herald Press, 2023.



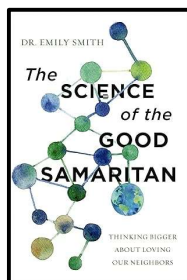
Everywhere we look, we see signs that all is not right with our earth: Extreme weather patterns wreak havoc. Pollutants sour soils and waterways. Fires and floods ravage land and communities. Climate change is just a symptom of a larger ecological crisis. If we want change, the solutions can’t come through the same systems that created those problems. This book offers hope for a better future alongside concrete actions for joining with Indigenous Peoples to protect life and negotiate with decision-makers for sustainable change that follows Jesus.

### ***ASHES TO ASHES; a Novel*** by Thomas Maltman, Soho Press, 2025.



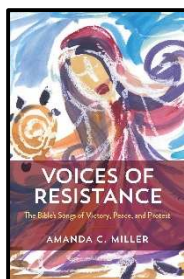
A novel of narrative daring and profound empathy. When the ashes from an Ash Wednesday service in the prairie town of Andwhen, MN, refuse to wash off, members of a small congregation are left wondering whether they’ve been blessed or cursed. For Basil - a “gentle giant” of a teen reeling from a farming accident that shattered his family and haunted by his mother’s decade-long confinement in a state mental hospital - the ashes become a sign. He embarks on a secret ritual of fasting and prayer, seeking meaning in his unraveling world. **A Minnesota Book Award Finalist**

**THE SCIENCE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN;**  
*Thinking Bigger About Loving Our Neighbors* by  
Emily Smith, Zondervan, 2023.



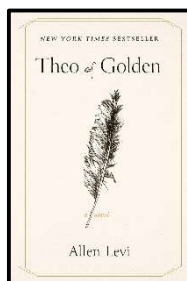
What does it mean to love your neighbor in today's fraught, divided world? Dr. Emily Smith, global health expert and creator of the popular Facebook page Friendly Neighbor Epidemiologist, dives into what loving your neighbor - as illustrated in the biblical parable of the Good Samaritan - truly means. Combining her expertise as a scientist with her deep Christian faith while drawing from her journey from small-town Texas to a prestigious university, Dr. Smith shares stories from her life and the lives of other inspiring people around the world.

**VOICES OF RESISTANCE; The Bible's Songs of Victory, Peace, and Protest** by Amanda Miller, Abingdon Press, 2026.



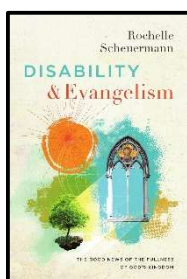
Through Deborah's and Hannah's songs, Mary's Magnificat, the laments of Jeremiah, the Psalms, the Christ hymn in Philippians, and the visions of worship in Revelation, you will hear the voices of our ancestors in faith and consider how their witness still calls us to live with courage and compassion. With insights into biblical history and a vision that explores the dynamics of race, gender, and marginalization, Miller discusses how this legacy of music, poetry, and community offers strength for the church and the world we seek to build today.

**THEO OF GOLDEN; a Novel** by Allen Levi, Atria Books, 2026.



A novel with strong spiritual and Christian themes about kindness and seeing the soul in others, but it's written to appeal broadly, functioning as both a deeply spiritual book for believers and a story about universal human goodness for non-religious readers. New in town, Theo visits the local coffeehouse, where 92 pencil portraits hang on the walls, portraits of the people of Golden done by a local artist. He begins purchasing them, one at a time, and putting them back in the hands of their "rightful owners." With each exchange, a story is told, a friendship is born, and a life is altered.

**DISABILITY & EVANGELISM; The Good News of the Fullness of God's Kingdom** by Rochelle Scheuermann, IVP Academic, 2026.



Per Scheuermann, "God wants people with disabilities in his kingdom as active participants in what he is doing in the world. The Bible is clear that God's kingdom is meant to be inhabited by people from every tribe, nation, language, and tongue, and from every walk of life, including those not highly regarded by worldly standards: children, slaves, and those with disabilities. If the church is truly meant to be a credible witness and foretaste of Revelation 7:9, then the church is also meant to reach and include people with disabilities within the church's works of evangelism and mission, not just as recipients but as active participants in and even leaders of this work as well. This is what should be. Why is it not?"

## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear friends:

I hope you all are looking forward to our spring season. It's been a difficult and trying time in our state with the presence of ICE and all that entailed. My own church cooperated with the Groveland Food Shelf, which resides in the lower level of our church. As many as 70% of the regular users of the food shelf were not coming into the food shelf for fear that they would be picked up by ICE. Our director of Children, Youth, and Families supported the food shelf director and members of the congregation were mobilized to pack up bags of food to be delivered to and picked up by those in need; along with providing transportation for people to get to work. I share this as a witness to what many of our churches are doing to nurture and heal our communities during this time; beyond what we do in our libraries in another way.

Speaking about church libraries, we will be enjoying our Spring event at St. Michael's Lutheran Church in Bloomington on Saturday, April 18th. Further information about our guest author and our upcoming discussion is in another section of this newsletter.

On another note, I will be passing on the torch of president after our fall event, as will Wayne Albertson, our current secretary. At this point, we have both served about 3½ years. It has been enjoyable work and a great motivator for getting great ideas for our libraries. While it is early in the year, we will be looking for candidates who would be willing to step into these roles. As president, I am primarily a facilitator of our board meetings, which are primarily involved in planning our spring and fall events. These board meetings are primarily done through online meetings. Please think about the possibility of serving our association and what you might bring to the leadership and future of our organization.

We will also be looking for a site for our fall event, which is not too soon to be thinking about. Thank you for giving this your thoughts.

Look forward to seeing you all at the spring event.

*Janet Howard, President*

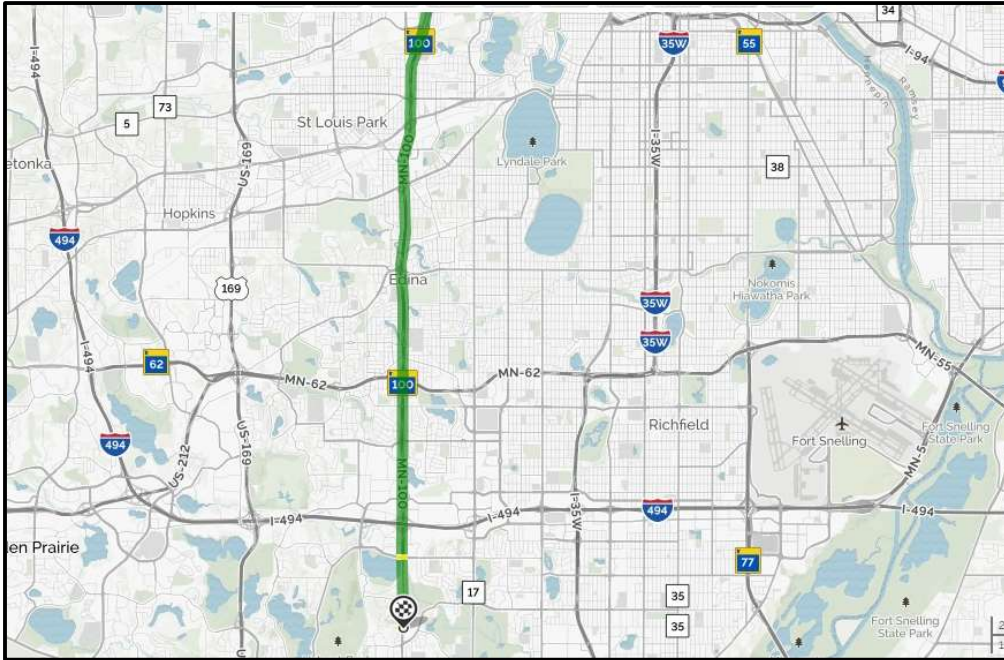
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## SAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR THE Q&A SESSION

- **Support from Your Church:** Does your library make reports to boards/councils the way other ministry program groups in a church would? Do you receive financial support from your church? If not, how is the library funded? Has your church ever relocated your library? Considered closing the library?
- **Collection Development:** Where do you get books? Do you have fiction titles that aren't strictly "Christian"? Do you accept donations? What do you do with donated books that you don't want? Has anyone ever asked you to withdraw a book from your library? What is the difference between banning a book vs. deciding that a book just isn't appropriate for your library? Do you have non-book materials such as DVDs?
- **Marketing Your Library:** How do you promote your library? Do you have non-book resources to attract interest – bookmarks, advent and/or lent calendars, toys? How do you attract readers, especially teens? What about younger readers who seem to want only graphic novels?
- **Circulation Management:** How long can a book be checked out? What do you do if the book isn't returned by then? How often do you take a complete inventory and weed out older books? What criteria do you use when deciding whether or not to replace missing books? What challenges do you have with an open library where people can check out books (or not) whenever the church is open?
- **Technology:** What are the factors that should be considered if you are interested in converting your paper card catalog to an online library catalog or switching from one online product to another?



St. Michael's Lutheran Church  
9201 Normandale Boulevard



### Directions from 494 in Bloomington

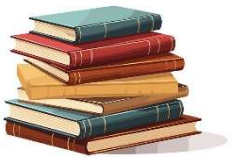
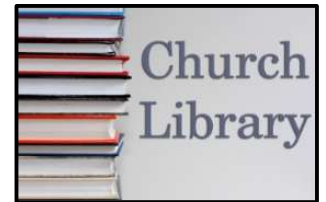
Take Exit 7 A/7B to County Road 34/Normandale Boulevard.

Continue south on Normandale Boulevard.

Make a U-Turn on 94<sup>th</sup> St. The church will be on your right.

If you come from the north on MN 100, it becomes Normandale Boulevard south of the intersection with 494.

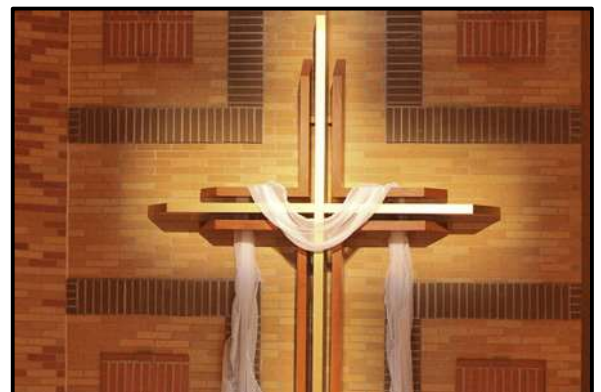
The church library's patrons can access the collection from anywhere by using LibraryWorld's Online Patron Access Catalog (OPAC). There are over 3,500 items in the library, including books, videos, and even board games.



**BOOK SWAP:** If you are new to TCACLA, you should know that there is a book swap table at all our meetings. Your library may have a duplicate copy of a book or a gently used book that you no longer need. If so, consider bringing it to share with others. Despite the "swap" name, you don't have to bring a book to take a book. If you do bring a book and it's still on the table when the meeting is over, please take it with you when you leave.



St. Michael's ministry includes an award-winning faith focused preschool for 3-5 year olds.



**Twin Cities Area Church Library Association Meeting  
Saturday, April 18, 2026**

8:30 Registration, Social Time, Book Swap Table Browsing  
9:00 Welcome, Devotions, Announcements  
9:15 Workshop: Q&A Session With Your Peers  
10:10 Break, Tours of the Library and Church  
10:30 Colleen Baldrice Presentation  
11:30 Break, Book Sales, Tours, Book Swap Browsing Continue  
11:45 Lunch

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**TCACLA Spring Meeting  
April 18, 2026  
MEETING REGISTRATION FORM**

Registration Deadline: April 14.

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

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

Number of registrants and their guests: \_\_\_\_\_ x \$14.00 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_.

Payment of the fee is required even if you aren't staying for lunch. There are other expenses for preparing and conducting a meeting besides the food.

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

BETHANY HYDE  
1878 W HIGHLAND PKWY  
SAINT PAUL MN 55116-1327



**TCACLA Spring Meeting  
April 18, 2026**



**OFF THE SHELF**

c/o Laura Dirks  
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