Where did the books go?

Consolidating, relocating and reorganizing the church library after space renovations

Oxford Presbyterian Church
Fall 2025
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About myself

- Librarian at Miami since 2019
  - Science and Engineering
  - Help people with their research
  - Collection management
    - Getting new things and removing older things
- Masters in Library and Information Studies (MLIS) in 2018
- Public Library 2010 – 2019
  - Public facing staff in circulation, youth and adult services

Roadmap of the process

Where the books used to be
Pre 2023

Moving and sorting
2023

Inventorying or cataloging
2024

Arranging and labeling
2025

Going forward
Post 2025



Previously the books had been in the Molyneux Lounge

However, the space was undergoing renovations and the collection needed to downsize by about 80%

Photos of the Molyneux Lounge before the renovations in 2023





Please note there were other books cases in the room than the ones shown

Library Word of the Day: Weeding

- Think of weeding when gardening – it's much the same here
- Weeding means reviewing the collection and removing those that no longer fit the needs of the users or those that are outdated
- It's necessary to make the collection more usable
  - Easier to focus attention when it's less cluttered
  - Makes it possible to remain within the physical space limitations
- Weeding needs to happen to make space for new additions
- This is often hard for people, even some librarians
- Key is keeping the users and purpose of the library in mind

The initial move and sort

- In summer of 2023 the books were physically relocated to the CCNS space for an initial sorting
- I helped to identify rare books and those of local interest to retain
- All church committees had the opportunity to review the collection and identify books to keep
- There was also an opportunity for the church community to review the books and take any for their personal collections at home
- So this was a community driven decision process, not by an individual or small group

What happened to all those left over books?

- After both reviews, the books not being retained were donated to two charities with specific requirements
- Pastor Lawrence, Pastor Marc, Gordon and myself assessed each book before boxing them up to each charity
  - Love Packages, https://lovepackages.org/
    - Begun in 1975 and they "send Christian literature to missionaries and Christian workers around the world"
- Those that didn't meet the specifications for either charity were dropped off at the Oxford Goodwill
- Only books were moldy, or physically falling apart were recycled

Inventorying the reduced collection

- In spring 2024, I indexed all youth materials, and in summer 2024, the adult titles.
  - The Sunday School rooms, grades k-2 and 3-5 were not included
- I inventoried all the books, including Bibles, children's books, and computer media (644 titles in total)
  - Meeting room (387)
  - C4C cart (47)
  - Kids cart (81)
  - Youth room (29)
  - Nursery (86)
  - Storage cupboard (7)
- Most of the remaining collection is now kept in the small meeting room next to the kitchen

Wasn't there an old print catalog?

- Yes
- Previously the catalog or index had existed only as a print card catalog, which was not retained for several reasons
  - We planned to shift to a digital version
  - We were dramatically downsizing
  - We were unsure how current it actually was with the books held in the collection.

Category	Total	Adult Titles	Youth Titles
Bible study	170	137	33
Bibles	44	36	8
Biography	29	25	4
Christian Holidays	25	8	17
Christianity	89	68	21
Families, Friends, and Relationships	17	13	4
Fiction	91	15	76
General Nonfiction	84	54	30
Grief	17	17	0
Local Interest	11	11	0
Media (non-book)	4	0	4
Presbyterians	15	15	0
Pulpit Bibles	7	7	0
Reference	24	24	0
The Church	17	16	1

The present collection by category

Please note that this is a count of the titles. It doesn't include a count of titles we have multiple copies for.

Collection Highlights

- Large print editions
  - 3 titles
- Signed by the author
  - 11 titles, 15 individual books
- Pulpit bibles
  - 7 in total
- Titles with several copies (4 or more, that are not Bibles)
  - Mere Christianity
  - Bridges out of Poverty
  - An Alter in the World: A Geography of Faith
  - Telling Secrets: A Memoir
  - A History of Presbyterianism in Oxford Ohio 1818-2000



Benefits of the new digital catalog

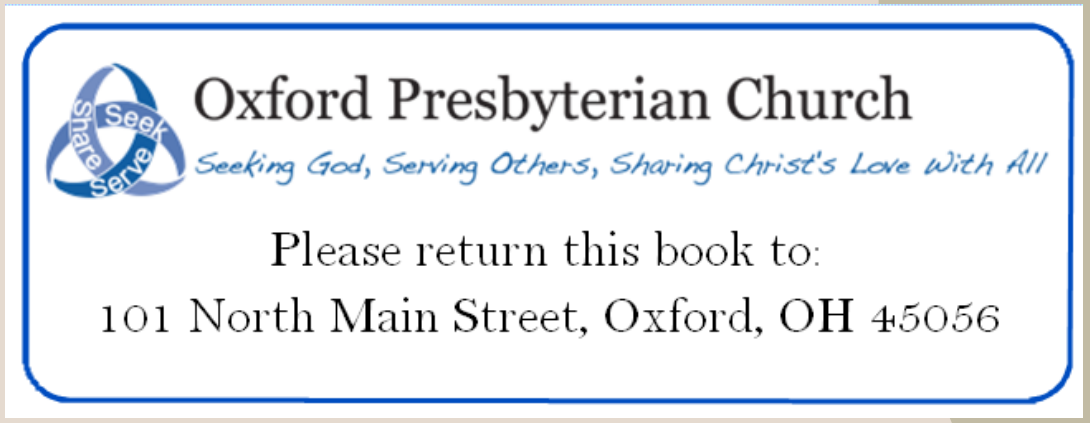
- This new digital index will help committees and the congregation easily know what is available now that the collection better fits the church's needs and space limitations
  - It's available upon request
- The spreadsheet is shared with the Christian Education Coordinator, CE committee chair, both pastors and the church office
- Information includes:
  - Title, author, copyright date, series name, number of copies, location in OPC, notes, OPC group, category, and audience (adult or youth)

Physically arranging the books

- Books moved into the small meeting rooms
  - At first in no order
  - Book groupings or shelve order were not retained during the initial move into CCNS – this was ok
- In spring 2025, I started grouping similar books together and naming the categories
  - Tried to avoid overly large or overly small groupings
  - Previous organization was some sort of homegrown system – it was neither Dewey (used at public libraries), nor Library of Congress (used at academic libraries)
- Made new shelf labels

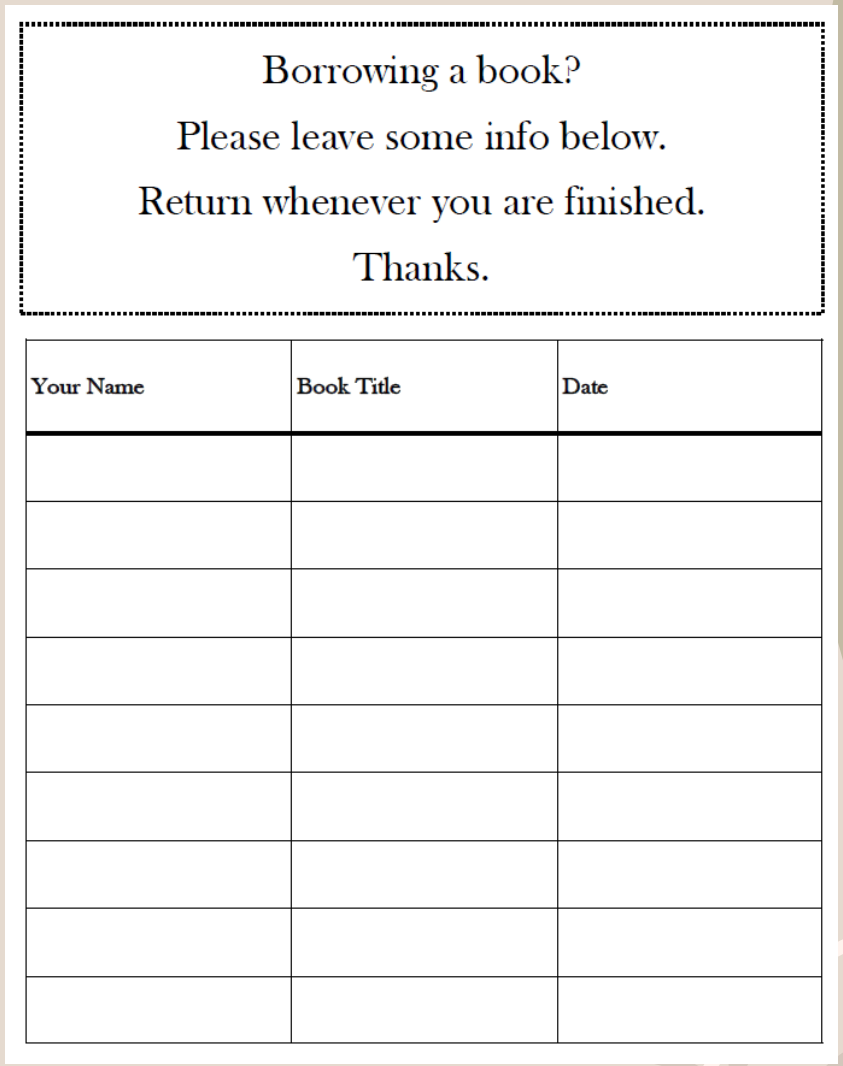
Labeling the books

- Previously they had spine labels
  - We aren't using that shelving method now
  - Hard to remove those without damaging the books
- Designed labels identify it as being from OPC
  - Placed inside the back cover of each book
- All books were labeled in spring to summer 2025



New signage

- Checkout sheet
  - Still borrow and keep it as long as you need
- Space to return books
- Space to leave a book as a donation to the collection
- No longer using the old cards in the back of the book
  - These have all been removed



Borrowing a book?

Please leave some info below.

Return whenever you are finished.

Thanks.

Your Name	Book Title	Date

Photos of the book collection's current location – both photos from the meeting room





Photos of the book collection's current location – book carts just outside the meeting room





Photos of the book collection's current location – youth room (left) and nursery (right)





Going forward

- I can keep the index up to date with any new additions,
  - Please leave in the designated spot, don't just add it to a cart or the shelf
- Not a lot of room for growth in the space
- No policy on what we should or shouldn't have
  - Libraries would call this a collection development policy
  - The church's library is unlike other kinds of library, it's more like a church family's 'living room' bookcase

Questions and discussion

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