

Plymouth Church Library and LGBTQIA+

Welcome to the Plymouth Church Library, generously supported by the people of Plymouth Church. Below are books presently in the Plymouth Church Library Collection on LGBTQIA+ and inclusion. These can be reviewed in the library or checked out for those registered as Plymouth Church Library Users. If you are not currently registered and regularly attend Plymouth Church, you can request information by emailing the library at library@plymouthchurchseattle.org.

For young children

A Tale of Two Daddies

By Vanita Oelschlager

In an affectionate story of adoption in a gay family, a small girl answers a friend's questions about what it is like to have two fathers. The boy asks: "Which dad would build your home in a tree? And which dad helps when you skin your knee?" And the girl answers: "Poppa's the one who builds in a tree. / Daddy's the one who fixes my knee." The simple, immediate rhymes are illustrated with digitally touched linoleum prints in bright colors and thick black lines that show the friends at play, as well as cozy scenarios of the girl in her nurturing home; in one particularly warm scene, Poppa serves a plate of eggs and bacon that looks like a smiley face. Strangely, the adults' faces are never shown, just distant views of their legs and arms: one daddy is formally dressed, the other is in jeans and sneakers. The story's message is clear in her answer to the question, "Who is your dad when you're sad and need some love?" Both, of course. Preschool-Grade 2. --Hazel Rochman Booklist

For young adults

Gay America: Struggle for equality

By Linas Alsenas

This eminently readable work highlights the history of gays and lesbians in the U.S. beginning with the Victorian period and following with five more chapters covering the 20th and 21st centuries through 2006, Alsenas prefaces each historically accurate section with a true story told from a personalized (or fictionalized) point of view, such as the notorious 1892 Memphis murder of Freda Ward by her lover, Alice Mitchell. This technique, combined with abundant archival photos and the author's accessible writing style, makes the pages fly by almost as if reading a long, compelling story. Of course, this book only touches on salient points of LGBTQ history, but for young teens who are interested in learning about queer scholarship, it is an excellent place to begin. A good index, excellent notes, and a selected bibliography of resources, into which the author encourages readers to "dig deeper," only increase the usefulness of *Gay*

America.—Betty S. Evans, Southwest Missouri State University, Springfield, School Library
Journal Grades 7–10

GLBTQ: The survival guide for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and questioning teens

By Kelly Huegel

Amazon reviewer, Claudia, says, “This guidebook hits home perfectly. Kelly's tone is so easy-going, so down to earth. She's not lecturing, she's not trying to pretend she is a kid, she's just talking to her audience in a natural, honest way. This is a book for teens themselves, whether they identify as LGBTQ, think they might, or have friends who do. It's for adults who want to support the LGBTQ kids in their lives, too. This book should be in junior high and high school libraries, public libraries, church libraries and on the bookshelves at home, too. Buy one for the kid in your life, and another couple to hand out when you meet someone else who needs it (and you will!).”

For parents

The Transgender Child

By Stephanie Brill

"Libraries may own books dealing with transgender adults, but this is the only guide about raising transgender children. While the general message to parents is that ‘you have nothing to apologize for and nothing to be embarrassed about,’ the authors make it clear that parents and families will not have it easy. Realistic and empowering. Background: What do you do when it's Grandma's birthday dinner and your eight-year-old son insists on wearing his dress and Mary Janes? And how do you handle dating when your transgirl daughter still has male sex organs? Brill (founder, Gender Spectrum Education and Training) and Pepper (coordinator, LGBT studies, Yale Univ.) bring solid credentials and years of research to help parents and others deal with issues specific to transgender children. ---Linda Beck, Indian Valley P.L., Telford, PA -- Library Journal--June 24, 2008

Always My Child: A Parent's Guide to Understanding Your Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgendered, or Questioning Son or Daughter

By Kevin Jennings

The first book to focus on the day-to-day experiences of adolescents dealing with sexual identity issues, *Always My Child* provides the insights and practical strategies parents need to support their kids and cope themselves.

Autobiography

Shattering masks: Affirming Identity. Transitioning Faith.

By Laura Bethany Taylor

Shattering Masks is story of how Taylor, came “to reconcile my faith in God with living a genuine, authentic life.” Amazon reviewer, Kimberly H. says, “My favorite chapter is the last,

called *The Mask of Knowing*, which the author also identifies as the hardest mask to shatter. She speaks of her/our “addiction to answers”, particularly on questions concerning the Christian faith, but concludes that “there is a false sense of security in knowledge....We can lull ourselves to sleep at night with the belief that all is in order simply because we are convinced we can explain it.”

In the Shelter: Finding a home in the world

By Pádraig O'Tuama

Amazon reviewer , Peri Zahnd, says, “A beautiful and thoughtful book--an engaging mixture of story, memoir, theology, poetry, prayer, musing on the meaning of language and of life. The author shares his struggles as a man who has often not felt at home in much of the world, because he happens to be gay. But this is not a book about sexuality--this is a book about life and how to live it--for everyone regardless of sexual orientation. Even though I don't know him, his vulnerability in expressing what it felt like to be excluded and marginalized made me wish not just to be more "tolerant" of others, but to reach out and embrace and include. A few days after finishing the book, I find myself once again scanning its pages. I will definitely reread it again in its entirety--soon. I'm also ordering his others!”

Religion

God and the Gay Christian: the biblical case in support of same-sex relationships

By Matthew Vines

As a young Christian man, Matthew Vines harbored the same basic hopes of most young people: to someday share his life with someone, to build a family of his own, to give and receive love. But when he realized he was gay, those hopes were called into question. The Bible, he'd been taught, condemned gay relationships. Feeling the tension between his understanding of the Bible and the reality of his same-sex orientation, Vines devoted years of intensive research into what the Bible says about homosexuality.

Heterosexism in Contemporary World Religion

Editor, Marvin M. Ellison

Comprising eight essays by religion scholars, this collection reviews the foundations of heterosexism in Islam, African American Christianity, Protestant Christianity, Taoism and Confucianism, Roman Catholicism, Buddhism, Judaism, and Hinduism, and identifies within each faith tradition paths toward ending the resulting homophobia.

“Readers may well find that they don’t know as much about religions not their own as they thought they did. I found the discussion of the historical influences on the development of African American Christianity to be germane to my doing some reworking for myself of media coverage of the recent controversy about the Reverend Jeremiah Wright. Realistic, but ultimately optimistic about a better future, this book is best suited for academic libraries.”

Reviewed by Dave Combe Ventura County Library [CA]

Crossing Over: Liberating the Transgendered Christian

By Vanessa Sheridan

Amazon reviewer, Richard O, says, "If you or a loved one is transgendered and you have felt in conflict with your Christian faith, help and enlightenment are finally here. Being transgendered and a Christian do not have to be in conflict. As a transgendered Christian, I wish this book had been written years ago. It provides biblically based information to educate those who are transgendered and those who are open to the truth. Churches that are open and affirming to all Christians would do well to include this in their library and to also circulate it amongst both clergy and lay leaders. The book offers many practical ways that Church communities can embrace our little known group."

Transgendering Faith: Identity, sexuality and spirituality

By Leanne McCall Tigert

Amazon reviewer, AaronR says, "This books talks about what it means to be transgender and religious. In it, a number of trans people tell their personal stories and their experiences with religion. The last section contains prayers, scripture reading, and hymns for and about trans stuff, including rites for name changes and transitions that could be used in church services. As a trans man of faith, I could relate to the stories & loved the prayers that pertained to me."

Trans-Gendered: Theology, Ministry, and Communities of Faith

By Justin Edward Tanis

Amazon reviewer, Shannon B says, "I have met Rev. Tanis and found him knowledgeable and articulate, and this book reflects that. For those who have studied this issue for a number of years, there is not much new or revolutionary here, but it does provide a comprehensive overview of the subject of transgender and christianity, and more than a superficial introduction to transgender in general. For clergy or lay interested in learning about this subject, Rev. Tanis' book is a must read."

Omnigender: A trans-religious approach

By Virginia R Mollenkott

This book bridges traditional religious doctrine and secular postmodern theory regarding gender. Through an examination of the Hebrew and Christian scriptures and church history as well as the exploration of other religious traditions and cultures, Mollenkott honors the experience of people who do not fit within the traditional binary concept of gender: intersexual, trans-sexual, or otherwise-gendered individuals.

History

Moral Combat: how sex divided American Christians and fractured American politics

By Marie R. Griffith

Moral Combat is a history of how the Christian consensus on sex unraveled, and how this unraveling has made our political battles over sex so ferocious and so intractable. Amazon reviewer, Gary Moreau, says, "This is a book of history written by a very capable and articulate

historian. It is not a partisan manifesto. Even after reading the book I would be hard-pressed to define the author's actual politics with any specificity. There is an occasional whiff here and there, particularly in the epilogue, but that is to be expected of any book written by an actual person. The author is, on balance, admirably successful in maintaining the political objectivity of the professional historian. (Although she would likely point out that those who hold the most extreme views on both sides of these issues are unlikely to agree with that assessment.)"

Fiction

Three Junes

By Julia Glass

In June of 1989, Paul McLeod, the recently widowed patriarch, becomes infatuated with a young American artist while traveling through Greece and is compelled to relive the secret sorrows of his marriage. Six years later, Paul's death reunites his sons at Tealing, their idyllic childhood home, where Fenno, the eldest, faces a choice that puts him at the center of his family's future. A lovable, slightly repressed gay man, Fenno leads the life of an aloof expatriate in the West Village, running a shop filled with books and birdwatching gear. He believes himself safe from all emotional entanglements -- until a worldly neighbor presents him with an extraordinary gift and a seductive photographer makes him an unwitting subject. Each man draws Fenno into territories of the heart he has never braved before, leading him toward an almost unbearable loss that will reveal to him the nature of love.

Philosophy

Will the Circle Be Broken? Reflections on death, rebirth and hunger for faith

By Stud Terkel

In this book, the Pulitzer Prize winner and National Book Award finalist Studs Terkel, author of the *New York Times* bestseller *Working* and an author who has had a book banned, turns to the ultimate human experience: death. Here a wide range of people address the unknowable culmination of our lives, the possibilities of an afterlife, and their impact on the way we live, with memorable grace and poignancy. Included is an interview with Tico Valle, a young Latino gay male, who reflects on the death of his partner and the significance of reincarnation for understanding the meaning of life.

Sociology

When We Rise: My life in the movement

By Cleve Jones

"You could read Cleve Jones's book because you should know about the struggle for gay, lesbian, and transgender rights from one of its key participants-maybe heroes--but really, you should read it for pleasure and joy. It's an incredibly vivid evocation of a bygone era and a

poignant story of someone who started out feeling like the only gay person in the world and ended up organizing millions of them. I loved it for the firsthand history, and the crazily great details about drag queens, radical excess, passionate idealism, how to change the world and everything else that matters most."—*Rebecca Solnit, author of Men Explain Things to Me*

Law

Sex and the Constitution: Sex, religion, and law from America's origins to the twenty-first century
By Geoffrey R. Stone

Amazon Reviewer, Sharon Fratepietro, says: "Don't let the book's length put you off. Every page is interesting, clearly written and makes you want to keep on reading. What a good writer Geoffrey Stone is! And the subject, of course, is fascinating, especially in its evolutionary mixture of sex and religion. You'll learn more than you thought you needed to know and get some important legal and illegal sex education. My book club loved it, and did we have a lot to talk about!"

Language

What's Your Pronoun? Beyond He and She

By. Dennis Baron

Heralded as "required reading" (Geoff Nunberg) and "the book" (Anne Fadiman) for anyone interested in the conversation swirling around gender-neutral and nonbinary pronouns, *What's Your Pronoun?* is a classic in the making. Providing much-needed historical context and analysis to the debate around what we call ourselves, Dennis Baron brings new insight to a centuries-old topic and illuminates how—and why—these pronouns are sparking confusion and prompting new policies in schools, workplaces, and even statehouses. Enlightening and affirming, *What's Your Pronoun?* introduces a new way of thinking about language, gender, and how they intersect. 20 black-and-white illustrations.

LGBTQIA+ Resources beyond Plymouth Church Library

Want to explore further? It takes a village, or in this case a generously supported public library, to make available so many amazing classic and new voices on sexual identity. Below is a link to books on LGBTQ+ recommended by Seattle Public Library staff.

<https://www.spl.org/programs-and-services/social-justice/lgbtq/lgbtq-staff-picks>

We cannot take for granted a public library that is allowed to support LGBTQ+ voices. Started by Brooklyn Public Library, *Books Unbanned* is an initiative in response to an increasingly coordinated and effective effort to remove books tackling a wide range of topics from library shelves. The Seattle Public Library is the second library to join this initiative and make their collection available to teens and young adults facing book bans, censorship and political

challenges in their local school and public libraries. Explore below to learn more about Books Unbanned, intellectual freedom and how you can fight for the rights of teens nationwide to read what they like, discover themselves and form their own opinions.

<https://www.spl.org/programs-and-services/teens/books-unbanned>

Seven of the top 13 ten banned books* in 2022 were banned for LGBTQIA+ content. See the top ten list released by the American Library Association.

*There were ties!

<https://www.ala.org/news/press-releases/2023/04/national-library-week-kicks-highly-anticipated-annual-list-top-10-most>

The American Library Association is a powerful advocate for the freedom to read, and to author. Click on the link below to find out more about their *Banned Author Letter-writing Campaign*. Plymouth Church Library will keep a list of banned book authors and a stack of postcards to send on its Welcome Table. Plymouth encourages you to come in and jot a quick line to these authors.

<https://www.ala.org/advocacy/bbooks/dear-banned-author>

Be a part of Plymouth Church Library

The Plymouth Church Library is a private collection that reflects the people of Plymouth. If you recently read a book that challenged you to look deeper into your faith and actions, it could be a book for the church's collection. Drop us a line at library@plymouthchurch.org.

Plymouth Church Library Vision

To provide resources and opportunities for individuals and groups to explore the nature of God and God's covenant with humanity