



Swedenborgians and the Original Black Lives Matter Movement: How the First George Bush Confronted Racial Justice Passivity in the Churches

BY JAMES F. LAWRENCE

Despite a robust European Swedenborgian legacy of fighting the slave trade as embodied in the visionary work of Carl Bernhard Wadström, American Swedenborgians were not conspicuous anti-slavery voices or workers in Antebellum America. In fact, though contemporary Swedenborgians have shown a tendency to cherry pick and generously interpret that history, a close reading of Swedenborgian discourse in Antebellum America in sermons, pamphlets, articles, and personal correspondence up through the end of the American Civil War in 1865 reveals a church movement that was a little behind the curve.

The reasons why are complicated but they start with the fact that Swedenborg was not a social reformer theologian in a modern sense and did not address specific social issues in his expansive theological corpus. This included the institution of slavery, even though it was prominent in the London where he spent altogether some thirteen years working on his spiritual books.

The English capital was home for a

large number of Blacks in various forms of servitude that were connected to the slave trade in which England had been so deeply enmeshed. About ten million slaves were merchandised in eighteenth-century England, and London was by far the busiest port city through which

such commerce passed. Placards selling sub-Saharan Africans were common in Swedenborg's London, and abolitionism against this practice was



George Bush "the First"

hotter in Swedenborg's London than it was anywhere else in Europe. Yet there is no direct line of theological application in his writings to

guide devotees on the slavery issue. As a result, Swedenborgians in England, South America, and North America were left to shape a variety of arguments from Swedenborg's abstract theology; and those derived positions ran the full gamut, due especially to the influence of local context.

The anti-slavery Swedenborgian who worked most fiercely to create a

public Swedenborgian conversation on slavery was none other than George Bush (1796–1859)—great-granduncle of George Herbert Bush and great-great-granduncle of George Walker Bush, the 41st and 43rd Presidents of the United States, respectively. George I, as he

is sometimes dubbed, was a renowned intellectual popular for public lectures; a foremost scholar at New York University on Semitic cultures; and the author of the first book-length American biography of Mohammed, the founding prophet of Islam. The formerly well-connected and influential Presbyterian clergyman created a sensation when he converted to the Swedenborgian Church, and he was by far the

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**Time is running out to register for the
192nd Annual Convention of
the Swedenborgian Church**

June 29–July 3, 2016

**Urbana University
Urbana, Ohio**

[Registration Form Page 67](#)

The Editor's Desk



Dancing Together

Recent research published in the *Evolution and Human Behavior* concludes that moving in synchrony leads to cooperative behavior and feelings of social closeness.

In the experiment, participants were given instruction in simple dance moves and given earphones. They were placed in groups of four, all strangers, and instructed to dance. Participants in some groups had learned the same dance and heard the same synchronous music while those in other groups each had learned a different dance and heard different music.

Before dancing, the participants were measured on a self-described pain scale when pain was applied by experimenters. After a period of dancing they were again measured for pain.

After a short time, the same-dance-same-music groups began to coordinate their dancing, and eventually synchronized. The other groups never co-

ordinated their dancing.

Afterwards, the synchronized groups reported more social bonding with the strangers in their groups, and the other groups reported none. In addition, individuals in the coordinated groups reported a higher pain threshold after dancing, while those in the non-coordinated groups reported no change. (Higher pain thresholds are a proxy for increased release of endorphins in the brain, which lead to feelings of well-being.)

Our own experience would suggest that dancing together (to the same music!) increases social bonding and that we feel better as a result, whether dancing in a group of strangers or dancing with an individual stranger. (May I have this dance?)

In evolutionary terms, the experimenters concluded, dance may have been an important human behavior evolved to encourage social closeness between strangers—a social lubricant and advantage in self-defense.

In any case, the findings reinforce the general notion that engaging in positive activities with others enhances our well-being.

An essential element of organized religion is activities that increase social interaction. Many religions include group singing in their worship activities and some include group dance. These and all of the activities that involve group interaction in committed communities comprise the social rationale for receiving and expressing our religious feelings in a context with others.

Let's have some dancing with the music at Annual Convention!

—Herb Ziegler

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Corrections

In the April 2016 *Messenger*, the article "Washington's Address to the Baltimore New Church," the date should have read 1793, not 1893. Some mailed newsletters did not contain the Annual Convention registration form.

To subscribe to the *Messenger* online, scan this image with a QR reader on your cell phone or tablet.



Church Calendar

- **May 22:** Kansas Association Annual Meeting • Pawnee Rock, KS
- **June 4–5:** Western Canada Conference Annual Meeting • Calgary, AB
- **June 29–July 3:** Annual Convention • Urbana University, Urbana, OH
- **November 3–6:** General Council meeting • Framingham, MA

the Messenger

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

Letter from the President



*2015–16: The Year of Spiritual Uses:
The Call to Be a Blessing*

*2016–17: The Year of the Word:
The Power of the Holy Scriptures*

Dear Friends,

Appearances of Truth: I've been thinking about that concept a lot lately. It is integral to Swedenborg's portrayal of our understanding of all things and yet, he doesn't so often speak of it outright. Most of the time it is something he seems to just assume we are assuming as he spins out his paragraph-long sentences describing the nature of life and how the spiritual and the natural interact in the creation and ongoing manifestation of the human and divine.

On one hand, it is not just a little bit annoying. Why must we be expected to deal with "appearances of truth," wading and struggling our way through layer after layer of curtain-like appearances of what things really are? Cannot we handle the truth? On the other hand, I have to assume that ultimate truth is a little, actually a lot, like the sun. It illuminates and allows us to see all that is, but to look directly at it would destroy our ability to see at all. I can't help but picture God as a rather impressive and intimidating authority figure saying to us "You can't handle the truth!" But instead of delivering that phrase in an outburst of angry arrogance, it is spoken gently and caringly, in a still, small voice within us that we can only hear if we stop, quiet our hearts and minds, and listen.

So, here we are, dealing with the appearance of truth, each of us as we perceive and interpret it, from

our own unique perspectives. Even when we look at the same thing, it is surprising how often we come away having seen very different things. It's surprising we can get along, let alone communicate, at all. And yet God's way of providing appearances of truth is also surprisingly effective and useful. If we are sincerely looking for truth, even the most distant appearance of truth will in fact lead us in the right direction. Appearances are not usually "wrong"; most of the time they are accurate in their way, only a little fuzzy in the details or perhaps incomplete in what they allow us to see. Another's actions are perhaps the most telling kind of example. No matter how well we think we know a person, there is always so much more going on within them than we can or ever will know. Their entire history is the foundation from which they act. Their recent history is driving their values and priorities as well as their state of mind and emotions. And each person has within them layer upon layer of being contained within and portrayed through the persona they want us to see and know them as. I would suggest that *proprium* is the word Swedenborg uses for that persona. Without engaging the question of whether it is good or evil, I will suggest that at its very best it is a mere appearance of the truth of who that person is. For some, the outer appearance is a closer representation of the inner person and for some it is quite distant. And so it is a mere appearance nonetheless.

Perhaps we might expand the concept a bit and look at appearance of truth in how it relates to our churches and our denomination. We have all encountered people who have no idea of who we are and what we are about. After that encounter, they are left with an appearance of truth based on what they learn from the experience of and with us. Most of us have had to deal with people who have an idea of who we are and what we are about based on very incomplete and, in some cases, very distorted information. It is fascinating to listen to the appearance of truth they have assumed is an accurate portrayal of who we are and what we are about. At times it is eas-

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Call for Nominations

The Nominating Committee recruits and puts forward nominees for election to offices and positions in the denomination at the Annual Convention of the Swedenborgian Church. (See table at right.) The Nominating Committee nominates at least one candidate for each open position, with the exception of the Nominating Committee position, where at least two candidates must be nominated.

If you are interested in being nominated for any position (particularly an open position), contact the acting chair of the Nominating Committee, Martha Richardson, (marthajane410@gmail.com or 207.935.1217).

In addition to the two candidates to be elected to the Board of Trustees of the Center for Swedenborgian Studies (CSS) by its representative class (members of the General Convention), two candidates nominated by the CSS Board are to be elected as at-large-class trustees. Election of at-large-class trustees takes place at the CSS Annual Meeting, which will convene during the Annual Convention.

Position to be Filled	Term (Yrs)	Candidate
Vice-President	1	Tom Neuenfeldt†
Recording Secretary	1	Karen Conger*†
Treasurer	1	Polly Baxter*†
General Council layperson (2 to be elected)	3	Debbie Dolley*† Carl Helm
General Council Minister	3	Rev. Betsy Coffman†
General Council Minister (unexpired 2-year term)	2	Rev. Dick Tafel
Communications Support Unit (COMSU)	3	Kristina Madjerac*
Education Support Unit (EDSU)	3	Rev. Jim Lawrence†
Financial and Physical Resources Support Unit (FPRSU)	3	BJ Neuenfeldt*†
Information Management Support Unit (IMSU)	3	Open
Support Unit for Ministries (MINSU)	3	Sharon Williams† Open
Committee on Admission to the Ministry: Minister (CAM)	3	Rev. Jonathan Mitchell†
Board of Trustees of CSS, representative class (2 to be elected)	3	Nancy Little* Robert Morrill*†
Board of Trustees of CSS, at-large class (2 to be elected)**	3	Terrie Crenshaw Alan Kelchner
Nominating Committee (2 to be nominated)	5	Open Open

* Incumbent

** Nominated by the Center for Swedenborgian Studies (CSS) Board of Trustees

† Candidate statement appeared in the April *Messenger*.

To date, the candidates listed in the table above have been nominated for election.

Nominations to all offices and positions can be made from the floor of the annual convention as well. ☪

Nominees for Elected Positions in the Church

General Council (Minister): Rev. Dick Tafel

I have accepted nomination for an unexpired term of minister on General Council. There are a number of issues that General Council will be facing in the months and years ahead. I will comment on two of them.

1) New directions in ministry: I bring fifty plus years of pastoral experience to share with our governing board. For fifteen years before my retirement, I brought a new “outside the box” Swedenborgian ministry to



the greater Fort Myers Beach area. Along with traditional worship for a small core group, we blended programs having a community focus: Feed the hungry from an upstart food pantry; clothe the naked from our thrift store; comfort the afflicted through counseling and group work; and nurture children with our unique after-school and camp programs.

2) Finance and fundraising: As new types of ministries surface, we need to find ways to fund them. I have been successful in both Cincinnati and Fort Myers Beach in raising capital funds from the community for our Swedenborgian-focused endeavors. New approaches for fund raising are called for. The new Tafel Fund is just one example.

The trend continues for our ministers to seek alternative ministries and new sources of support, bringing the

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concept of “tent ministry” to a new level. We need to encourage new ministries and to pursue new funding sources to support them. I believe I am duly qualified to work with other General Council members, moving our denomination forward. Thank you for your confidence in our denomination as we revitalize our church.

Rev. Dick Tafel lives in Ft. Myers Beach, Florida.

General Council (Layperson): Carl Helm



I am honored to be a nominee for General Council as a layperson. This role in the church is very important, and I am looking forward to this challenge. I

have served as a trustee in our Pawnee Rock Church for twenty-five years and as the Kansas Association President for fourteen years. I have served on General Council in the past, and I also serve as a trustee for the National Church in Washington, DC.

For forty-six years I served as an educator in the state of Kansas, and this July I am retiring from Education. I have served in three communities as a teacher, coach, director of federal programs, principal at both the middle and senior high levels, and director of finance and superintendent of schools. In these jobs, I have worked in very diverse cultures and very diverse economic groups. I have always tried to base my decisions that I made on what is best for the good of students, staff, and parents. I believe these experiences will help me do the best job possible if elected as a General Council member.

My wife Connie and I are looking forward to spending more time with our children and their families. It will

be nice to be free to go and see the kids and grandkids in the coming years. Connie is serving our church as president and as a lay leader.

Carl Helm lives in Great Bend, Kansas.

CSS Board: Terrie Crenshaw



Terrie Crenshaw, a member of the San Francisco Swedenborgian Church, cherishes her experience growing up in the Detroit-area church, visiting other church-

es with the youth league, and summers at Almont Summer Camp. She holds an MBA and brings to the board many years of professional experience in finance, ranging from accounting manager to chief financial officer. In her personal life, she is kept busy by two lively sons, Nelson and Clark, and a small specialty food business. Terrie has found her first term on the Board of Trustees rewarding and would be honored to serve a second term.

Terrie Crenshaw lives in Redwood City, California.

CSS Board: Alan Kelchner



Alan Kelchner is the senior staff member at the Graduate Theological Union most involved with their development work. His position title is vice-president of Advancement. A long-time senior minister in congregations of the United Church of Christ, he has also taught homiletics (preaching) as adjunct professor at Pacific School of Religion, where the Swedenborgian House of Studies was located from 2001 through 2015. He holds a PhD in homiletics from the

GTU.

Alan has provided effective pastoral leadership in a variety of settings, including guiding a church through a capital campaign, a new building, and establishing a church-owned school. He has also directed a nonprofit multi-program social service agency in Boise, Idaho, that provides family counseling, foster care support, and adoptions. He helped it grow from three employees to sixteen, increasing annual income from \$60,000 to \$900,000 in four years.

He would be excited to join the board of CSS with a focus on helping with development.

CSS Board: Nancy Little



My interest in CSS stems from my work in higher education. I hold a Masters degree in Library Science from Simmons

College School of Library and Information Science in Boston. For the past five years, I have worked as a librarian, first at a community college for three years, and currently at a small private liberal arts college in Springfield, Massachusetts. As CSS is faced with moving its library/archive/special collections to a new location, I hope that I will be able to contribute to this conversation as a board member.

The library at CSS is a treasure trove of Swedenborgiana, and needs to be taken into consideration as CSS moves to a new location. The library is essential to the scholarly work of the faculty at CSS, and will need to be in a location that is easily accessible for CSS faculty and students. As a board member, I hope to continue my support of CSS's efforts in the education of our students, as well as the scholarly pursuits of the faculty. The library is an essential part of this, as it allows our

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SPLATz Grow at Almont Retreat Center

BY KURT FEKETE

On a delightful spring weekend in mid-April, thirteen young people aged ten to thirteen traveled to Almont Retreat Center in Southern Michigan to join with friends at the *SPLATz* (Super Powered Lovable Almost Teens) Spring Retreat. Our theme for the retreat was, "Spring Flora: The Life Cycle of Plants," so we were most thankful for the beautiful, warm sunshine which allowed us to spend much of our time outdoors enjoying the fresh air and newly awakening plant life around the retreat center. Our sessions covered both the botanical and the corresponding spiritual life cycle of a fruit tree, from seed to sprout to flower to fruit, and back to seed again. We also wanted to experience this growth and life cycle directly with our hands by working the soil, planting and tidying up the Almont gardens. Taking inspiration from Emanuel Swedenborg's writings, we read in *Heaven and Hell* §109, "Very often, when I have looked over trees and fruits and flowers and vegetables in gardens, I have become aware of corresponding things in heaven."

Everyone arrived Friday evening, and we assembled together around a large bowl of produce to begin our retreat. The kids could not wait to dig into the edibles, but first we needed to cover some botany. We spent this opening nighttime session talking about the science of plants and reviewing some fun facts. Did you know that oak trees don't produce acorns until they are fifty years old? Did you know that ninety

percent of the foods that humans eat come from just thirty plants? After absorbing all this knowledge at the end of a long exciting day, most of us were quite sleepy. We retired to our rooms for the evening and were in bed before midnight.



Oliver, Kristofer, Conner, Molly, Ivy, Adrianna, and Boston show off the fruits of their labor.

We woke up Saturday morning to discover several of the boys were interested in helping wash, cut, and prepare the produce left over from the previous night to create a large, luscious fruit bowl, which we enjoyed throughout the retreat. We also enjoyed a delicious hot breakfast prepared by Lori Patana and wonderfully rich hand-poured coffee lovingly brewed by Heather Oelker. These ladies, along with the helpful kitchen boys, definitely got my morning off to a great start. And I was even more delighted to see the Almont Summer Camp girls lead the group in singing grace at each meal with no instruction or guidance from the adult leaders!

In our morning session, we discussed seeds and germination. We read the parable of the Sower (Mark 4:1–20) and talked about how seeds are like ideas and thoughts planted by God. Unfortunately, most seeds nev-

er grow into mature plants and bear fruit. Likewise, seeds from the Lord do not always take root in our heart. But some germinate, and we take it upon ourselves to nurture this seed into our own specific goal. The retreaters then began their own booklet, listing their

dreams and each deciding which one to make a goal. Next, Bekka Lange (President of the Swedenborgian Church Youth League, staffing her first *SPLATz* retreat) helped the youths craft their own tie-dye flowers with watercolors and coffee filters. It was beautiful to see all of the colorful "flowers" spread out drying in the sun.

After Rev. Jenn Tafel prepared and fed us a fantastic taco bar lunch, we launched into our afternoon session that focused on the growth part of the plant life cycle. This phase relates to the long, sometimes arduous work that it takes for us



Victor ready to start go to work

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to take our goal and make it a reality. Swedenborg wrote that leaves represent rational truths. The leaves are the facts we collect. They become the col-



Cleaning around the dorms



Emily and Adrianna take a break from shoveling



Julia clearing the leaf debris

lection of knowledge, learning, and wisdom we acquire to help us accomplish our goal. The *SPLATz* then wrote down in their booklets all the things they need to learn to reach their goals.

We spent the rest of Saturday afternoon working outside. These energetic young people did an amazing job cleaning around the dorms. After hauling away numerous large piles of leaves and sticks, they planted myrtle, six blueberries bushes, and two large hydrangea shrubs around the retreat center. I was so thankful and proud of all of their hard work. I offer special thanks to Heather Oelker for her hard



Molly and Ivy with the drying flowers



Emily with her finished flower



Boston with her finished flower

physical labor digging and hauling.

After dinner, we closed our sessions with a discussion of blossom and fruit.



Josh's garden picture

Flowers are important as they hold the reproductive part of the plant. They bring astonishing beauty and glorious aroma to our environment. In our flower, we too carry the seed of our goal surrounded by all the wonderful wisdom we have amassed (petals). When we flower, we burst with excitement in anticipation of bringing our gifts to the world. We learned how flowers are the joy and delight we experience when we are being good rather than the more useful and substantial fruit of doing good.

Our fruit is bringing our goal to fruition in charitable service to the neighbor. The youths finished their booklets by writing down a memorable "flower" that they could look forward to achieving and how they plan to transform their "flower" into "fruit" so that it is useful.

Bekka lead the *SPLATz* in a dream garden art project, where the youth assembled their tie-dye flowers and painted a landscape on poster board to plant their flowers.

The evening concluded with ice cream and our traditional spirited game of Catchphrase.

On Sunday morning we rose a bit sore from all of our hard work of gardening. As parents arrived for pickup, kids and leaders packed and cleaned the retreat center for departure. I offer my deep gratitude to Rev. Kit Billings and Penny Billings for driving the youths from LaPorte so they could attend this retreat. Helping these young people grow in knowledge, grow closer to one another, and grow closer to God is the greatest gift that this gardener could ever dream of. ☪

Kurt Fekete is youth director of the Swedenborgian Church.

Chicago Swedenborg Library's Wide Reach

BY HERB ZIEGLER

The Swedenborg Library in Chicago is a unique ministry within the Swedenborgian Church: it does not occupy a worship space nor does it hold Sunday services at present, and it is located in an historic building in the heart of the third largest city in America. The Library has been operating in this location since 1996, under the energetic leadership of Karen Feil. I recently visited the Swedenborg Library and interviewed her.

The Swedenborg Library evolved from the Western New Church Union (WNCU), a library that maintained a downtown bookroom from the mid-1800s through the 1960s; WNCU was also a publishing imprint in the 1800s. In the 1960s, its collection was moved to the Hyde Park house where the Chicago Society of the New Jerusalem worshiped, on the campus of the University of Chicago. The University purchased the building in 1991. The congregation and its library moved into a suite in the Chicago Temple Building downtown (side-bar), where it continued with worship (led by Rev. Jaikoo Lee) and expanded its outreach. The monetary gains from the sale went into an endowment that helps fund the Swedenborg Library.

With a more accessible location, under Feil's leadership, the Library pursued a course of building awareness of Swedenborg's work. Although the denomination had many important ear-

ly leaders in Chicago, from Jonathan Scammon (whose son would become Robert Lincoln's law partner in Chicago), to Daniel Burnham and Charles Bonney, Chicago area residents were largely unaware of Swedenborg. A plan was established with a goal to increase the public's knowledge of Swedenborg via partnerships with other cultural institutions. In addition, the Library would provide a space for programs and courses on Swedenborgian topics and other topics that relate to issues such as love, wisdom, uses, and spirituality. The Library had begun these programs at the house in Hyde Park but determined that a central location, easily accessed by mass transit, would make it more popular.

Attended by the general public, the Library holds programs on a variety of spiritual and ecumenical topics, (angels, near death experiences, and synchronicity are favorites); from those attendees the Library attracts a subset of participants to Swedenborg-based programs, which are led by Swedenborgian ministers through the use of live web-based connection technology.

"We're panning for gold in Chicago with our broader-ap-
peal programs; not only are we creating awareness of the name Swedenborg in Chicago, but we

The Chicago Temple

For more than 175 years, the congregation of the First Methodist Church of Chicago has gathered for worship in five buildings, four on its present site. After World War I, the church leaders followed the dictum of the great Chicago architect Daniel Burnham, who famously said: "Make no little plans. They have no magic to stir men's blood and probably themselves will not be realized. Make big plans; aim high in hope and word. . . . Let your watchword be order and your beacon beauty. Think big."

In this spirit, the church leaders planned a building that would be "Gothic in structure, with a churchly tower, a radiant cross at its pinnacle." It would be a building that could rightly be thought of as a city temple. Built in 1923, the Chicago Temple was the tallest building in Chicago for seven years. The Gothic spire at the top encloses the Sky Chapel, 400 feet above the streets of the city.

The congregation still worships in the first-floor sanctuary. The focal point is the altar with its wood carving that depicts Jesus weeping over the city of Jerusalem. Engraved onto one wall of the sanctuary is the verse from Revelation 21: 1 "And I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven."

The church uses the first four floors and rents the remaining seventeen.



The spacious, light-filled, and welcoming Library

provide a flexible array of materials to those who wish to explore his work more deeply," says Feil.

Feil has been accepted into the Licensed Pastor program at the Center for Swedenborgian Studies. "Our regular community isn't large enough for a full-time minister yet, but we do have the opportunity to build deeper connections through worship, and we do occasionally receive requests for a Swedenborgian funeral service," says Feil.

In addition to the Library's space, its landlord, the Methodist Church, has been very generous in sharing its multiple worship and meeting spaces with the Library.

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192nd Session of the General Convention of the New Jerusalem, Wednesday, June 29 - Sunday, July 3

Council of Ministers: Sunday, June 26 - Tuesday, June 28

Convention 2016 will be held in Urbana, Ohio on the campus of Urbana University (UU). To learn more about UU, visit www.urbana.edu. To learn more about the 2016 Convention and view a list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ), please visit www.swedenborg.org, email manager@swedenborg.org, or call the Central Office at (617) 969-4240.

Lodging: See next page for more details. Rooms will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis, and may fill up before the end of the registration period. Linen packs include a pillow, pillow case, cotton blanket, two flat sheets, twin bed sheets, bath towel, hand towel, and wash cloth. If you find that you often need extra towels or blankets, you are advised to bring some with you.

Roommates: If you are choosing a double room and have a specific roommate in mind, please fill in their name in the appropriate space. If not, please fill in the roommate matching section; we will try to pair you with someone with similar habits and needs. You will be paired with someone of the same gender.

Children: If you will be bringing children, please contact the Central Office to obtain the necessary information and forms.

Youth League Program: The Youth League program runs from Wednesday, June 29 through Sunday, July 3, and is supervised by Kurt Fekete. If you want your teen (age 12-17) to attend without a parent, please contact the Central Office.

Internet: Free wifi is available inside buildings on campus.

Parking: Please check the box below so we know how many cars will be parking on campus. You will need to pick up a parking pass on arrival.

Room & Board Reservations and Payment Deadline: No new room, meal plan, or Women's Alliance luncheon reservations will be available after **June 10 at 5PM EST**. Any room and board reservations not fully paid by this deadline will be subject to a \$50 late fee. Event registrations will be accepted for as long as space permits.

Cancellations: Fully refundable prior to June 10 at 5PM EST. Cancellations must be done by calling the Central Office between 9AM-5PM EST, M-F.

Arrivals and Departures: More information to follow.

Mobility: We cannot guarantee the availability of mobility aids such as wheelchairs. Please contact the Central Office for more information and advice on local arrangements.

Communications: Please provide a valid email address below if you have one. In order to facilitate faster communications, and to save money on printing and postage, we provide as much information as possible via email. Please add manager@swedenborg.org to your contact list to ensure that you receive all of our email updates.

Ground Transportation: It is recommended that you use Dayton International Airport. Please see the FAQ for more details on ground transportation options from either Dayton International Airport or Port Columbus International Airport. You may also sign up for a carpool list using the "Travel Information" section below. Please note that rides will not be arranged for you; this is a courtesy service to put you on an email list for you to coordinate ride shares with other attendees.

Name		
Name		
<input type="checkbox"/> Please check this box if you will be parking on campus		
Street		Apt. #
City	State/Province	Zip
Home Church	Preferred Email	Day Phone
Names, ages, and genders of any minors accompanying you		
Special Dietary Needs and/or Mobility Issues (Not everything can be accommodated)		
Specific Roommate Request		

Roommate Matching

We will do our best to match you with an appropriate roommate if you have not indicated one above.

Please indicate your gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female
I am (check all that apply):

<input type="checkbox"/> An early riser	<input type="checkbox"/> A night owl
<input type="checkbox"/> A heavy sleeper	<input type="checkbox"/> A light sleeper
<input type="checkbox"/> Fragrance sensitive	<input type="checkbox"/> Fragrance-free
<input type="checkbox"/> A CPAP machine user	<input type="checkbox"/> A snorer

Anything else we should know when matching you?

Travel Information (Dayton Airport recommended)

<input type="checkbox"/> Please check this box if you will have a car at Convention and would be willing to do an airport pickup on your arrival day. (Please specify airport with an "X": __Dayton or __Columbus.)
<input type="checkbox"/> Please check this box if you will have a car at Convention and would be willing to do a drop-off at the airport on July 3. (Please specify airport with an "X": __Dayton or __Columbus.)
<input type="checkbox"/> Please check this box if you will be flying in and would like to be added to an email list for you to coordinate sharing a ride on your arrival or departure day. (Please specify airport with an "X": __Dayton or __Columbus.)

Room and Board Packages:

- » **Package A (Sunday, June 26 - Sunday, July 3, seven nights):**
(choose this for Council of Ministers members)
\$373 per person for a double, \$513 for a single
Includes 7 nights of lodging, 7 dinners, 6 lunches, and 7 breakfasts.
- » **Package B (Sunday, June 26 - Wednesday, June 29, three nights):** (available **only** to Council of Ministers attendees who are only able to attend COM meetings)
Contact Swedenborgian Church Central Office for details
Includes 3 nights of lodging, 3 dinners, 2 lunches, and 3 breakfasts.
- » **Package C (Tuesday, June 28 - Sunday, July 3, five nights):**
(choose this for current lay General Council members or pre-Convention arrival)
\$288 per person for a double, \$388 for a single
Includes 5 nights of lodging, 5 dinners, 4 lunches, and 5 breakfasts.
- » **Package D (Wednesday, June 29 - Sunday, July 3, four nights):**
\$237 per person for a double, \$317 for a single
Includes 4 nights of lodging, 4 dinners, 3 lunches, and 4 breakfasts.

Meal Only Packages: For those **staying off-campus** who want to pre-pay for meals. Meals may also be purchased with cash or credit card at the dining hall.

- » **Package W (Sunday, June 26 - Sunday, July 3, meals only):**
\$138 per person
7 dinners, 6 lunches, and 7 breakfasts
- » **Package Y (Tuesday, June 28 - Sunday, July 3, meals only):**
\$97 per person
5 dinners, 4 lunches, and 5 breakfasts
- » **Package Z (Wednesday, June 29 - Sunday, July 3, meals only):**
\$76 per person
4 dinners, 3 lunches, and 4 breakfasts,

Registration	Cost	# People	Total
Adult	\$75		
Youth League (12-19)	\$65		
Child (3-11)	\$40		
Under 3 years old	Free		
*Family maximum	\$215		
One Day Registration	\$20		
Local Volunteer	\$40		
Women's Alliance Luncheon (must be reserved and paid by June 10 at 5PM EST) - See FAQ for details	\$10		

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

Room & Board	Package	#People	Total
Room & Board or Meal Only Package (see package descriptions for rates)			
\$50 Late Fee (assessed on R&B packages paid for after June 10 at 5PM EST)			

General Convention Subsidies	#People	Total Discount
Council of Ministers (for ordained Swedenborgian ministers with membership on the Council of Ministers only) - cost of Package A (double), Package B (double), or Packages W or X		
General Council (current members of the General Council only) - cost of Package C (double), or Package Y		
Swedenborgian Church Youth League Officers - cost of Package D (double) or Package Z		

Grand Total (from both Registration and Room & Board, less Subsidies)

Payment Information

All prices are in US currency. **If you pay with a Canadian check, please add US\$5 for handling. Please be advised that all prices are listed in US funds and must be converted for payment in other currencies. All room and board reservations not paid in full by 5PM EST on June 10 will be subject to a \$50 late fee.** See "Cancellations" section for refund policy.

Payment Method

1. Credit card by mail (DO NOT email credit card information) - Fill out the following:

Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ Amex ☐ Discover ☐

Card Number: _____ Exp. Date: _____
 Cardholder's Name: _____
 CCV/Security Code: _____
 Billing Zip Code (if different from mailing address): _____
 Signature: _____

2. Credit card by phone - call (617) 969-4240, Monday through Friday, 9AM-5PM EST

3. Credit card or bank payment via PayPal - enter an email address to receive a PayPal invoice to pay your balance below:

4. Check: Send checks payable to The Swedenborgian Church to: 50 Quincy St., Cambridge, MA 02138

Chicago Swedenborg Library

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A key element of the plan for the Library is establishing partnerships with other organizations. The Library has an ongoing relationship with Common Ground, whose primary focus is on the world's great cultural, philosophical, religious, and spiritual traditions and their implications for every dimension of human experience. Working with partners such as Common Ground enables the Library to elevate the quality of programming without incurring market-rate speaker expenses.

"Every once in a while we invest in a speaker such as author Sophy Burnham or Dr. Raymond Moody, whose programs drew 150–250 people respectively, which allows us to refresh our email and mailing lists," says Feil. Much of the Library's promotion is done using Vertical Response emails; the service does not require a monthly fee and bills on an as-used basis; the Library also posts programs in the *Chicago Tribune's* "Literary Events" section in the Sunday editions and in local spiritual and health magazines.

Current and Upcoming Programs

- **The Science of Mindfulness** explores developments in mindfulness research. After viewing a DVD lecture by Ronald Siegel, assistant professor of Psychology at Harvard Medical School, participants practice the techniques it presents. (Wednesdays, 10:30–11:30 AM)
- **Understanding Jesus's Parables** examines Jesus's parables at a deeper level, discussing them from a Swedenborgian perspective, with Rev. Robert McCluskey leading the discussion via Google Hangouts. Working with *The Language of Parables* by William Worcester and other works, participants discuss the deeper meaning of the symbolism and order of Jesus's telling of the parables. (ongoing, alternate Thursdays)
- **Europe and Islam: Fears And Realities**, with Jim Kenney, asks how terror attacks in France, Turkey, and elsewhere have heightened anxieties over Islam to the point where Euro-centric nationalism has become a concern in its own right. Participants will sort through the

reasons for European fears and the realities of the modern interface of Islam and the West. (Thursday, May 5, 7–9 PM)

- **The Religions of Ancient Persia and the Abrahamic Faiths**, with Ahmad Sadri, examines the pre-Islamic religions of Iran and their deep and lasting influence on Western religions. Participants explore the dualistic theology and colorful mythology of Zoroastrianism as well as its later syncretistic manifestation: Manichaeism. These ideas have shaped the messianic and end-time expectations of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. (Thursday, June 2, 7–9 PM) ☪



Karen Feil is the sister of retired Wilmington, Delaware, minister Randy Laakko. She was recently elected treasurer of the Swedenborg Foundation and serves as an officer of the Illinois Association and chair of EDSU. She holds degrees from the University of Michigan (BA) and the University of Chicago (MBA.) She joined the Chicago Church in 1982 and has participated in the community since 1980.

Letter from the President

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ier, at times more difficult, and at times completely impossible, to help make that perception of the appearance of truth a layer or two closer to the actual truth. And even when we are successful, we have only succeeded in giving that person an appearance of truth that is just a little more accurate. And while it may feel frustrating, it is still a useful and appropriate effort to make. I make this statement, because it is my belief (you can substitute the word 'hope') that the appearance of truth in regards to our church can, at least in some cases, be an extremely useful and valuable thing for those who are struggling to move through the layers of information about human existence and somehow get a little closer to the truth.

This brings me to my final thought: what is it we are trying to do as a church and why? Perhaps nowhere more visibly is the concept of the appearance of truth more relevant and both frustrating and rewarding as when we apply it to the intent and current reality of what our church is. We are moving into a new era. The deeper essence of who we are remains the same. Certainly the essence of the divine we seek to honor remains the same. But the forms in which it manifests, the appearance of truth that is projected, is changing and needs to change. The people who are active and the vital life of the

church are changing and the people to whom we seek to be of use and service are changing. So it is only right that how we present ourselves and how we communicate changes as well. Not because the essence of what we want to share has changed, but because the appearance of truth that is useful and effective must change. It is loving and wise that God gives us appearances of truth to engage, each of us at the level and in the way that works best for us. Whether we know it or not, that is all we are able to give to others in who we are. It serves us to try and understand that, and in that limited understanding, seek to be loving and wise in the appearance of truth we offer.

—Blessings, Rev. Ken

Convention 2016: Keynote & Mini-Courses

Keynote Address: Who Moved My Cheese? Navigating the Art and Science of Change:

Kathy Cleveland Bull



Who Moved My Cheese? *An Amazing Way to Deal with Change in Your Work and in Your Life*, by Spencer Johnson, was published in 1998.

It is a motivational tale written in the style of a parable or business fable. The text describes change in one's work and life and four typical reactions to those changes by two mice and two "little people," during their hunt for cheese. A *New York Times* business best seller upon release, *Who Moved My Cheese?* remained on the list for almost five years and spent over 200 weeks on *Publishers Weekly's*

hardcover nonfiction list. It has sold more than 26 million copies worldwide in thirty-seven languages and remains one of the best-selling business books ever.

Kathy was one of three professional speakers recommended by Dr. Spencer Johnson to provide training built upon his book. She has trained more than 100,000 people to successfully manage change in their work and personal lives by using Johnson's powerful change strategies. She is the owner of N-Compass Consulting in Columbus, Ohio and she has helped clients on three continents.

Kathy has appeared on stage with Dr. Phil McGraw and Deepak Chopra, where she delivered her powerful change message to an audience of more than 7,000 people.

Kathy conducts personal and professional development seminars for Fortune 500 companies, educational institutions, government agencies, and nonprofit organizations. She also consults on successful change strategies, human development, and strategic planning.

While *Who Moved My Cheese?* is most often delivered to businesses or trade groups, it focuses on adapting to a changing environment, a topic with which many of the leaders in our churches are coping, on both a personal and institutional level.

Visit her web site at <http://www.ncompass-consulting.com/> to see Kathy in action.

2016 Mini-Course Descriptions

Who Moved My Cheese? A follow-up discussion to the keynote address: Kathy Cleveland Bull

Wilson Van Dusen's Breakthrough on Uses: Rev. Dr. Jim Lawrence



When Wilson Van Dusen penned his 1981 *Uses, A Way of Personal and Spiritual Growth*, the substantial pamphlet rapidly progressed into a runaway favorite in all the branches of the New Church. Republished many times and universally referenced in Swedenborgiana, *Uses*, without doubt, is the most beloved and effective short work on Swedenborgian spirituality in the last half-century. What is little known,

however, is that before Van Dusen's pamphlet, the term "uses" was not reflexive in the churches and the "doctrine of use" was not in the foreground of Swedenborgian spirituality. A historical analysis of terminology in Swedenborgian history bears this out. But Van Dusen did more than seize a spiritual growth method from scattered mentions in Swedenborg's writings: he shaped a skillful and even profound philosophy of the good life. This mini-course will explore Van Dusen's work on uses in both its history and its future.

Jim is dean of the Center for Swedenborgian Studies of the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, California. (See biographical sketch in the April 2016 *Messenger*.)

Lifelong Learning as Preparation to Life in Heaven: Dr. Barb Mackey

Barb Mackey will discuss the benefits of such lifelong learning programs, and facilitate a discussion among attendees about their experiences in learning as an adult.

Barb is a member of the Urbana Church in Ohio. She came to Urbana in 1978 to be Dean of Students at Urbana College and was introduced to the Swedenborgian Church by Dr. Dorothea Harvey. From 1980 to 2012, she served as director of community programs at Wittenberg University in Ohio. From this position, her interest in life-long learning grew. She teaches cello to local community members, both kids and adults. In retirement, she serves the Wittenberg community as "special assistant in alumni relations—lifelong learning" and arranges for Wittenberg faculty members to speak at local retirement communities and the Senior Center.

She serves on several boards, in-

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cluding the Springfield Symphony Orchestra, and is chair for the Education Committee, the Alumni Board at Hope College, the Advisory Board for SAILL (Springfield Area Institute for Life Long Learning) at United Senior Services, and the Women's Association of the Springfield Symphony Orchestra as vice-president for program planning.

One of her research interests is transformative learning: how we learn from difficult experiences in our lives.

For about twenty years, she has attended week-long sessions at Chautauqua Institution in Western New York.

Recently, she has begun contemplating how our experiences in everyday life can serve as preparation for life in heaven. In this mini-course, she will facilitate a discussion among Swedenborgians about this topic. Participants in the mini-course will, she hopes, spend some time before the session thinking about how their life experiences on earth might help them prepare for their transition to life in heaven.

Using Social Media as a Tool to Increase Usefulness: *Morgan Beard*

Both the young and the young-at-heart enjoy connecting and learning via social media. Of Facebook's 1.2 billion users, forty-seven percent are ages thirty-five or older. Learn 1) which social media services have proven most productive for organizations such as the Swedenborg Foundation and 2) principles for using social media effectively as a means of spreading good will and joy.

In an average month, the Foundation's "Off the Left Eye" *You Tube* channel receives about 300,000 views,



FNCA Camp Scholarships

We want you to come to camp at the Fryeburg New Church Assembly (FNCA) in Fryeburg, Maine, this summer! There are several scholarships available to help you attend.

The Flames Scholarship Program

The Assembly will waive tuition for one teen from each association who has

for a total of 2.5 million minutes of watch time, and their posts on the "Heaven and Hell" Facebook page reach about half a million people each week.

Morgan Beard is the operations manager at the Swedenborg Foundation. In the three years since the Foundation launched a major new online initiative, the organization has collected a wealth of data on which social media outlets work best for promotional purposes and which topics interest online audiences the most. She's looking forward to sharing that knowledge with anyone who wants to get the most out of their online presence.

Interpreting & Preparing Financial Reports for Church Treasurers:

Polly Baxter

If you are preparing to handle your church's finances or simply would enjoy a refresher on reading and preparing financial reports for churches, join Polly for a discussion on this necessary use within the church.



Polly is the treasurer of the Swedenborgian Church. (See biographical sketch in the April 2016 *Messenger*.)

not been to the FNCA before. It is the association that chooses their teen, so please apply to your association if you are interested.

The Virginia Branston FNCA Flames Scholarship Fund

This scholarship will be open to a minimum of two people ages 13–22 each year based on stated need, including either two full scholarships or multiple partial scholarships. Preference will be given to newcomers to the FNCA. Others are also encouraged to apply.

Tuition Waiver Program

Partial and full tuition waivers are available to campers of all ages who need financial assistance in order to attend camp. Teen and adult recipients may be asked to put in some sweat equity while at camp. Please don't be too shy to apply for this since the money is in the budget and is often left unused year after year.

Staff Positions

Being on the staff at the Assembly pays for your room and board. At this writing, the following positions are still open: assistant dining hall supervisor both weeks; male Flames RA both weeks; female Flames RA first week; babysitter first week; religion class teachers for ages 6–8 and for teens first week; and lifeguard both weeks. We are also looking for a full-time assistant cook both weeks.

With the exception of lifeguard, these staff positions are for adults. If you would like to be a lifeguard but have yet to be certified, the FNCA will reimburse you at camp for your certification training course.

For more camp information and how to apply, go to:

<http://fryeburg.org/financialaid>

Swedenborgians and Slavery

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most prestigious mainline Christian intellectual of the nineteenth century to become Swedenborgian.

Bush felt by the late 1840s that the general silence in the Swedenborgian Church on slavery could not be excused, and he began correspondence with several Swedenborgians he knew of on both sides of the question. He planned a running dialog to air the issues in the *New-Church Repository*, a publication he founded and edited. The resulting series—"Aphorisms on Abolition and Slavery"—spanned 1852 and 1853 and was also re-published in *New Church Miscellanies* (1855) with additional information regarding its origins. The series represents the only systematic Swedenborgian conversation on the slavery question in Antebellum America.

The Aphorisms series elicited a number of energetic responses—both pro and con. Taking the form of a running dialog with viewpoints that are never precisely quoted and in which the identities of his correspondents are never revealed, Bush functions as moderator. He does not play a neutral role, as his anti-slavery views are obvious and he editorializes liberally; but he does take special pains to be fair and to keep the conversation going. Some readers were enthralled to have the subject raised, such as a farmer in the West Indies and an abolitionist in the North, neither of whom had joined the Swedenborgian Church—though they adhered to its theology—due to its silence on the slavery question. Others were horrified that the difficult subject was being broached at all, feeling that it was not appropriate to air it out in public discourse. Bush lost many subscribers due to the series, though he claims in the 1855 republication that most of them came back.

The Bush series reveals a spectrum

that could be replicated in most American Christian denominations at that time: immediatist abolition; gradualist anti-slavery dismantling; colonization (relocating Blacks to a free society somewhere outside the United States); a "temporary" pro-slavery position based on a confidence that a just divine providence was working toward some good end; and a wholesale pro-slavery position based on the perspective that slavery was a useful social institution for the betterment of both races.

American Swedenborgians brought some distinctive theological perspectives to the matter. Enlightenment, tolerance, and egalitarianism had appeal in England and France where the self-interest was much further removed from the daily living of a vast majority of Europeans. This set of circumstances made European Swedenborgians ripe for arguments of liberty from Swedenborg's writings. In the American context, however, where the institution of slavery was a much bigger and more integrated aspect of the social fabric, removal of such a colossal social institution seemed a suspicious diversion from the primary work of heralding the New Jerusalem theological revolution that Swedenborgians believed needed their whole attention.

Spiritual abstractions about the Last Judgment, hereditary evil, spiritual freedom, and divine providence, and racial theories, were used to support a Swedenborgian passivity and postponement of action. Their commitment to divine providence as they understood it in Swedenborg's thought made most American Swedenborgians confident that matters were firmly under divine control. Their understanding of a fully redeemed world—the heavenly Jerusalem descending to earth through the Last Judgment—required a profound and pervasive theological conversion of the masses. A great many Swedenborgians held no confidence in mere political victories achieved through the

current uninformed spiritual theology.

After this sustained flurry of intense exchange fostered by the distinguished NYU scholar, the slavery conversation went underground again, nearly vanishing from published dialog among American Swedenborgians until after the Civil War commenced, at which time American Swedenborgianism finally did swing with considerable passion into anti-slavery commitments. Bush did not live to see it. He died prematurely from poor health in 1859. Yet, 160 years later, as his country still wrestles painfully with an ongoing Black Lives Matter movement, the work of the first George Bush still peals forth like a trumpet, calling Swedenborgians not only to hear human justice principles aright in Swedenborg's theology but to apply them. ☩

Rev. Dr. Jim Lawrence is a professor and dean of the Center for Swedenborgian Studies of the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, California.

Further Reading

Bush, George, ed. *New-Church Repository* (1852-1853)

_____. *New Church Miscellanies or, Essays Ecclesiastical, Doctrinal and Ethical*. New York: Wm. McGeorge, 1855.

DeCharms, Richard. *A Discourse On The True Nature Of Freedom And Slavery: Delivered Before The Washington Society Of The New Jerusalem, In View Of The One Hundred And Eighteenth Anniversary Of Washington's Birth*. Philadelphia: J.H. Jones, 1850.

Holcombe, William. *Suggestions as to the Spiritual Philosophy of African Slavery*. New York: Mason Brothers, 1861.

_____. "The Alternative: A Separate Nationality, Or The Africanization Of The South." *Southern Literary Messenger* (Feb. 1861).

Lawrence, James. "The Role of the Churches in the American Abolitionist Controversy," in *The Moment is Now: Carl Bernhard Wadström's Voice on Human Rights and the Abolition of Slavery*, Anders Hallengren, ed. (forthcoming).

McKivigan, John R. *The War against Proslavery Religion: Abolitionism and the Churches, 1830-*

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Passages

Confirmations



Nine new members of the Pacific Coast Association of the New Jerusalem were confirmed at Wayfarers Chapel in Rancho Palos Verdes on March 6, 2016. Above, left to right: **Amy Wasserzieher, Marilyn Gubac, Jane Bradbury, Cindy Southgate, Shari Sachs, Donna Lee, Stefan Dragoshinov, Shannon Reynolds, and Paul Thompson.**

Ethan Perry was confirmed into the Christian faith at the Pretty Prairie Church (Kansas), Rev. Jane Siebert presiding. Ethan is the son of Karen (Kraus) Perry and Jason Perry, and grandson of Linda and Vernon Kraus, Jr. He is the seventh generation of attending members of the church.

Deaths

Eva Lorene Irvin passed away on November 28, 2015, in Hutchinson,

Kansas. She was born on November 30, 1916, in Pretty Prairie, Kansas, to Fredrick Charles and Lydia Magdeline (Krehbiel) Unruh. Eva married Ray Albright in 1936. To this union, a son Allen was born. In 1962 Ray passed away. Eva was a life-long member of the New Jerusalem Church of Pretty Prairie. She taught Sunday School for many years and was active with the Ladies' Aid. In addition, Eva was one of the three founders of the Service Guild—the other two being Helen Kraus and Betty Zacharias.

On August 14, 1965, Eva married Carl Irvin. This union brought sons Elliott and Carey. They made their home in Harper, Kansas. Eva supported her family as a stay-at-home mother, helping with her children's activities and being involved in the Harper United Methodist Church.

Eva enjoyed crocheting, reading, and walking every day. Eva is preceded in death by her parents, Fred and Lydia Unruh; husbands, Ray Albright and Carl Irvin; son, Allen Albright; sisters, Ruby Hampton, Alvina Unruh and Naomi Unruh; brothers, Frank, Mari-

Nominees

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scholars to contribute and be a part of an important conversation about where and how Emanuel Swedenborg fits into the larger conversation about religion and Christianity.

Since joining the board in 2014, I've become increasingly aware of how fortunate CSS is to have such talented and well-respected scholars on the faculty, and I wish to make certain that they have easy access to the research material that they need to do their work.

In addition to serving on the Board of Trustees for our theological school since 2014, I serve as chair of the Library and Documents committee for the denomination. My other committee work includes serving on three committees for Fryeburg New Church Assembly: Buildings and Grounds, Facilities Rental, and Outreach. I served on the steering committee for Gathering Leaves 2013 that was held at Fryeburg New Church Assembly. I also served on the board of trustees for our public library in Hatfield, Massachusetts, from 2010 through 2014.

I live in the Pioneer Valley of Western Massachusetts with my husband of seventeen years, Trevor Woofenden, and our four-year-old tuxedo cat, Whitney. In addition to my work as a librarian and on committees, I enjoy, reading, gardening, and crocheting.

Nancy Little lives in West Hatfield, Massachusetts. ☩

on, Lincoln and Allen Richard. She will be missed by her sons, Elliott Irvin and his wife Sharee, and Carey Irvin and his wife Mary, and daughter-in-law, Linda Albright. She will also be missed by her sister, De Ette Ellis; seven grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren and one great-great granddaughter, as well as a host of other relatives and friends. ☩

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1865. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1984.

Noll, Mark A. *The Civil War as a Theological Crisis*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006.

Odhner, Carl Theophilus. "The Early History of the New Church in Sweden," *New Church Life* 31:4 (April 1911): 269-80.

Williams-Hogan, Jane. "The Swedenborgian Foundations of Wadström's Plan for a Free Community in Sierra Leone," in *The Moment is Now: Carl Bernhard Wadström's Voice on Human Rights and the Abolition of Slavery*, Anders Hallengren, ed. (forthcoming).

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.

Apple Seeds of our Faith: Alliance of New Church Women

With Convention 2016 at Urbana University in Urbana, Ohio, the Women's Alliance (National Alliance of New Church Women) will gather to celebrate the yield of their fruitful history, planted by Swedenborgian women of long ago. In the heart of Johnny Appleseed country, we honor the sowers (women of our church who created a place and a purpose for themselves within the Swedenborgian Church) and proclaim the fruit borne of the followers—women of today who are active leaders in all areas of our denomination.



Our alliance has produced a sturdy and beautiful new strain of women who are in the forefront of the progress and future planning of our church. We are busy preparing the way, planting new seeds, and tending growing life among Swedenborgians and in the world. Our gathering as church women is more valuable as a time for friendship and sharing than for business meetings and electing officers. With gathering as a community as our goal, we will implement a new paradigm for our annual get-together that will allow us to embrace our sister-

hood and ease the structured format of yet another organized institution.

All women are invited to attend the Alliance Luncheon on Friday, July 1. Around tables of food (grandier than the nuts, fruits, and corn journeycake which was Johnny Appleseed's usual fare!) and fellowship, we will explore the faith of John Chapman, our beloved Swedenborgian pioneer. We will hear how his history is being preserved and taught by the Johnny Appleseed Education Center and Museum on the Urbana University campus from Cheryl Ogden, the center's director.



Please indicate your attendance on the [Annual Convention registration form](#) and plan to join with wonderful Swedenborgian women for this special time together. ☪



—Marjie Leas,
president,
National Alliance
of New Church
Women