

## The Ship of Faith—Paulhaven 2014

BY DAVID FEKETE

**T**hirty-seven teens and fifteen staff had a blast at Paulhaven Camp in Alberta and learned about God through the correspondences of water. The lesson centered on water while the camp took a “voyage” to Mexico, Italy, Ukraine, Greece, and back to Canada.

In morning chapel, led by Pastor Dave Fekete (P-Davie), campers heard the Bible stories of being born of water and the Spirit, Moses and the Red Sea, water from the rock, Jesus calming the stormy sea, Jesus walking on water, and Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead, and our concluding communion service was about how Paulhaven is like a kingdom of priests (Exodus 19) and like the Holy City which comes down from heaven. The heavenly joy of play, friendships, love, and Jesus at the center of it all is like the Heavenly City which has the Lamb and Jesus at its center. I was struck with the awed silence the campers maintained during chapel. Our classes, immediately after morn-

ing chapel, were also about water. We studied the stories of Naaman’s cure by dipping in the Jordan (2 Kings 5:1-15), baptism (Mark 1:1-11), Jesus and the gift of living water (John 4:1-42), the house built on the rock and the floodwaters (Luke 6:46-49), and Jesus turning water into wine (John 2:1-11).

much about face-time play, dear friendships—some of which last a lifetime—and teamwork as it is about religious programming. Teens enjoyed Pastor Dave’s “Religion 101,” in which any question was fair game and in which Pastor Dave raised important Swedenborgian topics. Pastor Dave thought

that the course should be called “Stump the Pastor.” He was asked, “What was before God?” How did Virgin Mary get pregnant?” “Why didn’t Jesus use His superpowers to come off the cross?” “What is the soul?” Everyone had



*The staff and happy campers at Paulhaven*

But Paulhaven was also all about soccer, volleyball, crafts, swimming, T’ai Ch’i (when one girl was about to be thrown into the lake, another girl yelled, “Use T’ai Ch’i!”), an all day baseball game (we had so many teens that we needed to break up into two games), a water fight and slip-and-slide, delicious meals, evening campfire with sing-along, “Paulhaven’s Got Talent,” and skits. The teens surrender their smart phones for the duration of the camp session. The camp is just as

fun with the depth and range of questions and P-Davie’s attempts at some kind of answer.

Managing so many teens and staff was a tall order, gently but firmly handled by Captain Bill Van Rooijen. Rec staff organized fun games enjoyed by all the campers. They were Dave Stolarchuk, Chris Sawchuck, Leah Francis, and Gord Schellenberg. Darlene Sawatzky, Dianne Epp-Roseinger, Sue Hulcher, and Pastor Dave taught

[Continues on page 127](#)

## The Editor's Desk



### Training and Scholarship

The Swedenborgian Church has been training our ministers since the mid-nineteenth century. Academic study and scholarship has been an important piece of the learning process from the beginning. From the Swedenborg School of Religion in Massachusetts to the Swedenborgian House of Studies (SHS) at the Pacific School of Religion (PSR) in California, deep learning in search of understanding has accompanied learning how to be a pastor—worship, counseling, Bible study, spiritual deepening, and church polity.

Dean Jim Lawrence and the Board

of Trustees have worked tirelessly to meet the challenge of this tradition; being small makes the challenge more daunting. Coming to PSR in 2001 was a brave and exciting change for our school. Constantly changing circumstances have challenged the school to evolve. New circumstances challenge the school to once again reposition itself institutionally and academically. The Board believes that Dean Lawrence will be able to facilitate a move from its affiliation with PSR to affiliation with the Graduate Theological Union (GTU), finding there a better fit. Read the report on the SHS fall board meeting on page 132 for more information.

### Ruby

Meeting on October 3, the SHS Board of Trustees received the devastating news of Ruby Blackman's untimely death (Obituary page 133). Although we believe in an afterlife, the loss of a child is tragic and contrary to the orderly process of life and death that we expect in the natural world.

I was fortunate to meet Ruby when her grandfather Jim Perry brought her to an annual convention several years ago and again at Freyburg Camp. She shone and bristled with energy as she engaged with fellow members of the Swedenborgian Youth Church League.

Adolescence is often a difficult time. Sometimes surviving it seems like a miracle rather than the norm. Most of us who have survived adolescence can remember the pain of the transition from the usually blissful innocence of childhood to the confusing onslaught of stimuli and changes in the journey

to adulthood. We gain the ability to perceive and contemplate the world as an adult, but without the experience or fully mature brain to easily process it. Self-awareness as an independent social being is thrilling but fraught with the task of navigating endless challenges, often seemingly alone.

Ruby's death is an immeasurable loss to her mother, Amy Blackman, her uncle, Bob Perry, her entire family, her friends, and to us, the community of Swedenborgians. We mourn her loss and weep and send our condolences to her family. Her absence here on earth is balanced by her arrival in heaven.

When I was a child, I talked like

[Continues on page 129](#)

## Contents

<a href="#">The Ship of Faith—Paulhaven 2014 ....</a>	<a href="#">119</a>
<a href="#">The Editor's Desk .....</a>	<a href="#">120</a>
<a href="#">Letter from the President .....</a>	<a href="#">121</a>
<a href="#">Teens Study 10 Commandments at SCYL Retreat.....</a>	<a href="#">122</a>
<a href="#">Bath Church Revival.....</a>	<a href="#">124</a>
<a href="#">Teens at Almont.....</a>	<a href="#">124</a>
<a href="#">The History and Philosophy of Astrobiology .....</a>	<a href="#">124</a>
<a href="#">The Candy Lady at Almont.....</a>	<a href="#">125</a>
<a href="#">Boston Church Thief to Plead Guilty....</a>	<a href="#">125</a>
<a href="#">Pacific Coast Swedenborgians Gather for Weekend of Fun and Spiritual Renewal .....</a>	<a href="#">126</a>
<a href="#">Swedenborg Foundation to Distribute Swedenborg Society Titles .....</a>	<a href="#">127</a>
<a href="#">Gathered in His Name.....</a>	<a href="#">128</a>
<a href="#">Recycling the Writings of Swedenborg .....</a>	<a href="#">128</a>
<a href="#">Book Review: Distilling Swedenborg's Divine Providence ..</a>	<a href="#">129</a>
<a href="#">Being Uplifted.....</a>	<a href="#">130</a>
<a href="#">Needs and Deeds— a Story of Love in Action.....</a>	<a href="#">131</a>
<a href="#">SHS Fall Board Meeting .....</a>	<a href="#">132</a>
<a href="#">Passages.....</a>	<a href="#">133</a>
<a href="#">SwedenborgianCommunity.org Opens 2015 Pledge Campaign.....</a>	<a href="#">134</a>

## Church Calendar

- Nov 6–8, 2014: General Council meeting • Framingham, MA
- June 4–7, 2015: Gathering Leaves—A Swedenborgian Women's Retreat Cincinnati, OH

## the Messenger

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## Letter from the President

*The Year of Regeneration:  
the Way of Change*



Dear Friends,

The first stage of Regeneration is repentance. That word has often been misunderstood and misrepresented. Repentance is not so much about feeling guilty and unworthy and self-flagellation as it is the willingness to take a long, hard look at yourself and come to grips with what is good and right and needs nurturing and what is not good and not right and needs fixing. To me, repentance is more about honest self-examination, acknowledging strengths as well as weaknesses, things that are positive and things that are negative. For, in my experience, it is when we get all the information open and out on the table that we are best positioned to make positive steps forward in the ongoing process of change that is useful and truly beneficial. Regeneration is not about change simply for the sake of change. It is about making carefully considered intentional and purposeful decisions and adjusting intentions and behaviors in pursuit of becoming closer to the goals we hold in our hearts and minds.

Just as each of us is engaged in the ongoing process of spiritual regeneration, so too is our church. To that end, I would like to invite us all to participate in the process of repentance. Please consider sending to our General Convention Secretary ([secretary@swedenborg.org](mailto:secretary@swedenborg.org)) a brief description of something you experience as positive or negative about our church. Given that there are many things we can do nothing about nor change, please make it something that we might in fact be able to do something about. Whether that be something positive we might add to, build upon, or expand or something negative that we need to eliminate, shore up, or change. Or perhaps it is something completely

new and innovative that we are not doing but could be. It would be helpful also, to share useful suggestions for constructive steps toward accomplishing the goal, and it would also be helpful if you would elaborate at least a bit on your goal—what it would contribute to Convention's purpose, and how we might begin moving toward accomplishing that goal. It is hard to achieve or even move closer to a goal if we are not clear what the goal is! Let's put our minds together and just see what we can come up with in pursuit of becoming the church we hold in our hearts.

Reporting on my recent activities, in mid-September the Wayfarer's Chapel Board met in Rancho Palos Verde, California, under the capable leadership of Rev. Rich Tafel to continue helping the chapel leadership and staff navigate the sometimes turbulent waters of transformation we have been navigating in the past few years. Some really positive things are happening there, and I encourage you to visit their website, [www.wayfarerschapel.org](http://www.wayfarerschapel.org), if not the chapel itself.

The next week was spent in Midland, Michigan, enjoying the wonderful hospitality of Chris Laitner in a joint meeting of the Financial and Physical Resources Support Unit (FPRSU) and the Ministries Support Unit (MINSU), sharing the difficult and essential work and decision-making of FPRSU and the Augmentation Fund Committee and MINSU and the Mission Fund. These are the sources of funding for nearly all of the ministries that are funded by General Convention.

The next trip was out to the San Francisco Bay Area to attend the Swedenborgian House of Studies Board of Trustees meeting. This board is charged with overseeing the present activities and plotting the future direction of our seminary and the education and preparation of our ordinands and future ministers. Like so many other areas of life in this day and age, the primary issue can best be described as the ground changing under our feet. As the nature of people's relation to "church" changes in society, the nature of ministry itself must change

[Continues on page 127](#)

# Teens Study 10 Commandments at SCYL Retreat

**F**ourteen teens made the journey to Almont New Church Retreat Center in Michigan to learn about the Ten Commandments at the 2014 Swedenborgian Church Youth League (SCYL) Memorial Day Weekend Retreat. This is the first Memorial Weekend Retreat held at Almont; in the past, we held this retreat at Fryeburg New Church Assembly in Maine, but this year almost all of the teens lived in the Midwest, and it proved too expensive and time consuming to transport them to Maine. We will still hold a SCYL retreat in Massachusetts over Columbus Day weekend.

I was a bit surprised when I realized that I had never led a teen retreat on the Ten Commandments. I know I attended an Almont summer camp and, as a young adult, a Transitions retreat on this topic. Having a retreat on the Ten Commandments seemed long



*The teens at Lake Nepessing Golfland*

a list of rules and telling them what they cannot do is just about the quickest way to provoke their agitation and rejection. Could a retreat on this topic even hold their interest? Perhaps that is why I had not led a retreat on the Ten Commandments. Maybe this is not such a great theme after all. Nevertheless, I decided to stay with this topic.

We opened the retreat Friday evening with the story of Moses and the Israelite people camped out at the base of Mt. Sinai. I wanted to give the teens a sense of how far these people had come and the struggles and adversities they faced on the journey. Most of this opening session was the historical summary of how the Ten Commandments were received (a summary of Exodus 19–34). We closed by writing down the Ten Commandments and learning how they are divided into two great commandments, love to the Lord and love to the Neighbor. Then immediately after, I had the teens read the Commandments in positive, affirming language to see how very different they sound. I felt it important for the teens to understand that these are ageless, timeless commandments that are applicable, useful, and instructive today.

There is a good reason that the Commandments are phrased in the negative in the Bible. It is important to read the words as written in the Bible and learn from them. I think it is equally important, especially for teenagers, to hear the Commandments in a fresh, nonthreatening, loving form. The posi-

[Continues next page](#)



*Collage projects*

overdue. So I began working on sessions and finding leaders for this retreat. Then I did some more thinking.

How would teens respond to a retreat on a theme about ancient Biblical rules stated as a bunch of “Thou shalt nots”? Teenagers struggle with authority and commandments. Giving them

## Ten Commandments in Positive, Affirming Words

1. Put God first. It is good to love yourself, your neighbor, your world and even your beloved pets and possessions. Just remember that God is at the core of all of this and is at the heart of all love.
2. There's something far more spiritually satisfying than any material possession or created object. God is always with you and loves you while self-made idols can't help you at all.
3. Respect the power of words, names, and language. How would you like it if your name was a swear word? Show God some respect by using his name appropriately.
4. Honor your sacred memories and chosen my traditions. Take time off from your busy life to honor of God.
5. Show respect to your parents and/or chosen family.
6. Preserve, encourage, and promote free life.
7. Be faithful and honor the relationships that you enter and those of others.
8. Respect other's possessions and gift others in your own beautiful way whenever possible.
9. Uphold truth as you have seen it. Be honest about and with other people.
10. Be content with what you have because you'll never feel satisfied if you are forever trying to get more. Strive for inner happiness and spread joy!

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tive Commandments the teens read were adapted from the blogs “A new way of looking at the Ten Commandments” (<http://tinyurl.com/k67p7wp>) and “What if the Ten Commandments were affirmative instead of negative?” (<http://tinyurl.com/odka37d>). (sidebar on preceding page.)

On Saturday morning, Rev. Dagmar Bollinger joined us and led a wonderful session covering the Commandments titled “No Other Gods,



*Rev. Dagmar's session on the Commandments*

No Worshipping Idols, and Honoring the Sabbath.” Rev. Renée Billings Machiniak followed by sharing personal reflections and leading thoughtful discussions in her afternoon and evening sessions, “Do Not Murder, Do Not Commit Adultery, Do Not Bear False Witness/Lie, and Do Not Covet.” In Renée’s afternoon session, the teens acted out various skits representing different commandment scenarios. Sunday morning, I presented a session on honoring your father and mother (titled “What! You want me to respect authority!”) and not taking the Lord’s name in vain (titled “OMG!”). Rev. Jenn Tafel closed out our sessions Sunday afternoon with the Commandment Do Not Steal. She had the group create collage art projects as a part of her session to affirm the teen’s inner wisdom and love that cannot be stolen. All of the leaders, Dagmar, Renée, Jenn, and I, led respectful and engaging sessions. The teens responded with quiet contemplation, thoughtful



*Frisbee on the quad*

questions, and intelligent comments. The sessions at this retreat were excellent and were some of the best I’ve heard in a long time. My fears about the topic were not confirmed. This was a tribute to both the leaders of the retreat and the teens that attended. The Ten Commandments was an excellent theme after all.

Outside of sessions, the weather was



*The group in the pit, awaiting the starter's flag,*

absolutely perfect. Everyone spent a lot of time outdoors recreating in the sun. The teens and I enjoyed lots of Frisbee time and even played games of Ultimate Frisbee and Guts. On Sunday we had our big outing. We went to Lake

Nepessing Golfland. We enjoyed a round of mini golf, and then we rode the go-karts. Everyone had so much fun racing around the track in those little cars.

Rev. Jennifer Tafel led the closing communion service on Sunday evening. It was a very moving worship experience, filled with music, scripture, and meaningful reflection. This was a fitting end to a wonderful retreat time spent together among friends. We all departed Almont on Monday morning, sad to be leaving one another, but glowing with strength-



*Tony attempts to pass Bekka*

ened bonds of friendship, spiritual renewal, and enlightenment. And what is the heart of all that the Ten Commandments teach us? All of the law is given to us to help us on our journey of increasing love to the neighbor and love to the Lord. We advanced at this retreat. We grew closer to each other and to God. Now our challenge is to take this spiritual advance out into the world and wisely spread goodness and love. ☪

—Kurt Fekete,  
youth director,  
Swedenborgian Church



*Cade corners with authority*



*Olivia commands the track with style*

## Bath Church Revival

Pastor Alison Longstaff has been a wonderful catalyst for our church these last few months. Her idea of starting a wedding ministry woke up the Executive Committee to the fact that our church needed to clean up its act—both inside and out. Luckily, much of the infrastructure had been recently completed—new wiring and insulation. This year we began the process of bringing our building and grounds “back on line.” We put down plastic on the basement floor and installed an industrial dehumidifier, remodeled our kitchen, removed the chain link fencing on High Street, erected new signs identifying our building and church parking lot, removed the old Lexan storm windows, repainted the exterior of the building, put two octagonal picnic tables in the side yard, and perhaps more importantly, began a weekly ad campaign in the local paper. Other improvements are underway—new carpeting for the sanctuary, new concrete steps and re-setting our iron railing down to Middle Street, a fresh coat of paint for the pews, new storm windows, repainting the chancel, and more.



The old expression of “waiting for your ship to come in” is applicable for the Bath Society. Situated on half a city block in a beautiful residential area of the old ship-building city known as the “City of Ships,” we are in the process of launching our “ship.” We anticipate that if we continue to network in the Bath community, our ship will return laden with a treasure trove—a cargo of spiritually renewed membership. ☪

—Rob Lawson

## Teens at Almont



Survivors (teens are called Survivors at Almont) at the campfire

Almont Camp is a place where you come as strangers and leave as family. Camp is where you can be yourself and not be afraid of what others think of you. You can tell everyone about your problems, and they will always listen and support you. It's a great experience. They have activities from swimming in the lake to playing frisbee in the field. I see everyone at camp as my second family.

—Luke

So, I thought telling you what I think about Almont would be hard. It's not. Almont is a good place to go if you need a break. All you have to do there is be yourself, because no matter what you do, no one is going to judge you. Everyone is welcoming. I'll admit I was scared to go to camp. Once I was there, I was confused as to why I even thought about being scared. You can talk to anyone about anything at any time. They are basically my second family. I couldn't be prouder to be a part of the family.

—Mary

## The History and Philosophy of Astrobiology With References to Swedenborg and his work *Other Planets*

David Dunér, professor of the History and Science of Ideas and fellow of the Centre for Cognitive Sciences, Lund University (Sweden) will present a lecture, The History and Philosophy of Astrobiology with References to Swedenborg and his Work *Life on Other Planets*, at the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, California, on November 13, 2014, at 7 PM. The lecture is cosponsored by the Swedenborgian House of Studies and the Center for Theology and the Natural Sciences.

Professor Dunér writes, “There are things we know. Even though life

might not exist in outer space, it is we human beings with our brains, bodies, and cultures who are searching for it. The history and philosophy of astrobiology is centered on humans, or more specifically, the scientific endeavor's dependence on the human mind and the human culture. If we find extraterrestrial life, we can be sure that this will change our way of thinking and how we perceive the world and our place in the living universe. It will change our culture and science. Should the day arrive when we find extraterrestrial life on another planet in our solar system

[Continues next page](#)

# The Candy Lady at Almont

BY HEIDI BARNABY

As a small child, the end of July was a time I always looked forward to. It was a guaranteed good time. I would have friends to play with, I'd see my grandma, and I knew the Candy Lady would be sitting and waiting for my pennies!

Three decades have passed and I still feel the same. I look forward to the end of July each year with the excitement of a small child. Although my responsibilities have changed over the years, I know that it is a guaranteed good time. Not only will I see my friends that I have missed over the past year, but I will get to see my children playing with their friends in the field like I did.

Although my grandma passed away twenty-seven years ago, Almont Summer School is the time I can feel her the most and know she can't wipe the grin off her face as she watches all the



Kids line up to buy penny candy from the Candy Lady (Joyce Fekete)

activities that are underway.

And the Candy Lady is still sitting and waiting for my pennies! But now, as an adult, I understand that her penny candy stand isn't just meant to "sweeten us up." Our beloved Candy Lady had a reason for starting up her stand over forty years ago. This past year I had the privilege of typing up Joyce Fekete's story, *Lessons From The Penny Candy Stand*, where she explains her love for children, her love for our religion, and the purpose of the Penny Candy Stand: "The child is learning life lessons there. And the experience will become part of his or her 'remains.'"

At our annual Women's Alliance Birthday Party, we sold *Lessons From The Penny Candy Stand* as a fundrais-



The Candy Lady (Joyce Fekete) serving a customer

er and had an author signing with our one and only Candy Lady. Joyce later told me that an author signing has always been a dream of hers, and she could not believe we sold out of all the books we had; I, on the other hand, was not surprised in the least.

To those of us at Almont Summer School, Joyce Fekete, our Candy Lady, is somewhat of a celebrity. She has touched our lives and our hearts in countless ways and we all long to hear her story! ☩

Heidi Barnaby is president of the Almont New Church Assembly.



## Boston Church Thief Pleads Guilty

Edward J. MacKenzie, a self-proclaimed enforcer for the South Boston gangster Whitey Bulger, who was arrested and charged in 2013 in federal court with racketeering, extortion, bribery, and money laundering, pled guilty October 21, 2014. (See the April, 2013 *Messenger* for an article on the arrest and charges.)

Beginning in 2003, MacKenzie took over the Boston Swedenborgian Church (Boston Society of the New Jerusalem). He created the position of director of operations for himself at a salary that reached well over \$100,000 a year. In addition, he received perks including a leased Mercedes Benz and significant gifts to his five children and others. In the indictment he was charged with taking more than \$500,000 from the church in the form of kickbacks from contractors and other forms of theft. (Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/kgzphh9>). ☩

[Continued from preceding page](#)

or on an exoplanet or exomoon orbiting another star, then that shall begin the new history of astrobiology. The greatest discovery of all for a human in her life, and for mankind itself in the history of its civilization, would be the encounter with another thinking being."

This talk will explore some answers as to why history and philosophy are important for the self-understanding of astrobiology and it will examine how astrobiology has developed and what deeper fundamental problems it faces. ☩

## Pacific Coast Swedenborgians Gather for Weekend of Fun and Spiritual Renewal

**H**ave you heard the sound of the organ in Swedenborg's summerhouse? Created pewter jewelry over a campfire? These were just two of the experiences shared by participants in the 2014 West Coast Swedenborgian Retreat.

Taking place each Memorial Day weekend, this year's retreat brought together thirty-seven adults from five churches, the Swedenborg House of Studies, and unaffiliated Swedenborgians. Participants came from as far north as Portland, Oregon, as far south as Lomita, California, and as far east as Silver City, New Mexico. Seven children also attended the retreat. It was wonderful to be together with seldom-seen friends and to make new friends.

The sound of Swedenborg's organ was just one of the treats presented by Professor Devin Zuber in his

to increase the knowledge of God's Word. It treats Scripture as the Living Word, God speaking to the reader. After meditation on various passages from the Bible, Swedenborg's writings, and a poem by Rumi, participants created something of their own—a bit of poetry, a drawing,

or an article to wear to remind us of our experience. Those who chose to do so shared their work with the group. People were surprised by their own creativity.

Introduction to Meditation was a popular workshop lead by Rev. Junchol Lee. In addition to providing a useful life skill, it provided an oasis of calm in the midst of all the excitement of the retreat.

Carey Smith, a former art teacher at the College of the New Church in Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania, came all the way from Oregon to show us how we could melt

pewter over a camp fire, make a mold out of tin foil, and create simple but lovely jewelry with imbedded pebbles or glass beads. We all walked away with jewelry of our own creation.

Each day started with a brief matins service and ended with vespers. These services, and Sunday worship, were created by our fellow retreat participants, and demonstrated how the Divine can be approached in many different ways. (A few of us enjoyed some late-night partying, but perhaps the less said about that, the better. Come to the 2015 retreat to learn more . . .)

St. Dorothy's Rest, a camp and re-

treat center located in the redwoods of Sonoma County, California, is a perfect location for the retreat. A friendly and dedicated staff served delicious and nutritious meals buffet style; special diets (vegetarian, vegan, gluten-free) were available. The setting provided opportunities for a quiet walk in the woods or

a walk along a stream into the quaint town of Occidental for an ice cream, a highlight for the children.

The children also enjoyed creating tie-dyed T-shirts, and then surprised all the adults by putting on a play, *Greeks Got Talent*, with various Olympian deities showing off their powers and competing for the coveted prize.

Of course, no camp could be complete without songs around the campfire and s'mores.

Finally, the weekend had to come to an end, but before retreaters returned to work-a-day life, they committed to organizing a retreat for 2015, with the theme "I Still Have Joy!" You can keep up with the latest information on the West Coast Swedenborgian Retreat, including the program and registration form, at <http://swedenborgretreat.wordpress.com>.

Hope to see you there! ☸



Grace Duronselt proudly displays her tie-dyed creation



Devin Zuber and Christine Lehto relax between workshops

workshop, "Swedenborg and Celestial Sound." Dr. Zuber is becoming well known for his ability to make the most esoteric subject fascinating and fun, and this was no exception. In addition to hearing the organ, we learned many interesting and unexpected connections between Swedenborg, his family, and music. Did you know that Emanuel's father, Jesper, wrote many hymns beloved in Sweden to this day?

Seminarian Joy Barnitz led a workshop on *Lectio Divina*, a traditional Benedictine practice of scriptural reading, meditation, and prayer, intended to promote communion with God and



Leslie Ferguson (left) and Mary Graves lead singing 'round the campfire

## Swedenborg Foundation to Distribute Swedenborg Society Titles

The Swedenborg Foundation has become a distributor of eighteen titles published by the Swedenborg Society, located in London, England. The Swedenborg Society has been publishing high-quality books about Emanuel Swedenborg and his writings for many years, but those books have been hard to find in North America because of high import costs. Now customers and booksellers on this side of the Atlantic will have easy access to these sought-after titles.

For the first time anywhere, Swedenborg Society titles are available as e-books. Formatted to work on any type of e-book reader (either a Kindle device or "EPUB" for all other devices), the e-book editions are offered at a substantial discount off the cover price of the printed volumes. Some of the older titles are still undergoing conversion, but will be available soon.

The eighteen titles include seventeen books and one video that cover a range of topics including classic reference works for research; biographies and memoirs about the life and works of Emanuel Swedenborg; essays that highlight Swedenborg's cultural and historical influence on philosophy, arts, life, and literature; and books based on the Swedenborg's ideas.

For a complete list of all titles and more information, visit the Swedenborg Society book page in the Bookstore section on the Foundation's website [www.swedenborg.com/bookstore/swedenborg-society-books/](http://www.swedenborg.com/bookstore/swedenborg-society-books/) or contact [info@swedenborg.com](mailto:info@swedenborg.com). You can also place an order by calling the Foundation at 610.430.3222, or order through our distributor by calling 800.621.2736 (in the USA & Canada) or 773.702.7000 (outside the USA & Canada). ☩

## Letter from the President

*Continued from page 121*

in response in order to remain relevant and effective in meeting the spiritual needs of a culture in transition, and so too then, seminaries must change and adapt to effectively educate and train those who would be ministers. Here it is true that every crisis is an opportunity. The opportunity for developing cutting edge scholarship and contributing to the ongoing evolution to theological thought and practice is wide open to us, and we do indeed have something to contribute. At the same time the opportunity to re-focus our educational process to be more effective in preparing ministers to be effective spiritual leaders in a changing world is beckoning us into the very process of regeneration.

Various churches and ministers are making changes while others are settling in after accomplishing changes, and still others maintain constancy. We continue our efforts in MINSU and the Communication Support Unit (COMSU) to develop an intentional and effective presence on the Internet, and new approaches to ministry continue to blossom and struggle to make their place in the garden of religious life. It is an exciting and challenging time, and as we fully engage "The Year of Regeneration: the Way of Change," I look forward to what we can accomplish together as a church.

—*Blessings, Rev. Ken*

P.S.: Here is a resource for ministers and musicians looking for new music for worship services and other church activities: [www.sheetmusicplus.com](http://www.sheetmusicplus.com). You can type in titles, composers, or scripture passages and see and listen to sheet music that can be purchased and downloaded. The sheet music for the anthem from our last Convention service "The Twelve Gates" can be found there.

## The Ship of Faith

*Continued from page 119*

classes. We were well fed with Canadian and ethnic fare by the kitchen staff: Kelly Schellenberg Kennedy, Darren Epp, Amanda Epp, and Brittany Steeves. Justin Runka and Lonny Schellenberg kept the campfire burning all day and night and brought us fresh drinking water (there is no electricity or running water at Paulhaven, except in the kitchen). Lonnie, in particular, was busy clearing the woods to make an outside chapel.

Swedenborg talks about "remains" throughout his writings. Remains are precious memories we have of love and spirituality that remain with us throughout our lives and are God's special dwelling place in our souls. I think that in places like Paulhaven, remains are instilled through the delights of playing together, worshipping together with spirited songs and in holy awe, and especially through the



Diane Epp-Roesinger

mutual love of camper for camper, staff for campers, and staff for staff. At Paulhaven one truly experiences the heavenly city descending for one short week. Staff and campers alike count down the fifty-one remaining weeks until next camp session. ☩

The Rev. Dr. David Fekete is minister of the Church of the Holy City in Edmonton, Alberta.

## Gathered in His Name

BY JANE SIEBERT

**T**he Pretty Prairie community experienced what Jesus meant when he said, "When two or three are gathered in my name, I am there with you." (Matthew 18:20) The presence of God in our midst was palpable when over 200, a third of the population of this little burg in southern Reno County (Kansas), came to the grade school on Sunday morning August 17, to eat together, to worship together and to truly "be church" together. For *church* is really the people gathered, not our buildings nor our individual understanding of doctrine.

The physical structures we build in which we worship we call churches, but they can actually keep us apart, separate us, and create a stigma of the other. When we lay down our differences in how we see God and come together to worship the Lord, we experi-

the age." (Matthew 28:20) But when Jesus taught the importance of coming together in His name, I think He was reminding us of the importance of community and relationships and being "church" together. When we pull back into ourselves we can think we are so right and have life all figured out. But when we interact with others our boundaries are stretched, our world is expanded, and we need to consider, "who is our neighbor?" It is then that the great commandment to love the neighbor as ourselves challenges us, and we can grow in our love to the Lord.

It was this cooperation of the churches and a unified outpouring of love for Paula (Kraus) Hilbert, who grew up in the community and is battling ALS, also known as Lou Gehrig's Disease, that brought everyone together. Food flowed in from individuals preparing breakfast casseroles, cinnamon rolls, coffee cakes, and heaping bowls of fruit. Coming together were Methodists, Mennonites,



Paula and Brad Hilbert at the ALS fundraiser

ence how much we have in common and how important this commonality is to the functioning of the whole. We do not have to have uniformity in how we worship or understand God. All we need is love of the neighbor to set aside the differences and to find our unity.

We know that God is with us all of the time, whether while walking alone along a dusty country road and seeing the most amazing sunset or feeling alone in a crowd of people at the State Fair. Whether we are aware of it or not, God is with us all of the time, just as Jesus promised, "And surely I am with you always, to the very end of

Catholics, Swedenborgians, and people from Calvary Chapel and Castleton Union, enjoying the opportunity to share a meal and join in lively conversation. People who don't usually attend traditional church came as well. Together we raised over \$5000 for ALS research and support for those dealing with this debilitating disease that, as of yet, does not have a cure.

We were one in the Spirit that warm Sunday morning, and we could feel what Jesus meant about how important it is to gather together in His name. When we sang "In this very room there's quite enough love for all

## Recycling the Writings of Swedenborg

**T**he Heavenly Doctrine Publishing Foundation has been established, in part, to keep the classic translations of the Writings in print and available to those who want them. We are aware that there are many of these classic translations (the old green or blue books) around in fairly good shape which are not being used.

If you wish to donate these books to us we would be willing to pay postage and find a new home for them. We have a few books already but we are hoping to get more so that we can advertise the books and make them available to those who cannot afford new books, especially for young people. And there may be others who would like to have the classic translations and cannot find it for sale any more. Many of these are now out of print.

If you have any books you would like to donate please contact one of the following people.

- In the US, Stephen Cole: [Stephen.cole@brynathyn.edu](mailto:Stephen.cole@brynathyn.edu). Phone 215.938.8663.
- In Canada, Nathan Cole: [AsstPastor@carmelnewchurch.org](mailto:AsstPastor@carmelnewchurch.org). Phone 519.748.5802.

We hope to have our website up and running soon at [www.heavenlydoctrinepublishing.org](http://www.heavenlydoctrinepublishing.org).

Thank you for your help in this important work. ☪

of us," the love was palpable, "For Jesus, our Lord Jesus, is in this very room." (Hymn by Ron and Carol Harris). ☪

The Rev. Jane Siebert is a member of the Pretty Prairie Church in Kansas.



# Distilling Swedenborg's *Divine Providence*

**Spiritual Law**  
By Joanna V. Hill  
Rock Point Press

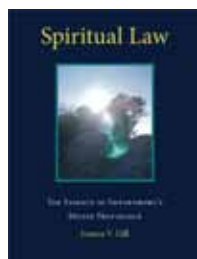
REVIEWED BY ROZ TAYLOR

As I skimmed the contents page of Joanna Hill's latest book, which offers "the essence of Swedenborg's Divine Providence," her paraphrase of the five Spiritual Laws drew me in right away. They were direct and clear, promising a discussion that would be accessible to the reader from the very beginning. The rest of the book certainly lives up to that promise.

Besides clarifying the author's purpose for distilling Swedenborg's theological text for today's spiritual seeker, the author's preface sets up two tensions. Is this book about Divine governance of our physical world, or is it about spiritual transformation? By the end of the preface, the reader is also feeling the tension between Swedenborg's "old fashioned" ideas and his "new view of Christianity."

As I moved into the body of the work, I found myself getting out a traditional translation of Swedenborg's, *Divine Providence*, to compare as I read along. Could this facile discussion of spiritual laws, although familiar sounding, really be based closely on a Swedenborg text?

In fact the author has done exactly that. Ms. Hill has faithfully followed the flow of the original text, using chapter headings that initially reflect Swedenborg's chapter titles. Later she creatively combines a few chapters under a more general heading, distilling pages of explanation into concise and easily readable sentences and paragraphs. The rendition into accessible language and current spiritual concepts transports Swedenborg alive and well into the twenty-first century.



The resolution of the initial tensions also flows along throughout the book. In various ways, the message becomes clear that the focus of spiritual law is on the action of the Divine in our lives. To bring that message home, the author repeatedly spells out the spiritual process of reflection, self-examination, making better choices, and developing a more heavenly life.

The resolution of the tension between old and new theology is resolved more subtly. The writing is dignified and at times poetic, a spiritual guide as hoped for in the preface, with evidence of the theological heritage of the era in which the original was written. Yet today's theological questions work their way into today's rendition of *Divine Providence* just as Swedenborg grappled with the theological issues of his day in his original theological work. Ms. Hill writes about "a hellish state" rather than "hell," refers to "any Higher Power" as well as traditional concepts of the Divine, and fleshes out wonderfully Swedenborg's teachings about spiritual law applying to all people on all spiritual paths.

Throughout the book, Ms. Hill selects themes that are particularly relevant to today's spiritual seeker. She artfully provides a guide for a serious inquiry into the nature of spiritual transformation and spiritual growth. Her inclusion of the futility of forcing beliefs and worship on others is well suited for outreach in a culture that is wary of proselytizing and church organizations, and in which many do not feel the need for church attendance.

This gem of an introduction into Swedenborgian teachings ends with a useful list of his theological works, with pithy explanations of their contents and purpose. Any spiritual reader,

whether searching for an overview or wanting to pursue a deeper exploration of Swedenborg will appreciate this resource. Another helpful resource is a manageable list of books for further reading. These suggestions fit right in with Ms. Hill's purpose in offering *Spiritual Law* to share "spiritual jewels" in a manageable distillation of Swedenborg's work on Divine Providence.

I can imagine many ways in which this 114-page book will prove itself valuable to the Swedenborgian community, besides its obvious benefits to the wider community of spiritual seekers. To start with, the intriguing mystical nature of the cover will attract attention wherever it is displayed or offered. Once it is off the shelf and opened, it brings relevance and new life to Swedenborgian teachings. Already at least one congregation is planning to use it in their book club readings. It is an excellent book for people who have just come across the works of Emanuel Swedenborg, or who are engaging in some way with a Swedenborgian community or church. My hope is to see more and more ripples of benefits from accessible distillations such as *Spiritual Law* from Ms. Hill in the near future. ☩

Roz Taylor leads home church services in Bryn Athyn. She is studying for ordination at New Church College in Australia.

## The Editor's Desk

*Continued from page 120*

a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. . . . For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love. (I Corinthians 13)

—Herb Ziegler

## Being Uplifted

For the first time in its 155-year history on the corner of Indiana and Maple Avenues, everyone, and not just the able-bodied, can participate in worship and fellowship events within LaPorte New Church Swedenborgian, 812 Indiana Avenue.

Finally after nearly five years of research, congregational meetings, and fundraising efforts, construction began last fall to install a handicap access lift. A steep inner stairwell from the sanctuary to the lower level was removed completely, a hallway entrance to the lift was created from the outside street level, and the entire foyer area in the lower level fellowship hall was remodeled and updated, including electric and heating. Insulation was added (for the first time ever) to the inside of those original brick-only exterior walls and also to the attic; drywall and wainscoting were then installed.

As a delightful and unexpected bonus, a stained glass window was uncovered in the remaining south-facing street level stairway which had mysteriously been hidden behind paneling for at least six decades. Daylight now shines through those beautiful colored panes as people enter the lower level to the fellowship hall.

This undertaking turned out to be a project of several unexpected challenges, such as about twenty empty wooden shipping crates in the attic that had to be removed, revamping decades-old hot water heating lines, and not least of all, figuring out just how to get the new lift apparatus to fit into the very limited available space with less than a half-inch to spare which could either make or break the project.

And fit it did, thankfully. In fact, the state inspector said it was one of the finest lift installations and remodel jobs he'd seen. The church was diligent about keeping intact the integrity of

the original church structure short of removing one stairway. One would not be aware by looking at any of the three levels of the church that such a positive impactful change has been made to the building.

The congregation is pleased and relieved that now everyone, themselves and visitors alike, no matter their physical abilities, can easily access and enjoy the peaceful and historic sanctuary.



*Rev. Kit Billings gets ready to ride the new elevator*

And also after the worship service, all can effortlessly gather for coffee hour afterward in the lower level Fellowship Hall just by pushing two little buttons.

Much thanks go to everyone in the LaPorte congregation who helped make this possible, from anonymous and other donors to those who got down and dirty while in the throes of the project. Also thank you to everyone who every Sunday ignored the dust, ladders, Visqueen, and painter's tape in favor of paying attention to the real purpose of attending Sunday worship. As well, we enjoyed a change of pace by holding the after-worship coffee hours at Manna House for about a month when the Fellowship Hall was out of commission due to that very messy and off-limits construction site. We all feel blessed to have been able to add this handicap accessible feature after so many years of striving to make it happen.

In addition, the church has recently set up a fund to help it secure the ability of its future congregations to maintain the church building and programs. Donations to this fund in any amount, including bequests, can be made by contacting Central Office.

### LaPorte New Church Projects Fund

This fund, established in 2014 by members of the LaPorte New Church, is an expression of their intent to continue to support the special projects of the LaPorte Society in the future. The fund is to be administered by the Executive Committee of the General Convention of the New Jerusalem in the United States of America, upon application by the governing board of the LaPorte New Church, for contribution to special projects being undertaken by the Society. Except in the most dire circumstances, distributions from the fund will be limited to an amount not exceeding that contributed or raised by the congregation, excluding denominational grants, for any specific project. Ideally, only the accumulated income of the fund is to be disbursed at any given time but it is within the scope of the gift that the corpus of the fund can be disbursed in cases deemed to be of an emergency nature. If that occurs, it is the hope of the donors that future income will be accumulated to maintain the fund at no less than its original amount.

Should the LaPorte New Church cease to hold regular weekly worship services, at the end of a period of ten consecutive years, the entire fund and its accumulated income will become part of the unrestricted net assets of the General Convention of the New Jerusalem in the United States of America to be used for its general purposes.

All are invited to contact Rev. Kit Billings at [revkitbillings@comcast.net](mailto:revkitbillings@comcast.net) and to visit [www.laportenewchurch.org](http://www.laportenewchurch.org) for other information, audio sermons and music, and newsletters. ☪

# Needs and Deeds—a Story of Love in Action

BY SASHA SILVERMAN

I am among you as one who serves.  
(Luke 22:7)

**“D**on’t be needy!” Enter any counseling center or watch any relationship-oriented reality show, and at one point you’ll likely hear someone offering these sage words. It has become a readily offered panacea for those experiencing heartbreak or grief or longing. Certainly, there is some truth there, and as we mature enough to care for ourselves, we need not expect another person to carry the burden of making us feel worthy, secure, or happy. But what’s the difference between neediness and genuine need? When is it okay to ask others for help?

I remember a time when I was lying in bed in a cold sweat, unable to stand up or walk down the hall to get myself water. Just when I had begun to panic, wondering if I could make it through the night alone, my younger sister came over with my favorite Vietnamese noodle soup. Deep into the night she stayed with me, waiting until my fever broke, putting cool cloths on my head and rubbing my feet. In the morning, my fever broke and I could easily take care of myself again. Just remembering her presence at that time of need still brings up feelings of love and gratitude.

Loving actions do that. They are relationship solidifiers—the glue. Because we need each other, we grow together. Because my babies needed me, I bonded deeply with them. Because I needed the help and knowledge of my best teachers, I appreciated and respected them. Because my father had hip surgery, my siblings and I took



## What Would Love Do? A New Journey Program

If you’re interested in finding more ways to practice kindness, we welcome you to join us in our newest Journey Program, “What Would Love Do?” This seven-week curriculum offers an in-depth study of the parable in Matthew 25, wherein Jesus describes the different classes of the neighbor and how we are invited to respond with care. This text beautifully highlights how a life of useful service combines the love of the neighbor with a love of the Lord Jesus Christ. Visit <http://bit.ly/WWLDProgram> to learn more about “What Would Love Do?” view an introductory video, and access the resources available for this program. (Resources include a participant workbook and a leader edition workbook, weekly program videos, a comprehensive youth and Sunday school curriculum, marriage materials, a daily email version of the program, leader resources [for those considering leading a group], and information about on-line small groups [including training, participant coordination, and technical assistance with Google+ Hangouts]).

We are hopeful that through this thoughtful and compassionate exploration of New Church teachings on loving the neighbor, we may inspire and encourage each other to answer the call to serve. You are invited to participate in one of the two coordinated campaigns for “What Would Love Do?” the second launch scheduled for Sunday, February 1, 2015.

Send questions and comments about this program to Burgandy Alden Smith, General Church Outreach, at [Burgandy.Smith@newchurch.org](mailto:Burgandy.Smith@newchurch.org).

time away from our jobs and computers to visit him and connect with each other. All this giving and receiving and bonding is beautiful, and many would even say it’s what life is all about.

As conscious beings, there are so many opportunities for us to help each other when needs arise. There’s a profound story in the Bible (Matthew 25:35–45) where Jesus reminds his followers how to love others. He speaks of those who are hungry, thirsty, and sick, who don’t have enough clothes or a place to call home or are in prison. When we see these people and help them and care for them, he says, we are embodying the whole essence of the Bible: to love God and love each other.

While those raw physical needs still exist today, they remind us of needs that go even deeper. We all have expe-

rienced times of emotional fullness and emotional starvation. We go through times when we’re hungry for love and someone gives us the best hug, or we’re thirsty for knowledge, and someone offers a wonderful bit of wisdom, or we feel exposed and vulnerable, and someone gives us just the right words that bring comfort and protection. Remembering times we’ve been helped during a time of need is great incentive to pay it forward. ☩

Sasha Silverman (coauthor of the New Church Journey program, “What Would Love Do?”)

**Start your Amazon shopping at** <http://tinyurl.com/n9e3eto>, and Amazon will give a percentage of your purchase directly to the Swedenborgian Church.

# SHS Fall Board Meeting

BY KAREN CONGER & HERB ZIEGLER

The Swedenborgian House of Studies (SHS) met in Berkeley, California, October 3–4, 2014. Chair Tom Neuenfeldt called the meeting to order with thirteen of fourteen members present. Present were Dean Jim Lawrence, General Convention president Ken Turley, Robert Reber, Herb Ziegler, Rev. Ken Turley Gard Perry, John Titus, Jenny Caughman, Robert Morrill, Nancy Little, Pina Warthan, and Terrie Crenshaw. Also present were Francesca McCrossan (office administrator) and Jennifer Lindsay (treasurer). Alison Longstaff sent her regrets.

In financial matters the Board reviewed financial statements and the budget. Considerable time was spent reviewing and discussing the proposed affiliation with the Graduate theological Union (GTU), academic affairs, and development issues. The board enjoyed a lecture on the Swedenborgian influence that Henry and William James received from their father and a tour of the “James Trunk” by Dr. Devin Zuber, SHS Assistant professor for American Studies, Swedenborgian Studies, and Literature at the Pacific School of Religion (PSR) and SHS.

Alan Thomsen, SHS financial manager, presented the audited financial statements for the 2013–14 fiscal year

(July 1–June 30), which the Board reviewed. The school ended the fiscal year with a deficit of \$5000, less than the budgeted \$40,000 deficit due to some lower expenses in several areas. The burden of defending the school against the IRS challenge to its non-profit status has been a strain on the budget these past two years. The IRS officially informed the school that it

connoiter. A driving piece of the pivot is the need for our scholarship talents to be able to be focused on Swedenborgian studies rather than being tied to coping with the needs of PSR as it goes through a major reorganization.

The GTU, of the top forty graduate school programs in religious studies and divinity in the US, is regarded as having the best mixture of religious/devotional scholarship and secular studies of religion in culture and history. The new freedom as an independent center will continue to permit M.Div. students to study for their degrees at PSR, Earlham School of Religion, and other seminaries, while continuing to take required courses from SHS in Berkeley or by distance

learning modes. Dean Lawrence is going to be advocating for more presence of our ministers as adjunct professors. He explained that this pivot toward GTU will also be helpful in enhancing the ability to even more effectively support our distance students.

Transition from affiliation as a house of studies with PSR to a center with GTU is a complex proposition. It implies a change of institutional rostering of the faculty, the winding down of a successful fourteen-year affiliation with PSR, and acceptance of an application for affiliation to GTU. There are physical space considerations as well, for both offices and the SHS library, a unique collection of Swedenborgian-related volumes and documents. A critical component of the discussion concerned the balance of the preparation of ordination candidates (Master of Divinity [MDiv] degree) with academic research, publication, and



SHS trustees (l to r) Nancy Little, Jim Lawrence, John Titus, Karen Conger, Jenny Caughman, Tom Neuenfeldt, Ken Turley, Gard Perry, Terrie Crenshaw, Bob Reber, Pina Warthan, and Herb Ziegler

had erroneously revoked its nonprofit status and returned filing fees spent to reinstate it. (The IRS did not compensate SHS for the thousands of dollars it spent fighting the revocation and pursuing reinstatement.)

Alan Thomsen presented a comparison of the fiscal year budget for 2014–15 with actual spending through the first quarter. The board made slight adjustments to account for unknown amounts for some expenses at the time the budget was adopted in April 2014. Expenses and income are roughly on track with the budget.

The process for affiliation with GTU as an independent center, the ramifications of affiliation, and the work required for a transition were presented by Dean Lawrence and discussed by the Board. In giving his report, Dean Lawrence spoke of “the major tectonic shift” in deciding to pivot affiliation from PSR to GTU. He spoke of the need to pause to take a breath and re-



Shipping label on the James Trunk

[Continues next page](#)

## Passages

### Deaths

**Ruby Alice Blackman** died October 3, 2014; she was born July 20, 1998. Ruby was christened at Fryeburg New Church Assembly in August 2001 and was a happy camper there during many of the Augusts that followed. Ruby also attended the 2011 and 2013 annual conventions of The Swedenborgian Church of North America with her grandfather Jim Perry and shared in activities with friends in the Swedenborgian Church Youth League (SCYL).



Having no words for our grief, we turn to old letters of John, Paul, and King Solomon, from the Holy Bible.

If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. (1 Corinthians 15:42–44)

So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal. (2 Corinthians 4:17–18)

Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. God is love. (1 John 4:7–8)

Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. (Ephesians 4:2)

Love covers over all wrongs (Proverbs 10:12)

While our beloved Ruby's time on Earth proved brief, her engagement with this life was vivid and rich, com-

prising a joyful beginning and sparkling middle, as well the rushed end.

The only daughter of Amy and Bill Blackman, the only grand-daughter of Pat and Jim Perry, sister of Harding, Alex, and Walter Blackman, and the only niece of Jane and Bob Perry, Ruby Alice Blackman was cherished: such a well-loved child.

She entered this world with a curious heart, theatrical flair, and the perspective of a highly sensitive soul. As a bright songbird feathers her nest, Ruby gathered found objects and little treasures into her world, and was forever in a creation process: an impromptu magic show with props and costumes, a series of doll-sized lovely rooms made of fabric scraps and glitter, art work and paintings which dazzled the eye, engaged the mind and spoke to the heart.

Ruby was a creative artist, but also an athlete, on the soccer field and on skates, and a scholar as well: a charming, smart girl who could make her way in diverse academic settings.

Ruby put on funny accents and made faces, she made cookies, she camped out, she rocked out, she made pottery, she wrote poetry, she laughed and cried and danced and loved and did all the other things that make up a full life. Ruby found friends everywhere she went, and no doubt beneath the sharp edges of teenage girl drama, there was love. There is love.

Like every adolescent person, Ruby was a work in progress. As we all must do, she was navigating that tricky process of "human becoming," as described in Parse's nursing theory. As her path unfolded, she displayed that same need for grace that we all know well: to be seen, to be heard, to be loved for exactly who we are.

Ruby was loved and is loved and will be loved, always. In the words of Robert MacArthur Crawford, "Off she goes, into the wild blue yonder, climbing high, into the sun."

—Bob Perry

*Continued from preceding page*

teaching. The GTU is a complex entity comprised of member schools and affiliated bodies, who provide faculty for GTU classes. GTU awards PhDs and MAs, not MDivs. Maintaining a relationship with PSR, so that students can continue matriculating there while pursuing ordination through SHS and the Committee on Admission to Ministry (CAM), is critically important, and thus an objective in any change of affiliation.

Dr. Reiss Potterveld (president of GTU) met with the Board to discuss affiliation. He described the changing model of the GTU as one that started with goals of ecumenism and interfaith dialogue and interaction. Recently, the school has been moving closer to fulfilling its interfaith goals. The school now has an academic faith community that includes Sikhs, Buddhists (and soon, Hindus), Jewish and

Muslim faiths, and multiple Christian sects. He said, "GTU encourages the wedding of the academic to the living manifestation of faith expression." He suggested that when we apply formally for affiliation with GTU, that we emphasize the many unique gifts we will bring. Acceptance as an affiliate with GTU requires the concurrence of all member schools, an affirmative vote of the GTU Council of Presidents, and an affirmative vote of the GTU Board of Trustees. Dr. Potterveld noted that he believes SHS-connected faculty will attract many more students, which is already starting to happen. GTU has well over 200 PhD students, more than any other religious school in the USA.

Dean Lawrence intends to present a plan and a draft application for affiliation with GTU to the SHS Board at its spring meeting. ☪

Karen Conger is secretary of SHS. She lives with her husband, Stan, in Bishop, California.

### 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 questioning 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.

## SwedenborgianCommunity.org Opens 2015 Pledge Campaign Help Expand The New Frontier!

The [SwedenborgianCommunity.org](http://SwedenborgianCommunity.org) is expanding its presence in social media. Your pledges will help us

- Broaden the ways we present the weekly worship; we're expanding our technical capabilities to give you a video or audio option for our messages!
- Vary the ways we connect in our Thursday and Sunday chats; we are exploring Google Chat Rooms and Internet Blog Radio. This will allow small groups to meet "face-to-face" on computer screens and hear guests being interviewed, with a chance to call in questions and comments.
- Develop small group options; we are working with the Journey Program of the New Church to connect on a small group program this coming winter.
- Enhance our Facebook presence; we're putting in place some new features that will allow you to stay up-to-date through your Facebook page and connect with others in a new way.

And we are planning these initiatives with a proposed 2015 budget that stays almost level with our 2014 budget! In 2014, we received pledges for ninety-three percent of our contribution budget of \$6500. We are very grateful to the Augmentation, Rotch, and Gray Funds for grants (totaling about \$22,000) for the rest of the budget.

For 2015, we have proposed a \$7500 contribution budget.

Please visit our Collection Plate page:

<https://secure8.nm-secure.com/swedenborgiancommunity/donate>

