

OFF THE SHELF



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

Fall 2026

**TCACLA Fall Meeting
Westminster Presbyterian Church
October 31, 2026
8:30-12:30**

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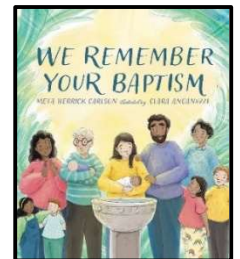
During the annual business meeting, we'll be electing a new President and a new Secretary for 2027-2028.

Prior to Meta's presentation, we'll continue our 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 3 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 in advance or ask them on the day of the meeting.



Our keynote speaker is Meta Herrick Carlson. She is a pastor at Bethlehem Lutheran Church Twin Cities and a poet. Her ministry labors for more meaningful rituals, accessible language, and healthy communities. Her theology is informed by the sacred wisdom of recovery circles and survivors of sexual violence.

Meta is the author of five books that proclaim God's delight for our ordinary lives. ***ORDINARY BLESSINGS: Prayers, Poems, and Meditations for Everyday Life*** proves a worthy gift in these uncertain times. ***SPEAK IT PLAIN: Words for Worship and Life Together*** contains blessings and resources for church leaders and liturgical worship communities. ***ORDINARY BLESSINGS FOR PARENTS: Prayers, Poems, and Meditations for Family Life*** is inspired by God's delight in the ordinary lives of kids and those who love them. ***ORDINARY BLESSINGS FOR THE CHRISTMAS SEASON*** offers blessings for what is holy and hard about the holiday season. Her newest book, ***WE REMEMBER YOUR BAPTISM***, is a beautiful read-aloud picture book for baptism celebrations and any time a family or church community wants to retell the story of a child's baptism. All of them will be available to purchase that morning.



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: 22 Churches

01/01/2026	\$1,060.26	Beginning Balance
	\$410.00	Membership Renewals
	<u>\$510.00</u>	Meeting Registration
	\$920.00	
	-\$185.87	Off the Shelf Expenses
	-\$439.06	Meeting Expenses
	-\$400.00	Insurance
	<u>-\$35.19</u>	Website Fees
	-\$1,060.12	
09/15/2026	\$920.14	Ending Balance



2675 Benet Road, St. Paul 651-777-8181

At St. Paul's Monastery, Benedictine Sisters embrace a monastic life devoted to glorifying God in all things. They welcome all seekers of all Christian traditions.

Guests have access to most of the first floor and the grounds, as well as the dining hall, where a home cooked lunch costs \$15. Most of the time there is art hanging in the halls. There are quiet places, including a chapel. The conference room has a display of art items depicting the Prodigal Son. In addition, they have a labyrinth and a small library of spiritual books for the sisters (browsing only for visitors).



To make a reservation, call the day before or early morning on the day you want to visit.

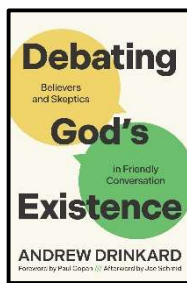
Recommended by Janet Howard

WHAT CHURCHES ARE READING

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

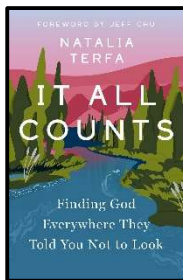
"You think your pain and your heartbreak are unprecedented in the history of the world, but then you read. It was books that taught me that the things that tormented me most were the very things that connected me with all of the people who were alive, whoever had been alive." - James Baldwin

DEBATING GOD'S EXISTENCE; Believers and Skeptics in Friendly Conversation by Andrew Drinkard, Eerdmans, 2026.



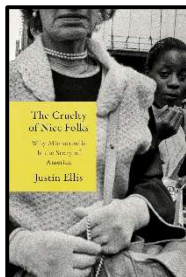
When a Christian philosopher and a well-known atheist debated each other at an atheist convention, many expected a hostile showdown. Instead, what happened was something rare in today's polarized world: a genuine, respectful exchange between friends pursuing truth together. Whether readers are skeptics, believers, or undecided, they will here find honest engagement across genuine differences - a refreshing departure from the destructive mischaracterizations that too often dominate discussion of God's existence.

IT ALL COUNTS; Finding God Everywhere They Told You Not to Look by Natalia Terfa, Broadleaf Books, 2026.



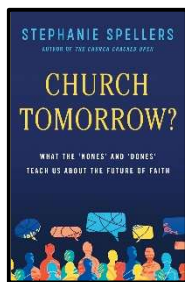
Through stories of grief, joy, digital ministry, nature, rituals, and rage walks around the lake, Terfa challenges the idea that faith only "counts" when it fits inside institutional boxes. Instead, she offers a liberating vision of spirituality rooted in authenticity, curiosity, and love. Whether you've been told your questions are too big, your worship too unconventional, or your body too broken, this book insists: You still belong. You are not alone. God is not small, stingy, or confined to buildings but present in every breath, every doubt, and every messy, beautiful moment of being human.

THE CRUELTY OF NICE FOLKS; Why Minneapolis is the Story of America by Justin Ellis, Harper, 2026.



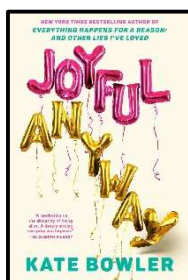
The city Ellis grew up in is not the idealistic metropolis it claims to be. It was built on discrimination - in housing, schools, politics - much like all other American cities. Black families were systematically cut out of the prosperous neighborhoods, lush parks, and pristine lakes that make Minneapolis a haven. Because of its image as a liberal ally in the fight for civil rights, Minneapolis has rarely been forced to confront this fact. But after George Floyd's murder sparked a global protest movement with the city as ground zero, its residents must finally ask what being a good neighbor actually means. Includes an epilogue on the recent ICE presence in the metro area.

CHURCH TOMORROW? What the 'Nones' and 'Dones' Teach Us About the Future of Faith by Stephanie Spellers, Morehouse, 2025.



Spellers presents hard truths about declining religious affiliation in America, paired with stories and wisdom from her interviews with dozens of young people who either grew up with no faith or gave up formal religion. She joins hundreds in a yoga circle at San Francisco's Grace Cathedral; in Atlanta, she attends Sunday Assembly, a secular congregation that caters to agnostics and atheists; just outside the Twin Cities, she interviews college students exploring crystals and tarot decks; and in New York City she comes home to meet spiritual-but-not-religious young adults who once attended her own church.

JOYFUL ANYWAY by Kate Bowler, Dial Press, 2026.



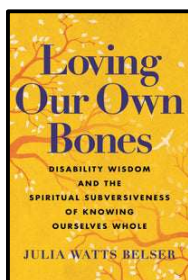
Bowler shares her personal experience and stories from some of our culture's preeminent historians, philosophers, and religious scholars to present an original and inspiring understanding of joy. This is a type of joy that is different from happiness and it does not depend on resolving the things that make life difficult. Drawing on a decade of living with serious illness and as a divinity professor, studying America's obsession with progress, she shows why the relentless pursuit of happiness may, in fact, keep us from experiencing true joy.

HEART OF A STRANGER; An Unlikely Rabbi's Story of Faith, Identity and Belonging by Angela Buchdahl, Pamela Dorman Books, 2025.



Buchdahl inspires Jews and non-Jews alike with her invigorating, joyful approach to worship and her belief in the power of faith, gratitude, and responsibility for one another, regardless of religion. She does not shy away from difficult topics, from racism within the Jewish community and the sexism she confronted when she aspired to the top job to rising antisemitism today. These challenges, which can make one feel like a stranger, can ultimately be the source of our greatest empathy and strength.

LOVING OUR OWN BONES; 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?"

CREATION CARE BOOKS FOR YOUTH

Here are some of the many good books about appreciating God's creation and what humans can do to help preserve and protect it. Can you recommend others?

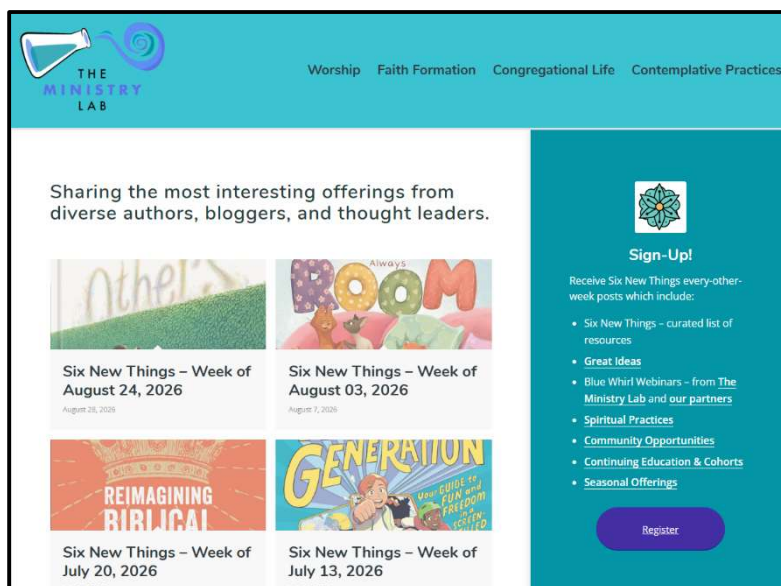


- ***Autumn Peltier; Water Warrior*** by Carole Lindstrom and Bridget George
- ***Bud Finds Her Gift*** by Robin Wall Kimmerer and Naoko Stoop
- ***Hike*** by Pete Oswald
- ***One Earth*** by Eileen Spinelli and Rogerio Coelho
- ***Psalms of Wonder*** by Carey Wallace and Khoa Le
- ***The Marvelous Mustard Seed*** by Amy-Jill Levine and Sandy Eisenberg
- ***The World Is Ours to Cherish; A Letter to a Child*** by Mary Annaïse Heglar
- ***When God Made the World*** by Matthew Paul Turner and Gillian Gamble
- ***When You Go Into Nature*** by Sheri M. Bestor and Sydney Hanson

SAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR THE Q&A SESSION

- ***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? What information do you require when someone wants to check out a book? Do you put some kind of protective cover (e.g., contact paper, clear tape) on your paperback books to prolong their lives?
- ***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?
- ***More?***

Go to
<https://theministrylab.org/six-new-things/>





Westminster is located at the corner of Nicollet Mall and 12th Street in downtown Minneapolis. The best way to access Westminster's parking garage (95-99 Alice Rainville Place) is to take 12th St. to Marquette Ave. S to Alice Rainville Place OR to take LaSalle Ave. to Grant St. to Nicollet Mall to Alice Rainville Place. Lots of one-way streets! Take the stairs or elevator to the first floor. The parking fee is waived.



The two Westminster Libraries - the Lowe Library and the Children's Library - are open on the honor system whenever the church is open. Members of the congregation and neighbors are welcome to check books out for three weeks. Books may be renewed by request. A volunteer committee manages both libraries, making sure the space is welcoming, developing the collection, and connecting to Westminster's mission statement and programming. The collections are combined in one electronic catalog. You can access it at <https://westminsterpc.library.site>



**Twin Cities Area Church Library Association Meeting
Saturday, October 31, 2026**

8:30	Registration, Social Time, Book Swap Table Browsing
9:00	Welcome
9:10	Business Meeting
9:15	Workshop: Q&A Session with Your Peers
10:10	Break, Tours of the Library and Church
10:30	Meta Herrick Carlson Presentation
11:30	Break, Book Sales, Tours, Book Swap Browsing Continue
11:45	Lunch

**TCACLA Fall Meeting
October 31, 2026
MEETING REGISTRATION FORM**

Registration Deadline: Because U.S. mail delivery has slowed in recent months, **please mail your registration form by October 17.**

Your church name: _____

Name(s) of person(s) attending: _____

Number of registrants and their guests: _____ x \$15.00 = \$ _____.

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.

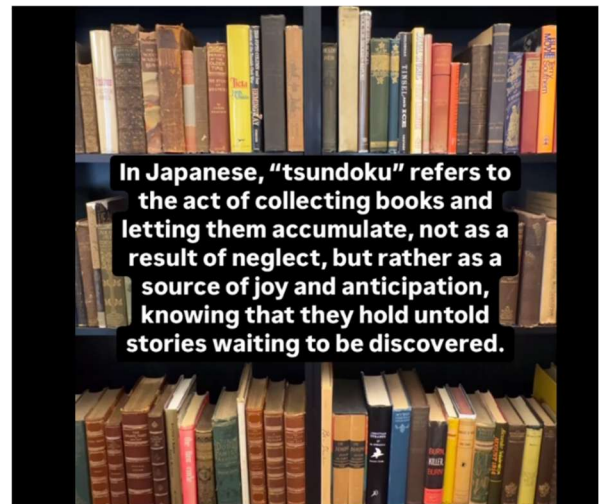
Make checks payable to TCACLA. Mail the completed form and check(s) to:

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TCACLA Fall Meeting

October 31, 2026



OFF THE SHELF

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