

## Swedenborgian Church Comes Together The 2012 Annual Swedenborgian Convention



The 2012 Annual Convention, held at Bridgewater State University in Bridgewater, Massachusetts, followed a new, shortened (by one day) schedule. It began with the Council of Ministers (COM) meeting on Monday evening, July 2, and concluded on Sunday morning, July 8, with the closing worship service. In between, attendees participated in business sessions, workshops, mini-courses, social activities, SHS graduation, the ordination and communion service, and many pleasant conversations at meals and between scheduled events.

On Wednesday, some delegates and friends arrived to enjoy an evening of entertainment and the 4th of July fireworks. Trevor the Gamesman entertained that evening with social games that had everyone, young and old, laughing and sharing with one another. New and old friends grouped and regrouped for successive games as Trevor kept things moving at a fast pace and kept spirits high. The evening ended with some proceeding to a hill on campus to chat and watch the Bridgewater fireworks.

Beginning Thursday morning, early risers attended daily morning devotions at 7:15.

On Thursday, Rev. Gard Perry led a



workshop titled "Spiritually Integrated Self-Care for Those Who Care For and About Others," and Rev. Sarah Buteux led the workshop, "Can I get a Witness: Stories of Vital Congregations Fostering Lives of Transformative Faith."

After dinner, the opening service and celebration began with the traditional banner procession, followed by the president's address. The address took a non-traditional turn. You can read about what transpired next on page 91.

Following the opening ceremony, folks moved on to the president's reception, where they caught up with old friends and made new friends, as they did at receptions on Friday and Saturday following evening activities.

The memorial communion service on Friday morning, led by the chaplains, gave participants an opportunity to remember and honor members who had passed fully into the spiritual world in the preceding year.

At the first business session, the constitutionally required reading of the articles governing conduct of busi-

ness at the annual meeting has become a creative performance of sorts. This year was no exception as recording secretary Susannah Currie took to "the

bridge of the Starship Enterprise" with her crew, delivering the articles via "subspace communication."

The following reports were approved and received by the convention:

- The president's and vice-president's reports as distributed in *Advance Reports*.\*
- Treasurer Polly Baxter presented a draft of the 2011 financial statements and gave an illustrated presentation that explained unrestricted, restricted, and temporarily restricted assets of the denomination and the percentage of expenses incurred by each cost center that is paid from unrestricted assets. There was insufficient income from unre-

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\* Reports, will be printed in the 2012 Swedenborgian Church Journal, available for free by emailing [manager@swedenborg.org](mailto:manager@swedenborg.org).

### More Inside:

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Ordination and Communion Service • Convention Sermon: The Way We Worship  
Convention 2012 Snapshots • Ordination Addresses • Forms of New-church Ministries

## The Editor's Desk

### Learning and Growing

There is no more gratifying and rewarding sight at annual conventions than young people—babies, young children, and teens. We are all learning and growing—more spiritually



Kevin Baxter, Ephraim, George, Moses, and Ari taking a walk

and emotionally than physically for those of us past the teen years—but in the young we can often watch the growth occur.

Sarah Buteux brought her five-year-

old, George Dole II, to the convention. He was looking for racing opponents in the first days; I discovered that meant that I raced on foot against him on his Razor scooter. I noticed that he did not glide—he always pushed with one foot as if walking, unsure if this balance thing would last. To my surprise and delight several days later, he sailed past me while I was walking, casually banking into a turn on the sidewalk while swinging one leg nonchalantly forward, as if he had been born with this wheeled appendage.



How did George acquire that skill? He enjoyed the feeling he got from zooming and balancing, but the wide, vehicle free, and extensive sidewalks of the campus gave him an opportunity to take a little further glide each time; his exhilaration from gliding and feeling his ability to control it and enhance it made him the agent of his own learning and growth.

The annual convention gives all of us, children and adults alike, a time and place to learn and grow in ways that may amaze us.

Once again, even with one day less

of practice due to the shortened convention schedule, the convention choir under the direction of Laurie Turley and accompanied by Bet Giddings, performed magnificently at convention sessions and services.

Bill Lee, Kevin Baxter, Susannah Currie, Donna Keane, volunteers from the Bridgewater Church, ministers leading services, officers, and committees gave selflessly of their time and talents to provide a pleasant and seamless experience.

Thanks to all and to all who gave their time and energy to attend. We look forward to seeing familiar and new faces next year. (Don't forget to bring the children.)

—Herb Ziegler

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## Church Calendar

• **November 1–4: General Council Fall Meeting • Temenos Retreat Center, PA**

• **October 26–28: Pacific Coast Association Annual Meeting • Rancho Palos Verde, CA**

• **October 26–28: SCYL Columbus Day Weekend Retreat • Duxbury, MA**

• **November 9–10: SHS Fall Board Meeting • Berkeley, CA**

## the Messenger

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The opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect the views of the editor, the Communications Support Unit, or the Swedenborgian Church.

## Letter from the President

Dear Friends,

As I write this I am sitting by Long Pond, recharging my batteries for the resumption of work in September.

I would like to share with you some of my words from the 2012 Annual Convention program, and I invite you to read (below) about my address at the opening session of the convention.

Stop! Pause! Take a moment to breathe. . . . Contemplate this: "In the beginning, God . . ."

What better place to take a restart? I ask us all to put this thought foremost in our minds and our hearts as we arrive here in Bridgewater, to finish the first year of our seven-year cycle. As with most endings, we take time to look back at what we want to remember, hold onto, and build upon; and we also look back to what we want to remember, offer blessings on, and release and let go of. Yet it is from this perspective that we also look forward to engaging the discovery of the coming year. Let it be for each of us with open mind, open heart, and open arms!

We continue to be confronted with the realization that we are in a time of rapid change. In our

next days together, I hope we will draw strength and inspiration from one another, that we will exchange ideas and experiences, that we will share deeply in our worship, and all of us, each in our own way, will contribute to the ongoing development of our church, that small part of the Lord's New Church, that common place of heart and mind and action, of which we are all a part.

Together, from the foundational starting point of the Year of the Lord, we enter into and begin the journey through the Year of the Spiritual World. We know the spiritual world in all of its contrasting shades and depths is around us and within us. If then, perhaps, we pay more attention to the subtleties around us, if we are to be more fully part of what is always there. That the Divine Presence always is there, is this not a basic assumption we share? If so, then is it not for us to open the door of our souls and offer welcome?

So, as the General Convention of the New Jerusalem and in the spirit of that open door and open mind and open heart and open arms, let us together, begin the walk with our angels into and beyond the Year of the Spiritual World!

—Blessings, Rev. Ken

## President's Address—and a Surprise Visitor

Lately, individually and denominationally, we have been much concerned with the changing nature of church, so as president I thought it would be good to get a little different perspective on the subject. So, if you will—

(At this point President Ken and Laurie Turley played a simple minuet by George Frederick Handel, who was living and composing in London at the time Swe-



denborg was there. As the music came to a close, a stranger entered, visibly enjoying the music immensely. The following conversation transpired.)

THE STRANGER: Oh that was wonderful! I remember that piece. When I lived in London, the family next door had a young lad learning

the violin. He would play that tune in the morning and again when he came

home for lunch and after dinner until the late hours of the night. I admire such dedication. He inspired me to stay at my work. I certainly wasn't getting to sleep.

REV. TURLEY (A delighted look of recognition crossing his face): Welcome Herr Swedenborg. Welcome to our convention! Please, let's sit down. (Reverend Turley and Herr Swedenborg fetch two chairs and sit down for conversation.)

And how, Herr Swedenborg, do you

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## SHS Graduation

## A Decade of SHS Grads

*This article is derived from a presentation given jointly at the annual meeting of the New Church Theological School (SHS) by Dean Jim Lawrence and SHS chair Jane Siebert.*

By 2001, General Convention had operated a seminary in the Boston area in at least four separate locations for 135 years (for 100 years as the New Church Theological School and for 35 years as the Swedenborg School of Religion.) When the board voted to move the school's operations from the Boston area to California in 2001, significantly there were no students left in the pipeline. That summer the school's library, administrative files, and a few pieces of furniture crossed the country in a large moving van to the campus of Pacific School of Religion (PSR) in Berkeley.

That fall the school opened with four students and began operations under its third DBA name: the Swedenborgian House of Studies at Pacific School of Religion (SHS). Since that momentous transition eleven years ago, the SHS program pipeline has produced twenty-four ordained ministers: Kim Hinrichs, 2003; Kevin Baxter, Alison Lane, Jane Siebert, Kathy Speas, and Rich Tafel, 2004; Sage Currie, Carla Friedrich, and Doug Moss, 2005; Dave Brown, Hunter Roberts, Lana Sandahl, and Freeman Schrock, 2006; Sky Paradise and Jenn Tafel, 2007; Catherine Lauber and Judith Vandergrift, 2008; Cameron Linen and Alison Longstaff, 2009; Sherrie Connelly, 2010; Gabriella Cahaley and Steve Sanchez, 2011; Jenny Martin Caughman and Emily Jane Lemole, 2012. The school is set to open its next academic season this September with seven students studying for ordination: Joy Barnitz, Elizabeth Blair, Dagmar Bollinger, Kyung-

ho Cho, Yudai Hori, Lisa Solwold, and Anna Woofenden.

We feel it is a great sign of hope for the church that there are so many talented individuals still responding to the call of ministry for Convention. From whence did these thirty-one individuals come?

- 7 grew up in Convention
- 7 were new active laypersons in Convention
- 5 grew up in General Church
- 2 were new active laypersons in Gen. Church
- 1 adult convert unaffiliated with any Swedenborgian denomination
- 1 was an induction path minister from another tradition who was being hired by a Convention church
- 8 were "campus converts" from the student body at PSR



A question often posed is how would we characterize a common denominator for the sizable category of campus converts, and perhaps the one statement that holds true for all is that they had come to seminary wanting to serve God in a vocational path, but they had some level of discomfort or of an ill-fit with the spiritual traditions in which they had been raised or previously active. That is, they had not found a real spiritual fit—until they discovered the Swedenborgian House of Studies and the ministries of Convention.

As for these twenty-four ordained graduates, we'd like to share what they



Emily Jane Lemole and Jenny Caughman at their graduation from SHS

have done and are doing since graduation. Here are some figures (the totals come up to a little bit more than twenty-four because several ministers show up in more than one category).

- 14 have served or are serving a Convention church
- 7 have at-large or entrepreneurial ministries
- 6 have been or are chaplains
- 2 are serving in other denominations

Of the seven that are in the pipeline, six are either committed to or open to working with Swedenborgian church congregations. Most are interested in developing some aspect of an entrepreneurial ministry. One is primarily committed to the chaplaincy path.

So as we celebrate the closing of our eleventh year as the Swedenborgian House of Studies, we recognize that this chapter in the school's life has been productive in the number and talent of its graduates. The church and the world have gained many gifted and devoted servants of the Lord. We realize that we have many new challenges to meet in our task of preparing Swedenborgian women and men for paths of service, but we pause to give thanks at this juncture for the blessings we have received in the bold venture to become the Swedenborgian House of Studies at Pacific School of Religion. ☦

Go to <http://2012SwedenborgianChurchConvention.shutterfly.com/> for more photos!





## Ordination and Communion Service

**O**n Saturday Evening, July 7, conventioners and family and friends of the ordinands gathered at the Bridgewater New Church on the town common in Bridgewater, Massachusetts. The new schedule combined the ordination service with the convention

communion service, promising a longer service than usual. But the church, filled to capacity, proved comfortable for a long but engaging service as it is air-conditioned.

A traditional liturgy, including performances by the Convention Choir and soloists included a sermon, "The Way We Worship," by the 2012 convention minister, the Rev. Andy Stinson. (next page).

Following the sermon, the candidates for ordination, Jenny Martin



The opening of the ordination service at Bridgewater New Church

Caughman and Emily Jane Asplundh Lemole, introduced themselves and delivered their ordination talks (pages 96 and 97). The Rite of Ordination pro-



ceeded with first Emily Jane and then Jenny mounting the stairs to the chancel where she responded to inquiry by

a prayer. The ceremony of ordination closed with the choir singing "Here I am Lord." The ministers joined them for the second refrain and the congregants for the third.

The congregants partook of communion, receiving the sacrament from Rev. Caughman and Rev. Lemole.

The newly-ordained ministers received family, friends, and well-wishers as they left the church, joining them later for a reception at Bridgewater State University. ☦



(l to r) Revs. Paul Martin and Erni Martin; Jenny Caughman; and Rev. Ken Turley (not in view: Revs. Rachel Rivers, Jim Lawrence, and Jane Siebert)



(l to r) Revs. Jane Siebert, George Dole, Susannah Currie, and Reuben Bell; ordinand Emily Jane Lemole (not in view: Rev. Jim Lawrence)

## Convention Sermon

## The Way We Worship

BY ANDY STINSON

*Scripture: Micah 6:6–8; John 15:9–17**Swedenborg Reading: Secrets of Heaven § 10143(5).*

A young man named Gordon was with his parents, and they were taking refreshments in the bar at a train station when they heard a whistle. They rushed out of the bar onto the platform only to discover that they had just missed the train.

“The next train is in one hour,” intoned the stationmaster.

The three went back into the bar. The parents had another drink, Gordon had a Coke. Again they heard a whistle, rushed out, and discovered the train pulling away.

“Next one is sixty minutes from now,” grunted the stationmaster.

An hour later, the young man, with his mum and dad, raced out onto the platform, and his parents leaped onto the train as it pulled away. The boy was left standing on the platform and began to laugh uproariously.

“Your parents just left you,” said the stationmaster. “Why are you laughing?”

The boy smiled saying, “They only came to see me off.”

It seems funny that a couple might run after a train that was never theirs, but I would submit to you we run after trains that are not ours all the time. Not only are we captured in the “business” of world, but we in our churches and in our lives may never know the difference between the train meant for us and for another. We live in world of millions of trains going here and there—ideas, emotions, actions—all of them prepared to take us someplace.

When Swedenborg lived, most of the information in the world could fit into the Sunday edition of *The New York Times*. Today, information is ex-

panding exponentially. It’s not a bad thing but it does require us to know who we are and where we are going at a level that we as a church and a people have never been called to before.

*So . . . What Does the Lord Require of You?*

To carry our judgment, to love mercy, and to walk with your God so you may know humility. These are our trains! These are the things that will take us where the Lord would lead.



But long before we get there, we find in Micah this sarcastic tone.

Shall I come before Jehovah with burnt offerings? Will Jehovah be pleased with thousands of rams? He has shown you what is good; and what does Jehovah require of you but to carry out judgment, and to love mercy, and to humble yourself by walking with your God (Micah 6:6–8)?

I mean it almost sounds like Dr. Evil from Austin Powers, “I want a *BILLION* Dollars” What is it going to take, Lord? Ten Thousand Rivers of Oil?

We are the Dr. Evil of our own sphere so often, or at least I am. When I can’t figure things out or I come up against the pain and discomfort of my own life, I get snotty with God too. “Really, Lord what do you want from me, What? What? What?” And I would guess, you do too.

But the Lord’s invitation is these three of justice, mercy, and humility.

From *Heavenly Secrets* §10143.5,

Swedenborg offers us an image of loving God and of God loving us that we all have encountered at one point or another when in love: “Whatcha thinkin’?” That “there is nothing that a person who loves another, and who believes in another, would rather do than to will and to do what that other wills and thinks; his only desire is to know his will and thought, and so what is pleasing to him.” Just like people in love will offer “a penny for your thoughts” or ask, “What are you thinking?,” to worship in its truest form is to worship seeking to feel something of what God feels and think something of what God thinks and to have God bestow that on us.

Saint Theresa of Avila said that the most powerful prayer that she prayed was to ask that she might “see as God sees.”

God sees so much rushing and running and moving, but what of all of those trains that are pointed at the eternal? What of the things of our church that are pointed toward the eternal, the lasting, and the true . . . or do we often find ourselves aboard a train worrying about stuff or scarcity or loss. . . . Let’s look now to these three trains that take us toward that “seeing as God sees.” The first is . . .

### To Carry Out Judgment

If Swedenborg offers us anything that places our human status as so precious and unique, it is our freedom to discern: our ability “carry out judgment” to discern what we will call true and make it a part of our lives. It is not that we would judge this person and that person for their transgressions, or even ourselves for our own shortcomings, but it is that we would decide what it is that we discern as our great-

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# Be Not Afraid

## Ordination Address by the Reverend Jenny Martin Caughman

**G**ood Evening. I would like to start by saying it is a true honor to be in the position of addressing you this evening as an ordinand. In addition to thanking God, I would also like to thank all the people who have taught, guided, and walked beside me during this journey, as well as all who have come here tonight to celebrate with Emily Jane and me. And while those of you who have been around the church for a while may think, “here comes another Martin,” I must say for me this path was not so obvious. What I would like to share with you this evening is the *Reader’s Digest* condensed version of this path and some of the most significant insights I’ve gleaned along the way.

When I started undergraduate school many long years ago, I had plans to be a scientist, an oceanographer. My first semester I hit the chemistry books with great zeal. But midway through the semester, as we were studying the probable shape of the electron cloud around the nucleus of the atom, a little voice in my head said, “Who cares?” And I had to acknowledge, not me. So that was the end of my scientific career. But as fate, or divine providence, would have it, I was not through with atoms. Ten years later I met, fell in love with, and married someone who does care about such things. You see, my husband John is a nuclear engineer!



Jenny Caughman and her father, Rev. Erni Martin

Instead of oceanography I pursued an undergraduate degree in philosophy—the most re-

warding benefit being the smiles on both my father’s and my faces one day in Maine when he said, “Well, you know what Heraclitus said,” and I could simply answer “yes.” My first graduate degree was in music therapy, and I worked for five years as a music therapist with terminally ill cancer patients. I love music and know that many of us have been strongly moved by music. The meaning and power of music at the end of life can be especial-



ly profound. While wrestling with just why this is so, I came to value the way, in music, both beauty and pain can exist simultaneously. Most often we mourn the death of someone because we loved them, so our grief contains both the beauty of love and the pain of loss. Thus while on the surface we may think of beauty and pain as an oxymoron, in music, and in bereavement, they can be inextricably entwined, perhaps even distinguishably one, as are love and wisdom, if we want to bring Swedenborgian theology into the picture. In any event, to sing at people’s bedsides as they approached death, was an incredibly meaningful and deeply spiritual experience, and I am both grateful to have had this opportunity as well as changed because of it.

Now we need to fast-forward almost twenty years through marriage to a wonderful man, the move to Ten-

nessee, the birth of three amazing children (Neall, Alex, and Abby), through various jobs, the acquisition of a few extra pounds and grey hairs, and through the spring of 2008 when I received my calling. As to seminary, things simply fell into place, and I arranged to attend the Earlham School of Religion as a distance student. Now while it is true that things did fall into place, at the same time the decision to go back to school, and not to any school but to seminary, was huge! Recognizing this I decided to take time, while my children were still in school, to try to process this decision. And I confess, one particular day, as I thought about it, I was almost overcome with doubt. My train of thought was something like, what on earth are you thinking? Do you realize how much work this will be? Isn’t that a bit presumptuous to think you are minister material? Do you think you can handle this? As I was sitting on our porch, my mind filled with such thoughts, I heard an almost audible voice ask “Do you trust me?” Do you trust me? And deep in my heart I knew the answer was unmistakably “Yes.” My path was clear.

That was just over four years ago. And while these four years have been an incredible challenge, and while I have learned a great deal in seminary, about the Bible, Swedenborg, theology, spirituality, preaching, and so forth, the most important thing I have learned is not only that I can trust God, but also how deeply I do trust God. Life is not easy, life is not fair, and there are some very odd twists and turns. And while I do believe much happens in this world because of the choices we make (I’ve written several lengthy papers on this theme, but will spare you

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# One Wild and Precious Life

## Ordination Address by the Reverend Emily Jane A. Lemole

*First Lesson: Deut. 30: 19*

*Second Lesson: Mark 13: 33-36*

*Third Lesson: Secrets of Heaven §61*

The poet Mary Oliver asks, “Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?”

The stand-out word for me here is *do*. What is it you plan to *do* with your one wild and precious life?

For our brief moment on beautiful planet earth—what will we do? This question is for everyone.

Actually we do what matters to us—or what we love. Swedenborg teaches that we are or become what we love.

However we can fool ourselves, (masters of self-deception that we are) that we are living our beliefs—our deepest values—that our principles have become our process. But often we are asleep at the spiritual switch and sleepwalk through life. What will we do?

Only when we wake up can we take a good look at what we are doing and see if it matches how we want to live.

What are our interests? How do we spend our precious hours? What do we think about when we are alone?

Swedenborg teaches that we are here to change—to reform, to transform, to regenerate, and be reborn. This ability springs from spiritual freedom and having choices.

The key to change is to realize we have choices.

William James had this advice: To change one’s life

- 1) start immediately
- 2) do it flamboyantly
- 3) no exceptions.

What helps us in our choices toward living and doing a spiritual life (with God at the center, instead of us) is a

gift of the greatest worth, given by God to help us experience heaven here and heaven later—remains: a funny name, but they do remain with us forever. These are affections for the good, the true, and the beautiful.

They are laid down by angels in our infancy and are added to by loving, kind and thoughtful human influence for as long as we live on earth. Embed-



ded in the deepest, inviolate, still place of our soul, they are a treasure trove given to us as an original blessing—a name and concept created by Matthew Fox, an ex-Dominican priest, to counterbalance the heavy emphasis on original sin.

Our theology does not believe in Original Sin, but has a different concept. We have natural hereditary tendencies that pull us toward self and the world and away from loving the Lord and others. These tendencies do not become sins unless embraced and incorporated as our own.

Remains are ballast to help us stay in perfect equilibrium between good and evil—so that we really do have spiritual freedom for choice between the two.

Franciscan Priest Fr. Richard Rohr talks about an implanted promise—a gravitational pull toward God creating in us a longing for something deeper, for real meaning in our lives, and final-

ly, a return to God. St. Augustine said, “God, thou has made us for thyself and we are restless until we rest in thee!”

I think remains have a lot to do with my being here tonight.

My earliest years were deeply influenced by a loving family and a devout grandmother who read her Bible daily and sang and played Baptist and Methodist hymns on her little pump organ every day. Our housekeeper was Catholic and we watched Bishop Sheen together regularly.

With a New Church education from pre-school through graduate school and a deep friendship throughout my childhood and adulthood with my Uncle George deCharms, who was Bishop of the General Church, I was drawn to loving the things of religion (and closet Catholic that I am, candles, incense and statues). I would ask my uncle why couldn’t I be a minister? I was never satisfied with the answer.

What began as a quiet push, or pull actually, became stronger. After our six children were grown, I earned a Master’s Degree in Religious Studies—and later was ordained as an interfaith minister. The master’s degree was of course theology, not ministry. The interfaith was ministry—wonderful to study about and be able to serve many faiths—but it still wasn’t the Swedenborgian context for which I longed.

Over the years I had become acquainted with and have developed a great affection for the General Convention. My dear friends in the Convention have helped me shape a new and broader understanding of the teachings of Swedenborg—and helped me to receive a bright and hopeful vision of my own role in the growing strength and influence of those teachings in this

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## Jenny Caughman

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the details tonight), and we sometimes suffer greatly because of the actions and inactions of others, I still trust in God's presence and guidance. There is an inner compass which can guide us to move in the right direction, whether that be away from Oceanography or toward seminary.



Now one of those long papers I mentioned was on the topic of theodicy—which addresses the question of how we reconcile the evil and pain in the world with the concept of an all-loving, all-powerful God. And while I believe this is a very important topic, and Swedenborg's treatment of free will elucidates this subject, again, I will spare you the details. However, in exploring this issue I have come to recognize there is much we simply do not know; we really can't fully understand either the world or God. God is so much bigger, richer, deeper than my feeble finite mind can grasp—and I'm OK with this. So while I may not always know why bad or painful things happen, I do know what we need to do when these things happen—we need to reach out with love and compassion. All that is good originates in and comes from God, thus when we respond with

## Emily Jane Lemole

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world. They are for the here and now, not just for the over there and later.

Rather than keep on kicking the door for ministry in the General Church (and my foot was getting sore) I realized it wasn't the door I wanted to enter even if it did open.

In 1947 the Council of Ministers stated,

Convention thinks ultimate religious authority resides not in an ecclesiastical body or in a ministry, not in ways of stating things or in texts, but in the truth, and in Him who is the truth. The Lord's mind, His spirit guiding into all truth, are to govern our thought and life. A supreme motto of the teachings of the New Church is that it is now the privilege of mankind to enter with the understanding into the mysteries of faith.

From the position paper in 1977 we read,

The heritage Convention as bequeathed to us is essentially one of spiritual freedom: the right to inquire freely and to make our way unfettered toward truth. A dogmatic attitude, or any other appeals to arbitrary authority, runs counter to this spirit of freedom.

And also this:

love, God is there. So while I do not believe that God necessarily caused the bad thing, I have come to very firmly believe that God is very much present in the pain, and that is, in part, the grounding of my faith and trust.

I would like to finish tonight by singing a song, a song which, for me, expresses this trust in God. Through Biblical imagery this song addresses, metaphorically, our journey and the many challenges we may face. Yet it emphasizes, through it all, God's presence, and thus encourages us, in the words of the title, to *Be Not Afraid*. ☙

It is a firmly held point of view of Convention that it is essential to the protection of freedom of thought that presentation of different points of view continue to be encouraged rather than stifled. . . . All shades of opinion, interpretation, and understanding of the doctrines upon which the New Church is being and is to be established by the Lord are welcome.



My heart is full of gratitude to my family and friends—all of whom carry a piece of my heart in theirs—and my dearest husband Jerry—my North, my South, my East, my West.

And I am so thankful to the General Church for the deep roots it gave me, and the General Convention Church for the wings it allows.

I'd like my ministry to look like this: Rev. Frank Rose writes,

I used to think that my job as a preacher was to tell people the truth. If I asserted the truth as I saw it from the pulpit, I would be satisfied that I had done my work. Now I think it is my job to lead people to the point where they see the truth for themselves, maybe without me even saying it."

St. Francis said, "Preach the Gospel all the time—if necessary, use words."

So, "Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?"

I'm sure it will be splendid!

I plan to be a Swedenborgian minister. Amen ☙



# SCYL Teens at the Annual Convention



BY ALICE HENDERSON

This past July, I attended the Swedenborgian Annual Convention as the SCYL West Coast and public relations officer. What a treat! I've attended Almont summer camp since I was five, but this was my first full convention (I attended the Seattle convention part time back in 2009, commuting home each day for "My Fair Lady" rehearsals).

After a six-hour, red-eye plane trip, I arrived in Boston at 7:30 AM where I then took both bus and train rides and finally rolled into Bridgewater State University around 9:30. After lunch, I prepared myself to read quietly in my room while awaiting the rest of the teens. I'd sat hardly a minute when I was bombarded by familiar Almont faces, including our SCYL president, Celie Bauer, who was my roommate. From that moment on, I had no hope of getting any reading done. The teens kept busy—from croquet, to late night Frisbee games, planning our superhero themed worship service, subway surfing during our day trip to Boston, meeting Dr. Oz, and impromptu jam sessions in the dorms, the days were full to the brim with fun and uplifting activity.

The music of Convention was a highlight for me. I feel so blessed to be a part of a youth league with so many talented musicians! Apart from music with the teens, I and several other teens participated in the choir directed by Laurie Turley, which was a blast—especially singing in a trio with good friends Nina Sasser and Tam Mounce.

The people of Convention are mainly why I went in the first place—my friends from Almont are like family to me—however, the new faces in the



SCYL teens feel their power at the Convention 2012

teen group really made the Convention stand out for me. Coming a day late without knowing the other teens can't have been easy, but Abby, Sarah, Joyce, Jillian, and Otto seemed to fit right in.

Abby was coauthor of the skits in our service which—for those of you who missed the experience—involved some dire situations (which may have involved an alien or two) and our Swedenborgian superhero Average Man (played by Alex). Sisters Sarah and Joyce shared their strong voices with the readings during our service and played pool quite well for first timers. Jillian read during our service as well, but was also an especially great contribution to our Frisbee team Saturday night, after learning to play only twenty-four hours before. Our worship service would not have been the same without Otto running slides and music on the computer. We ended up scrambling a bit last minute to get the technology to work, but he coolly handled it all and made the service complete. Old friends are always a blessing, but I hope to see these new faces at more retreats and that they'll be old

friends as well.

Finally, I want to thank our amazing youth director Kurt Fekete and his assistant at convention, Jenn Tafel. They are fantastic at leading without being overbearing and are just overall easy-going great people to be around. They made convention a fun and sacred time for me, and I'm sure the other teens agree with me. I returned home from Massachusetts sad that convention was over—of course—but overwhelmingly glad that it had happened, and I certainly hope to make it again next year in Urbana. ☦

Alice Henderson is the SCYL West Coast and public relations officer and lives in Olympia, Washington. She loves singing and theater and has been on stage in numerous musicals. Next year, she will attend Pacific Lutheran University.



Danny, Tony, Nina, Skylar, Celie, and Joey saying goodbye on the last day of convention

# Forms of New-Church Ministry

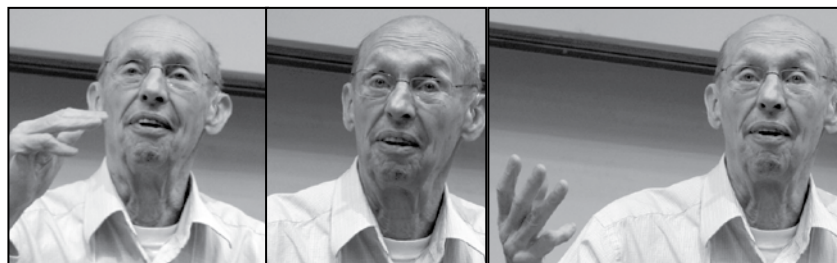
BY GEORGE DOLE

As he began his exegesis of the book of Exodus, Swedenborg started a series of “interchapter” articles on “a theology of caring (or charity),” noting that this was the theology of the earliest churches, and contrasting it with what was to develop later, namely, “a theology of faith.” The first, he said, makes the church one, regardless of doctrinal differences (*Secrets of Heaven* §6628). He later recast this material and published it as *The New Jerusalem and Its Heavenly Teachings*. At the close of his publishing career, when his followers were embroiled in theological controversy with the Lutheran Church, he published *True Christianity*, which begins with a statement of the *faith* of the new church, and has a decidedly creedal focus—a theology of faith.

It is surely no coincidence that when early readers decided to form an ecclesiastical institution, they turned to the theology of faith. Thirty-six of the forty-two theological principles debated at the first organizational meeting were drawn from *True Christianity*. After all, the primary purpose was not to unite but to separate. The call to the meeting was addressed to “readers . . . desirous of . . . separating from the Old Church.” It is remarkable, at least in retrospect, that there is just one reference to the only actual description of the new church we have, the description of the New Jerusalem in *Revelation Unveiled*—and that was to the *Nunc Licet* inscription: “Now it is permitted to enter intellectually into the mysteries of *faith* (emphasis mine).”

In between these two overviews, incidentally, there is one more, one to

which we rarely pay much attention. It goes by the name of *The Four Doctrines*, but in a way, that is a misnomer. In *Revelation Unveiled* §668, Swedenborg offers the following description:



There are four “doctrines” that are now in print—one on the Lord, the second on Sacred Scripture, the third on living by the commandments of the Decalogue, and the fourth on faith—which may establish the following facts: that the Word has now been opened and that it bears witness to the fact that the Lord alone is God of heaven and earth, that we are to live by his commandments [that’s three] and that the faith of the present day needs to be discarded.

The “Big Three” are the essentials of the church, according to *Divine Providence* §259:3—“belief in the divine nature of the Lord, belief in the holiness of the Word, and the life that we call ‘charity.’” The whole point of the fourth little book, *The Doctrine of Faith*, is that there is no such doctrine apart from a doctrine of life, a doctrine of caring.

What would have happened if that first organizational meeting had taken this statement seriously, and had focused on the New Jerusalem as its model, if it had focused on what unites this “new church” rather than on what separates it from others? It’s hard to say, because the intent of the meeting was to separate, to found an organization, an institution, and both the description of the new church in *Revela-*

*tion Unveiled* and the presentation of its doctrine in *The New Jerusalem and Its Heavenly Teachings* are all about the quality of that church, neither has anything whatever to say about external form.

These days, I find myself wondering whether we may not be being called back to square one. What would happen if we tried to lay aside our basic assumptions

about external order and organization, immersed ourselves in that description of the new church, and tried to imagine an institution that would embody it?

It wouldn’t necessarily take a lot of reading. The bare bones of that description are presented in about three pages of the Standard Edition, the closing pages of section 875. It would take a great deal of thought, since that presentation is dense. For example, one recurrent phrase is, traditionally translated, “the good of love.” “Those who are in the good of love are given to understand (§904);” “all things of that church are from the good of love (§907-908);” “the all of that church is the good of love flowing in together with light out of heaven from the Lord (§912);” “every truth of that church and of its doctrine is in form the good of love flowing in together with light out of heaven from the Lord (§917).”

My computer tells me that the phrase *bona amoris*, traditionally translated “the goods of love,” occurs 131 times in the published theological works. “Goods” is a *plural*. They keep coming up time and again, so there must be a lot of them. Name six. Well, the fruits of the tree of life in the holy city signify “the goods of love and

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charity, *which are good works*" (§933, emphasis mine)—in the new church, then, good works done from love and in a light that flows in through heaven from the Lord, which has to mean seeing ourselves and others in the Lord's loving light.

Let me also very briefly call attention to the recurrent mention (five times) of the wall of the city (§§898, 902, 909, 911, 914), which signifies "the Word in the sense of the letter." This is something very down-to-earth and very specific. This wall contains the holy city. What might it "include in" and what might it "rule out"?

This obviously is no more than a tiny sample of the issues that would call for our attention, constantly asking how these qualities might best be provided with effective institutional forms. "The good that love does" most certainly can take such distinctive forms as social action, chaplaincy, hospice work, teaching, pastoral care, and retreat leading, so there may be something distinctively "new church" about the variety of such activities in which members of our clergy are involved. Is there some "form of forms" that could include them all? Is there also a distinctively "new-church" way of performing such ministries?

Then there is the fact that these ministries rest on a history of local congregations; and as is the case in virtually all mainline Christian denominations, this foundation has been slowly but steadily eroding for at least half a century. How do we read this situation from a "new church" perspective? Do parish ministries fit in this hypothetical "form of forms," and if so, how and where?

One very distinctive feature of a parish church is that it is multigenerational. There are very few organizations in which you will find people of all ages. This is because the parish church is designed to be there for you all your life,

## New Programs for SC.org

### New for Thursday Nights!

Starting on Thursday, Sept. 27, we're partnering with the Swedenborg Foundation to offer a monthly book discussion on a book recently published by the Foundation. The September book is *Getting into Heaven and Out Again* by Albrecht H. Gralle. Also, throughout each month, we'll have discussion questions in our forum for people to share ideas about that month's book.

Other Thursday evenings during each month will feature a discussion on one of Emanuel Swedenborg's books, a welcome meeting for new registrants on the site, a special guest, or a discussion on the theme of the month.

### Worship Theme

We base our worship services and sermons on the denominational worship theme for the year, "The Spiritual World." Our focus areas will be

- The Journey after Death
- Spirits and Angels

- Life in Heaven
- Creating Heaven on Earth
- Creating Hell on Earth
- The Reality of the Mind

During September we're specifically exploring near-death experiences.

### Outreach

We've been an active online ministry—a strong Web presence—for six years. We are happy to report that we have over 2,000 visitors a month, of which six or seven register as participants each month to access all areas of our site. Registrants total over 600.

### Contributing

Would you like to make a contribution to this active on-line outreach ministry? It's an easy process. Just visit our site ([www.swedenborgiancommunity.org](http://www.swedenborgiancommunity.org)) and click on the collection plate at the lower left of the home page. We thank you for assisting this worldwide outreach for the Swedenborgian Church!

though thick and thin. This is no easy task, especially in an age of increasing mobility and apparently shortening attention spans. It requires a kind of institutional patience that all too readily degrades into a functional apathy.

It is important, though, on a particularly deep level, because each one of us is a whole life story. We take our early childhood with us when the family moves to a new location; and in our later years, if all goes well, those innocent "remains" resurface in the form of "the innocence of wisdom." The parish church is designed to be what Robert Kegan calls an "embeddedness culture, that most intimate of contexts out of which we repeatedly are recreated."

How, then, can the local church best fill this need? Kegan says something well worth hearing on this sub-

ject. His naming of "the embeddedness culture" is immediately followed by the following brief sentences. "I suggest that it serves at least three functions. It must hold on. It must let go. And it must stick around so that it can be reintegrated." These I would recommend as three basic categories of "the good that love can do," and as a place to start. I've experienced the parish church as pretty good at holding me, reluctant to let me go, and remarkably determined to stick around. Where do we go from here? I really don't know—so *GOOD LUCK!* ☿

The Rev. Dr. George Dole lives in Bath, Maine, where he preaches at the Bath New Church. He is a professor at the Swedenborgian House of Studies and author of many books. He gave this talk at the annual convention.

## Convention Report

Continued from page 89

stricted funds in 2011 to cover expenses, resulting in another year of deficit spending from unrestricted assets. The report will be received and placed on file on completion of a review by our accounting firm.

- Rev. Kevin Baxter, secretary of the Council of Ministers (COM) reported on the COM meeting held earlier in the week. COM moved to place the names of the Reverends Paul Zacharias and William Woofenden on the roll of former ministers due to their demise. The delegates voted affirmatively by standing and honoring them with a moment of silence.
- The General Council Report was read by recording secretary Rev. Susannah Currie. (See page 105.)
- The Nominating Committee Report was read by chair Rev. Alison Lane-Olsen.
- Barb Boxwell, retiring chair of the Ministries Support Unit (MINSU), reported foundation-laying work over the last nine years:



they've been developing an application process for funding ministries that evaluates six criteria and established the New



Directions grant for new projects. The convention stood with a round of applause for Barb Boxwell's long service on the committee.

- Roslyn Taylor reported for the Communications Support Unit (COMSU). *The Messenger* has instituted fees for print subscriptions while providing free access to online subscriptions beginning in September. COMSU has begun work-

ing with the Information Management Support Unit (IMSU), developing plans for utilizing social networking for the denomination.

- Education Support Unit (EDSU): John Maine reported that their major initiative is the cycle of annual themes.
- The Financial and Physical Resources Support Unit (FPRSU) and Information Management Support Unit (IMSU) reports were distributed in *Advance Reports*.

The floor was then opened for nominations. Lon Elmer was nominated for General Council to fill the unexpired layperson term ending in 2014. Tamara Mounce and Gardiner Perry (who later withdrew his name) were nominated for MINSU. Dagmar Bollinger was nominated for IMSU for the unexpired term ending in 2014.

BJ Neuenfeldt, Women's Alliance Mite Box chair, announced that the Mite Box went to support the Tweens retreats in 2011 and will support both the Tweens and SCYL for 2012. A collection to support the Mite Box garnered \$1255.



Harvey Tafel updated the Wayfarers Chapel report. He highlighted the ongoing success of chapel programs and announced the hiring of a director of development.

Three people spoke of their experiences of the Lord's presence in light of the annual theme, "The Year of the Lord." Pete Toot shared an experience of the Lord's presence in a



recent health crisis. Barb Halle shared her experience of a positive attitude and faith in the Lord. Tom Neuenfeldt described his excitement in experiencing the Lord's presence at Almont family camp.

Bob Tafel explained his videotaping work at this and past conventions. He will be working with members of SCYL to convert tapes to DVD. His goal is for the edited DVDs to be archived as a history of annual conventions.

Rebecca Kline Esterson announced that she has been posting photos of the convention daily on Facebook and then introduced herself as the Swedenborgian scholar-in-training at the Swedenborgian House of Studies (SHS). She is supported by SHS and Boston University in her Ph.D. work.

Marjie Leas presented the Structure Review Committee's report on the survey that was conducted to assess the effectiveness of the structure of General Convention since it was revised in the 1980s.



- Most respondents were regular participants in some Convention group, attend annual conventions and regional association meetings, and feel connected to the denomination through *the Messenger*, Swedenborgian Community.org, their associations and societies or churches, or in a variety of other ways.
- Most were familiar with Central Office and have made use of its services.
- Most said the denominationally connected group they have belonged to met regularly, and many reported that they have understood the tasks and process of their groups.
- Half understood the denomination's budget, and half understood their group's budget; most understood the connection between their



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*Continued from preceding page*

group's budget and the denomination's budget.

The survey is ongoing, and more people may submit information. President Turley asked that anyone interested in volunteering to move the project forward contact him.

Kurt Fekete reported on the denominational youth programs. He announced that fifteen teens were present (augmented later by four late arrivals). He related his inspiration from and dedication to the teens. He thanked Convention for the time and resources to allow teens to share their talents and show our love for them.

SCYL (Swedenborgian Church Youth League) president Celie Bauer shared how SCYL and all of Conven-



tion have been a support and inspiration to her. She invited the officers and members of SCYL to the podium, each of whom introduced himself or herself to the delegates.

President Turley directed delegates to choose a break-out session to attend (Ministry in Our Church and the Church Universal: Where Do We Go from Here?" "Pamphlets to Blogs: Facilitating Communication in a Changing World," "Financial Planning and Management in Today's Economy"). When the delegates returned from the breakout groups, Rev. Ken Turley (ministry group), Rev. Susannah Currie (financial group) and Rev. Kevin Baxter (communications group) reported on the input and analysis received in each break-out session.

Rev. Carla Friedrich announced the formation of the Mexico Society.

Credentials Committee chair Lon

Elmer gave the final credentials report: ninety-six voting delegates present.

Body	Clergy	Delegates
Eastern Canada Conference	2	2
Western Canada Conference	0	0
Illinois Association	2	8
Kansas Association	2	1
Maine Association	7	5
Massachusetts Association	7	10
Michigan Association	1	6
Middle Atlantic Association	1	8
New York Association	1	3
Ohio Association	1	7
Pacific Coast Association	7	4
Southeast Association	1	2
At large	0	
SCYL	0	2
Lay Officers and General Council	0	6

Rev. Jane Siebert, representing the Chaplains Group of the Council of Ministers, announced the 2013 Convention in Urbana, Ohio, celebrating "The Year of the Spiritual World," June 27–30, 2013. To help with convention planning, Kevin Baxter will send out a survey about the convention experience by email to all convention registrants.

Vice-President Betsy Coffman, who is also a member of the Urbana University (UU) Board of Trustees, brought their greetings to General Convention.

In her remarks she reminded delegates of the relationship between UU and Convention. The school is initiating new online education projects and partnering with other schools to enhance degree opportunities. Two 2012 graduates were Swedenborgians. The Alicia Titus Memorial Peace Fund held a special program on the tenth anniversary of 9/11. Rev. Ken Turley is working to strengthen the Convention–UU relationship. The Scholar-in-Residence Program, which General Convention helps underwrite, hosted SHS professor Devin



Zuber last year. This year UU will host Rev. Susannah Currie to coincide with the opening of the "In Company with Angels" exhibit on campus, joined by Ken Turley, who will talk about the creation of the music that was inspired by the angels. In addition, he will present "Song of Spring," the story of Johnny Appleseed, which is a musical play written and composed by Ken and Laurie Turley, to the theater program. UU is working to establish a chaplaincy program and a Chautauqua program, building on synergy with John Chapman (Johnny Appleseed) and Swedenborgian theology.

Joanna Hill brought greetings from the Swedenborg Foundation, of which she is executive editor. She shared a PowerPoint presentation of new titles, some of which have won awards, and announced a new Bridge Book Award proposal deadline of 2/1/2013. Older translations of Swedenborg's works are available as free PDF downloads. She introduced Foundation board members present: Pete Toot, George Dole, Page Morahan, and Jim Lawrence.

Rev. Kevin Baxter, secretary of the Council of Ministers, reported that at the 2012 meeting of the Council of Ministers moved to recommend that Emily Jane Lemole and Jenny Caughman, "having completed a full course of study at the Swedenborgian House of Studies, be inducted into our ministry." The motion on behalf of Emily Jane Lemole was seconded by Rev. Susannah Currie, and the motion on behalf of Jenny Caughman was seconded by her father, Rev. Erni Martin.

The convention unanimously approved each motion with a thunderous standing ovation.

John Maine announced the theme for the year that begins at the end of this convention: "The Year of the Spiritual World."

Several groups presented donations to General Convention. Lon El-

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## Convention Report

Continued from page 103

mer presented a check for \$1,000 from the Pacific Coast Association. Barb Halle presented a “gift-back” donation of \$1,648 from the LaPorte New Church, representing one per cent of gross church revenue and a special collection.

Treasurer Polly Baxter extended thanks to the following organizations and societies that support General Convention with their donations. For 2011 and 2012 to date this list includes:

Church or Organization	Donation 2011	2012 to 6/30
Bridgewater Church	\$ 104.00	\$221.00
Chicago Society of the New Jerusalem	1,000.00	480.00
Fryeburg New Church	200.00	100.00
Good Shepherd Community Church	200.00	
Korean New Church	300.00	
LaPorte New Church	1,813.19	
New Jerusalem Church, Lenox Township, Iowa	120.00	
Royal Oak Church	100.00	
Urbana Church	150.00	
Wayfarers' Chapel	5,000.00	5,000.00
Kansas Association	400.00	
Massachusetts New Church Union	5,000.00	2,601.00
Michigan Association	2,000.00	500.00
New York Association	1,500.00	
Ohio Association	1,550.00	
Pacific Coast Assoc.	1,000.00	
Total	20,437.19	8,902.00

In 2011 a new restricted fund, The Tafel Fund, was established by a \$25,000 donation from Rev. Richard H. (Dick) and Linda Tafel. The treasurer's thanks was affirmed by applause.

Rev. Dick Tafel made an appeal for stewardship, outlining the history of giving in the denomination and encouraging donations. The Tafel Fund has a goal to raise one million dollars to fund new ministries and programs.

Polly Baxter announced a pledge

drive, for which there is one hundred per cent General Council participation. Pledge cards were distributed to the delegates. The pledge drive will be rolled out to the churches toward the end of the year.

Revs. Sage Currie and Jane Siebert thanked the Massachusetts Association on behalf of the COM Hospitality Committee for their good work in hosting the convention.

President Turley recognized the following ministers for service milestones:

- Rev. Stephen J. Pults: 25 years
- Rev. Donna Sloan: 25 years
- Rev. Richard Hugo Tafel Jr.: 50 years
- Rev. Chungsun Lee: 50 years

President Turley recognized the following individuals for service to the denomination:

- Beth Harvie: 3 years on COMSU
- Sue Ditmire: 3 years on EDSU
- Stan Conger: 3 years on FPRSU
- Barbara Boxwell: 6 years on MIN-SU
- Rev. Junchol Lee: 3 years on MIN-SU
- Rev. Alison Lane-Olsen: 5 years on the Nominating Committee
- Chris Laitner for service in founding the Online Community

Pres. Turley offered thanks to Vice-president Betsy Coffman, treasurer Polly Baxter, secretary Susannah Currie, operations manager Renee Hellenbrecht, local host and worship and music coordinator Kevin Baxter, and choir director Laurie Turley.

Upon recommendation of the General Council, the delegates voted that General Convention formally adopt the convention logo that has been in continuous use since 1962. Minor stylistic alterations to the convention logo will be acceptable for specific purposes when the integrity of the original design elements are maintained.

Mini-courses were enthusiastically attended on Saturday afternoon;

## Election Results

President: 3-year term	Rev. Kenneth Turley
Vice-president: 1-year term	Betsy Coffman
Recording Secretary: 1-year term	Rev. Susannah Currie
Treasurer: 1-year term	Polly Baxter
General Council layperson: 3-year term	Carl Helm & David Vigas
General Council layperson: unexpired term	Lon Elmer
General Council minister: 3-year term	Rev. Kit Billings
COMSU: 3-year term	Rev. Steve Sanchez
COMSU: unexpired term	Kristina Madjerac
EDSU: 3-year term	Karen Feil
FPRSU: 3-year term	Rev. Paul Martin
IMSU: 3-year terms	Andrew Sciarretta
IMSU: 3-year term	Dagmar Bollinger
MINSU: 3-year term	Paula Hilbert & Tamara Mounce
Nominating Committee: 5-year term	Martha Richardson
SHS trustee to the Representative Class: 3-year term	Karen Conger & Herb Ziegler
SHS trustee to the At-large Class: 3-year term	Robert Leas & Robert Reber

many regretted they couldn't attend all of them: “How to Read Convention Financial Statements,” facilitated by Polly Baxter; “Spiritual Practice—Why Do We Need to ‘Practice?’” Jane Siebert; “The Big Bang and I,” George Dole (Look for this in next month's *Messenger*); “Top 10: Lessons Learned in Creating a Start-up—What ‘Revelation of the Spirit’ Has Taught Us So Far,” Catherine Lauber and Pamela Kesseling; “The Hitchhiker's Guide to Correspondentia,” Jim Lawrence; and “Reflections on a Year of Ministry in Iraq,” Andy Stinson.

The convention business session closed following the worship service, led by Rev. Donna Keane, and the installation of elected persons, with the closing of the Bible. ☪

# General Council Meetings

## Pre-convention Meeting

**G**eneral Council (GC) met on Thursday, July 5. Present were Rev. Ken Turley, president; Betsy Coffman, vice-president; Polly Baxter, treasurer; Rev. Susannah Currie, recording secretary; Rev. Kit Billings; Carl Helm; David Vigas; Tom Neuenfeldt; Barb Cullen; Rev. Randy Laakko; and Rev. Jonathan Mitchell, chair of COM. Absent were Rev. David Fekete and Matthew Fleming.

GC voted to assess a maintenance fee of 0.5% on restricted funds for FY 2012, with the provision that a grant by General Convention be made of an amount equal to any fund deficit that might be caused by such assessment.

Treasurer Polly Baxter announced that a grant summit would be held to which all granting organizations were invited to discuss granting procedures. The Gray and Rotch Fund trustees, although not part of General Convention's structure, were invited to attend as well. (The summit was held during the convention.) The purpose was to standardize procedures and increase communication between granting bodies and constituents, and to discuss the maintenance fee.

The council received a recommendation from COM that the "privilege of call" motion be referred to an ad-hoc committee of COM.

In light of the long standing issues and the most recent report of the Trustees of the National Church, GC passed a motion requesting that the Trustees of the National Church look into and follow up on the steps necessary to sell the National Church building.

Swedenborgian Community.org (SC.org), the online ministry of General Convention, submitted two requests to Convention: to become a member body of Convention and to permit Swedenborgiancommunity.org "mem-

bers" to become members-at-large of Convention. GC voted to affirm Swedenborgian Community.org as a recognized ministry of General Convention and to recommend that the Steering Committee of SC.org pursue with all haste the action required to establish themselves as an independent group.

GC voted to support in principle and pursue funding for a position of Swedenborgian chaplain at Urbana University (UU). Funding will be sought from a variety of sources, including UU, GC, and regional and local church bodies.

For long-term planning purposes, GC discussed the function and location of Central Office after receiving a Central Office report from Vice-President Coffman, focussing on the question, what do we want Central Office to be: showplace office and meeting place, at-home office, virtual office, or something else? The possibility of housing Central Office at a Swedenborgian center (such as UU or Temenos) was discussed. The Central Office Committee will create a request for proposals (RFP) for long-term workspace to be sent to Swedenborgian centers for review at the November meeting.

New groups that are not societies may want to apply for membership in General Convention: Swedenborgian Community.org; Revelation of the Spirit; and Hunter Roberts's and Carla Friedrich's new ministries for example. The president will ask MINSU to address the issue of guidelines and procedures for accepting new groups into Convention, reporting to the Executive Committee.

GC voted to approve the following motions recommended by the Council of Ministers:

- "General Convention purchases and presents to each candidate upon ordination a Bible in the translation

of their choice; and an inscribed volume of Swedenborg, preferably *True Christianity* or *The New Jerusalem and the Heavenly Doctrines*; and one white stole with the Alpha and Omega symbols."

- "Procedures for Handling Allegations of Misconduct Against Our Ordained Ministers Or Our Lay Leaders"
- Reference back to committee of the motion to amend the By-Laws of General Convention adding "Privilege of Call" as a Category of Ordination as Article XIII Section (c).

## Post-convention Meeting

Attendance was identical to the pre-convention roll with these exceptions: Lon Elmer (newly elected), present; Carl Helm, absent.

Annual appointments were made to committees, boards, and representative bodies. (These will be published in the Annual Swedenborgian Journal.)

GC voted to make funds available to the Trustees of the National Church for legal fees and appraisals related to the sale of the National Church. If funds are used, they will be repaid from the proceeds of the sale of the National Church should it occur.

GC appointed Susannah Currie and Polly Baxter to collect and compile the information from the Structure Review Committee and the break-out sessions and present them at the November GC meeting, along with the Executive Committee's recommendations on how to proceed. ☩

## SCYL Columbus Day Weekend Retreat Life or Death Does It Really Matter?

7:00 PM, 10/5 through 10:00 AM, 10/8

Cedar Hill Retreat Center

Duxbury, Massachusetts

Cost: \$50.00 (assistance available)

email kfekete@hotmail.com



## President's Address

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wish to be addressed?

HERR SWEDENBORG: That will do fine. Of course different people call me different things depending on the nature of our relationship. But you and I are just getting to know each other, so Herr Swedenborg will do fine.

TURLEY: Perhaps you and I can talk together, here . . . call it a living room soiree.

SWED: Did you say a living room soiree? This is a church convention isn't it? No need to apologize, I've been in churches before—many times. And here I am alive to tell about it!

Of course, I myself pray and meditate on divinity in the sanctuary of all human beings and this beautiful creation. And there are places built with human hands, . . . call them churches, if you will, where I love the experience of worship; and, oh how I love the music! That Bach was something—too rich and dark for some, but I loved him. I could never understand it why Telemann—compared to Bach he was a lightweight—was so much more popular. Anyway, we aren't here to just talk about music; by the way, lovely piece earlier. I play a bit myself you know, mostly the organ, I guess that's why I love Bach; Buxtehude, Bach's mentor, was a master, but listen to me, I digress.

TURLEY (*leaning forward to ask a question with studied seriousness*): Herr Swedenborg, there's something—

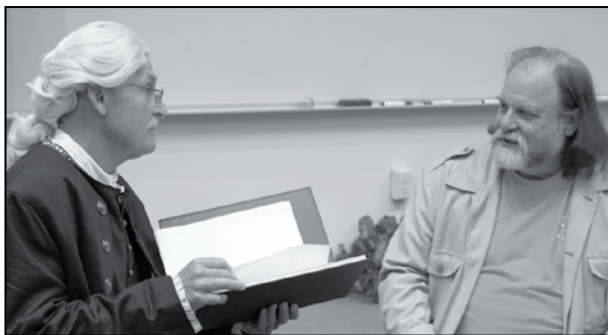
SWED: Yes, I know, . . . you are not quite comfortable with the word, *church*—in the spiritual world, we don't need words to communicate our thoughts. Church can be a beautiful word that stirs the deep emotion of happiness, of being in the presence of the sacred; one can savor the beauty of light through a stained glass window, experience a spark of inner recognition

in a thoughtful sermon, and hear, "You are welcome here," and feel deeply that you belong.

Nonetheless, Reverend Turley, one can understand your discomfort with the word church. There are those who hear the word church in the same way

**. . . one can find so much variety among spiritual communities: such gatherings are like jewels. set in the crown of heaven.**

they hear the word love, and have to be content with only one word for the many kinds of deep affection! They would say, "If the Eskimos can have



multiple words for snow, how is it that we have only one word for love?" Amazing! And the word church is not much better: so many kinds of spiritual community—and only one word. For many, church includes the building: a physical structure with meaningful architecture, uplifting spires, and richly colored stained glass windows—powerfully built, amazingly beautiful, impossible to heat.

But a church is also an individual; and a community; it is a shared state of mind and heart: all things that have love and wisdom as their core. In the spiritual world a church is a joining of souls in a living community with a deep bond of affection filled with the love of God and a desire to serve others. They find joy in interacting with

one another. The beauty is that the more one loves others, the more one finds one's own true self-expression. That is the happiness and joy one finds in heaven, and in a true spiritual community here on earth.

TURLEY: That is beautiful. When I hear you say—

SWED: If I may add, in the spiritual world when you use the word church angels think of the spiritual interaction that is within one person; each one of us is a church! And while each human being is a church, each small community of souls is also a church, and so is the large community of similar loves, and on and on. And the Grand Human is the church in the largest form—this side of divinity, of course. (*Pause*)

As a word, I admit I've got problems with *church* too. Oh to have the Latin in which I wrote at hand! . . . so full of meaning. . . . *Ecclesia* is the word I used: ". . . *de Antiquissima quidem Ecclesia agitur, sed interiora Verbi ita se habent ut quicquid dicitur de Ecclesia, dicatur de unoquoque Ecclesiae, qui nisi foret Ecclesia, non potuisset esse pars Ecclesiae; . . .*" Now there's a language I can relate to! But, fortunately I've learned to receive my thoughts in English, which has come in handy from time to time, including now in our conversation. . . . As for that sentence in English, it conveys the idea that "when one looks deeply, one will see that whatever is said about the word church can be said of every individual member in it; for unless one is a church in least form, one cannot not possibly be part of the church." (*Arzana Coelestia* §82)

TURLEY (*pausing long enough to let the deep thought sink in*): And how about the word *word*? What a powerful . . . , well, word! Did you know the Beatles did a groovy little song called, "The Word"?

Continues next page

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SWED: Why yes, I actually do know that—

TURLEY: Great little tune, draws on that funk rhythmic style but with philosophical lyrics. And what was the word? Why love of course! Wonderful pop lyrics. Now, because of that catchy rhythm, those words are in all kinds of people's subconscious minds. They're humming along and without even knowing it, singing a divine truth. I think you, Herr Swedenborg, might say that is Divine Providence manifesting and the means by which little gems of divine-filled moments are placed to remain within us until we call upon them later in life.

And I believe that you might include that pop lyric in what we call church, which is actually a spiritual community in a place where those who are drawn to it can—

SWED (*exitedly*): Yes, can gather! To have a place to go, a time to be there, and others there to greet you, and to welcome you to your place within the community! Here on earth, therefore, one needs a place to go, and a time to be there. How could it be otherwise in this world of time and space? So, what would you like to call such a place?

TURLEY: Well, I would—

SWED: Why, Yes! That would be my idea, too! For those who have a good feeling about the word church, let's call such a place a church. And for those whose experience resonates with the phrase spiritual community, I say we call it a spiritual community. And there are other words for still more people who call it by another name. I love variety!

And speaking of the variety, one can find so much variety among spiritual communities: such gatherings are like jewels set in the crown of heaven. Each one has its own hue; each sparkles with

its own light, depending on its reception of love and wisdom from the Lord; and together they shine as one, like a crown of infinite beauty . . .

TURLEY (*nodding in agreement*): That is beautiful, I—

SWED (*exitedly*): Oh, the variety of worship in heaven! Why in the spiritual world, there are people who worship in magnificent cathedrals of stone and glass, others in warm and lush groves with arches of interwoven trees. Some have the most wonderful singing and music and others a silence that is so profound it penetrates to the depth of your very soul. I wouldn't want to have to choose just one way to worship.

TURLEY (*nodding in agreement*): Me neither—



SWED (*with deep intention*): You know, I was meditating on that word *worship* a while ago while I was preparing for my visit to your General Convention and practicing my English. Worship comes from a word that means honor, and that's a deeply beneficial attitude . . . but there is so much more involved in bringing oneself before God, the Holy One . . . in the company of like-minded souls.

Oh to have the Latin word *colere*, [*colo*, *-ui*, *cultus*]! . . . Now there is a word! *Colere* is often translated "to worship," and yet it also carries the meaning "to cultivate." To cultivate the soil of one's life in such a way that seeds from the Lord's Word and ideas about the inner life are planted, take root, grow, flower, and bear fruit—that is what it means to worship! . . . Or dare I say quite literally, this is to cul-

tivate an inner life that is full of love as big as the sky, and that shines with wisdom as bright as the sun, in service to God and neighbor.

You know that I talked quite a lot about cultivating the life of regeneration in my writing, don't you?

TURLEY (*nodding in agreement*): Of course! I believe some of my best sermons included—

SWED: Yes, I know; I did a little research on your work before getting here. And you know a church is a living thing, made up of living things, and that it must be cultivated! The spiritual bonds that make up this living thing are where life happens, in the love and understanding shared in collaborative service to God and the

neighbor. Whatever the name of the group, whatever size, whatever language or vocabulary, those are only the outward trappings of the inner spiritual bonds that are shared in becoming and being a church.

TURLEY (*pausing to reflect on this idea*): We here in The Swedenborgian Church—

SWED (*slightly irritated*): I was waiting for that. You know I am not all that happy about using my name as the name of your church. I will try to be respectful of your use of my name . . . but . . . I have . . . issues. It never occurred to me that there would be a church that would use my name. Now, I know your intentions were good, and that you were focusing on what was revealed through my writings, and on the teachings that were brought to light, and that you were not really trying to bring attention to me except as the means by which the Lord's truths were made accessible, but . . . I mean really now! Can't you come up with some other name?

Now that that's off my chest, please don't forget that I am not the object of attention; rather, remember that you

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## The Way We Worship

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est truth to be lived out in this world.

Let me give you an example, if you take someone with no exceptional talent, say in music or art or anything, and you have them practice exceptionally hard to get better, they might get up to 200 times better than when they originally began to cultivate the talent. *But* if you take someone with true God-given talent and have them practice at the same intensity, they can become as much as 3200 times better. The Gallup organization has researched this extensively, Andy Stinson will never be as good as Yo-Yo Ma on the cello, it doesn't matter how much I practice. But there is within me, and within you, a talent that can be cultivated to be 3200 times better. Will I carry out judgment in my life to discern what that may be and cultivate it? Will we as a church carry our judgment in our institution and stop doing the things, to stop chasing the trains, that we were never called to do in the first place?

Swedenborgianism, as a movement, as a church, can better discern that which we do better than any organization on the globe and do *that*, cultivate *that*, because here is the truth of our Gospel lesson. If we are to love one another, as Jesus commands, we don't get to leave our best selves at the station. We don't get to check our greatness and just let it wither; because if I am going to love you, I need to do with the best of me, because as children of God, do we not deserve that? And if you are going to love me, does the divinity that shines through me demand that we not offer obnoxious promises of oil and rams but our true greatest and best selves? When the Hindus say "namaste," they are not saying, "The mediocre in me salutes the mediocre in you." *No!* they are saying, "The *GOD* in you me salutes the *GOD* in you."

It is ours to do the work of carrying

out judgment in our movement and in our lives that we might shine like the angels.

### To Love Mercy

Swedenborg is particular in his definition of the Lord's mercy. In *Heaven and Hell* §522, he defines the Lord's mercy as "[God's Love that is] constant toward every individual, never withdrawing from anyone. This means that everyone who can be saved is saved"

In short, we are to love the things that bring love and save people. Love the things that bring us closer to God, Love the *Love!* The great channeling angelic spirit Abraham-Hicks constantly uses the rejoinder, "Choose the better feeling thought." Give energy to the thing, love the thing, that brings love and that *Saves* us. And forget about the rest! If we look at the time we spend in our church and in our life how often are we really doing this?

For example, everyone in this room has had some kind of transformational experience with Swedenborg or at least with scripture, *but* do we *love* it? Do we cultivate it? That thing that came alive in us when we first read the writings, do we celebrate it? Do we *share* it and give light to it? Do we set *goals* around it? *Do we develop our angelic love?*

We can so often spend our time drunk, and we can be drunk on so many things in this world—alcohol is probably the least of them—on ideas, on feelings; they can in the true meaning of drunkenness have us see the world in skewed way.

To love our neighbor as ourselves is to offer our neighbor our greatest talent, our greatest light, our sincere and full effort of being. . . .

### To Humble Yourself By Walking With Your God

A *shammes* is a guy who takes care of handyman tasks around the temple and makes sure everything is in working order. He is at the bottom of the

pecking order of synagogue functionaries, and there's a joke about that:

A rabbi, to show his humility before God, cries out in the middle of a service, "Oh, Lord, I am nobody!"

The cantor, not to be bested, also cries out, "Oh, Lord, I am nobody!"

The shammes, deeply moved, follows suit and cries, "Oh, Lord, I am nobody!"

The rabbi turns to the cantor and says, "Now look who thinks he's nobody!"

I think we often get caught up in what humility is and what we must be like in humility. Humility is not self-effacing "nobodiness," rather it is knowing and acting that we are absolutely equal and no better or any worse than any person on the planet. It was said of the great Abraham Lincoln that he could talk to anyone, from cabinet ministers and foreign heads of state to illiterate woodcutters. Lincoln's knew that he was not special, because every soul in creation is special.

This part of the Micah passage is often translated, "to walk humbly with your God," which I just dislike. Translated that way it is just another thing that I am doing wrong on the long list of things I'm doing wrong, but I don't think that is what the Lord is trying to say. The way Swedenborg translates this it is much more about our seeking to walk with God and in so doing we are humbled. We are led into humility not through some superhuman force of will, but through the desire of following the Lord's leading which is inherently a humbling act. How often in my life has following God's call meant setting down the ideas and wants of my smallness for a greater more wondrous good that I might not even see at the time? In following the Lord's leading we might discover again and again the paradoxical truth that it is not all about us, and yet without us something precious and unique and beautiful is lost.

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## President's Address

Continued from page 107

each utilize the teachings of the New Church as a lens through which to see the life of charity, through which to contemplate the Lord's Holy Word as the interior design of our own inner lives, and through which to see the life that leads to heaven.

And underlying all of what you do may there be the desire to foster the spiritual well being of others and yourselves—got that last phrase from your constitution and by-laws while I was doing my research for this visit. I like the wording. By the way, your work created quite a buzz in the spiritual world; would like to see more progress in its implementation, though.

TURLEY (*nodding vigorously*): I wanted to—

SWED: Being a church—being a



spiritual community—is about bringing heaven down to earth and earth up to heaven. The heavenly marriage is the metaphor I used to suggest the intimacy that is possible between your own true self and the neighbor who is to be loved as yourself—between your own inmost depths and the Lord as your very own Protector, Guide and Savior.

I found in looking at (*pausing and shifting uncomfortably*) the Swedenborgian

Church that you pay lots of attention to the idea of being useful. I'm pleased about that. Of course, uses in Latin can express as many ideas for being useful as the Eskimos have kinds of snow.

If The Swedenborgian Church can be a gathering of spiritual communities that opens the door to a deeper inner life, a community of communities that

encourages people to love the neighbor in just the ways that this particular neighbor needs, and that has at its core the Lord's Divine, why, you *will* be an expression of the Lord's New Church. And I won't mind so much you using my name for your church. (*pause*)

So what did you want to know about church?

TURLEY: I think we've covered quite a lot of ground already.

SWED (*wryly*): O-o-h-h, ground . . . as in this fertile ground of conversation? . . . I love speaking in correspondences. So, Reverend Turley, were you to speak now to the General Convention about being a church, wouldn't you say, "You must be realistic about who you are. Not just you, of course, but who *you* are as a church in least form, and who *you* are as a church in larger form. Then, focus on things you want to do that are an expression of how you love God and neighbor.

Start with yourself and do that. You're a church.

Get together with others, and do that. You're a church.

Develop a number of small groups for a useful endeavor. You're a church.

Get involved with other groups. You're a church.

Become part of a national or international movement. You're a church.

Church is a verb—it is a way of being, of loving, and of doing. It's something you do."

(*Swedenborg arose and, with a bow, walked slowly to the door, and exited.*)

TURLEY: Well, now that was some insight into what it means to *be a church*. I hope you enjoyed it as much as I did. The task is before us: responding to the call to be a church.

—*Blessings, Reverend Ken Turley, with much gratitude for the*

*contributions of Reverend Gard Perry*

You can view the above interview at <https://vimeo.com/45304914>. The interview follows the opening ceremony and begins at minute 43.

Continued from preceding page

In being led to live shoulder-to-shoulder with every soul in creation and to our very creator, we discover it is impossible to love another from a place of subservience or mastery, and we can only love another from a place of service. And service requires us to be in a free and equal relationship with the other—in short, the humility we gain by following God . . .

Our exploration of Micah in a way is all just prelude, to remind you of the simple and glorious fact that if the truth of the resurrection and the truth of eternity tell us anything, it is that there is always another train.

It does not matter what train we think our lives, our church, our tradition are on, because there is always another train, there is always another chance to live out the vision of the Holy City. Because the hope and

promise given this and every true carrying love to the Lord it is promised to us that the fields are ripe with harvest, that goodness and mercy will go with us; and it does.

I know that in my life, in your life, in your ministry, and in your churches—and in this church there are trains we have missed—there are moments we have raised our voice and lost our way down a track of our own choosing, rather than the track the Lord shares with us . . .

And my hope for you is simple: there is another train, waiting at the station of your life and your church; there is another train waiting to take you to the new and wondrous promise of a life filled with justice, mercy, and humility. Set down your hurried lives and see, for there is another train. ☩

Rev. Captain Andy Stinson is a US Army chaplain living in Woolwich, Maine.

# What Did You Do for the Year of the Lord?



BY JOHN MAINE

**W**hat did you do for the Year of the Lord?

That was the question that was being asked at Convention as we looked back at the year that was, 2011–12. Here are just some of the answers I received from an informal poll of my fellow ministers.

Rev. Judith Vandergrift said that, as the prayer minister for the online Swedenborgian Community.org, she sends out an inspiration and prayer each week with the weekly sermon that focuses on the Year of the Lord (Judith is hoping to expand this ministry into a network of prayer circles all over the world)

Rev. Susannah Currie told me that during Lent the Bridgewater Church explored the meaning of the Lord's Prayer, line by line during the weekly children's talk. She said, "Now we say this prayer more slowly and reverently as we remember the deeper meaning that was revealed."

Rev. Rich Tafel proclaimed the Lord through a ministry of being use-

ful through his organization Public Squared, which trained change-agent leaders on how to engage governments in the belief that we can't change the world until we change the rules

And speaking of amazing stuff, Rev. Cameron Linen says that last year he was making the Lord known as a newly-minted pastoral counsellor, a firefighter/paramedic, and a volunteer crisis counselor (whew!).

Rev. Jenn Tafel of the Lansing Spiritual Center has felt the Lord's presence in her work with children and youth this past year, supporting teen and tween retreats, and also in launching a monthly youth group.

Rev. Jane Siebert reported that she came back from a trip to the Holy Land with a renewed commitment to follow the Lord in the ways of social justice and peace.

Rev. Gard Perry says that in his counselling work he has felt that "God is in the room" when he shares in those sacred moments of openness, vulnerability and reaching out.

Rev. Dr. Jim Lawrence completed his doctoral dissertation on the inner sense of the Lord's Word. (Congratulations, Jim!)

Rev. Wilma Wake told me that the online spiritual community has been using "The Year of the Lord" as their worship theme—wonderful! Wilma and her team are really committed to using the annual themes as the basis for their worship.

Rev. Dr. George Dole says he's been feeling energized by a number of projects and is looking forward to "something publishable" in the next year or two!

Rev. Adam Seward is planning ways he can be a positive presence for the Lord where he is.

Rev. Young Min Kim (Korean New Church) and Rev. Junchol Lee (the San

Francisco Church) both report celebrating the goodness of the Lord through a host of activities around learning and serving in the community.

Rev. Gabriella Cahaley says she preached a series of messages "to make real the life of the Lord," and she made special use of music and art as well.

Rev. Alison Lane-Olsen of the Pretty Prairie Church told me that they have begun posting their Sunday messages on YouTube in the hope of helping more minds and hearts connect with the Lord.

Rev. Catherine Lauber's new teaching ministry, "Revelation of the Spirit", was launched last year to bring opportunities for spiritual growth and life in the Lord to more people in the community.

And finally I'll include myself, Rev. John Maine of the Kitchener Church, where we have been hard at work organizing and preparing to launch "The Harmonia Center for Life and Growth," intended as "an alternative to church operating out of the church," a holistic center for spiritual growth, healing, the arts, and community-building, to make the Lord known in new ways.

That was just a sample of the year that was—and now on to the Year of the Spiritual World (2012–13)! ☩

The Rev. John Maine is Chair of the Educational Support Unit (EDSU). He lives in Kitchener, Ontario.

**Next month: 2012–2013, The Year of the Spiritual World.**

## Sustainability Project

Rev. Carla Friederich has organized efforts to create a home for children and eco-village, with a goal of sustainability.

The first phase is establishing a sanctuary oasis to save endangered Frankincense, the beginning of a Biblical garden. Once the trees are secure the sale of propagated trees, resin, and products will help sustain them and also go to support endangered children.

Read more at <http://hometribe.blogspot.com/2012/08/indiegogo-crowd-sourcing-fundraiser.html>. ☩

## Passages

*Continued from page 111*

daughter of the late Rev. Everett Bray. A memorial service was held at Swan Point Cemetery July 14, 2012, in Providence, Rhode Island, the Rev. Susannah Currie officiating. ☩

## Passages

### Baptisms

**Leah Sophia Dearing**, infant daughter of Erika (Penabaker) and Matthew Dearing was baptized on July 21, 2012, at the Almont New Church Assembly by the Rev. Ronald Brugler. Leah is a seventh generation member of the Almont family.

### Blessings

On Sunday July 22, 2012, **Benjamin Daniel Brown**, infant son of Katie Shelley and Julius Brown (and grandson of Marjie Leas), was blessed and welcomed into the life of the Almont New Church Assembly by the Rev. Ronald Brugler. Members of the Assembly are proud that Benjamin is a sixth generation member.

### Deaths

**Jim Erickson**, member of the Virginia Street Swedenborgian Church in St. Paul, entered fully into the spiritual world on May 18, 2012. He is survived by his wife, Carla, mother Sylvia, brother Gerald, sister Judy Wuollett, daughter Kimberly Tennyson, granddaughter Amanda and great-grandson Brayden. Jim had worked for the Science Museum of Minnesota and the Ramsey County Historical Society. A memorial service was held at the Virginia Street Church, on June 16, the Rev. Eric Hoffman officiating.



It is with deep sadness that we at the Virginia Street Church report the passing of our beloved friend Jim Erickson. Jim has been a gift to our church in so many ways for many years, and we miss him deeply.

In the course of a lifetime of explo-

ration, Jim happened upon the Swedenborgian Church and felt a deep connection to its philosophy and mission. His love for the historic building was evinced by his enthusiasm when he talked about the Swedenborgian contributions to Minnesota history and when he gave tours of the church. He donated his skills as the church's official librarian and archivist for many years and, at various times, as the church's president, vice-president, and Sunday School superintendent. He chaired many committees over the years, notably the Building and Grounds Committee and the Stewardship, Growth, and Outreach Committee. Jim has also served as our denomination's vice-president with President Chris Laitner and, as a function of that office, was chair of the Board of Directors of the National Church in Washington D.C. He also served a term as president of The Sunday School Association, contributing from his experience in education, and on General Council for many years.

In all of these positions, Jim brought a degree of sharp insight. We remember him for his love of wit, his anecdotes that served to highlight the point of the discussion, and his passion for Swedenborg, among many other enlightened thinkers. His passion for books bordered on a delightful mania, and he appreciated the history of ideas that could be found in their pages. Open to ideas from many sources, Jim became thoroughly Swedenborgian in his outlook on life.

With his wife Carla, he found a love for human relationships that he grew to cherish deeply. Anyone could always count on Jim for an intriguing conversation as he considered dialogue an under-appreciated art form. He has been for us an astute listener, an inspired companion, and a good, good friend. We are blessed that this dear historian has now become part of the history of our church.

—Rev. Eric Hoffman

**Cecilia (Lalla) Searle** (65) entered the fullness of her spiritual life on June 23, 2012, at her home in Providence,



Rhode Island. She was the wife of Colgate Searle, Jr., mother of Llerena Searle and Colgate Searle III, and grandmother of Alci-da Enck.

An accomplished landscape architect, she cofounded Searle and Searle Landscape Architects and Planners with her husband in 1975. Lalla's work with plants and design included many projects in Rhode Island and Massachusetts, teaching Plant Materials and Design for Rhode Island School of Design, serving on the Providence Historic District Commission, and extensive work in preserving historical landscapes throughout the state. Her professional work has been recognized by the National Endowment for the Arts, the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts, and the Rhode Island Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects.

Lalla was a member of the Cambridge (Massachusetts) Swedenborgian Church but in recent years attended the Bridgewater Church. For her entire life she was an active part of the Fryeburg New Church Assembly in Fryeburg, Maine, having served at one time as treasurer, many times on the nominating committee, and always keeping watch on property use and betterment. She was gifted in many areas and shared her interests and enthusiasm of life to the fullest.

Besides her immediate family, Lalla is survived by her parents Rafael and Betty Guiu and her sisters Tina Wood and Gloria Costello. She was a grand-

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### 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.

### SHS Outreach Program Take a Learning Adventure with an SHS Professor

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with Dr. Devin Zuber

**An 8-Week Online Course  
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This online discussion-based course examines Swedenborg's writings from a contemporary environmental perspective. How might Swedenborg's writings speak to some of our pressing ecological concerns in the 21st century? We will do some close "slow reading" of selections from Swedenborg's theology (*Divine Love and Wisdom*, *Divine Providence*) and skim through some of his earlier science to understand how Swedenborg took part in 18th-century conversations about natural theology, Divine beauty, and the order of nature. We will look also at the ways Swedenborgian theology was read and received by American nature writers such as Ralph Waldo Emerson, John Muir, and Henry David Thoreau, and the emergence of the modern environmental movement at the end of the 19th century.

The course will be held on an online blogspace, supplemented with video lectures and weekly webinars. All reading materials will be provided in electronic format. The class is limited to fifteen students.

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