

# Fort Collins faith library wins international award

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The Northern Colorado Faith Library was named the Outstanding Congregational Library for 2009 by the Church and Synagogue Library Association in June.

“Through visionary long-range planning, focusing on service beyond their own congregation, and recognizing what is needed in infrastructure for a 21st century library, Fort Collins First United Methodist Church is supporting the development of an ecumenical faith-based library, which far exceeds the scope of service normally expected from a congregation of moderate size in both membership and annual budget,” wrote Pat Shufeldt, of Greenville, S.C., who submitted the nomination.

Members of First United Methodist Church of Fort Collins launched the library in 2006 to allow members to browse the church library’s catalog from their home computers.

Three years later, that simple idea has blossomed into a rejuvenated library with a new focus to serve the region by sharing its resources.

The faith library has a paid librarian and has acquired hundreds of books, DVDS and magazine subscriptions. It also has launched a network of partner congregations with Our Saviour’s Lutheran Church and Blessed John XXIII University Parish in Fort Collins. The

network is intended to build links between the libraries and leverage their strengths.

Library membership is free and open to anyone and self-checkout is available when the church is open.

The library is one of the few that can boast every book in its collection has been checked out in a little more than a year. But that’s what happened when a team of 10 volunteers took home boxes of books to assemble the library’s new online catalog. The volunteers researched the books, primarily at the Library of Congress Web site, and downloaded the information into the new catalog, which debuted in October.



Anna Grace Hoffman, left, and Katie Torrey are lost in their thoughts on a busy day at the Northern Colorado Faith Library. (Courtesy Northern Colorado Faith Library)

### **Want to go?**

The Northern Colorado Faith Library was named Outstanding Congregational Library for 2009 by the Church and Synagogue Library Association (CSLA).

- > Address: 1005 Stover St. in Fort Collins
- > Hours: 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday-Thursday; 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Friday; 9 a.m. to noon Saturday; 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Sunday.
- > Phone: 482-2436
- > Web site: [www.nocofaithlibrary.org](http://www.nocofaithlibrary.org)

Now volunteers are need to help patrons, process new books, re-shelve books and handle other tasks.

Resource Center Director Edward Hopkins has developed an acquisition strategy to acquire materials on theology, spirituality and Bible commentaries. The library also has added novels, poetry and drama. There are new books about history, interfaith dialogue, prayer and the intersection of faith with the arts, ecology, politics, poverty, race, science, sexuality and other topics. For classes or other small groups from partner congregations, Hopkins can provide bibliographies and suggest curriculum resources.

Funding for the library has come primarily from three sources: the Good Is Not Good Enough program that was funded by an anonymous member at First United Methodist Church; other designated gifts from church members; and a grant from the church's own foundation. "Faith formation is a lifelong task," said David W. Reid, co-chair of the library's oversight committee. "Having access to first-rate library resources is critical to accelerating progress in that journey. That is why we are eager to assist individuals and to form partnerships with religious and educational institutions throughout Northern Colorado."