

Velcome to Zinzinnati! 2011 Annual Convention: June 29–July 3—Behold I Make All things New

BY GLORIA TOOT

Come this summer to Convention 2011 and help us celebrate the 200th anniversary of the First New Jerusalem Society of Cincinnati (now known as the New Church of Montgomery), the oldest surviving Swedenborgian church in the Western Hemisphere. You're invited to visit us here in the Queen City, home of Cincinnati Chili, the Reds and Bengals, and the world famous Cincinnati Symphony and Pops Orchestras, for the deliberations and fellowship of the Swedenborgian Church at its 187th Session.

Dates are Wednesday (evening), June 29, through Sunday (noon), July 3. Ministers will be meeting Monday, June 27, for their Council of Ministers meetings (registration form and details on page 47).

The annual convention will be held at the University of Cincinnati, Ohio's premier urban research university, which traces its origins to 1819. Plan to fly into the Greater Cincinnati-Northern Kentucky Airport (CVG), which is actually located across the river in Ken-



The University of Cincinnati campus just north of downtown

tucky, but still only about twenty minutes from the University of Cincinnati campus.

The 2011 Convention theme "Be-

transformation, which echoes our local church's current transition, honoring its 200-year history and leaping forward into a new and as yet unknown path of ministry. We have exciting things planned for the convention.

Our beloved Tiffany Angel Windows will have returned home for a temporary stay at the Taft Museum. The Taft has included an exhibit of Swedenborgian historic memorabilia and art carved furniture from the Cincinnati Church (razed in 1968). You will have the opportunity to tour this exhibit as well as their permanent collection.

On Saturday evening a real treat is in store for us—a concert performed by MUSE Cincinnati Women's Choir (<http://www.musechoir.org/>).

Muse is an amazing musical experience; you won't want to

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Union Terminal in Cincinnati is one of the premier examples of Art Deco architecture and depression-era mural painting in the US. Although the concourse is long gone, the rotunda with its murals and architectural details has been preserved and restored. The historic site houses five museums and is a short distance from the University of Cincinnati.

hold, I Make All Things New!" is a bridge from the old and the past to the new and the future. It is a celebration of

The Editor's Desk



Together

Every summer we have an opportunity to gather together for a short time to conduct business and to share with our larger community. The annual convention is our governing meeting, and to function as a denomination, we need members to participate.

The business meetings are constitutionally required, and they are a form of sharing, but the annual convention is more than just conducting business. There are worship services every morning, an ordination service to induct new ministers, opportunities to renew friendships and make new friends over meals and at evening get-togethers, and a social activity organized by the local hosts, in this case, the Montgomery New Church. Teens in SCYL always have a rich experience under the

leadership of Kurt Fekete.

I can attest that Cincinnati is a wonderful city to explore and enjoy, having lived there briefly as a young man. The site of the convention, the University of Cincinnati is in the city and close to all the urban attractions there. Make your plans now—I hope you can attend. Some societies and some associations provide financial assistance to attend—check with yours.

Consider as well the opportunities to serve the denomination, which serves societies in many ways, by submitting your nomination to serve on a governing body, a support unit, or a committee (article page 39).

More Theodicy

Erni Martin's article in the December *Messenger* ("Reflections on the Price of Freedom") has generated much thought and discussion. A practical suggestion for confronting the problem of evil in the world when it touches our lives is Mark M. Scott's "Companion Theodicy" on page 38. He sets aside the theological and philosophical discussion and focuses instead on acting in the face of evil. Also, read the letter from Susan Hemmerich (this page) on the subject.

—Herb Ziegler

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Church Calendar

April 15: Annual Reports Due

April 17–21: SCYL Easter Rally, Purley-Chase Retreat Center, Birmingham, England

April 29–30, 2011: SHS Board of Trustees meeting, Berkeley

May 27–30: SCYL Memorial Day Weekend Retreat, Fryeburg New Church Assembly, Fryeburg, Maine

June 29–July 3, 2011: Annual Convention, Cincinnati

Letters to the Editor

Freedom and Hell

Thanks to Erni Martin, David Fekete, and John Maine!

I have read with much interest, both Rev Martin's article "Reflections on the Price of Freedom" in the December *Messenger* and Rev Fekete's follow-up "God, Hell and Regeneration" in the January's issue. As it happened, at our church [Church of the Good Shepherd in Kitchener, Ontario] last Sunday, Rev Maine's message focused on two statements Jesus made, namely, "You are the salt of the earth," and, "You are the light of the world." Rev Maine pointed out that Jesus said

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the Messenger

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Letter from the President



Dear Friends,

We have passed the depth of winter. Even though there is over a foot of snow on the ground and it is still falling, I know the worst is over. Even though there are several hours of shoveling and the firewood still needs to be brought in to keep ahead of the wood stove's voracious appetite, I know that the cold will soon let go its grip.

This is a quiet time. Things slow down as people and nature itself turn inward. It is a time of taking stock, checking one's inventory and making plans for when the life begins to return all around us. As we each move through this time having made our adjustments for winter and begin to think about what we plan to do as spring approaches, is there anyone who doubts that spring will arrive? This is one of those things that, while we can take into account some variation on timing, no one even considers that spring might not arrive. At its core this is a fundamental act of faith. We can predict based on constant indicators, and experience repeated over the years has provided reason to expect, so we trust without doubt that spring is just weeks away, and it is indeed a comforting thought.

So how many of us have a very similar faith when it comes to the presence and ongoing Providence of God in our lives? How many of us passing through the occasional troubles and losses or enduring and even struggling with the hardships and burdens of life simply expect God to be—and in fact is—directly involved in all that is going on in our lives. And that in time, the burdens will be lifted, the hardships eased, the losses regained, and the wounds healed? Is there anyone of us who considers that anything other than an inevitability

whose only uncertainty is when?

We may long for spring, we may wonder when will it ever return? But there is no doubt that it will. We may be in a position where we long for healing and call out for help; we may wonder when our situation will be eased, but is there any doubt that it will?

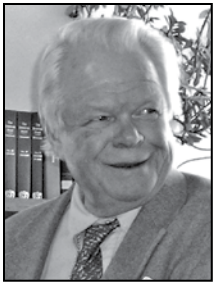
We have a certain advantage in this kind of thinking; because as surely as we expect spring to follow winter, we expect spiritual life in heaven to follow the end of our time here on earth. Not only that, we hold that God is actively engaged with us in the very details of our lives as they are unfolding here and now. Because of that faith, no matter how dark and cold life gets, we hold the sure expectation that it will emerge into the light and warmth of God's love and wisdom. I shovel snow and move firewood now because that is what makes life possible in these conditions and allows me to live forward into those joyous months when the grass is green and the flowers blooming. So too, we deal with the chores of life, difficulties, losses, wounds, and troubles now because that is what makes life possible in these conditions, and it is what allows us to move forward into the joyous place when love is in blossom and our efforts are bearing fruit. We know that the one state follows the other. As sure as God *is* and is moving all things and calling all beings to what is loving and true, we are moving through the seasons of our lives with the sure expectation that God is calling us, and accompanying us, as we journey ever closer to heaven.

We share this fundamental faith. We live knowing these things are true. So as we wrap the blanket of God's love around us just a little more snugly and look out the window longing for spring; in this time of in-turning, may we each be renewed and may we each dream boldly, may we each collect and build our strength for the work in the garden of our church and churches that awaits with the promise of blossoms and fruits in the coming season.

Blessings, Rev. Ken

Born Young: Discovering Remains

BY LARS-ERIK WIBERG



A few weeks ago I was having a glass of cider before going to bed. Taking a tablet and pencil, I listed the following without

much thought: “Ancestral Remains—Most Ancient Church—Psychic Inertia, thus no loss—Can’t shed beliefs that were experiential.” The motivation for these semi-connected thoughts may have been a numinous photo of St. Michael’s Mount off the coast of Cornwall that I had been looking at earlier in the day. Could it involve something experiential preserved somehow and involving ancestral remains? I wondered whether any of my ancestors ever got to Cornwall. I thought how Kristianstad, my family’s native city in southern Sweden, seems so familiar to me and how southern Sweden in general is so comfortable a place and not foreign at all.

I came away from that rumination convinced that it was another example of the psychic inertia that would be involved in what is termed *ancestral memory*. Next morning, thinking that *remains* was probably a bit Swedenborgian, I googled “ancestral+memory” and discovered enough examples to show that its existence is well documented indeed. A recently added entry titled “Ancestral Memory—an Anecdotal Account,” submitted by Keith Hays on August 18, was most specific.

It was August in 1974. . . . We were driving US Route 11 south from Chambersburg, through Maryland and West Virginia. We had, as was our habit, gotten an early start. It was dawn as we reached Williamsport, Maryland, where Lee had crossed the Potomac, end-

ing his Gettysburg campaign. I had been driving in the dark and the light was just beginning to illuminate the landscape as the children started to waken to ask where we were and the inevitable, “Are we there yet?”

I turned to [my wife] Emily and told her that I had the strangest feeling that I had been there before though I had never been in that area in my life. As we drove south toward Winchester, Virginia, those feelings of familiarity intensified and I was telling the kids what to expect to see over the next hill. As we pulled into Winchester and approached the old town square, I felt completely at home as though

Immortal cells provide a receptacle for this expression of the Lord’s goodness imprinted on us in babyhood for all time.

I was seeing a town in which I had grown up. As we drove south out of Winchester headed for Front Royal and the Skyline Drive, the feeling left me. I was never able to explain that feeling.

A decade later my interest in discovering my family’s history was rekindled by finding that genealogical records were beginning to become available on the new and somewhat magical Internet. Pursuing my great-grandmother’s family, I learned that William Hickman Harris, my 4-G grandfather, and his father before him had lived and raised their families on a farm just outside of Winchester. The course of US Route 11 ran through their land, and they had a prominent place in the history of Winchester. The country that evoked that feeling was familiar ground to them, just as it had seemed to me.

Something certainly is passed from one generation to the next other than the physical resemblances, of which we are all aware, and my thinking side insisted that there has to be an explainable process to account for such passage of information or impressions. Carl Jung is emphatic on this point as he writes in *The Practice of Psychotherapy* ¶ 61,

Inasmuch as the newborn child is presented with a ready-made, highly developed brain which owes its differentiation to the accretions of untold centuries of ancestral life, the unconscious psyche must consist of inherited instincts, functions, and forms that are peculiar to the ancestral psyche. This implies the probability that a man will behave much as his ancestors behaved right back to Methuselah. Thus the unconscious is seen as the collective predisposition to extreme conservatism, a guarantee, almost, that nothing new will ever happen.

But these accounts, persuasive as they may be in portraying a condition, don’t tell us what causes the condition. They are like the description of the behavior of an automobile without any reference to internal combustion. So I was thinking there has to be a process of which I was seeing the result. Then unexpectedly I stumbled onto the following exchange, and the light of understanding was switched on. Quoted from the magazine *Life Extension* of June 2010, it is an interview between a founder of the magazine and Dr. Michael D. West, Ph.D., the CEO of Bio-Time, Inc., a firm involved in regenerative medicine and stem-cell research. Here’s the clip that made me catch my breath.

Questioner: So, are you saying that an inadequate ability to gen-

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GATE*way (*Growing Angels Through Education)

A New Constitution

BY REV. JOHN MAINE

One of the long-standing commitments we have had as the Sunday School Association—it's been talked about at the last two or three annual meetings—is the complete overhaul of our very long (nineteen pages), overly complex, and generally antiquated constitution. The problems that the old constitution poses are these:

- an exclusive focus on traditional, religious education in parish Sunday School settings, rather than a broader-based approach to children's spiritual growth in ministry contexts of all kinds;
- an orientation of quasi-independence, if not near-isolation, from the rest of Convention, its associated bodies and programs;
- a narrow focus on publishing print materials only (the document pre-dates computers, the Internet and social media by many years);
- an elaborate system of boards, committees and sub-committees reporting to one another that is both unnecessary and impossible for us to implement, due to a lack of volunteer personnel.

In short, our constitution is a document that reflects and expresses the values, outlook, history, and technology of a bygone era. It speaks to the concerns and way things were done fifty to a hundred years ago. It may have worked well enough back then. Certainly it helped guide the work of many devoted volunteers in bringing the New Jerusalem to young minds and hearts. However, by today's standards, it is so out-of-date and cumbersome that it is no longer of practical use in serving the needs of children and their families.

We need a new governing document to set out who we are, why we

are here, what we want to do and how. To that end, the executive of your Association proposes a new constitution for what we are calling the Swedenborgian Church Children's Ministries (SCCM).

The new SCCM constitution has been developed by the executive in conjunction with a peer review and feedback process involving Swedenborgians outside the Association executive. SCCM is built on the framework of the Sunday School Association, but it has these new features:

- it will be an independent body but under the umbrella of the Education Support Unit (EDSU) just like the Swedenborgian Church Youth League (SCYL);
- it will work collaboratively with SCYL, Transitions, and EDSU so that children can be helped to move on to these other programs as they grow;
- its focus will be on supporting and promoting children's ministries of all kinds, sharing information, and pointing to new resources more

than creating its own print materials that go so quickly out of date;

- it will be very streamlined organizationally, run by a leadership team of four people, with working groups or committees struck as required.

Formal Notice

According to our present constitution, notice of any proposed constitutional change is to be published in *The Messenger* in the month of March prior to the annual meeting at which it is to be voted upon. The article you are reading serves as that notice. We will be formally presenting the new constitution at our annual meeting at the annual convention in Cincinnati in June. A two-thirds majority vote is required for confirming the document as our new constitution.

As president of the Association, my sincere thanks go to all those who assisted, supported, and guided this process. It has taken many months, but we are excited about the new beginning before us that will serve the regeneration of our ministries to children. ☩

The Annual Meeting of the Corporation of the New Church Theological School (dba the Swedenborgian House of Studies at Pacific School of Religion)

**Will be held at the Annual Session of the
Swedenborgian Church of the US and Canada,
at the University of Cincinnati Ohio)
in the main meeting room of the Convention.**

Thursday, June 30th, 2011, at 7:30 PM

Please join us for a reception immediately following.

Reflection

Companion Theodicy

BY MARK M. SCOTT

Theodicy, in its classical sense, signifies the rational attempt to reconcile the existence of evil in the world with the doctrine of divine omnipotence, goodness, and justice. To those in the midst of suffering, however, these logical explanations often fail to bring any comfort. Nicholas Wolterstorff, in his poignant *Lament for a Son*, bemoans that in the aftermath of his son's death from a mountain climbing accident, he found no solace in theodicy:

I have read the theodicies produced to justify the ways of God to man. I find them unconvincing. To the most agonized question I have ever asked I do not know the answer. I do not know why God would watch him fall. I do not know why God would watch me wounded. I cannot even guess (68).

It seems to me that if theodicy fails here, in these concrete moments of despair, it fails everywhere. If it does not make sense in the crucible of tragedy, it loses all intellectual and existential credibility and relevance.

The Book of Job has been the *locus classicus* for theological reflections on the problem of evil. Nevertheless, its message is notoriously difficult to discern, and many deny that it gives us any "solution" at all. I would not be so foolish as to venture an interpretation of Job in these few words, but I have found in Job an image that has constructive value for theodicy. When Job's friends Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar first see him "from a distance," they perceive the depth of his suffering and weep and mourn for him (Job 2:12). What happens next is astonishing: rather than uttering specious theological explanations for his plight, they

simply sit with him in his pain and sorrow: "They sat with him seven days and seven nights, and no one spoke a word to him, for they saw that his suffering was very great" (Job 2:13). In the tabernacle of Job surrounded by his friends in the midst of his suffering, we have a beautiful biblical image to guide what I call a "companion theodicy."

A companion theodicy begins with the assumption that those in the throes of suffering find comfort in our solidarity with them, not in ill timed and ill conceived theological theories. They do not need someone to stand in front

The mourning bench is a place for silent reflection, for sharing pain that surpasses speech, and for deep friendship—not for false consolation that "it's not really so bad,"

of them spewing empty words. Even when offered with the best of intentions, theological speculations ring hollow at best and compound suffering at worst. Rather, those beset by misfortune need someone to sit beside them in silence and solidarity. The depth and breadth of evil in the world defies simplistic explanations. While I would not abandon the project of theodicy, all theodicies eventually come to the realization that the mystery of evil exceeds our noetic capacity. We simply do not and cannot know why God allows some to suffer and not others. Since we "know only in part" (I Corinthians 13:12), we should speak with theological reserve and humility. A companion theodicy refrains from hasty theological conclusions (silence) and attends to the practical and emotional needs of those who suffer (solidarity). Theodicy,

in the expanded sense of reflective responses to suffering (both intellectual and practical), speaks best through compassionate actions, not words.

Wolterstorff employs the apt metaphor of a "mourning bench" (*Lament for a Son*, 5, 34, 63) where those who suffer from loss sit in silent solidarity. Wolterstorff's metaphor perfectly complements the image of Job's friends sitting silently beside him. The mourning bench is a place for silent reflection, for sharing pain that surpasses speech, and for deep friendship—not for false consolation that "it's not really so bad," or for blame. Job's friends lose their way and become the proverbial "Job's comforters" when they rise up from "the bench" and begin to accuse him of wrongdoing. Similarly, Pat Robertson lost his way when, in the aftermath of the earthquake in Haiti, he blamed the natural event on the Haitians themselves, calling them "cursed." Although theodicy eventually must speak, it should wait for the right moment and search for the right words. More often than not, we are wise to say nothing at all.

The more I read and write about theodicy, the more I am convinced that the "solution" to the problem of evil does not lie in books and talk at all. Research and scholarly discourse have their place, but at the end of the day people in the depths of sorrow want aid, companionship, and, yes, answers, but not scholarly sleight of hand. In moments of tragedy and despair, we should come alongside those who suffer and help as best as we can: sometimes by doing, sometimes by speaking, sometimes by silence. A theodicy of silence and solidarity a companion theodicy calls for theological agility, humility, and humanity. It recognizes

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Call for Nominations

Every year, the Swedenborgian Church holds a convention and elects members of constituent bodies to a variety of denomination-wide offices. These offices give you an opportunity to meet people throughout the church while helping our denomination achieve its mission. The following positions are open:

- Vice-president: one to be elected for a one-year term
- Secretary: one to be elected for a one-year term
- Treasurer: one to be elected for a one-year term
- General Council: (one minister and two lay members to be elected for a three-year term)

General Council is the governing body of the Swedenborgian Church. Led by the president of the denomination, they meet face to face at the annual convention and in the fall (travel, room, and board provided).

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es the mystery of evil and the limits of human reason. It combines theory and praxis. It creatively employs and adapts the most promising aspects of classic and contemporary Christian theodicies to meet the needs of particular situations of suffering. And last, it strives for theological sophistication, systematic coherence, and practical relevance. If I were to blaze a pathway in theodicy, it would be in that direction. ☩

Mark S. M. Scott, Ph.D. is visiting assistant professor of the history of Christianity in the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Missouri Columbia.

Reprinted with permission. Mark M. Scott, "Companion Theodicy," Harvard Divinity Bulletin, Vol. 38, Nos. 1 and 2 (Summer/Autumn 2010): 17–18. Copyright 2010 The President and Fellows of Harvard College.

vided). All other business is conducted by conference call and e-mail.

- Communication Support Unit: (one to be elected for a three-year term)

COMSU assists the church through the development of printed materials. Meetings are by e-mail and conference call.

- Education Support Unit: (one to be elected for a three-year term)

EDSU facilitates activities that enhance the understanding and the skills needed for the realization of the Swedenborgian Church's purpose. This unit is concerned with resources, personnel and programming (specifically, annual convention mini-courses). Meetings are by e-mail and conference call.

- Information Management Support Unit: (one to be elected for a three-year term)

IMSU's focus is on gathering, storing and distributing data pertinent to the fulfillment of the Swedenborgian Church's purpose. Its primary focus has been the denomination's web page. Business is conducted through electronic communication.

- Financial and Physical Resources Support Unit: (one to be elected for a three-year term)

The central focus of FPRSU is on the wise use and development of such resources as are directly under the Swedenborgian Church's control. FPRSU oversees the management of the Swedenborgian Church's properties and investments, seeks new sources of material support and provides consultants for the Swedenborgian Church's collective bodies and the best coordinated use and development of the body's financial and physical resources. Meetings are usually by e-mail and conference call.

- Ministries Support Unit: (two to be

elected for a three-year term)

MNSU is charged with facilitating ministries within the Church and activities that increase the number of individuals and groups consciously committed to the realization of the Swedenborgian Church's purpose. Meetings are by e-mail and conference call.

- Nominating Committee: (two to be nominated, one to be elected for a five-year term)

It is the duty of this committee to present at the annual convention nominees for the officers of the Swedenborgian Church and vacancies in the elective members of the General Council and all other boards, support units and committees. The nominating committee proposes a slate representative of the Swedenborgian Church's overall constituency. Meetings are by e-mail and conference call.

- Committee on Admission into the Ministry: (one lay member to be elected for a three-year term)

This committee meets with ministerial candidates to review, and recommend qualified candidates for ordination. Meetings are by conference call and face-to-face (travel, room and board provided).

- The Board of Trustees for the Swedenborgian House of Studies: (four to be elected, two to the representative class and two to the at-large class, for a three-year term)

The SHS board manages the business and affairs of the New Church Theological School. Meetings are face-to-face (travel, room and board provided).

Please contact Deane Currie at deanecurrie@gmail.com or one of the other members of the nominating committee as soon as possible if you are interested—deadline for this part of the process is May 1. ☩

Reflection

Returning to SCYL After a Long Hiatus

BY RONALD BRUGLER



This past September I received an email from our youth director, Kurt Fekete, asking for volunteer ministers to serve on the staff of the annual winter

SCYL retreat that is held at the Almont New Church Assembly in Michigan. I have received emails such as this in the past from Kurt, and to be honest, I have pushed the *delete* key on my computer rather quickly. But for some reason, this was not the case this time. I found myself going back and re-reading it over and over again. I even went so far as to count up the number of teen retreats I have attended in my ministerial career—some twenty-eight or so. I figured that I had “done my share” so to speak, and could leave this up to the younger ministers. But then I figured up something else. I tallied up the number of years that it has been since I have taken part in a teen retreat. I was shocked by the fact that it had been twenty years since I had made the effort to support our youth. I then and there made the decision that I was volunteering to attend.

During the weeks before the event, as the staff ministers emailed back and forth sharing ideas as to how we might approach the theme, “Dreams and the Whispering of Angels,” I’ll admit to having a mixture of feelings present in my mind. I wondered if I would be able to connect in a meaningful way with the teens. I questioned if I still had the passion for youth ministry that I once

had. I even had images of them gathering for my presentation, and questioning what such an “old” man would say that was worthwhile. In retrospect I laugh at these foolish notions.

What I discovered from the moment I arrived was that being present with these people was a blessing to be cherished! Upon arrival the staff was welcomed. The twenty-seven teens that were there even took the initiative to introduce themselves. We engaged in a very informative and productive training session that Kurt led (something that had never taken place years before), we reviewed our job descriptions and expectations, and it was made clear that we were there for one primary purpose, to assure the teens that God and this church loves and

cares about them. All other aspects of our time together were secondary, but meaningful just the same. We had fun. We worked. We shared friendly conversations. We grew.

I listened with great interest to the ministers who presented before me. Sage Currie talked about dreams in general and what they represent to us. She distributed journals for the teens to record their dreams in, and each morning before breakfast we gathered together in small groups to discuss them. Alison Longstaff had the teens in the palm of her hand as she spoke about “Animal Speak” and what they represent on a spiritual level. She wove this into a session using Tarot Cards and Palm readings. And the room was

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Announcing a . . . Youth Retreat in England! April 17–21, 2011

Hey Everyone! Kurt Fekete, our National Youth Director, will be leading a retreat at Purley Chase, in England next spring!

Do **YOU** want to go?

Cost? \$600–\$800, depending on response, need for financial assistance, and our ability to find good prices on flights.

However . . .

If **YOU** want to go, **WE** will try to make it happen.

Purley Chase is a large English country home—now a retreat centre—near Birmingham, in the heart of England. It sits on several acres of fields and trees, with trails and an adventure play ground. You will be joining British Swedenborgian youth, as eager to meet you as you are to meet them.

Now is the time to begin planning! If you are interested, contact Kurt at kfekete@hotmail.com, or if you live in Canada, contact Rev. Alison at Rev.Alison@shepherdsway.ca.

Welcoming Devin P. Zuber to the Faculty

Swedenborgian Scholarship in the 21st Century

The board, faculty, and staff of the Swedenborgian House of Studies are pleased to announce the arrival of Dr. Devin Zuber to the faculty at Pacific School of Religion. Professor Zuber takes the post of assistant professor of American studies, literature, and Swedenborgian studies. Zuber received his Ph.D. at City University of New York. A native of the Washington, DC, area, he has been teaching abroad for four years, serving as an assistant professor of English and American studies at Ludwig-Maximilians Universität in Munich and at Osnabrück Universität in Osnabrück, Germany.

Dean Jim Lawrence says, "We are delighted to bring in such a talented thinker who already has been enormously productive in Swedenborgian Studies. His warmth and obvious love of working with students in their formation will bestow blessings on the SHS program. Our seminary community is looking forward to new adven-

tures in thought and spirit with Professor Zuber."

Among his many interest areas in Swedenborgian studies is the vision of creation and the environment in Swedenborg's writings. Dr. Zuber's Ph.D. dissertation is entitled "Hieroglyphics of Nature: Swedenborg, Ecology, and Romantic Aesthetics," and was awarded the alumni and faculty award for most distinguished dissertation for 2009–2010. In his first semester, which begins in January, he is teaching a class called "Ecocriticism and Environmental Literature."

"I'm currently working on a project that involves John Muir and a circle of Swedenborgian artists and writers who were part of the emergence of conservation aesthetics at the end of the nineteenth century," Zuber says, "so there's something quite serendipitous about ending up in the very place where these ideas first percolated a century ago."

He is also teaching a course called "Swedenborg's Spiritual World," which

looks at Swedenborg's extensive accounts of the other world, setting them within their eighteenth-century cultural contexts and putting *Heaven and Hell* into conversation with other great classics on the afterlife, such as those by Augustine, Dante, and Milton.

Devin and his wife Suzanne, with their two preschool-age daughters, Katie and Sophie, are looking forward to the change of climate in northern California; snowy Osnabrück received the least amount of sunlight in all of Germany last year! Please join us in welcoming the Zubers to the Swedenborgian community of our seminary and of the General Convention of Swedenborgian Churches. ☙

Many Messenger subscribers did not receive their January issues until February because the Post Office held it until February (bulk mail deliveries). *The Messenger* apologizes for the delay and any resultant confusion.

Born Young

continued from page 36

erate new cells in the aging body is linked to the body's inability to repair itself as we grow older?

Dr. West: Every tissue is different, but that's basically what I'm saying. The goal of gerontology for many years has been to find the reason that our reproductive lineage continues to make babies generation after generation while the other cells in our body, called somatic cells, have a finite life span and are mortal or, in other words, to discover the reason babies are born young. The answer is that we come from a lineage of cells that have been proliferating since the

dawn of life on earth. The cells that made us have no dead ancestors.

So our reproductive cells are immortal—they don't age. Babies are, indeed, always born young. Suddenly there appears a physical substance, a cell, full of information which presents a tangible basis for such notions as psychic inertia, ancestral memory, and, most appealing to any Swedenborgian, remains. When Carl Jung was questioned about his belief in the afterlife, he said that it was possible only if we human beings were host to "something incorruptible." Immortal cells fill that bill.

Focusing on ancestral memory, the cells which produced us, as well as the cells which produced the members of

the Most Ancient Church, never aged. Something is rooted in people to make them what they are, come what may, and these immortal cells provide that something.

The idea of something immortal within us generates many inferences. Further rumination makes me think that the phenomenon is not unique to humans and would appear to be a characteristic of life itself. Take the phenomenon we call instinct that we observe in animals. The immortal cell concept provides us with the information we need to account for how standard behavior patterns are passed from one creature to another of the same species without ever being lost. What

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Born Young

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we call instinct in animals is their specialized psychic inertia, keyed to survival, a use which is not so crucial to mankind.

We have the luxury of a long childhood and youth owing to the safety of hearth and home, whereas other mammals characteristically have to be able to fend for themselves in much shorter order. On the other hand we do have all the equipment needed to develop specialized behavior patterns that would produce instinctive behavior in the face of danger. In other words we have the tools for instinct if needed.

So the dividing line between animals and mankind when it comes to retention of behavior patterns is not abrupt; it consists of the same ilk of ingredients emphasized differently. After all, we are both born young as the products of immortal cells. In animals these cells are imprinted with behaviors that have proven conducive to survival. In mankind the situation is different because the human feeling and thinking apparatus is more complex and results in highly developed affections and knowledges.

We can't cover all the inferences of course, but one which deserves mention and which has survived from a simpler and more pastoral time is an innate love of nature. This love isn't taught and doesn't need to be because it is part of the human state. Just think how many of us on vacation head for the mountains, the lakes, the seashore, national parks, or favorite campsites.

Another inference is ancestral memory. It consists of special impressions that were experienced over and over until they were imprinted for transmission indefinitely, as the quotation from Mr. Hay illustrated. What seemed uncanny knowledge to him was of the sort that would depend on repetition for retention—travelling the same route over and over and seeing

the same scenes repeatedly.

For a Swedenborgian, the existence of remains receives a wonderful confirmation. Immortal cells provide a receptacle for this expression of the Lord's goodness imprinted on us in babyhood for all time. And our remains can no more be erased than can our immortal cells become mortal. Tied to this state of affairs is the Lord's injunction that we love the neighbor. He says we should do so no matter what, with no exceptions. No matter that our neighbor be a scoundrel, his remains are immortal, and they contain good and truth in him that can be loved, and of course, God knows this.

Psychic inertia, however expressed, really does come into its own. Now it is easy to see how impressions, tastes, talents—all manner of characteristics,

It is fascinating to ponder the existence of immortal cells in the context of free will.

including biases, can be kept without limit down through the generations to make an impact on any modern family. What's to stop psychic inertia from keeping its thrall with each of us? We can't shut it off any more than we can our remains, our memories, or our love of nature. It's all a part of us; it is what we are.

It is fascinating to ponder the existence of immortal cells in the context of free will. As a kind of back-door look at free will, it certainly seems that God would have provided a safety valve for relief in cases of utmost free-will abuse. It also would seem that, without such foresight, provision of free will could allow pollution to affect any cell and threaten the very pattern of existence that is imperative if the miracle of being born young is to be kept safe.

As it is, abuse of free will does not affect remains, which are firmly in place before any such abuse can conceivably

occur. Also established is our psychic inertia, ancestral memories, and oneness with nature, all of which will ultimately serve to shape our personal use of free will. It is all too true, however, that we inherit a history of free will abuse that rides in on inertia and memory and can lead to everything from poor judgment to outright evil. Nevertheless, the stabilizing effect of inertia and memory, coupled with remains which are never mixed with evils, gives each successive soul born young a fair chance to exercise free will in a way God would hope for.

The existence of immortal cells emphasizes uninterrupted flow from generation after generation of having been born young. And these cells are packed full of information. We have seen that they contain remains and provide psychic inertia, ancestral memory, and love of nature. These may be considered our possessions at the very outset of our entry into the natural world, and they will be added to as we progress through our stay here.

When our stay is over, with what confidence can we presume we will continue our existence in a spiritual world? Do we keep our immortal cells or not? I believe that these cells are truly immortal, that they are ours, that our remains remain in them, and that we will continue as individuals, along the path that God has made ready for us. How heartwarming it is that being born young is a clue to which science has responded by conceptualizing immortal cells and thus reinforcing everything that Emanuel Swedenborg had to say about remains.

And finally, wonder of wonders, it happens that by giving immortality to remains, which are states of affection for good and truth, God has effectively, and for all time, stacked the deck against evil. ☩

Lars Wiberg is a member of the Cambridge (Massachusetts) Society of the New Jerusalem.

Lungerich Fund Guidelines

The Lungerich Fund Trust was established in 1874 by Louis C. Lungerich for the following purpose as stated in the trust document:

The income from the Trust is to support printing or publication and gratuitous distribution of the theological writings of Emanuel Swedenborg to Protestant clergy, theological students and instructors of theology in the United States and Canada.

Louis Lungerich included language in the purpose and use of the Trust that authorizes the trustees to review the usefulness of the Trust and the publications to be disseminated, and allows the trustees to determine how the purpose of the Trust can be more usefully achieved as methods and resources change over time. The original intent of the Trust must always to remain central to its use.

The current trustees are looking at various ways in which the intent of the Trust can be supported in the twenty-first century. The use of digital technology and the Internet as vehicles of production allowing for distribution via electronic means is something that Mr. Lungerich could not have foreseen, but he wisely included language that allows the trustees to broaden or change methods of fulfilling the Trust's pur-

pose as follows:

... and if at any time hereafter the Trustees for the time being, and the said General Convention ... shall be of opinion that said uses have failed or become impracticable, then it shall and may be lawful for said Trustees, The said General Convention ... concurring, to appoint new and other uses of a kindred nature for said trust funds. Always provided, however, that this power shall never extend so far as to divert the said trust funds from the circulation of said theological writings of Swedenborg in some form or other, in such a way as to most effectually disseminate the doctrines therein taught.

The trustees must always follow the original intent of the Lungerich Fund by supporting programs of free distribution of Swedenborg's writings as the first priority, followed by consideration of programs that mix summaries and explications of Swedenborg's works with direct connections to specific writings.

If you have an idea for a program that could benefit from the support of the Lungerich fund, the trustees invite you to apply. Proposals to the Lungerich Fund are accepted annually by

Esther Capon

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calling was to help the less fortunate. She did pro bono work for the battered women organization now called STAND and worked with the Contra Costa County Senior Legal Services in Richmond for many years. Esther also provided free legal advice clinics at the Concord Senior Center. She held member positions in the Pleasant Hill Commission on Aging and the Concord Commission on Aging.

Through all of her many accomplishments, Esther remained an involved, loving, and devoted mother of six children and numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren. As of this writing, a memorial service is scheduled at the San Francisco Swedenborgian Church for April 2, 2011, the Rev. James Lawrence officiating. ☩

September 15, with one-year grant decisions made by October 30 for the following calendar year. Send proposals to the chair of the Lungerich Fund trustees at Chris.laitner@gmail.com. ☩

The Lungerich Fund trustees
Barbara Cullen
Dave Viges
Matthew Fleming
Herb Ziegler
Christine Laitner (chair)

Letters to the Editor

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"you" referring to each of us!

Together these experiences have moved me greatly. First, I know that it is essential that I have the freedom to choose; then I am once again reminded that God's love is so completely unconditional that He ceaselessly continues to make opportunities to draw me to heaven. I am told in no uncertain terms that in the Lord's opinion, I am the very salt of the earth, able to

preserve that which might deteriorate and able to give zest and flavour to life. Further, I am the beacon for others to show the way.

Wow! How will I ever be the same old me?

My opinion of myself does not currently measure up to those words of Christ, but I can take some baby steps, reminding myself that I am able to choose freely in all aspects of my life, that I am loved unconditionally forever as I make those choices, and most im-

portantly, that the Lord looks upon me as a very important influence on everyone around me and on the social conditions of my immediate world.

What an inspiration! Readers, we are so blessed. I wish that everyone could know these things. But hey, you are the salt of the earth. You are the light of the world.

If we are all empowered in this way, together we will change the world!

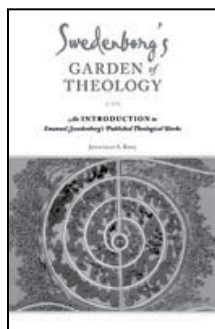
—Susan Hemmerich
Kitchener, Ontario

Foundation Releases

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contact with the spirits of heaven and hell. Before his death, he wrote eighteen different works published in twenty-five volumes, totaling about three and a half million words.

Navigating that rich garden of thought has been a challenge even for scholars of Swedenborg, let alone those new to his work. In this compact guide, Jonathan S. Rose introduces readers to the basic concepts of Swedenborg's writings, including Swedenborg's view of God and the afterlife and his description of humanity's spiritual history. Rose also examines how Swedenborg's theology relates to other Christian denominations, both in his time and ours, and takes a side



trip into some of Swedenborg's more unusual ideas.

Swedenborg's Garden of Theology provides an ideal introduction for anyone seeking a starting point to delve into Swedenborg's religious thought.

A Swedenborg Sampler

For new readers of Emanuel Swedenborg, knowing where to start and what to read can present an insurmountable task. This volume is a good starting point and provides samples of some of his most powerful writings, now available in new, contemporary translations.



What happens to our souls after we die? What is the afterlife like? What is the nature of God? Of evil? What can we do during our lives to help guide us to heaven? What kinds of answers can we find in the Bible? Selections from



The National Church in Washington DC
(Article on page 45 at right)

some of Swedenborg's most popular works—*Heaven and Hell*, *Divine Love and Wisdom*, *Divine Providence*, *Secrets of Heaven*, and *True Christianity*—answer these questions and more. Ideal for those new to Swedenborg's theology, *A Swedenborg Sampler* offers a rich smorgasbord of spiritual insight. ☩

Return to SCYL

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absolutely quiet as Jenn Tafel spoke of her own experiences hearing the whispering of angels. And then came my turn.

I had decided to address the theme in two related ways. The first was a session on "Dreams in the Bible" (Did you know there are 224 dreams recorded in the Good Book?) and the second was an opportunity for the teens to use a variety of Swedenborgian resources in interpreting several notable dreams from the Old Testament. I figured it was an opportunity for a "hands-on" approach. I was very pleased with the first part of the presentation. Wow! The questions that were asked were worthy of a class in seminary! The second part of my session, well, on one hand it bombed. There were not

enough books, and I couldn't stretch myself thin enough to be at each of the four tables answering their questions. I longed for wifi access! But in retrospect I know that they learned. They became familiar with some of our resources. And I am content with that.

During the retreat I was surprised when more than one teen asked me what it was like to be back for a retreat. They wanted to know what had changed. My response to these queries came easy. It was great being back, and nothing important had changed. I will never forget one teen asking what it was like to be there since I was "so old." He jokingly referred to the "beep" that constantly came from the broken fire alarm system as being "Ron's heart monitor." Immediately another teen stepped over and informed the group, "He isn't old. He likes to text." Oh to

be sure, Game Boys have been replaced with I Pods, and hairstyles are a bit different, and not once did I see anyone use the camp phone since we all had our own cell phones with us. But even so, as Kurt had made clear to the staff, the retreat was about love and care. That was true years ago, and it is the same today.

I am so grateful that Kurt contacted me about helping with this year's retreat. As is so often the case in life, this year's invitation came across my desk when God knew that the time was right. And I can assure you that I will not hesitate to respond positively if an invitation comes for 2012.

How long has it been since *you've* volunteered to staff an SCYL retreat? That's an important question! ☩

The Rev. Ronald Brugler is pastor of the Cleveland Swedenborg Chapel.

National Church Receives Grant

The denomination's church in Washington, DC, the National Church, has received a matching grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation. *The InTowner*, a neighborhood newspaper in Washington, featured the church and its efforts to restore the tower in its February issue (<http://www.intowner.com>). The National Trust has pledged \$5000, which has been matched by a contribution from the Mid-Atlantic Association. The Washington Society has raised over \$1000 through fund raisers, including the monthly "Music with the Angels" concert series in an effort to raise enough money to continue the work.

The tower suffers from years of neglect, when it was exposed to weather, termites, and bird droppings. ☩

Swedenborg Opera Premieres in Malmö

On February 12, the Malmö (Sweden) Opera premiered an opera by composer Jonas Forssell. *Hemligheter* (*Secrets*) places Emanuel Swedenborg in the world of spirits as described in his writings. Swedenborg meets his be-



loved sister who died young, as well as Swedish king Karl XII, Polish princess and French queen Maria Leszczyńska, politician Fredrik Gyllenborg, and French king Louis XV—people who played important roles in his life. The premiere was broadcast on Swedish Radio. Search *Hemligheter* on YouTube to hear a clip. ☩

Women's Alliance By-law Changes

After years of discussion about bringing the Women's Alliance fiscal year into conformity with the denomination, it was moved by the executive board to bring the following motion to the annual meeting of the Women's Alliance for a vote. The by-laws state that changes must first be published in the *March Messenger* and then voted upon at the following annual meeting. Please consider the following motion in preparation for our meeting in June at the annual convention in Cincinnati:

Motion

By-law change to bring the Women's Alliance fiscal year into conformity with the denomination's fiscal year, January 1 to December 31.

Article 9 of the by-laws sets the fiscal year.

Article IX

The fiscal year shall extend from June 1 to May 31.

New Article 9 replacing old one:

Article IX

The fiscal year shall extend from January 1 to December 31, except for the Mite Box fiscal year which shall remain June 1 to May 31.

Enabling Motion (to be made after (and if) the amendment is approved at the annual meeting in 2011):

The fiscal year for 2011 shall run only from June 1 to December 31 in order to implement the by-law changing the fiscal year to the calendar fiscal year.

Round Robin Changes

The annual meeting will also vote on a set of changes to disband the Round Robin Committee and remove it from the list of standing committees, as has been discussed at the last several meetings. The changes are extensive but technical in nature. ☩

Convention 2011

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miss it.

The Saturday evening reception is planned to be a special event also, angelic perhaps. Stay tuned.

A business meeting may be just a business meeting (and there are some of us who love them) but we're hoping to find ways to make at least a part of them more enjoyable.

So, come join us in worship, community, music, growth, celebration, and remembrance, as we go we go about the work of our church.

Then stay awhile after and visit our great city. Visit one of the top ranked zoos in the nation—the Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Garden, a national historic landmark and second oldest zoo in the US. Visit the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center. It brings to life the importance—and relevance—of struggles for freedom around the world and throughout history and today. Explore how Cincin-

nati's location put it at the crossroads of the Freedom Trail. At the Cincinnati Museum Center at Union Terminal, stand in wonder under the art deco dome while visiting five great museums in one historic location. Then visit the Cincinnati Art Museum and Contemporary Arts Center. Just in case you have more eclectic taste, stop by the Sign Museum or the Cincinnati Fire Museum. (Cincinnati had the nation's first professional fire department.) There are many beautiful churches and cathedrals to see as well as other historic and natural sites. And for the thrill seekers in the crowd there is Kings Island theme park, just a half hour north, with their newly opened ride—the 301-foot drop tower Windseeker. (<http://www.cincinnatiusa.com/VisitorInfo/Reasons.asp>)

See you in Cincinnati. ☩

Any group wishing to sponsor a reception or coffee break should contact Central Office for more details.

Passages

Births

Teagan Gray Robbins was born in Seattle on January 14, 2011. Parents Michael and Jennifer Robbins are members of the Swedenborgian Church of Puget Sound. Teagan will be baptized at Wayfarer's Chapel—as was her sister



Rylie Blue Robbins—on June 19 by the Rev. Jonathan Mitchell.

New Members

Berganh Junge was voted into the membership of the Cleveland Swedenborg Chapel on Sunday, January 16, 2011.

The Virginia Street Church in St. Paul, Minnesota, was pleased to welcome four new members into the community on December 19, 2010. **Elizabeth Rose, Lisa Sowold, and Bruce and Susan Warden** gave our church a wonderful Christmas present by standing during our worship service and receiving our delighted welcome. Liz has participated in the life of our church for many years as a talented musician and has volunteered to coordinate the church's small group programs in 2011. Lisa has offered her expertise by leading a community program entitled "The Art of Spiritual Eating." Bruce leads our "Spiritual Cinema" small group, and Susan teaches the Svaroop Yoga portion of our "Living With Integrity" small group. Our church is blessed to have such gifted people among us.

Deaths

Esther Capon (See article this page.)

Esther Nicastro Capon

Esther Nicastro-Capon, 83, entered the fullness of the spiritual world on February 8, 2011, following complications from a severe stroke on February 2. Born and raised in the Boston area, Esther had an early career as a teacher of the deaf in grades 1–8, having earned a bachelors degree in speech therapy and a masters degree in deaf education, both from Boston University. She developed her own curriculum where she incorporated her love of music and piano into the program so students could feel the beat by placing their hands on the piano.

Esther married the Rev. Edwin Capon in 1975, a second marriage for both of them. Rev. Capon at that time was president of the Swedenborg School of Religion, but over the next twenty

years his career took them to Swedenborgian parish ministries in Detroit, San Francisco, and St. Paul, as well as spending many weeks every summer in their cabin in western Maine. During

Edwin's two terms as president of the denomination, she accompanied him on countless trips.

While in the Detroit, area Esther taught school and obtained a real estate license. In 1979, Esther became a speech therapist with the Pittsburg (California) Unified School District. Though Esther loved teaching,

she was always attracted to her father's profession—law. At the young age of 58, Esther received her J.D. from Golden Gate University Law School in 1986. She worked for a while in a law firm but eventually found that her true

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Sam McBride, a member of the Church of Latter Day Saints (Mormon) and a distributor of Swedenborg's writings in Salt Lake City and other locales, passed on December 26, 2010, at the age of 90. A group of liberal Mormons have an annual symposium called Sunstone—a series of lectures and meetings that includes a large book display. Sam was always there with a full table of Swedenborg's books, giving them away and talking about Christianity and Swedenborg's writings. Even when his health was the poorest, he was there. Sam will be missed by his family and friends. He was passionate and dedicated in his advocacy of Swedenborg's writings.

Sigmund Martin "Sam" Minsky of Edmonton, Alberta passed into the other world November 13, 2010, at the age of 92. Beloved husband of Marie, Sam and she were married in 1995.

Marie Johnstone Procter, Age 73, died February 11, 2011. Beloved wife of Robert Procter Jr., devoted mother of Glenn Procter and Dawn McKenzie, Marie is also survived by two grandchildren and many brothers and sisters. Marie was an Air Force veteran and a longtime member of the Newtonville (Massachusetts) Church of the Open Word. A memorial service was held February 16, led by the Revs. Robert Tafel and Gladys Wheaton. ☛

187th Session of the General Convention of the New Jerusalem, June 29–July 3

Council of Ministers: June 27–28, 2011

Registration Form

Convention 2011 will be held in Cincinnati, Ohio on the campus of the University of Cincinnati. To learn more about UC, visit www.uc.edu. To learn more about the 2011 Convention and view a list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ), please visit www.swedenborg.org or call the Central Office at 617.969.4240.

Lodging: We will be staying in the Campus Recreation Center Housing: <http://tinyurl.com/63mh2k>. These are all single rooms. If all of these rooms fill up, the Central Office will contact you about alternate housing arrangements. The Kingsgate Marriott (on campus, about a mile away) is a good choice for families or those who would prefer a hotel: <http://tinyurl.com/4yqufc>.

Childcare: The childcare program will run June 29–July 3 during meetings and receptions for children ages 3–12. **If you will be bringing children to Convention, please read the Convention FAQ or contact the Central Office for details, rates, deadlines and to obtain the necessary forms.**

Teen Program: The youth program runs from Wednesday, June 29 through Sunday, July 3, and is supervised by Kurt Fekete. If you want your teen (age 13–17) to attend without a parent, please see the FAQ or contact the Central Office for details.

Parking is available for an additional charge. Please indicate on the form below that you will be bringing a car, and the Central Office will contact you. Gym passes are available for \$10 per person for the week. Contact

the Central Office for details. Wired internet access is available for \$25 per room. (Bring your own Ethernet cable!) Wireless internet is available to guests on campus, but it does not work everywhere.

Registration and Payment Deadline: Monday, May 30 by 5 PM EST. No exceptions. Any reservation not fully paid by this date will be cancelled.

Cancellations: If made by Wednesday, June 15 by 5 PM EST, you will receive your full prepayment. If you cancel twelve days prior to your arrival, you will receive your prepayment, less the cost of one night's room and board. If you cancel two days or less prior to your arrival, you will forfeit your entire prepayment. Cancellations must be done by calling the Central Office directly during normal business hours (9 AM–5 PM EST, M–F).

Room and Board Packages:

- Package A (June 27–July 3, six nights), Council of Ministers:**
\$349 per person
Includes six nights of lodging, six breakfasts, five lunches, and six dinners.
- Package B (June 28–July 3, five nights), General Council:**
\$290 per person
Includes five nights of lodging, five breakfasts, four lunches, and five dinners.
- Package C (June 28–July 3, four nights):**
\$230 per person
Includes four nights of lodging, four breakfasts, three lunches, and four dinners.

Name		Attending Women's Alliance luncheon?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Name			Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Will you be parking on campus?			Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Street		Apt. #	
City	State (Province)	Zip	
Home Church	Email	Day Phone	
Names, ages, and genders of children accompanying you			
Requests (dietary, mobility, roommate)			

Please print any additional names or information on the back or on a separate sheet.

Registration	Amt	# People	Total
Adult	\$120		
Teen (13-17)	\$90		
Child (3-12)	\$55		
Under 3 years old	Free		
*Family maximum	\$300		
One Day Registration	\$40		
Local Volunteer	\$55		
WA Luncheon	\$15		

Room & Board	Package	#People	Total
Room and Board Package (see package descriptions for rates)			
Gym Pass (\$10 per person)			
In-room Wired Internet (\$25 per room)			
Grand Total (from both Registration and Room & Board)			

*Family maximum price applies to immediate family members (i.e., parents/guardians and children) only.

Payment Information

All prices are in US currency. **If you pay with Canadian funds, please add US\$5 for handling of each Canadian check. Please be advised that all prices are listed in US funds, and must be converted for other currencies. All bills must be paid in full before May 30.** See "Cancellations" above for refund policy. Bills may be paid by check, Visa or by MasterCard. You may also call the Central Office to make a secure credit card payment at 617.969.4240. Please do NOT email any credit card information.

Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ Expiration Date: _____

Card Number: _____

Cardholder's Name: _____

Signature: _____

Send checks payable to The Swedenborgian Church to:
Central Office, The Swedenborgian Church
11 Highland Ave., Newtonville, MA 02460

About the Swedenborgian Church

Emanuel Swedenborg was born January 29, 1688, in Stockholm, Sweden. Although he never intended a church denomination to be founded or named after him, a society was formed in London fifteen years after his death.

American groups eventually founded the General Convention of Swedenborgian Churches. As a result of Swedenborg's spiritual questionings and insights, we as a church exist to encourage that same spirit of inquiry and personal growth, to respect differences in views, and to accept others who may have different traditions.

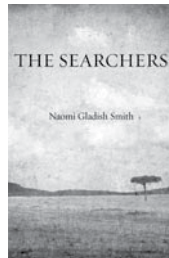
Swedenborg shared in his theological writings a view of God as infinitely loving and at the very center of our beings, a view of life as a spiritual birthing as we participate in our own creation, and a view of scripture as a story of inner life stages as we learn and grow. Swedenborg said, "All religion relates to life, and the life of religion is to do good." He also felt that the sincerest form of worship is a useful life.

New Releases from the Swedenborg Foundation

The Searchers

The Searchers, the third book in Naomi Gladish Smith's acclaimed series about souls in the afterlife follows a new group of seekers on their journey to heaven—or hell.

Kate Douglas, who spent a lifetime on earth teaching young students, in death finds herself at the Academy, a school for new arrivals in the afterlife. Barely accustomed to her new existence, she's confronted with the soul of her troubled nephew Dan, who took his own life. Dan struggles to find his path in this new world, encountering the innocent Birgit, who in life was an abused girl, and the beautiful Pegeen, who draws him into the dangerous territory bordering hell. But even as Kate teams up with her friend Frank and budding angel Percy to try to help Dan face his inner demons, Kate must deal with her own issues: her helplessness at watching her husband Howard, still on earth and dying of a degenerative disease; her attraction to Frank; and an assignment to guide a particularly difficult new arrival named Janet. Their fates intertwine as each search-



es within to discover whether they ultimately are bound for heaven or hell.

Inspired by Emanuel Swedenborg's descriptions of the afterlife, Smith paints a vivid picture of the world of spirits, a spiritual realm between heaven and hell where inner truths are revealed and the distance between any two people is no more than a thought.

Naomi Gladish Smith, a former teacher, is the author of *The Arrivals* (2004) and *The Wanderers* (2007), which are also Swedenborgian novels. She also wrote the mystery *Buried Remembrance* (1977) and numerous essays and short stories that have been published in the annual anthology *Chrysalis Reader*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, *Interludes Magazine*, and a Journal of the American Medical Association anthology.

Swedenborg's Garden of Theology: An Introduction to Emanuel Swedenborg's Published Theological Works

When he entered the visionary phase of his life, Emanuel Swedenborg set out on a journey to document all that he had seen, heard, and learned while in

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