



Teens Study Correspondences at the SCYL Fall Retreat

BY KURT FEKETE

A small but enthusiastic group of youth gathered in S. Duxbury, Massachusetts at the Cedar Hill Retreat Center on a brisk, beautiful, October weekend to learn more about Emanuel Swedenborg's concept of correspondence. We started off the retreat with a fun game of Apples to Apples on Friday night while waiting for everyone to arrive. Saturday morning after breakfast we discussed the schedule, arranged the meal prep teams, and did a little icebreaker where the retreaters got their first taste of correspondence by playing a game where they matched metaphors with meanings.

Rev. Kevin Baxter came in to start our sessions by leading a morning discussion introducing Swedenborg's concept of correspondence. He started off by asking the youth to tell him the creation story from the Bible. "Adam and Eve," several youths exclaimed! Then another retreaters said, "Wait, what about the story where the sun, moon, and stars are created?" "Exactly!" proclaimed Kevin, "Literally, the Bible doesn't make sense. There are two creation stories." Kevin went on to explain how the American

statesman John Bigalow (1817 – 1911), had the same concern while reading the Bible. It just didn't make sense. Did animals come first or humans? How can there be light with no sun? Then, in 1854, a providential encounter with a stranger led John Bigalow to the works of Emanuel Swedenborg. From there, everything fell into place, and he went from agnosticism to faith.

life challenges. Kevin went on to talk about some general correspondences, like water and stones, gathered from Biblical stories like the Flood (Genesis 7), the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11), and Jesus turning water into wine (John 2:1-11).

Kevin's second session after lunch involved the youth making their own correspondential picture story. The

retreaters illustrated a memorable scene from their life using art supplies and poster board. Then each youth had an opportunity to present the artwork scene to the group and describe what was occurring. The group and the presenter then attempted to apply relevant correspondences to the situation. As an example, one teen shared a situation of a bus trip home from a school outing. Boys on the bus jumped out of

their seats and started having a push-up competition in the aisle of the moving bus. Everyone on the bus acted differently. Some people cheered the boys on, some people ignored them, some people quietly watched, some people questioned the riskiness of this activity but did not intervene. From the



The group at the English settlement village. Jeff, Heather, Julien, Athena, Charlie, Wyatt, and Ava. Bill and Jill in back.

With the aid of correspondences, the Bible made sense and Bigalow later went on to write *The Bible That Was Lost and is Found* in 1893. Kevin explained how knowing correspondences is like having a decoder ring. Glimpses into the inner meaning of the Bible provides life lessons that are directly practical and useful in solving real

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the Messenger

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Editor's Corner



Season of Change

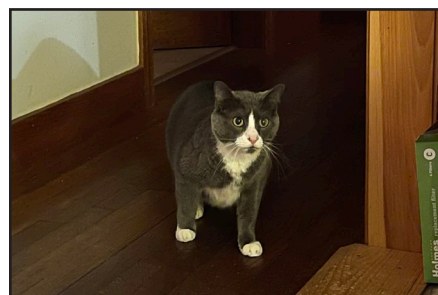
Have you seen the social media posts about leaves falling and it is the tress reminding us to think of the beauty of letting things go? I look out my office window and see piles of leaves swirling around in the wind—the deciduous trees shedding leaves after they've faded from their fall beauty. Fall is a time of change for many, not just the trees.

For our family, there were many changes—my husband started a new job, we're settling into the new routines of middle school, a new cat joined our family—we all have new schedules to adapt to. It has been a wild and busy time.

Like the trees dropping their leaves, it feels like we are also shedding our outer layer of change and settling into the upcoming winter routine. There's still plenty of fall clean-up to do, inside and outside, heart and home, getting ready for the winter to recharge and grow again in the spring. I hope you all are able to find the beauty during this season of change and to welcome the upcoming light of the holiday season.

—Beki Greenwood

Messenger@Swedenborg.org



Our new cat, seven-year-old Xavier, exploring his new home and learning to adapt to his new environment.

Print Messenger Subscription Changes

If you subscribe to *the Messenger* (print edition) we are making a change to the subscription model. Now everyone will have their subscription renewed on the same day every year, starting August 1, 2023. There will be renewal reminders printed in *the Messenger* as well as a mass email reminder. We hope that this will make it easier to remember to subscribe! This also means that the "First" edition of 2023 will be the Convention edition.

If you are set to renew before 8/1/2023, you will be invoiced for the prorated amount of \$2 per issue, with the option of adding \$25 to carry you over to 2024.

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The Swedenborgian Church of North America



Message from the President

Good News of “Life After Life” is Still Urgently Needed

The Year of Regeneration: 2022–23

During a recent memorial service for a young adult killed in yet another senseless act of random gun violence, I was saddened yet again by how often people of faith in certain modern frameworks do not seem to regard an ongoing spiritual world life beyond physical death to be a possibility. Of the many people who spoke, only one alluded in any way to the possibility that the death being mourned was only of the body and the physical presence here, but not of the true spiritual person. Many people of faith, of course, do speak about the newly departed as now in heaven with God, but for decades in my personal religious circles outside of Swedenborgianism most memorial services are like the one I just experienced: the deceased will (only) live on in our memories.

Such a spectacular omission in a memorial service always spurs me to continue the work of our tradition that holds out for much better news. If we have arisen into this amazing experience of life full of the drama of growing into the meaning of love and into an expanding joy in relationships and community only for it all to come to a crashing end with physical death, that imposes a severe limitation on the meaning of life. At least it does for me.

Emanuel Swedenborg certainly agreed that the significance of the truth or falsity of soul survival of physical death was of supreme importance. A decisive turning point for him occurred during 1734 when preoccupied in Leipzig, Germany with publishing his *Principia*, the natural science work that would establish his reputation throughout Europe as



a promising natural philosopher. He became disturbed at the extent of atheism among the intelligentsia and blamed lack of empirical evidence of the soul's immortality as the cause. He spent the next several years trying to find proof of the soul in anatomical research, which produced lasting contributions to early neuroanatomy but nothing that he could present as hardcore evidence of the soul.

His private journals, however, describe an immersion into a spiritual world full of activity with not only the presence of God but with spiritual beings who had once lived in the physical world. Of all the books that eventually flowed from his pen, the one with descriptions of the spiritual world beyond this one, *Heaven and Hell* (1758), is far and away his bestseller. But in many ways, it hasn't sold well enough. So many today see no reason to believe in ongoing life.

But more good news continues to grow. The psychiatrist Raymond Moody revived interest in Swedenborg's teachings with his now legendary 1975 work *Life After Life*. He wrote a section on Swedenborg as someone whose writings supporting the new evidence of empirical studies of what he coined “near-death experiences” (or NDEs). Nearly a half-century later, that mountain of evidence is astounding. Comprehensive databasing at the Near-Death Experience Research Foundation on their website <https://www.nderf.org/> should give hope to everyone that life here is not a momentary blip. These efforts combine with

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Emanuel Swedenborg's *Heavenly Secrets*, Paragraphs 1–5

Freely Adapted to the Language of the Cosmos

BY RACHEL RIVERS

Translator's Preface

In July of 2021, for the first time since the beginning of the Coronavirus pandemic sixteen months previously, I packed up my car with my camping gear and ventured away from my home on the Point Reyes peninsula, driving northeast three hundred miles to Lassen National Forest, where I set up camp in a remote campground.

And so began a week-long silent retreat, away from human company—including no Internet! I gave myself permission to do whatever I wanted, whenever I wanted. I spent the first few days hiking and swimming, eating and sleeping, lying in my hammock watching the birds and chipmunks, and gazing at the magnificent Douglas firs and Ponderosa and Lodgepole pines. One afternoon, returning to my campsite after hiking into the Caribou Wilderness where I had dipped into Emerald Lake, Hidden Lake and then taken a nice long swim in Silver Lake, I plopped myself down in the shade on my canvas camp chair with a booklet I had brought with me. The booklet contained the first chapter of Swedenborg's thirteen volume *Arcana Coelestia*, translated by Lisa Hyatt Cooper for the Swedenborg Foundation's New Century Edition, now titled in English, *Heavenly Secrets*.

I first began studying Swedenborg's writings in earnest in 1978 when I was twenty-two years old, and happily, I am as deeply nourished by what I read now as ever. In 1983, I was ordained as a Swedenborgian minister with the calling to communicate these heavenly truths to people hungry for a life more deeply rooted in love and wisdom and

meaningful activity. From the beginning, the challenge was to connect the great love and wisdom I found in what Swedenborg had written 250 years ago to the people of today.

The part of the Swedenborgian Rite of Ordination that has most stayed with me over the decades was the moment in the service when Rev. Calvin Turley placed a Bible in my right hand and Swedenborg's *True Christianity* in my left hand and said, "From the Lord's holy Word, according to this doctrine, lead thou the people by truth to the good of life...." From the beginning of my ministry, I discovered that many people had little or no interest in the Bible, and I always took it as a challenge to find a way to communicate the spiritual truths in the language and daily experience with whomever I was speaking.

I found myself with more and more people who fell into the camp of being spiritually hungry, but not interested at all in the Bible.

As time went on, I found myself with more and more people who fell into the camp of being spiritually hungry, but not interested at all in the Bible. I found this even more so when in 2008, I left serving in a congregational setting and continued my ministry out in the field. Never able to keep quiet about "what Swedenborg says..." regarding whatever topic we would be discussing, it was only a matter of months before my friends and neighbors asked if I would be willing to meet with them, and with their friends, to

talk in a more focused way about "what Swedenborg says." This I gladly did, and fourteen years later I am still at it, meeting in people's homes in small groups, talking about whatever is most on people's minds and in their hearts, and sharing what Swedenborg has to offer.

A requirement that was clear to me from the start of these gatherings was that I was not to use theological language, draw from the Bible, or use words like "God" or "Lord." I understood the restriction, and I obeyed, again taking on the challenge to adapt Swedenborg's understandings in language that connected in the here and now.

After several years of the group meeting together monthly, one morning in my enthusiasm I slipped up and said something about God. There was an audible collective gasp in the room and then there was absolute silence. Finally, dear Julia, one of the people present most allergic to the word "God" said to those assembled, "Excuse me, but I think what Rachel meant to say was "Love." We all started laughing, and maybe me the loudest, in the joy of the knowledge that the message of God as Love had clearly been received.

And so, here I was in Lassen National Forest, several days into my solo camping trip, pondering yet again my favorite subject: how to share with others the depths of meaning and guidance available from the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg, this time from *Heavenly Secrets*, which draws upon the Bible on every page, beginning with the opening words of Genesis.

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Heavenly Secrets

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And the answer came to me: I would translate the opening paragraphs of *Heavenly Secrets* into the language of the cosmos!

There is a tradition in Christianity that goes back centuries, that there are two books of Sacred Scripture: the “Little Book”—the collection from Genesis to Revelation—and the “Big Book”—the cosmos.

And so, with the magnificent pine trees towering over me, and under a sky that day by day during my camping trip was becoming thicker with smoke from forest fires that would collectively in California that year burn over two-and-half million acres, I re-wrote the first five paragraphs of Emanuel Swedenborg’s *Heavenly Secrets*, first published in 1749, freely adapting from the language of the Bible to the language of the cosmos.

Heavenly Secrets, paragraphs 1–5 Freely Adapted to the Language of the Cosmos

AC 1 The universe contains secrets of heaven, and every single aspect of the universe has to do with divine love and wisdom, heaven, the union of heaven and earth, right understanding, and all the ways of doing good; but we do not see this in the day-to-day surface appearance of life on earth. On the surface, we basically see that the world is for the most part only about our physical survival.

AC 2 The truth is, however, that every part of the cosmos holds an inner message. Unless we look, we aren’t likely to notice as the inner depths do not show on the surface of things. For the most part, we remain deeply ignorant of the fact that each and every detail down to the smallest dust mote—even down to the tiniest subatomic particle—enfolds and

symbolizes spiritual and heavenly matters; and because we lack such knowledge, we also tend to lack interest in and awareness of the sacredness of our physical abode.

However, with the aid of divine love and wisdom, we can see that even the smallest event represents, symbolizes, and incorporates a message of divine love.

Still, we can come to a proper understanding if we reflect on a single notion: the cosmos comes from divine love and wisdom, and so it could not possibly exist unless it held within it the kinds of things that have to do with heaven, the union of heaven and earth, and understanding and doing good. Otherwise, it could not be said to contain any life. Where, after all, does life come from if not from the properties of life? That is, if not from the fact that every single thing in the world relates to divine love and wisdom, which is truly life itself. Whatever does not reflect divine love and wisdom at some deeper level, then, is without life on a deeper level; in fact, if even a single event in the world does not embody or reflect divine love and wisdom in its own way, it is not truly alive.

AC 3 Without this interior life, the universe in its outer appearance is dead. It is like a human being, in that a human has an outward self and an inward self. The outer being, separated from the inner, is just a body and so is dead. It is the inward being that truly lives and allows the outward being to live. The inner being is a person’s soul. In the same way, the universe regarded from the standpoint of a purely outer appearance is a body without a soul. (And thus sadly, we tend to treat it as such.)

AC 4 The world’s superficial appearance alone, when it monopolizes

our thinking, can never provide a view of the inner, spiritual contents.

AC 5 However, with the aid of divine love and wisdom, we can see that even the smallest event represents, symbolizes, and incorporates a message of divine love.

Appendix: Emanuel Swedenborg’s Heavenly Secrets, Paragraphs 1–5

Translated from the Latin by Lisa Hyatt Cooper, Swedenborg Foundation New Century Edition, 2010

HS 1 The Word in the Old Testament contains secrets of heaven, and every single aspect of it has to do with the Lord, his heaven, the church, faith, and all the tenets of faith; but not a single person sees this in the letter. In the letter, or literal meaning, people see only that it deals for the most part with the external facts of the Jewish religion.

The truth is, however, that every part of the Old Testament holds an inner message. Except at a very few points, those inner depths never show on the surface. The exceptions are concepts that the Lord revealed and explained to the apostles, such as the fact that the sacrifices symbolize the Lord, and that the land of Canaan and Jerusalem symbolize heaven (which is why it is called the heavenly Canaan or Jerusalem [Galatians 4:26; Hebrews 11: 16; 12:22; Revelation 21: 2, 10]), as does paradise.

HS 2 The Christian world, though, remains deeply ignorant of the fact that each and every detail down to the smallest—even down to the tiniest jot—enfolds and symbolizes spiritual and heavenly matters; and because it lacks such knowledge, it also lacks much interest in the Old Testament.

Still, Christians can come to a proper understanding if they reflect on a single notion: that since the Word is the Lord’s and comes from him, it

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SCYL Fall Retreat

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standpoint of correspondences, we talked about what it means to “go home.” What is the correspondence of home and what does it mean to go home? Then we talked about the correspondence of the risky activity on the bus. What does physical exertion and risky behavior represent in your life? How are we like each of the people on the bus? Do we traverse life primarily as an observer? Do we cheer on other people taking risks? Do we like to quietly ignore the world around us? Looking at real life situations using correspondence was a useful and productive way to share about our own personal life choices, decisions, and path.

I led the Saturday evening session. My presentation was all about the correspondence of fruit trees and how they can lead to the fulfillment of dreams. I started with the beautiful reading of the third day of creation - the appearance of dry land, plants, and how every seed produces more of its own kind of plant (Genesis 1:9-13). We talked about the parable of The Fig Tree that was not producing fruit (Luke 13:6-8). We learned what it means correspondentially to dig around the roots and feed a tree that is barren so that it might bear fruit (*A barren tree can refer to a person that is not being useful. When you dig at a person's roots you are shaking their foundation. You are getting them to really consider what they are doing and not doing. After which, you feed the person. You're providing reasons for them to do good deeds. You help them understand what they get out of it. Hopefully when you help someone who is not doing useful things, they improve and can “bear fruit” as useful deeds and actions.*). The second half of

my session involved the retreaters completing a worksheet where they consider a dream (seed), define goals that can make the dream a reality (germination), list things you might need to learn and do (stem and leaves), determine how you can show off your talent and find delight (flower), and finally, determine how your dream can be



Above: Rev. Kevin Baxter leads session with the youth. **Right:** The arcade gang, Ava, Julien, Wyatt, Charlie, and Athena.

useful to yourself and others (fruit). The youth also considered pitfalls and challenges that might prevent their dream seed from becoming reality bearing fruit. The completed worksheets that the retreaters shared were complex and extremely interesting. The dreams varied from becoming an independent adult, to traveling the world, to launching a new business idea! I was amazed at how well the youth could vision their dreams and construct plans to bring them to fruition.

Rev. Sage Cole and her field ed student Eleanor Schnarr arrived on Sunday afternoon. Eleanor was excited to conduct the mid-day session on spirituality and breathing. She presented a wonderful slide show on yogi breathing which included fascinating scientific research on how this special breathing technique aligns the brain and nervous system and puts the body into harmonious balance. Then she led us in

some experiential breathing where we had the opportunity to try this unique and powerful breathing method. Eleanor shared some of her personal experiences visiting India and learning this breathing technique. This was a very interesting session, and several teens talked with Eleanor after her session to learn more about her intriguing life and spiritual path.

Interspersed between all of these amazing sessions were some great activities and recreation. Jeff Oelker, Midwest driver and staff member, took many trips with the retreaters down the path to the beach on Kingston Bay. Here they explored the tidal pools and



hunted for mollusks and other numerous sea creatures. Evening visits to the beach for sunset were a notable retreat highlight. Saturday evening our group went to Alley Kat Lanes for the annual rock-n-bowl and arcade game outing. Since we were a smaller group this year, we had the pleasure of visiting the Plimoth Patuxet living history complex in Plymouth, Massachusetts. Here we visited a replicate of the seventeenth century settlement established by the English colonists Pilgrims as well as a site of the Patuxet people upon whose land the Pilgrims settled. It was captivating to learn about the life of the indigenous people while seated around a fire in a Patuxet hut and equally interesting to listen and watch the professional

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role players in the English Village that spoke, acted, and dressed appropriately for the period. I made sure to ask the “villagers” essential questions about their relationship with God and spiritual beliefs so the youth could learn a little about the Separatist Puritan religion.



Rev. Sage Cole leads the closing worship service and communion under the full moon.

As our retreat drew to a close, we lit a Sunday evening campfire. Under a gorgeous rising full moon and a sky filled with a myriad of stars, Rev. Sage Cole led us in a moving closing communion service. We sat around the campfire circle and we each selected a rock. As we held our rock, Sage told us how rocks correspond to solid truths in our life. Sometimes smooth, sometimes sharp and jagged, these rocks help us to recognize the critical role that truth has in our life. We openly shared an important bit of understanding or wisdom that we have found to be solid truth. I shared one of my truths. The truth I shared was that these retreats and the connections made with the individuals at these retreats are the most important gift that I have ever received. It is my hope and prayer that all the retreaters have this same experience. ☪

For information on the upcoming retreats in November and December, please see p. 129.

Heavenly Secrets

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could not possibly exist unless it held within it the kinds of things that have to do with heaven, the church, and faith. Otherwise, it could not be called the Lord’s Word, nor could it be said to contain any life. Where, after all, does life come from if not from what is living? That is, if not from the fact that every single thing in the Word relates to the Lord, who is truly life itself? Whatever does not look to him at some deeper level, then, is without life; in fact, if a single expression in the Word does not embody or reflect him in its own way, it is not divine.

HS 3 Without this interior life, the Word in its letter is dead. It resembles a human being, in that a human has an outward self and an inward one, as the Christian world knows. The outer being, separated from the inner, is just a body and so is dead, but the inward being is what lives and allows the outward being to live. The inner being is a person’s soul. In the same way, the letter of the Word by itself is a body without a soul.

HS 4 The Word’s literal meaning alone, when it monopolizes our thinking, can never provide a view of the inner contents. Take for example this first chapter of Genesis. The literal meaning by itself offers no clue that it is speaking of anything but the world’s creation, the Garden of Eden (paradise), and Adam, the first human ever created. Who supposes anything else?

The wisdom hidden in these details (and never before revealed) will be clear enough from what follows. The inner sense of the first chapter of Genesis deals in general with the process that creates us anew—that is to say, with regeneration—and in particular with the very earliest church; and it does so in such a way that not even the smallest syllable fails to represent, symbolize, and incorporate

this meaning.

HS 5 But without the Lord’s aid not a soul can possibly see that this is the case. As a result, it is proper to reveal in these preliminaries that the Lord in his divine mercy has granted me the opportunity for several years now, without break or interruption, to keep company with spirits and angels, to hear them talking, and to speak with them in turn. Consequently I have been able to see and hear the most amazing things in the other life, which have never before come into people’s awareness or thought. In that world I have been taught about the different kinds of spirits, the situation of souls after death, hell (or the regrettable state of the faithless), and heaven (or the blissful state of the faithful). In particular I have learned what is taught in the faith acknowledged by the whole of heaven. All of these topics will, with the Lord’s divine mercy, be explored further in what follows. ☪



Rev. Dr. Rachel Rivers presently serves in a field ministry of counseling and teaching on the Point Reyes peninsula, about fifty miles northwest of San Francisco. Her specialty is bringing Swedenborg’s understanding to

people who do not identify with a religious affiliation.

Message from the President

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our church’s devotion to continuing Swedenborg’s own quest to shape empirical evidence to help people understand the Good News that our time on earth is just the beginning of love, community, and the exhilaration of being alive.

—Rev. Dr. Jim Lawrence
President@Swedenborg.org

The Year of Regeneration

The Rigor and Reward of Regeneration

Excerpts from *A Thoughtful Soul: Reflections from Swedenborg*

BY GEORGE F. DOLE, ADAPTED BY JIM LAWRENCE

Any picture of our human condition would be romantic if we did not take into full account the obvious wrongs that plague us as individuals and as societies. Swedenborg takes sharp issue with the doctrine of “original sin” if that is taken to mean we are born guilty and are therefore damned. He insists, however, that we are born *inclined* to “evil.” That is, we are born in inverted order to where we need to go such that we begin more sensitive to our lower loves than to our higher ones. In the beginning we are more sensitive to our own pleasures and pains than to those of others. We start with a spontaneous tendency to protect our own interests at the expense of others. It becomes the central task of our



spiritual lives to do our part in reversing this hierarchy, which should be understood as a rebirth.

Significantly, Swedenborg’s most complete outline of the lifelong process of regeneration (literally rebirth in the Latin) is in the very first paragraphs of his very first published theological work, *Secrets of Heaven*. The rebirth process framework rests on the symbolic base of the opening creation story that unfolds in seven days (we can think of that as seven phases). The process is initiated and fueled by Divine vision, and our part involves learning that there is a higher way and that by striving toward that we follow the process, which enables the Divine to reorder our loves.

It is not an easy path to follow because it means going against what feels most natural to us and abandoning the “certainties” that once gave us a sense of security. Fidelity to the ideal leads to fundamental change, however, because ultimately inner conflict is succeeded by an inner peace and wholeness that are the true foundations for heavenly community.

Here we begin to approach another of Swedenborg’s more radical assertions—namely, that in the person of Jesus Christ, the Divine so clothed itself in our nature that it went through on an infinite scale the same process required of us. At the center of his system, then, is an intensely personal doctrine of transformation. ☩

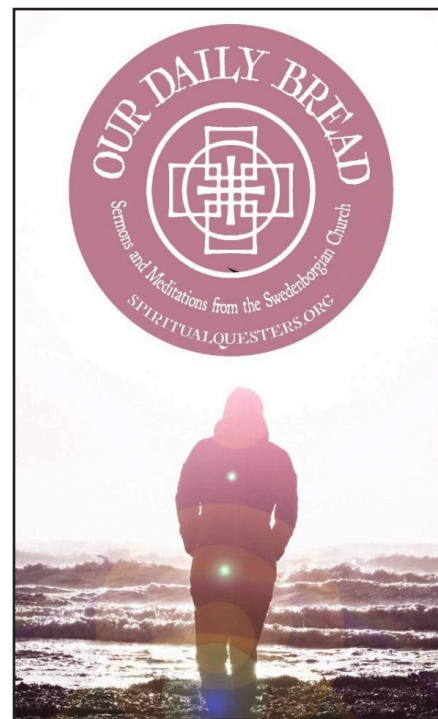
Adapted by Jim Lawrence from chapter 5, “The Human Process,” in *A Thoughtful Soul: Reflections from Swedenborg*, ed. and trans. by G. F. Dole, Chrysalis Books 1995.

“None but those who have experienced a state of peace can appreciate the nature of the peaceful tranquility the outer self enjoys when there is an end to struggle and the disquiet of burning desires and misconceptions. That joyful state surpasses all our previous notions of joy. It is not simply an end to our struggles but a vibrancy welling up from deep-seated peace, affecting our outer being beyond the capacity of words to describe it. That state gives birth to religious truth and a loving goodness, which draw their life from the joy of peace.”

Secrets of Heaven, §92

“The issue in our deeper trials is whether the evil will gain control that is in us from hell or the good that is in us from the Lord. The evil that wants control is in the natural or outer person, while the good is in the spiritual or inner person. As a result, even in our trials, the issue is the control of one over the other. If the evil wins, then the natural person controls the spiritual; if the good wins, then the spiritual process controls the natural.”

Secrets of Heaven, §8961



Retreats and Virtual Education

Warrior of the Human Spirit

Royal Oak Church of the Holy
City Zoom Series
November 5th & 12th

The Royal Oak Church of the Holy City is offering, “Warrior of the Human Spirit: A Two-Part Series” on Saturdays, November 5 and 12 from 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM ET.

This is a free Zoom series based on leadership training in a seminar that Royal Oak church member, Sue Fabian, has been taking throughout the past year. It concerns how to lead in a time of civilization collapse:

“We need leaders who recognize the harm being done to people and planet through the dominant practices that control, ignore, abuse and oppress the human spirit... Who can stand steadfast in crises and failures... Warriors for the Human Spirit train to develop the qualities and skillful means necessary to protect and preserve the human spirit and the spirit of life. They have only two ‘weapons’—compassion and insight... They learn how to calm situations of conflict and distress by offering their presence and equanimity. They learn how to embody sanity by being responsive rather than reactive... To see beyond their filters and judgments so that more information is available for decision-making... To see what’s needed rather than imposing their own needs on a situation... To trust themselves... To see clearly so they can act wisely... When we consciously commit to reign as a Warrior, we are taking our place in history. Countless others have gone before us to serve the needs of their time. Personal family lineages are filled with Warriors; those

Freedom

Splatz and Younger SCYL Teens
Retreat in Boston, Massachusetts
November 11th – 13th

The Super Powered Lovable Almost Teens (Splatz) and younger Swedenborgian Church Youth Leaguers are excited to host a Boston retreat! Our retreat theme is “Freedom.” We will explore the concept of freedom in our lives through discussion, games, activities, and a walk along a portion of the Freedom Trail! We will also plan and provide a brief presentation at the Boston Society worship service on Sunday morning. Of course, there will be plenty of time for recreation, great food, relaxing, and hanging out with friends, both old and new.

The retreat will run from 5:00 PM Friday, November 11 to 1:00 PM Sunday, November 13 at The Boston Society of the New Jerusalem Church located at 140 Bowdoin Street, Beacon Hill, MA 02108. All youth ages 10 – 15 are invited. Cost is \$30 (scholarships are available). You must be vaccinated for Covid-19 in order to attend (boosters not required). Please bring sleeping bags and mats as we will be sleeping on the church fellowship hall floor. For more information or to register, please contact Youth Director, Kurt Fekete, kfekete@hotmail.com or 802-345-0169. See you there! ☒

who went to war, who migrated, who endured poverty, injustice, conflicts, dislocation, natural disasters. Without their valiancy, we wouldn’t be here. Standing on their shoulders, we find strength and determination. Looking forward, we discover a path of meaningful contribution.... It’s just our turn

Languages of Love

SCYL Teens Retreat at Almont
Retreat Center
December 27th – 30th

The Swedenborgian Church Youth League is please to be gathering in person again for the annual 2022 Winter retreat! The retreat will run 4 PM Tuesday, December 27 to 10 AM Friday, December 30 at Almont New Church Assembly and Retreat Center located at 1513 Cameron Rd, Berlin Township, MI 48002. All youth ages 13 – 18 are invited. Cost is \$75 (scholarships are available). You must be vaccinated and have received a booster for Covid-19 within the last six months in order to attend. Our retreat theme is “The Five Languages of Love.” We will explore the five languages of love within a Swedenborgian theological context and how it is useful in our lives and our relationships. We will also have our special Exodus to Independence ceremony for our teens exiting the SCYL. As usual, along with our spiritual sessions, we’ll have time for great games, recreation, as well as just relaxing and hanging out talking with friends. Register at swedenborg.org or more information contact Youth Director, Kurt Fekete, kfekete@hotmail.com or 802-345-0169. I can’t wait to see you there! ☒

to serve the world.”

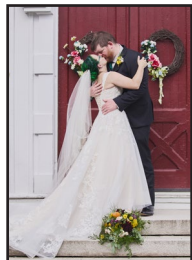
Those who are interested in participating in this Zoom series, please RSVP by contacting Rev. Renee Machiniak: Revrenee@aol.com. A Zoom invitation and two documents attached will be sent prior to the online event. ☒

Passages

Marriages

Emily M. Woofenden, daughter of Carol LeBaron and Ross Woofenden (members of the Fryeburg New Church and the Fryeburg New Church Assembly), and **Christopher Teragliafera**, son of

Tammy Teragliafera and the late Peter Teragliafera, were wed at the Fryeburg New Church in Fryeburg, Maine, on September 4, 2022. The reception was held at sunset at the beloved Fryeburg New Church Assembly. They reside in upstate New York with their puggle, Lexi. May they be blessed with a lifetime of love, happiness, and adventure.



Deaths

Rev. Jon Skuli Thorhallsson, 71, passed fully into the spiritual world on July 30, 2022.

Skuli was born in Reykjavik, Iceland on October 9, 1950. He came to this country when he was six years old with his mother and her husband. He did not know a word of English, but was thrust into the American school system, having to fend for himself. He spent most of his childhood in Florida. He was athletic in his teen years, being both a surfer and a runner.

At age nineteen, he had an out-of-body experience where he encountered an angel. This set him off on a quest which eventually led him to the Swedenborgian Church. At age twenty, following his angel experience, he hitch-hiked from Sicily to Iceland to reconnect with his Icelandic roots. He reunited with his father and met his

Icelandic siblings for the first time. He spent two years working on a family sheep farm in the north of Iceland.

When he returned to the United States, his quest continued. This quest led him to the Church, and he chose to enter the ministry. When Skuli had the opportunity to serve in the DeLand ministry his vision was to transform what had originally been a rural retirement community center ministry with a general building for housing and parking into a spiritual growth center for the surrounding communities, and that led to a vision for a rebranding into the Chrysalis Center that focused on spiritual retreats and programs in addition to regular services.

He had a small but thriving ministry in DeLand, Florida until he retired in 2015. Skuli traveled extensively in his adult years, including trips to Europe, South America, and the British Isles. In 2010, he visited his homeland for the last time, joyfully reuniting with his many relatives. In 2014, Skuli and his wife, Maryann, traveled to Japan to visit his daughter Sola, who was studying the Japanese language.

Aside from his duties as a minister, Skuli traveled all over the United States going to dozens of seminars on spirituality, New Age thinking, shamanism, and presentations on Traditional Wisdom Cultures. For years, he and his wife offered professional seminars through Daytona State College on Spirituality and Health to health professionals needing continuing education credit.

Skuli leaves his wife, Maryann, his daughter Sola, and five stepchildren, Lauren, Matthew, Adam, Maryrose, and Andrea. He had six grandchildren, Liora, Logan, Zane, Alanna, Gaku, and Uta. He has two sisters still residing in Florida, and two additional sisters and one brother living in Iceland.

Joyce Laverne Siracuse, 74, passed away peacefully at her home on September 20, 2022, surrounded by her family, after a long battle with pancreatic cancer. Joyce was born on June 12, 1948, in Fresno, California, the daughter of Robert and Ruth Beach.



After making South Hiram, Maine her home in the 1970s, Joyce earned a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Southern Maine, an Associates degree in cardiovascular technology from the Southern Maine Community College, and pursued a career as a certified registered medical nursing assistant.

She had many talents, including cooking, singing in the Portland-based Choral Arts Society, the Women in Harmony choir, and volunteering at her local church. Joyce sang in the Fryeburg New Church choir and also was the lead cook at the Fryeburg New Church Assembly for a few summers. She was also a two-term selectperson for the town of South Hiram, Maine. She enjoyed making delicious meals for her family and friends. She was funny, adventurous, hardworking, and kind. She will be very missed. Joyce is survived by her husband James, brother Robert, daughters Alyssa and Sarah, son Michael, and grandson Peter.

Rev. Judith Vandergrift of Santa Rosa, California entered the fullness of the spiritual world in late July 2022. She was ordained into the Swedenborgian Church of North



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Passages

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America on July 5, 2008, in a service at the Swedenborg Chapel in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Ministry was a late in life new career aspiration for her, and she began seminary at what would be a retirement age for most people. A member of the Disciples of Christ denomination when beginning at Pacific School of Religion, she converted to the Swedenborgian faith while on campus through engagement with the Swedenborgian students and faculty. After receiving a call to serve the Church of the New Jerusalem in Pawnee Rock, Kansas, a sudden downturn in health prevented her from beginning in that ministry, a condition from which she never recovered sufficiently to candidate for another call. However, she treasured serving as the prayer support leader for the Swedenborgian Online Community on a volunteer basis for several years and found joy in providing spiritual support to many people through the phone and online. ☪

Swedenborgian Road Angels

Did you know that the Ohio Association and the Montgomery New Church now offer outreach to Swedenborgians in South Florida? We call ourselves The Swedenborgian Road Angels, and twice a year we drive from Fort Lauderdale and West Palm Beach to Naples and Fort Myers and hold home communion services!

If you live in South Florida or are planning on being here for vacation, and would like some spiritual nourishment, please contact us, and we'll let you know when the Swedenborgian Road Angels will be heading out again. We will do our best to meet up with you! ☪

Ron Brugler: rbrugler916@gmail.com
Susan Wood: splendors@gmail.com

Welcome Temenos Interim Pastor, Rev. Yung Me Suh Morris

Rev. Yung Me Suh Morris is a first-generation Korean American who was born in Seoul, South Korea. Together with her parents and younger brother, she immigrated to the United States, Chicago, Illinois, specifically, where she grew up speaking Mid-western English, navigating multiple cultures and developing a deep abiding love for deep dish pizza and lasagna.



Living in a foreign country and straddling two worlds, Rev. Morris often wondered where she belonged. At school she wasn't American enough. At her parent's Korean church she wasn't Korean enough. The one place where she felt she was enough was in the eyes of God. She discovered over time that reflecting God's love and acceptance had a transformative effect on her life and her pursuits leading her down the ministry rabbit hole.

Rev. Morris earned her B.A. and M.A. in Education Ministries from Wheaton College and earned her M.Div. from San Francisco Theological Seminary. Rev. Morris served congregations in Northern California and Eastern Pennsylvania at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. As the pandemic surged, she moved on to learn and serve as a Pediatric Chaplain at A.I. DuPont Nemours Children's Hospital and as a Hospice Chaplain working with the bereaved. Walking alongside others in the rest and transformative power of God's presence is what she loves best about ministry.

Rev. Morris reads the Bible using the interpretive lenses of Social Justice

Ordination of Sarah Walker

It is with great pleasure that I can share the ordination of Sarah Walker on Monday evening, September 5, 2022, as we all arrived in Port Macquarie for the Council of Ministers face to face meeting. Sarah is the first person to take up the role of Regional Spiritual Director, a new form of ministry created by the NCIA ten years ago or more, as a result of the Council of Minister's paper, "The Church and the Future."



Sarah will be active as part of the work of the Australian New Church College, with a particularly focus on Logopraxis. The Council of Ministers welcomed her warmly into membership and valued her full participation in the two days of meetings that followed her ordination. We look forward to seeing and participating in Sarah's developing ministry. ☪

and Trauma Theory. She understands the Bible as a book written by a people who have endured unspeakable trauma and injustices to provide a record of thanksgiving for their survival and a poetic dream for a future that does not yet exist.

Rev. Morris and her spouse, Morgan, have three children (two out of the nest and one nearly out) and three miniature poodles (that will never leave home) in West Chester, Pennsylvania. Among her interests, Rev. Morris is a Certified Massage Therapist specializing in Deep Tissue, Trauma Release and Acupressure. She is also a Reiki Master Teacher, yoga practitioner and dances because the pleasure of it connects her deeply to Spirit. ☪

Poetry

How Frail is Space

BY GEORGE F. DOLE

I hold the world within my mind
A world of now and long ago
As real a world as man can find.
The only world I can know

I hold a room within my eye—
The walls too far away to touch
The floor down there, the ceiling high
To be and Remain just such

And yet, so very frail is space
That just a slender disc of glass
Held in my hand before my face
These boundaries can overpass.

Those walls that were so fixed out
there
I now can touch—this I believe
And if my fingers feel but air
It is my fingers that deceive.

I hold a world withing my mind
That I can hear and see and feel
And change. So in it may I find
His Presence, who alone is real. 📖

Do you write poetry?
Send it along to:
Messenger@Swedenborg.org.

Bearing Witness to the Oft Unopened Gift

BY JENNY CAUGHMAN

Death is rooted in denial
denial of truth.
Denial of what we see,
who we are.
Denial of the sacredness of all
life,
of each human being.

We die a bit each time we turn our
backs on truth
say no to kindness
close our eyes to another
isolate our hearts, isolate our
souls.

Truth, often uncomfortable,
challenges our complacency,
illuminates our mistakes,
invites us to act,
stirs us to change.

Truth is also full of Grace.
Spotlighting the internal
it shows the way.
In the light of Truth we are seen
as we are.
No illusions
we are beloved,
special,
ourselves gifts to the world.

Gifts can be expected, wanted, asked
for
a surprise.
Gifts, to be seen, to be used
must be unwrapped,
welcomed,
nourished,
shared.

In such a way, as through art,
we are spoken to,
touched,
encouraged.
Our souls, and others.
From this we grow,
through this we live.

The gift of Truth
waits to be unwrapped.
A testament to all we go through
yet rarely share. 📖

In response to The
Power of Art, found
in the book *Drinking
From the River of
Light: The Life of
Expression* by Mark
Neпо.

