



Toward a Newer Church, part 6

The Gold Standard

BY GEORGE DOLE

In this sixth and final in the series of columns about our 2015 Annual Convention Program, "Toward A Newer Church," Rev. Dole brings our attention to the gold standard, which he believes ought to "get our attention, and hold it." But there is a problem. Swedenborg speaks in a language of abstractions, which, George observes, leaves a lot up to us. Each one of us can fill in the abstractions with something from our own life experience—something that makes a difference in our own lives and the lives of others.



Rev. Dole writes, "What comes to my mind is one of Cal Turley's favorite questions—'So what?' Given a debate about some theological point, some 'truth of faith,' Cal would urge his students (and his colleagues) to tell him what difference the answer would make. How would this point affect the way I understand and treat my friends, my enemies, my colleagues, my parents, my children, my spouse, myself?"

Please join the conversation by filling in the blanks for "the good that love does," with your own inner attitude and gold standard of conduct—as you, and we, move toward becoming a newer church.

—Rev. Dr. Gard Perry, chair,
2015 Convention program

Perhaps the most striking statement in the description of the Holy City is the one in Revelation 18: "And the city was pure gold like pure glass." This seems to apply to the whole city; and it is said to mean that "everything that church has is the good that love does, flowing in together with light out of heaven from the Lord" (*Revelation Unveiled* §912). Everything. That should surely get our attention—and hold it.

The phrase just translated "the good that love does" has traditionally been translated as "the good of love." This is unnecessarily ambiguous, since "the

... we understand doctrine when we experience what it is talking about, whether or not we can put that understanding into words.

goods of love and charity" are clearly defined in §934, where it says that "fruits" signify the goods of love or charity, which are called in common speech, 'good works.'" "The good of love" is not a good feeling, but the good that love produces, the good that love causes us to do. The good works that we do out of love are everything of the new church. No loving good works, no new church.

What about the doctrines?

"And the street of the city was

pure gold like clear glass' means that all the truth of that church and its doctrine [emphasis mine] takes the form of the good love does when it flows in together with light out of heaven from the Lord" (§917).

When John the Baptist sent some of his disciples to ask Jesus whether he was the promised one, Jesus sent them back to tell John what they had seen and heard (Luke 7:18–23). It is put very simply in the discourse at the Last Supper: "Believe me . . . because of the works . . ." (John 14:11). Doctrinal truths are a wonderful recipe for living. The new church isn't the cookbook, it's the cake.

And for clinchers, "And the one speaking with me had a golden reed so that he could measure the city and its gates and its wall" means that people who are focused on the good that love can do are given by the Lord the ability to discern and know what the Lord's new church is like in regard to its doctrine and its introductory truths, and in regard to the Word that is their source" (§904).

This sounds to me like a prescription

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**The 2015 Annual Convention
commences at 7 PM on Saturday,
June 27, in Bridgewater,
Massachusetts**

**The 191st Annual
Swedenborgian
Convention**
*The Year of
Regeneration*



Guest Editorial

God Cares About Truth and Justice

BY KIT BILLINGS



We are in the midst of a social and cultural struggle, which is highlighted by the social unrest and protests over the death of Freddie Gray, a young African-American citizen born and raised in Baltimore. Similar protests happened in Ferguson, Missouri, in August, over the fatal shooting of Michael Brown by the police. The underlying complaint is that there is systemic unfairness, brutality, and violence being committed by some police officers and that our justice system is infected by

bias and discrimination.

God cares ardently about truth and justice, because the roots of the “Tree of Life” (as the Lord is called in the Bible) are Divine Love itself (*Revelation Revealed* \$933), and God loves everyone equally and forever. Thus, the Lord suffers when we suffer under injustice, violence, and oppression.

“And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations” (Rev. 22:2). Thus, truth symbolized by those leaves growing on all levels of life will bring us healing. As a church, we can help our country by proclaiming the healing and regenerative Divine Love and Truth, which is God, as we know it. We can also pray fervently for love, peace, and justice to prevail, as well as take action where we feel it is needed.

The prophets were outspoken about the Lord’s passion to protect and support the poor and vulnerable, as in Isaiah 1:17, “Learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow’s

cause.” In Zechariah 7:9–10, “Thus says the Lord of hosts, Render true judgments, show kindness and mercy to one another, do not oppress the widow, the fatherless, the sojourner, or the poor, and let none of you devise evil against another in your heart.” Compare this with where Jesus quoted Isaiah in Luke 4:18–19.

I have enormous respect for and gratitude toward our law enforcement organizations and justice system, and yet, over and over I hear good citizens saying that they are tired of being pushed around and oppressed. I am glad when Americans choose to protest peaceably, and also when law en-

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Church Calendar

- **June 4–7:** Gathering Leaves—a Swedenborgian Women’s Retreat, Cincinnati
- **June 13–14:** Western Canada Conference Annual Meeting, Kelowna, BC
- **June 24–26:** Council of Ministers annual meeting
- **June 27:** General Council pre-Convention meeting
- **June 27–July 1:** Annual Convention 2015, Bridgewater MA
- **June 28:** Annual meeting of the Corporation of the New Church Theological School
- **July 1:** General Council Post-Convention meeting
- **July 19–25:** Paulhaven Summer Camp, Upper Mann Lake, AB
- **July 25–August 2:** Almont Summer Camp, Allenton, MI
- **August 1–August 16:** FNCA Summer Camp, Fryeburg, ME
- **August 15:** Application deadline for 2016 Augmentation Fund grants
- **September 30:** Application deadline for 2016 lungerich Fund grants
- **November 5–8:** Fall General Council meeting

the Messenger

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Letter from the President



2014–15
*The Year of Regeneration:
The Way of Change*

Dear Friends,

Spring has two phases, and thank goodness the first one, affectionately known as “mud season” has passed and we are just entering the second; here in Maine we call it “Black Fly Season.” These little critters can really *bite you!* They are small enough that you don’t really see them, except when they are flying around your face trying to get into your eyes and, because once they’ve glommed onto you and broken the skin and they inject a kind of numbing agent, you don’t really feel them. They gnaw away and, when they’ve had their fill, fly off and leave you bleeding and with an itch that lasts for a day or two. I have to hand it to God with this little creation: extremely creative work!

However, it is right in the midst of this annual Egyptian-like plague, that the green returns to the forests and hills, and even more stunning, the flowering plants and shrubs burst into their full glory! You can walk out on the porch in the morning, and the sun and the warmth in the air are invigorating to the soul. All across our lawn there is a frosting-like covering of the most delicate white flowers. The magnolias and forsythias are magnificent, and the promise of the coming summer season is heard in every deep place in the soul, even for those still shivering from February’s cold. It is so beautiful you don’t even mind the black flies.

That’s pretty much the way it is with life in gen-

eral. There are things that bug us, that frustrate and distract us—even hurt us and make us bleed. Yet, at the same time there are always the soul stirring-ly beautiful things right there to lift our spirits and remind us of all that is heavenly. Even with people, we find amidst all things we love and admire and enjoy, there are those irritating little habits and behaviors that bug us, that irritate and frustrate us.

I come more and more often to the annoyingly correct statement of Swedenborg’s that regeneration is *only* accomplished through dealing with temptations. And by temptations he is referring to not just the extra cookie, but all of the things that present us with options in what we choose to focus on and how we choose to respond to what we experience. There are and always will be, at least here on earth, the things that give us the opportunity and even the reasons to focus on and obsess about the negative. But there are, and always will be, the things that give us the opportunity and the reasons to see and lift up the positive. And the effect of that choice is both the result and the ongoing cause of the quality of our inner state of being. It is in choosing how we respond to what we experience that we form our inner being and our character. We are free to choose how we respond, even if we are not free to choose what we must respond to. And while we are free, we are not alone. God, the source of all that is loving and wise, and a cloud of angels are hovering over and within us, just waiting for our invitation to enter into us and our responses to the circumstances in which we are engaged, just waiting for us to allow divinity to enter into what we are doing and what is happening. This is the essence of temptation, not the negativity which is there to bug us, but the opportunity it presents to invite the heavenly spirit in and transform the situation and our inner spirit and character in the process. This is our work as spiritual beings living in the material realm, engaged in the process of spiritual regenera-

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Nominees for Elected Positions in the Church

The Nominating Committee recruits and puts forward nominees for election to offices and positions in the denomination at the annual convention. The Nominating Committee nominates at least one candidate for each open position, with the exception of the Nominating Committee, where at least two must be nominated.

The representative class directors of the SHS Board are voted on by the delegates to the Annual Convention; the official ballot is cast by General Council at the New Church Theological School Annual Meeting.

The at-large trustees are nominated by the SHS Board and voted on at the annual meeting of the Corporation of the New Church Theological School (SHS).

The Nominating Committee is still soliciting candidates, but as of *the Messenger* going to press, the candidates listed in the table at right have been nominated for election at the 2015 Annual Convention.

Nominations to all offices and positions can be made from the floor of the Annual Convention.

Candidate Statements

Statements in the April 2015 *Messenger* and the following candidate statements have been received by *the Messenger* to date.

The candidate elected to be president will become the president-elect and then take office as president at the 2016 Annual Convention. There are three candidates for president: Rev. Kevin Baxter, Rev. Gard Perry, and Rev. Jane Siebert. Statements by Rev. Perry and Rev. Siebert appeared in the April 2015 Messenger.

President: Rev. Kevin Baxter

I love church. Not in an abstract sense, but in the sense that I think church is one of the greatest things in our world!

I am not talking about a single model of church, because I do not believe that any one model is better than another. I do not believe that trends or fads should be mistaken for the “new” church. (I also must admit that I



Position to be Filled	Term (Yrs)	Candidate
President	3	Kevin Baxter, Gard Perry†, Jane Siebert†
Vice-President	1	Betsy Coffman*†
Secretary	1	Karen Conger†
Treasurer	1	Polly Baxter*†
General Council layperson (2 to be elected)	3	Stan Conger† Open
General Council Minister	3	Sue Turley
Communications Support Unit (COMSU)	3	Elizabeth Blair
Education Support Unit (EDSU)	3	Open
Financial and Physical Resources Support Unit (FPRSU)	3	Paul Martin*†
Information Management Support Unit (IMSU)	3	Open
Ministries Support Unit (MINSU)	3	Open Open
Committee on Admission to the Ministry (CAM) (Unexpired 2-year term)	3 2	Open Page Morahan
Board of Trustees of SHS, representative class (2 to be elected)	3	Karen Conger Jennifer Lindsay
Board of Trustees of SHS, at-large class (2 to be elected)**	3	John Titus Robert Reber
Nominating Committee (NomCom) (2 to be nominated)	5	David Fekete Carla Friedrich

* Incumbent
** Nominated by the Swedenborgian House of Studies (SHS) Board of Trustees
† Statement appeared in the April Messenger

personally find what Swedenborg termed “the New Church” to be a spiritual state based in correspondences, without a need for a representative church in the world.) I love the church because it is a place that unifies all the aspects of our personhood and calls us into wholeness. In that environment, I am presented with the Divine, wherein I have a glimmer of what God might call me to be—and I do so within a community of believers. This community of believers is more than the things I gain from reading a book or watching a program. It is a body that provides feedback and ideas, to which I had hitherto not had access, about all sorts of things. I say that both as a person who has pastored a church and as one who now sits in the pew on most Sundays.

This to me strikes at the heart of what it is to be the “new” church. Our church, the Swedenborgian Church, “exists to help people be open to the Lord’s presence and leading, especially by fostering personal and ordained ministries which facilitate the spiritual well-

Continues next page

Continued from preceding page

being of people.” In other words, as a community we exist to inspire and lead people into feeling that they are doing what God has called them to be (note, not solely what they feel they ought to do). I do not believe God has called me to do loving things, but rather God has called me to be loving.

Not so long ago, I felt that we really needed to change what we, as a denomination, did. If we could just do things differently, I felt, we could grow the church or fix the problems. I held this perspective even as I stepped into the chairmanship of the Council of Ministers. I thought that we really needed to change our ways. But I myself have changed over the past two years. It's not that the difficulties and problems have dissipated; there will always be difficulty and problems. It is foolish to think that we will evade this world's challenges while we are dwelling here.

My vision for General Convention is of an organization that celebrates the Lord's active participation in our lives and in our churches—a church that celebrates its love of God and the lessons that we have to learn from our teachings, which are a unique and precious blessing in the Christian world as well as among religious and spiritual disciplines worldwide. Something unutterably beautiful comes about when we examine not merely what we are doing, but also who we are being. A straightforward example: our annual convention should be more about feeding the soul than about business meetings. We do not gather because we love business meetings; we gather because we love our faith and one another, and we want to grow in our understanding and living of our faith and the Divine in the people around us.

As many know, I have a keen understanding of both Robert's Rules of Order and our denominational gover-

nance structure. This knowledge exists in me not because of any innate craving for order, but because I desire that every person be able to communicate within complex conversations, and that every voice ring out in its conviction. I believe myself to be approachable and open. I do not try to force my thoughts or my way. I believe in the truth and love that only community can manifest.

I will not run for president by focusing on issues in and of themselves. As a candidate, I must, in good faith, focus on who I am and what I would be. I understand deeply our governance structure. I grasp the need for both elegant form and life-bearing substance in our tradition and our practices. I love the church. I am open to new ideas and opposition as we walk the road of faith and life together. And most of all, I celebrate the Lord as the center of our church.

COMSU: Rev. Elizabeth Blair



Rev. Elizabeth Blair was ordained in 2014 after completing her education at Pacific School of Religion, the Swedenborgian House of Studies, and clinical chaplaincy training at the VA hospital in Palo Alto, California. She hails from Iowa originally, and spent two years in New Mexico before recently returning to Northern California. She has been involved with the Swedenborgian Transitions group (young adults) and is excited to be bringing her talents to COMSU.

CAM: Page Morahan

I became a member of the General Convention's Portland (Maine) New Church in 2009 after spiritual study with Rev. Dr. Wilma Wake. My major involvement has been with the Swe-

denborgianCommunity.org, where I am a member of the Central Committee. I am especially interested in the wide variety of entrepreneurial ministries that are emerging within the denomination. I learned about Swedenborg through living for the past twenty-five years in the Swedenborgian community in Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania, and engaging in various spiritual groups including spiritual growth groups, adult spiritual growth camps, Home Church, and Gathering Leaves. I have also been involved with an activist Methodist church in Philadelphia, particularly being committed to Healing the Wounds of Racism and Conversations on Race.

I believe I can contribute to CAM with the above experience, combined with my professional career as a teacher, researcher, administrator, and leadership educa-



tor in several universities. I have just retired as professor emerita at Drexel University College of Medicine, where I served as chair of the Department of Microbiology and Immunology, associate provost for faculty affairs, and founder of a major national leadership program for senior women faculty in the United States. I have also cofounded an international leadership program for mid-career health professions faculty in developing countries. Thus, I have extensive experience with CAM-related activities such as selecting students who will benefit from educational programs; designing and delivering educational programs for adults; guiding students through advanced degree program courses, research, and writing requirements; developing and implementing accountability systems in educational programs; and conducting and publishing research studies and evaluation of educational programs. In

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Nominees

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addition, I have had considerable experience in strategic career counseling, distance education, and creating community among students located in many geographic sites. I look forward to using my experience and skills to nurture individuals who are seeking ordination in the General Convention and to working with the committee to evaluate the current processes and make changes that may be necessary to meet the needs of students in ministry in this new era.



SHS Board: Karen Conger

I have served on the Swedenborgian House of Studies Board of Trustees for one three-year term and over those years have acquired a working knowledge of procedures and policies at the school. I would very much like to serve a second term in order to put that knowledge to use for the benefit of our wonderful theological school and the Church at large. Thank you so much for considering my candidacy.

SHS Board: Jennifer Lindsay

Jennifer Lindsay served on the Board of Trustees for the Swedenborgian House of Studies from 2008 to 2014. She has continued serving the SHS this past year by remaining as treasurer in a non-board capacity. She is pleased and honored to be considered again to serve on its board.



Jennifer has been a member of the San Francisco Society for over fifteen

years. During that time, she served as the Society's treasurer for seven years. She also has served the broader denomination by sitting on the Board of Managers for Wayfarers Chapel for two terms and is in her fourth non-consecutive term for both FPRSU and the Augmentation Fund Committee. In addition, Jennifer is assisting with the launch and realization of the Garden Church by sitting on its board and serving as treasurer.

For each of these positions, Jennifer draws on over twenty years of business experience consulting with companies to help resolve regulatory compliance and internal investigation matters. She recently retired as a principal with the accounting firm KPMG LLP and currently co-owns two wine bars in San Francisco.

SHS Board: Robert Reber



Robert E. Reber is a long-time friend of the Swedenborgian Church, who served on the first board of Teme-nos Conference and Retreat Center and was on the board of the Swedenborg School of Religion in Boston when it decided to move to the West Coast and become the Swedenborg House of Studies.

Over the years he has come to have a deep appreciation for the Swedenborgian Church. He thinks that the current situation in theological education in the United States is a tumultuous one posing many challenges and many possibilities. Fortunately, SHS is in a position to make a creative contribution to the education of clergy and laity in the life of the church and the larger society as well as the larger arena of theological education. He would look forward to working with members of the SHS board as it transitions into

the Center of Swedenborgian Studies at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley.

Most recently, Bob has been the interim president of Bexley Hall Seminary in Ohio. Before that he was the Dean of Auburn Theological Seminary in New York City. He has had experience as a teacher and consultant in many settings and as an evaluator of Lilly Endowment grants to theological schools and centers. He lives in Worthington, Ohio, and volunteers at St. John's Episcopal Church, the Interfaith Association of Central Ohio, and Horizon Prison Initiative.

His latest writing project focusses on the journals that he has kept of visits to fifty-two countries around the globe during the past fifty years.

Bob relishes the time he spends in retirement with his wife Wendy and the numerous visits with his children and grandchildren.

NomCom: Rev. Carla Friedrich

I am a (fourth generation) life-long Swedenborgian, ordained in 2005. Since then I have served San Diego, Wilmington, and Silver City Churches, as well as doing independent mission work. I served for six years on COMSU, three years on the SHS Board of Trustees, and six years on the board of In Company With Angels. I was asked to be on the Nominating Committee; I am happy to serve, although I also heartily recommend my worthy opponent. ☛



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Origins of Our Denomination Logo

The General Council directed the Messenger to report on the adoption and explanation of the Swedenborgian Church logo. Thanks to Rev. Susannah Currie and Rev. Jim Lawrence for providing research results.

From an undated letter by Rev. David P. Johnson.

In 1962, General Council appointed Rev. Owen Turley as consultant in church expansion. Rev. John King and Rev. David Johnson, president of Convention, had attended sessions of the Midwest Training Center in Human Relations and Group Dynamics at Urbana University. . . .

This led later to engaging Creelman Associates to meet with General Council. [The result was] the Fryeburg Conference, where most of the leaders of the Church met and then a program in which the concepts of human relations and group dynamics were shared with all congregations in regional meetings throughout the United States, including our Canadian congregations.

In all of this King, O. Turley, and Johnson were very much involved. It led to a distinct feeling among them that by working personally with groups of members in the church, using the principles of human relations and group dynamics in the light of our theology, more might be achieved in getting the meaning and message of our church across. The concept evolved that if a center of church activity were chosen and several ministers would lead, using these concepts, we might find a viable means of expanding the church.

It was on this concept that Project Link . . . became a real possibility. We needed a place to try our experiment. . . . [The] church in Bellevue, Washington, where Rev. Calvin Turley was pastor, was chosen. . . .

To present the program to Gener-

al Convention, Rev. Owen Turley and Rev. John King went to a professional designer of public relations materi-



al. It was he who designed the symbol for Project Link, since adopted by the General Convention for its use. The project so interested the man designing the brochure that he would not accept pay for his design work.

The explanation of the design which follows, is the original, and is quoted directly from the brochure:

Readers of Swedenborg are familiar with the way images and symbols have served for centuries to represent abstract and holy things, stemming from ancient usage when the full significance was clearly understood. The *Cross*, which held divine implications even before historic times, has symbolized the Lord and His Church since the dawn of Christianity. Since the beginning of civilization, too, the *Circle* has stood for eternity and the Spirit of God; and the *Square* has represented the world and nature.

From these age old symbols, a new symbol has been developed to express an exciting new program for General Convention. . . .

In the Project Link symbol, it should be noted that the Circle and Cross interlock not with one but with four interlocking squares. This represented the fact that the plan was . . . to have a central church and several outlying centers and become known as a

“hen and chickens” arrangement such as the rosettes of a familiar succulent are known where the original plant puts forth new ones at its base.

So in most simplified form the symbol represents “Linking God, the Church, and the World.”

From “Our Convention Emblem” in the September 1980 Messenger

“A square signifies what is just because it has four sides, and the four sides look toward the four quarters, and to look equally toward the four quarters is to respect all things from justice.”

—*Apocalypse Revealed No. 905*

“The radiant circle is the Divine going forth from the Lord, which flows not only into heaven, but also into the universe, and disposes and rules these.”

—*Arcana Coelestia No. 4658*

Thus, for us, the Cross symbolizes the Glorified Lord, and stands for his church; the Circle, unending, represents the divine and its universal power; the Square signifies a just union of what is good and what is true; in Four Squares joined by a Cross under a Circle we can see righteous lives, ruled by the inflowing love of God, united by the Lord into his Church.

—*the Alliance Bulletin, Convention '80*

From *Where Heaven Begins* by Everett Bray, 1969

Explanation of the Symbol . . .

- The CROSS symbolizes the Lord and his Church;
- the CIRCLE, eternity and the spirit of God;
- the SQUARE, man and his world.

Combined, these represent the church linking man with man under God. ☩

SPLATz Explore the Nature of Truth at Almont

BY KURT FEKETE

Eleven rambunctious boys and three exuberant girls gathered for a SPLATz (Super Powered Lovable Almost Teens) retreat at Almont Retreat Center in late April to explore “The Nature of Truth.” At this retreat we played, ate, learned, and grew together in community through listening to Bible stories and Emanuel Swedenborg’s correspondences of nature to illuminate the meaning of truth. Lori Gayheart drove youth from Indiana and watched over the group with Rev. Jenn Tafel and Heather Oelker while Amy Little lovingly provided the cooking and music.

We launched into the retreat Friday night with “Two Truths and a Lie,” an icebreaker where each person tells two true facts and one lie about themselves and the group must guess the lie. Then we held our first session, where we discussed God as divine goodness and truth as well as Swedenborg’s four levels of truth: the natural, rational, spiritual, and heavenly.

The Friday evening opening session concluded with a “true or false” game where the youth po-

sitioned themselves along a continuum string with “true” and “false” at the two extreme ends. The Splat moved along the string towards true or false according to where they thought they stood on a series of easy questions like, “I like broccoli” and “My favorite color is yellow” and more thought provok-

sent solid foundational truths that we can build our faith on. We read the David and Goliath story (1 Samuel 17:1–50) and talked about our own personal five smooth stones of truth that we use to slay the giant temptations and challenges in our lives. Then we did an activity called “Stones of Promise” where

the youth each selected and decorated a stone with cutout words that are meaningful and true.

The afternoon session was all about water. We explored how water corresponds to moving fluid truths that change in form and function. We went around the circle naming Bible stories about water and were amazed to discover how many of them there were—

water as liquid, water as ice, and water as vapor (clouds). The Flood, Jesus turning water to wine, the first plague of the Nile turning to blood, and the seventh plague, hail and fire—to name a few. It was difficult to choose which to study!

We decided to first hear the story of Moses and the bitter waters of Marah (Exodus 15:22–27). We learned that the bitter tasting water is when we are thinking and acting negatively and then discover there is a better way to behave. We reject this new “bitter” truth because it is against our old, natural inclinations. It is foreign, different, and strange. It’s far easier to think that our problems are somebody else’s fault or beyond our control. But we slowly realize that we must take responsibility for our actions. With help from the

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The SPLATz group at Almont



Jenn, Lori, and Heather take a staff selfie

ingly difficult ones like “I like myself,” “I am a good friend,” and “There is a God.” The evening closed with an optional quiet meditation time in the library before we all turned in for the night.

Saturday morning, we awoke to the aroma of rich coffee and delightfully devoured Amy’s wonderful fresh fruit medley at our continental breakfast.

Our morning session was devoted to rocks. We learned how rocks repre-

Continued from preceding page

Lord, Moses throws wood into the water and it becomes sweet. God helps us understand that this new truer way to think and act is actually more loving and pleasant for us. It feels good and tastes sweet. We slowly move and eventually grow to a better place. The sweet water now refreshes us.

Next, Rev. Jenn Tafel led us in a washing ceremony. We listened to the Passover story (John 13:1–17) and how Jesus washed his disciples' feet. We then had the youth participate in a cleansing activity where we poured water on their hands as they received the powerful message, "The Lord's truth heals you."

We played Frisbee and basketball in the beautiful sunshine during the afternoon. It was a welcome time of recreation after all of that Bible studying, discussing, and learning. Afterwards, we gathered for a big pasta dinner with a delicious garden salad and lots of avocado. Yum!

Our final evening session on "truth" was about leaves. We discussed how leaves are living truths that heal both us and our neighbor. Our Bible story was from Revelation 22:1–2. In this story, we learned how, in the Holy City New Jerusalem the River of Life flows from the throne of God with the Tree of Life on either side. We heard how the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. Now we all know that many varieties of leaves are actually quite useful homeopathic herbal remedies. But leaves can also represent healing truths. Leaves are the forbearers of fruit (fruits signify the good works of life). Our good works to help heal others can only come to fruition after we gather natural and spiritual understanding. Leaves in these Bible verses from Revelation represent the learned truths that help us apply our passion to heal. Next time you see a green tree, try to picture each individual leaf as a

Notice of a Proposed Amendment to a Standing Resolution

Given the evolution of the ethos in the United States and Canada, I propose a change to the standing resolution of the Swedenborgian Church adopted in July, 1989: Standing Resolution 1, Objective 9, Strategy 3: discussion on organized structure and specifically membership.

It reads as follows with the suggested added language in bold and in brackets:

A Standing Resolution to Swedenborgians Everywhere

Resolved: The General Convention/Swedenborgian Church assembled at Urbana University, Urbana, Ohio, for Convention June 28, 1989, reaffirms its belief that the Church Universal includes those of diverse origins.

In its ever-growing desire to serve

all of God's children, the General Convention (aka The Swedenborgian Church), urges Swedenborgians everywhere to acknowledge that the Church Universal is inclusive and to act in this spirit. Let no Society of the Church exclude any from membership on such considerations as ethnic origin, race, color, sexual orientation, **[gender identity and/or expression,]** condition of health, handicap, or economic status; but seeking those who accept our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ as Redeemer of the world and who accept the essentials of faith of the Church, welcome all with joy and affection into the full and free community of the Church.

This notice is in *the Messenger* for your consideration to conform with Robert's Rule of Order; the proposed amendment will be introduced on the floor of the 2015 Annual Meeting.

—Rev. Jennifer M. Tafel

Guest Editorial

Continued from page 66

forcement does their job to protect our rights, our citizens, and our property and businesses. I believe an overhaul of our justice system is now warranted.

The findings of our Justice Department investigation concerning the death of Michael Brown revealed startling information. I quote this from the website of the National Council of Churches, "The report revealed that the police department and the City of Ferguson perpetuated the practice of discriminatory and racial bias against African-Americans. This shocking report states that the city had 'a pattern or practice of unlawful conduct within the Ferguson Police Department that violated the First, Fourth, and Four-

Continues on page 74

little container of truth providing the necessary elements of instruction and knowledge to bring goodness into the world. Our evening concluded with an activity. We made leaf rubbing cards to send to people in need of healing.

After our action-packed Saturday, we slept in on Sunday. We had time only for a quick breakfast and a closing prayer circle before packing and getting ready to depart. The group left Almont mindful of the many truths learned over our weekend together. It is our prayer that we use what we have learned to move towards a more truth-centered self and to gain wisdom to help improve the world around us. ☙

Kurt Fekete is the youth director of the Swedenborgian Church. He lives in Fryeburg, Maine, with his wife, Shelly, and their daughter, Ava and Zsa Zsa.



Urbana University to Build Dorothea Harvey Memorial

BY BETSY COFFMAN

At Urbana University, the name Dorothea Harvey epitomizes spiritual inquiry and the Swedenborgian Church. Having served as professor of religion and also chaplain from 1968 until she retired twenty years later, Rev. Dr. Dorothea Harvey left a lasting legacy on campus and in the lives of the students that she touched through her teaching, example, and acts of service. Her impact was recognized in 2004 through her induction into the Educator's Hall of Fame.

To recognize her monumental spiritual influence, the chapel on the Urbana University campus was named the Harvey Chapel upon Dorothea's retirement in 1988. Built in the 1960s along with Memmott and Eaton Halls, the three structures served primarily as temporary residence halls to accommodate the large influx of students at that time. Through the years, the buildings have been repurposed several times. However, because of the nature of their construction, the structural and operational integrity of these buildings has diminished significantly. Consequently, all three structures were demolished in April.

Because of the significance of Dorothea Harvey's role in the history of Urbana University, an enduring monument to replace the Harvey Chapel is planned. Incorporating the steeple of the Harvey Chapel, this on-campus

memorial will enable guests and members of the Urbana family to understand and appreciate Dorothea's legacy and lasting contributions.

To enhance their effectiveness, the beautiful Westminster chimes that rang out from the Harvey Chapel steeple have been upgraded and relocated to the clock tower of the Moore Mathematics and Science Center. This carillon will provide an audible memory of Dorothea's influence for the foreseeable future.

The Dorothea Harvey Memorial will serve as a catalyst for many meaningful activities, including reflective conversations, informal gatherings, study, prayer, and peaceful respite. Featuring appropriate seating, the area should become a destination for students at dawn, midday, and evening who need a break from the rapid pace of collegiate life. Its location and structural and architectural details will be influenced by the University's master plan and input from students as well as Swedenborgian friends.

In 1983, Dorothea wrote in her book, *The Holy Center*,

Lord, we get so often lost, and so afraid, and hurt. Bring us back to you. Tell us again your Love for us, as goodness and as mercy to us and to all people. Help us to come to you with the beginnings and with the endings of our lives.

Urbana University welcomes all who knew Dorothea or were touched



Dorothea Harvey

by her ministry to join in supporting the construction of this memorial. Your support of this project will help share this truth and Dorothea's inspiration for generations to come.

To learn more about this opportunity or to support the memorial to Dr. Dorothea Harvey, contact the University.

Urbana University Advancement
579 College Way
Urbana, OH 43078
937.772.9246

advancement@urbana.edu

Rev. Betsy Coffman is pastor of the Urbana (Ohio) Swedenborgian Church and a chaplain at Urbana University. She lives in Urbana with her husband, Bill.



The steeple on the demolished Dorothea Harvey Memorial Chapel

Guest Editorial

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teenth Amendments to the United States Constitution, and federal statutory law." This reminds me that no one is above the law and that either intentional or unconscious evil and falsity can spring up anywhere.

Thank you, Lord, our "Tree of Life," that your spirit of goodness, peace, and justice lives within us all. May your roots of love continue to deepen in our hearts and minds, and give us the nourishment and courage we need.

Rev. Kit Billings is pastor of the LaPorte (Indiana) New Church.

SHS Spring Board Meeting

BY KAREN CONGER AND HERB ZIEGLER

The Swedenborgian House of Studies (SHS) Board of Trustees met April 24 and 25, 2015, in Berkeley, California.

In attendance were chair Tom Neuenfeldt, vice-chair Robert Reber, dean Jim Lawrence, Herb Ziegler, Gardiner Perry, John Titus, Robert Morrill, Nancy Little, Terrie Crenshaw, Jenny Caughman, and secretary Karen Conger. Student representative Joy Barnitz, administration manager Francesca McCrossan and financial manager Alan Thompson joined the Board for parts of the meeting.

The Board received information on and discussed the proposed move of SHS from the Pacific School of Religion (PSR) to the Graduate Theological Union (GTU) (they are within blocks of each other on “Holy Hill”). A full report on that move will appear in the June *Messenger*.

The proposed budget was presented by the finance committee and financial manager Alan Thomsen. It was discussed in detail and adopted by unanimous vote. Projected revenues for the 2015–2016 fiscal year are \$531,686 and projected expenses are \$515,580.

The Board discussed the need for a development program, a major piece of which is fundraising. The budgeted goal of raising \$40,000 represents just under ten percent of the budget, the balance coming from the school’s endowment. Discussion and planning will continue.

The Board was joined by Rev. Dr. David Vasquez-Levy, the new president of PSR. He shared his professional and spiritual journey from childhood in Honduras (with a Lutheran mother and Jewish father) to, most recently, campus pastor at Luther College in Decorah, Iowa. He related a bit of

his background, a roundabout journey that brought him to Berkeley. He was attracted to PSR in part because of the way it articulated its mission, preparing theologically and spiritually rooted leaders for social transformation.

The scholarship hour was a three-part presentation by Rev. Jim Lawrence, Rev. Jenny Caughman, and Rev. Gard Perry.

Jim Lawrence shared the syllabus from a new course called “Apocalypse! . . . Then and Now.” It is a theology of history: the three Abrahamic religions, the inbreaking of the Divine in history, and the Eschaton (the final event in the Divine plan) as the endpoint and destination of this long journey.

Jenny Caughman gave a talk on regeneration, for both individuals and the world. She suggested that the *motivation* behind what we do is much more important than *what* we do, that love of God and the neighbor are the most important motivators.

Gard Perry led the group in an exercise to explore these concepts.

The Board was joined by Rev. Reiss Potterveld, president of the Graduate Theological Union (GTU). He said that the anticipated affiliation of SHS with GTU is being met there with appreciation and a great deal of welcome. President Potterveld shared concerns that the costs of a theological education (as with all higher education) is out-running the ability of GTU to increase scholarships and the ability of students to afford graduate degrees. Even more concerning is that from 1982 through 2011, the amount of aid directed to the lowest quintile of students (by financial status) has barely moved, while the amount to the highest quintile has shot up. The Board agreed that there is need to put more effort toward scholarship funding in order to remedy this problem.



The SHS Board of Trustees' last meeting as the Swedenborgian House of Studies. L to R: top: Nancy Little, Gard Perry, Tom Neuenfeldt, Bob Reber, Terrie Crenshaw. Bottom: John Titus, Jim Lawrence, Jenny Caughman, Karen Conger, Herb Ziegler

The Academic Committee reported that Professor Devin Zuber will be on a working sabbatical for the academic year 2015–16. He will spend half the year at Stockholm University and half the year at the University of Munich doing special research on Swedenborg and on Swedenborgian studies. He will be writing a blog from Europe throughout his sabbatical year on the new SHS website: “Adventures of a Swedenborg scholar in Stockholm.” Professor Inese Radzins will complete her contract with SHS on June 30 but will continue as a professor with PSR. For the next academic year, courses will be taught by Dean Lawrence and Rev. George Dole, with the option of supplementing with adjunct faculty.

The fourth annual January intensive class, “Swedenborgian Rites and Sacraments” (February 2015 *Messenger*), was a great success with a large turnout. The course may become a certificate requirement.

Joy Barnitz reported that approximately one third of the SHS students responded to her questionnaire. The intensive was universally well received. Joy frequently runs into students on campus who refer to the SHS students as “the mystics.” She feels that our presence on “Holy Hill” is increasingly known.

The next Board meeting after the SHS annual meeting at the Annual Convention in Bridgewater will be September 25–26, 2015. ☛

The Gold Standard

Continued from page 65

for new church education. If we want to discern and know our church's doctrine and its introductory truths, then the main prerequisite is that we focus our thinking on the good that love can do. This is the gold standard. This was the "doctrine of charity" of the earliest church, the doctrine that had been lost, the doctrine that the new revelation is intended to restore. This is why the theology calls for the church to include all who live in the good of charity, no matter how much they may differ as to the truths which at this day are called truths of faith (*Secrets of Heaven* [SH] §6628). This is the doctrine "delivered before the several chapters of the Book of Exodus" and later edited and published as *The New Jerusalem and Its Heavenly Teachings* (NJHD).

What comes to my mind is one of Rev. Cal Turley's favorite questions—"So what?" Given a debate about some theological point, some "truth of faith," Cal would urge his students (and his colleagues) to tell him what difference the answer would make. How would this point affect the way I understand and treat my friends, my enemies, my colleagues, my parents, my children, my spouse, myself?

I hasten to add that I am not talking about translating everything into behavioral rules. I'm talking about fundamental attitudes. Conceiving of God the Father as damning me to hell does affect my attitude toward myself, and therefore my attitude toward others. Rob Bell says it loud and clear in *Love Wins*: "Inquisitions, persecutions, trials, book burnings, blacklisting—when religious people become violent, it is because they have been shaped by their God, who is violent."¹

For years, I assumed as a matter of

course that "what is true enables us to sense what is good because it teaches us" (SH §3207:5). I was not aware that the passage goes on to say, ". . . but this is an appearance. It is something good that is enabling what is true to perceive. You see, the good is the soul or the life of the true." I noticed only recently what is being said in the first sentence of *The Doctrine of Life*—or perhaps more precisely, the order of events that it presents.

Everyone who has any religion knows and acknowledges that people who live rightly are saved and people who live wrongly are damned. That is, they know and acknowledge that if we live rightly we think rightly not only about God but also about the neighbor, which is not the case if we live wrongly.

Living rightly comes before thinking rightly.

We need to bear in mind that Swedenborg is talking about ordinary, everyday matters, about what irks us and what pleases us, about what puzzles us and what worries us. Above all, he is talking about what really matters to us.

He speaks, though, in a language of abstractions, which leaves a lot up to us. Each one of us can fill them in with something unique, and that something will find its proper place. The whole pattern of the Holy City assumes nothing more than everyday human nature. It assumes that we matter to each other and to ourselves, that we make a difference to each other. When it talks about the good that love does, then it is talking about individuals not as isolated units but as individuals in community.

We are accepted into heaven when we accept heaven into ourselves (*Heaven and Hell* §420). We become members of an earthly community by taking that community into our minds and hearts. We become human through "the good that love does." The good that love does teaches us what it means to be human. Doctrine simply artic-

ulates that knowledge; we understand doctrine when we experience what it is talking about, whether or not we can put that understanding into words.

Lastly, I would call attention to the fact that this is a description of the new church, and that it says nothing about its external form. There is no mention of clergy and no prescription for worship. In fact, the temple itself, the very center of the earthly Jerusalem, seems to have vanished. I am reminded of SH §7038: "For true worship consists in the performance of uses, thus in the exercises of charity."

This, I believe, points us toward a vision of a newer church. It does not call us to make an abrupt U-turn (I'm reminded of the coach who promised that next year would be better, that his team was going to make a three hundred and sixty degree turn). It calls us to recognize the unique value of an institution that is concerned with both where we come from and what will happen when we die, and with everything in between. We can look at some of the institutions that have formed around basic human needs—support groups, for example, HMOs, AA. What about the church as a lifetime support group, as a spiritual health maintenance organization (catchy acronym), as Aging Anonymous? After all, aging faces us all, from birth to death, and we do have a very troublesome tendency not only to ignore but also to deny it.

Postscript

In my February article, I noted that in NJHD's chapter on the Lord, Swedenborg almost immediately says, "There are two things which make the life of heaven with man, the good of love and the truth of faith. Man has this life from God, and nothing at all of it is from man" (§281). I profoundly wish that Swedenborg had published the four-step process that he came up with in his unpublished Index to Isa-

Continues next page

¹ Rob Bell, *Love Wins: A Book about Heaven, Hell, and the Fate of Every Person Who Ever Lived* (New York: Harper Collins, 2011), p. 183.

Continued from preceding page

iah. It relates directly to last month's theme of understanding the Word. "In its outer sense," he says,

[the Word] is for people to whom it seems that their own efforts contribute to their reformation; in a deeper sense, for people to whom it seems that something is demanded of them for their regeneration; in the still more inward sense, for people who know in theory that they are capable of nothing but still think they are somehow involved, and in the inmost sense for people who claim no credit whatever for themselves.

This classic theological tension between law and grace makes it a creative one—never really resolved, but serving as a kind of process driver that can be finally simply accepted as such with gratitude. It is distilled into a single phrase in Swedenborg's theological works—*sicut a se*, "as if of oneself." Swedenborg tells us this no fewer than a hundred and forty-one times in the published theological works. It apparently takes a while for it to sink in—a lifetime, perhaps?

I've paid very little attention in these articles to the first great commandment; and would leave you with just one phrase and one word. The phrase is "to behold the beauty of the Lord," and the word is "awe." The phrase suggests melting hearts and the word suggests blowing minds; and the combination sounds to me like a recipe for some real worship. ☞

The Rev. Dr. George Dole is a Swedenborgian minister who teaches part time at the Swedenborgian House of Studies at the Pacific School of Religion. He is a past pastor of churches in Maine and Massachusetts and taught at the Swedenborg School of Religion. He lives in Bath, Maine, with his wife, Lois.

This is the sixth and final part of the series "Toward a Newer Church," parts 1–5 appeared in the December 2014, and January, February, March, and April, 2015, *Messengers*. An introduction to the series appeared in the November 2014 *Messenger*.

General Council Spring Meeting

BY SUSANNAH CURRIE & HERB ZIEGLER

The General Council of the Swedenborgian Church held its spring meeting by conference call on April 18, 2015.

Council members present were president Rev. Ken Turley, vice-president Rev. Betsy Coffman, recording secretary Rev. Susannah Currie, Rev. Sky Paradise, Lon Elmer, Barb Cullen, David Vigas, Rev. David Fekete, Debbie Dolley, and Tom Neuenfeldt.

Guests present were Rev. Kevin Baxter, chair of the Council of Ministers, and Renée Hellenbrecht, operations manager.

The Council received reports from the president, vice-president, recording secretary, chair of the Council of Ministers (COM), and operations manager.

Reports were received also from the Information Management Support Unit (IMSU), Ministries Support Unit (MINSU), Education Support Unit (EDSU), the youth director, and the Financial and Physical Resources Support Unit (FPRSU). The Communications Support Unit (COMSU) did not submit a report.

The Council received reports from the Placement Committee, the Building Fund Trustees, the SwedenborgianCommunity.org, Wayfarers Chapel, the National Church Trustees, the Lungerich Fund, the Investment Committee, the Augmentation Fund Committee, the delegates to the National Council of Churches, the Swedenborgian House of Studies, and the Nominating Committee.

The draft building use agreement between General Convention and the National Church in Washington DC has been reviewed by the DC Church. They have requested more time to respond. The DC Church has begun paying insurance, which has been paid

by General Convention until now. Renée Hellenbrecht will obtain proof of insurance with General Convention listed as an additional insured and confirm that bills are paid before the Executive Committee meeting in May. The Council discussed issues related to the building use agreement and the DC Church's plan to call a minister. The Council will prepare a response to the DC Society, which will be reviewed at the General Council pre-convention meeting.

The Council continues to explore options for a site for the 2016 Annual Convention in or near San Francisco.

Kevin Baxter is chairing a group searching for a Philadelphia area location for Annual Convention 2017, which will celebrate the 200th anniversary of the founding of the Swedenborgian Church. A host group should be identified by the fall General Council meeting. The committee is soliciting volunteers from the Middle Atlantic Association to join Host Committee for the convention.

The Silver City (New Mexico) Church is considering joint membership with another denomination. (It is not uncommon for small churches to join together in this way.) A task force will be appointed after the General Council pre-convention meeting.

The Council authorized Rev. Betsy Coffman to be General Convention's representative for an ongoing relationship with Urbana University/Franklin University.

A Committee composed of Kevin Baxter, Jim Lawrence, Herb Ziegler, and Donna Keane has been appointed to explore relationship with the Boston Church.

The next meeting will take place on June 27, 2015, the day that the Annual Convention commences in Bridgewater, Massachusetts. ☞

Review

Apocalypse of John Card Set

BY CATHERINE LAUBER

Perhaps you remember The Apocalypse Study Group, a group of General Conference ministers in the UK who set out to study the Book of Revelation and find ways to help make this powerful piece of scripture more accessible. To that end, they have produced a card set, called *Apocalypse of John*, based on the Book of Revelation. (www.apocalypse-of-john.org.uk).

The set includes twenty-four colourful images (major cards) representing scenes from Revelation plus a set of minor cards in five suits—Churches, Seals, Trumpets, Bowls, Holy City—each depicting a single image or symbol. The card games have been designed to be an enjoyable way of becoming familiar with the scenes of Revelation and as a means to support the spiritual growth and awareness of each individual player. Also included in the set are two handbooks, which provide information, exercises, and spiritual summaries of the correspondences of the images.

There are many ways to engage with the card deck, and using it to play games is one possibility. There are rules for eight card games for two to five players, and one solo game.

Each game has a “spiritual link,” which connects it to a spiritual principle. For example, the spiritual link for “In the Balance” reads, “There is good and bad in all of us. But will we end up with more ‘good’ than ‘bad’ to our name?” The object of the game is to win tricks and achieve the highest sum of cards. Some cards represent additions and some cards subtractions. A good strategy is required to ensure you have a greater number of additions at the end of the game. As you play, re-



www.apocalypse-of-john.org.uk

flect on how this relates to your life.

Another way to engage the deck is to work individually or in groups to reflect on the spiritual meaning of Revelation. There are patterns upon patterns represented within the Book of Revelation; and the card deck, along with the handbooks, provide an entertaining way of engaging with this complex presentation of the wisdom of the Apocalypse.

Handbook One outlines the pattern of sevens, which occur throughout Revelation. By linking major cards with minor cards, the game helps unravel the layers of patterns. You can set out the cards in a row on a table and have a visual depiction of different scripture passages, providing hours of material for mediation and reflection while helping to create a framework for understanding the bigger picture.

After working with *Handbook One*

for a time and becoming familiar with the patterns and layers of meaning of Revelation, a player can move to *Handbook Two* to pursue deepening personal awareness of the inner self and personal spiritual growth. Working with an individual card, or a number of cards set out in simple patterns, a player can delve deeply into the spiritual meanings of the cards. *Handbook Two* contains more detailed descriptions of the correspondences. Each card is presented with the chapter and verse, and a narrative summary of the passage. *Handbook Two* also provides a summary of the spiritual significance of the passage and suggestions for a personal application of the lesson contained.

The *Apocalypse of John* Card Set is a fun and effective way of learning about the Book of Revelation and exploring the personal, spiritual meaning contained within. The information provided in this set is the result of decades of study and reflection and will likely provide a lifetime of material for reflection and spiritual growth. ☦



Rev. Catherine Lauber is minister of Revelation of the Spirit, an education- and workshop-based ministry and executive director of Marigold Whole Life Centre, a ministry of health and wellness in Cambridge, Ontario.

Rev. Andy Stinson, minister of the Second Congregational Church of Warren, Maine, delivered the invocation at the Maine House of Representatives on May 20, 2015.



Letter from the President

Continued from page 67

tion. It is about trials and temptations, it is about change and transformation. It is exciting and hard, challenging and at times even painful. But, ah the rewards. It is good work and well worth doing.

—*Blessings, Rev. Ken*

PS: I hope to see you at the annual convention this June. We are going to dig deep into the work of transforming our little band of believers from the New Church to the Newer New Church. All of the above applies!

Installation: Rev. Alison Lane-Olsen



Rev. Ken looks on as Rev. Alison asks the children of the church to decide which stole she should wear during the installation service.

The Fryeburg Church of the New Jerusalem was delighted to celebrate the installation of Rev. Alison Lane-Olsen on April 19, 2015. Rev. Ken Turley performed the service, explaining

its significance and offering an opportunity for a community representative to assent to the installation. Chair of the church trustees, Jonathan Crowe, had the thorough support and expressed the joy of the church community while fulfilling this task.

During the children's talk prior to her installation, Rev. Alison asked the children to help her decide which stole to wear for the occasion. The children chose the colorful stole filled with happy sheep.

Rev. Alison's two children, Monroe and Elin, were among the group. They have added such light and life (and giggles) to our Sunday School, as well as the parsonage. The entire Lane-Olsen family has become a treasured part of both our church and local communities since we welcomed them here in the fall of 2013. We look forward to many years of shared growth, service, and fellowship with them. ☩

Bath Church Receives Award

BY ROB LAWSON

Last October, Maine's Sagadahoc Preservation Organization presented awards to several home owners and to the stewards of several public buildings—one church, one grange, one store, and one lighthouse—the classic Greek Revival Bath Church of the New Jerusalem being the church.

Judy Barrington, chair of the Preservation Committee noted in her presentation:

This pristine Greek Revival church was built in the Doric Temple style in 1843 by A.B. Farnham, the same year that the Gothic Revival style Winter Street Congregational Church was built. Small, compact, and sitting resolutely on its high piece of land, it had been carefully conceived to house the Protestant teachings of Emmanuel Swedenborg. Long considered one of the purest Greek Temple style wooden buildings in Maine and possibly New England, it has been lovingly maintained by its Swedenborgian clergy and church members since it was built. After a disastrous snowstorm in March of 1920 col-

lapsed the roof, the repair was handled with sensitivity to the exterior design of the original. Only the size of the auditorium was compromised.

Ms. Barrington continued,

Declining membership and the impending retirement of Rev. George Dole and his wife Lois, gave cause for concern that there would be neither people nor funds left to maintain the building. But enter new minister Reverend Alison Longstaff and church board president Rob Lawson. This summer the activity consisted of painting the whole building complete with crane for the high spots. It was also noted that members led by Rob Lawson were also helping to paint. We are giving you this award because you have done a marvelous job of stewardship over the years in maintaining one of Bath's signature buildings. We hope you can continue for years to come."

Rev. Longstaff and Rob Lawson accepted the Award of Excellence in Historic Preservation on behalf of the church.

See [page 80](#) for photos of the latest renewal projects at the church. ☩



Low point for the Bath Temple: 1920 collapse from snow overload

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.

In his theological writings, Swedenborg shared 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.

Bath Church Renewal

Following up on the preservation award last October (see [page 79](#)), the Bath (Maine) Swedenborgian Church members worked together this past spring to renew their temple with repairs, fresh paint, and new carpets. ☦



Virginia Domhoff mulching lilies



Rob Lawson vacuuming
pew cushions



A new sanctuary carpet and
freshly painted pews



Lee Evans sweeping
the porch



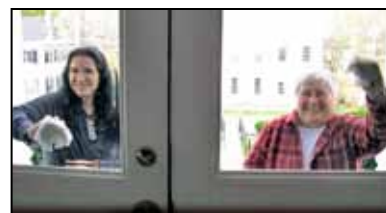
The Bath New Jerusalem Temple



Rick Cruz spearheaded installing the new
sanctuary carpet and painting the pews.



Seven years of bad luck—Bill Briggs
installing a mirror!



Robin Cruz and Jody Evans letting the light in!