



Swedenborgians Meet in Urbana The “Year of the Word” Commences

The 193rd Annual Convention of the Swedenborgian Church concluded on July 3, 2016, after meeting for four days at Urbana University (UU) in Urbana, Ohio. Preceding the convention, the Council of Ministers met for two days, and General Council met for one day.

This convention conducted its usual business and, in addition, honored Rev. Ken Turley for six years of leadership and celebrated the installation of the new president, Rev. Jane Siebert.

Annual conventions are more than delegates meeting to conduct official business. The convention is a community, albeit a “pop-up community,” as it reassembles for a short time every year. The participants continue as a long-distance community over the course of a year, communicating through committees, social media, *the Messenger*, emails, and telephone.

The convention opened on Wednesday evening, June 26, with warm welcomes to Urbana University and the city of Urbana from Rev. Betsy Coffman, minister of the Ur-



Ministers at the Annual Convention (L to R): Dick Tafel, Gard Perry, Jonathan Mitchell, Carla Friedrich, Julie Conaron, John Maine, Betsy Coffman, Wilma Wake, Catherine Lauber, Kevin Baxter, Nadine Cotton, Ken Turley, Renée Machiniak, Anna Woofenden, Susannah Currie, Sage Cole, Jenny Caughman, Jane Siebert, Jim Lawrence, Robert McCluskey, and Young Min Kim (Some ministers departed at the conclusion of the Council of Ministers meeting.)

bana Church of the New Jerusalem; Dr. George Lucas, president of UU; and Bill Bean, mayor of Urbana. Next, the president of General Convention, Rev. Ken Turley, gave his last presidential address to the convention. He spoke of the changes in the Swedenborgian Church and within himself over the six years of his presidency. Looking ahead, he informed us that although his official ministry is over, he intends to continue his spiritual explorations and be of use through writing and performing music, a lifelong passion.

Morning activities began early each day with a small group gathering for a morning sing at 7:15 and a short chapel service at 7:30. A reception fol-

lowed each evening activity (Saturday evening was an open mic gathering), where delegates and guests delighted in refreshments and conversation. Free time gave everyone an opportunity to peruse the display room, where information, books, and fundraising items were offered. Some gathered for vespers at the close of each evening.

Keynote Speaker

After the opening of the first business session on Thursday morning, the keynote speaker, Kathy Cleveland Bull, explored the lessons of the book—*Who Moved My Cheese?* in a slide and lecture presentation. She was friendly and animated, sharing personal stories as she asked, “Which kind of mouse are you?” ([page 106](#))

Reports and Presentations

The business sessions of the conven-

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Betsy Coffman welcoming the convention



President Ken Turley presiding

The Editor's Desk



Beginnings

Mimicking the annual circumnavigation of the Sun by the Earth, the annual cycle of nature's changes responding to it, and the calendar devised to quantify and measure it, the Swedenborgian Church holds its gathering for business and community annually.

Just as we view January 1 of each year as a time for new beginnings, spring as a time of renewal in nature, and Easter as a time of spiritual rebirth, we start afresh each year at our annual convention.

Starting afresh means looking at

things in a new or different light; re-examining our assumptions, goals, and values; asking questions that challenge the way we have been doing things; starting new initiatives; and ending programs and policies that no longer serve our purpose or have value. We look for signs of change as we try to discern pathways to meaningful change as individuals, as communities, as groups within the church, and, to achieve larger ends, as a single body. Out of caution born of wisdom, we change our leadership slowly, electing councilors to three-year terms on a rotating basis and electing new presidents a year before they assume office.

We begin this church year with a new president, Rev. Jane Siebert, and we naturally look to her for unifying leadership. She has been examining structures, investigating issues, seeking expert advice, and organizing teams to begin this annual cycle with new energy. We can look forward to hearing more from her on our progress and we can expect to hear from her asking for our help.

Six years ago, led by Rev. John Maine, the church began a new tradition: a seven-year cycle of annual themes to give us focus as we ap-

proach each year with renewed hopes and plans. For 2016–17, year six in the cycle, the annual theme is “The Year of the Word: the Power of Holy Scripture.”

It is inspiring that we should refocus our attention on the Word, that source of God's love and wisdom that Emanuel Swedenborg always reminds us will guide us in our paths of regeneration. We sometimes become overwhelmed by the problems that face us, as individuals, as societies and as a church—pessimism can easily take over. But together, with strength from the Word, we can begin this hopeful year of change.

—Herb Ziegler

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Church Calendar

- **September 25–26:** CSS fall Board of Trustees meeting, Berkeley CA
- **October 7–9:** Kansas Association Fall Retreat, Camp Mennoscah, KS
- **October 7–9:** Mass New Church Union East Coast Retreat, N. Andover, MA
- **October 14–16:** Pacific Coast Association Annual Meeting, Mosswood Hollow Retreat Center, Duvall, WA
- **November 3–6:** General Council fall meeting • Framingham, MA

the Messenger

© The Swedenborgian Church of North America

Published monthly except July and August by the Communications Support Unit of the Swedenborgian Church of North America (founded 1817, incorporated 1861 as the General Convention of the New Jerusalem in the United States of America), Rev. Jane Siebert, president.

September 2016

Volume 238, No. 9, Whole Number 5412

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Subscriptions: free online subscription at www.swedenborg.org. Printed and mailed to US address, \$20/year; to Canada address, \$30/year; to all other addresses, \$35/year; single copies, \$2.00. Libraries & prisoners, free. Send check made out to “Swedenborgian Church” with “*Messenger*” on the memo line. Other requests, write or call Central Office.

Deadline for submissions is three weeks before the first day of the month of issue.

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

Letter from the President



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

Greetings to all of you faithful *Messenger* readers.

We are so fortunate to have this publication that keeps us informed and connects us as Swedenborgians or friends of Swedenborgians throughout the world. My appreciation to Herb Ziegler as he works each month to edit an enlightening and widely inclusive publication that unites us by keeping us informed.

One thing I have experienced in my year as president-elect is the wide variety of people that are interested in Swedenborg. To me this is a good sign. As we know, Swedenborg emphasized that heaven is made more complete with all the variety of people representing the image of God in which we were created. This “image of God” is reflected in our diversity here in this world and the next. The more diversity, the more heaven. So how can diversity bring us to unity?

A statement that I heard recently has stayed on my mind, “Unity is not the same as uniformity.”

In John’s gospel, Jesus’s last prayer for all of us is that we all “may be one” (John 17:21). Jesus prays that we “may be brought into complete unity” (John 17:23). There is no better witness of Christian love than to accept those who might be different from us, in a variety of ways.

Unity does not mean uniformity. Unity calls for accepting differences, not trying to eliminate them. If God wanted us to all think alike, God would have made us that way. And since we are all unique, God comes to each of us in unique ways. There is no one way to be, to act, to believe. And there is no one way for God to reach us.

My favorite Christian mystic from the early fifteenth century wrote, “By myself I am nothing at all, but in general, I am in the oneing [won-ing] of love. For it is in this oneing that the life of all people exists.” This was Julian of Norwich, and she went on, “The love of God creates in us such a oneing that when it is truly seen, no person can separate themselves from another person.” This is the life Jesus lived and the example he set. “In the sight of God all humans are oned, and one person is all people and all people are in one person.” Everything and everybody is connected.

What if we lived that way, or at least tried to, realizing that we are all connected and that what affects one of us affects all of us?

The epistle of Paul set this forth also, “There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works in all of them.” (1 Corinthians 12:4-6) To me, this is unity of Spirit, but it does not mean uniformity in beliefs. God is creating a heaven of diversity.

So here we are, in a world that is collapsing together into oneness. And we have a choice: look for the good in people rather than how we differ. Relish differences rather than fear them. Realize we are all God’s children, which unifies us. God’s love shows us the way, not to fight the coming together but to embrace it with love. This is the love that only God can give through us to one another.

—Rev. Jane Siebert

Convention Sermon

Love of the Highest Command

BY REV. YOUNG MIN
KIM, 2016 CONVENTION
PREACHER

Readings:

Jonah 4:9–11, John 21:15–18

Sixteen years ago, I stood in Urbana to receive my ordination at the annual convention. This afternoon, I stand here honored and grateful. In those years, the world we live in seems to have changed so much. We, too, have changed. We have lost some of those among our family and friends and we have also gained some. In this time, our Convention has continued on for 192 meetings. Our denomination continues on with the newer generations of faith leaders. We are here because of our connection to those who came before us. But more, we are here because our faith is rooted in the significance of biblical figures. Today I want to talk about Jonah and Peter—two figures whose characters and approaches to practice are deeply meaningful to me.

God commanded Jonah to go to Nineveh, the enemy of Israel and the capital of Assyria. He was tasked with delivering God's message to the Assyrians: "After forty days because of sin, you will be eliminated." But Jonah knew the atrocious acts the Assyrians committed and thus, he resisted preaching to them about the Word of God. Jonah, secretly hoping for Nineveh's destruction, boarded a ship travelling in the opposite direction of Nineveh. But the boat encountered a big storm that threatened to destroy it. Knowing that the boat's fate was due to his actions, Jonah asked the sailors to throw him into the sea to save the other passengers.



Jonah, thrown into the deep water, finds himself in the belly of a giant fish for three days and three nights. Within the dark belly, Jonah finally exclaimed that "Jehovah is my only Savior."

He pleaded with the Lord to save him, vowing to keep his word to obey the Lord. So the Lord had the fish release Jonah and he commanded Jonah once again to go to Nineveh.

Although the journey through all of Nineveh took three days, Jonah walked only a single day around the city to spread the Lord's warning that they would be destroyed if they did not repent. However, something that Jonah neither wanted nor expected happened. The people of Nineveh heard his words and believed his warning. From the king to the beasts, those who heard Jonah's message put on coarse sackcloths, sat down in the dust, fasted, and repented.

Seeing this, the Lord forgave them and spared the people of Nineveh. Jonah was profoundly angered at the Lord's actions. He complained to God, "Lord, I knew you would forgive them. But you knew that you would not destroy them, why did you have me go through these trials to warn them? It would have been better for me to die than to live." He could not understand why the Lord, the Lord of the Israelites, showed such mercy and saved the Gentiles of Nineveh.

Angered, Jonah went out and sat down in a place east of the city where he made himself a shelter. He sat in its

shade and waited to see what would happen to Nineveh. During the night, God provided a vine that grew to shade Jonah. During the next night however, the vine dried out. Jonah became angry once again and said to the Lord, "It would be better for me to die than to live." God replied to Jonah, "You concern yourself with this vine, though you did not tend it or help it grow. It sprang up overnight and died overnight. Nineveh is a city full of people and cattle, much greater than a simple vine. Should I not concern Myself with it?"

In this story, Jonah reveals the dissonance between his belief in the Lord and his own beliefs as a man. From our study of Swedenborg, we know that the fish's belly, where Jonah is trapped for three days, signifies the interiors of thought or understanding, as there are two lives with man. There is the life of the understanding and then the life of the will. Though there are these two lives, all things of the body correspond to these two fountains of life, and thus the whole body of man is subject to the government of these two lives—of will and of understanding (*Apocalypse Explained* §622.13). In essence, Jonah was trapped in the fish's belly because he was fighting with God's truth. Thus when Jonah confessed that only God could save him and escaped the interiors of the belly, he placed his desire to understand God's will above his own human will. However, Jonah was not vigilant and once again placed his selfish will above his desire to understand God's will.

When I read this story, I began to reflect. I looked back on my life and my life as a pastor. To the best of my abilities and with my God-given faith, I worked very hard toward accomplishing good acts. And I believed those good acts were to worship, to study the Bible, to work in my community with

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the underprivileged and the newly immigrated—all of this while raising my family. Despite the many good and beautiful memories, I found myself displeased. It was not the reality that I had desired. And I had to ask myself: Why was I displeased? Deep down, I knew the truth, but I did not want to share it with others—or even myself. What was it then?

In my reflection, it was helpful to think about the conversation between Jesus and Peter. In John 21:15, Jesus asked Peter, “Simon, son of Jonas, love you me more than these? Do you love me?”

Peter’s first two answers were simple and positive: “Yes, Lord. You know that I love you.”

Jesus then replied, “Feed my lambs,” and “Take care of my sheep.”

When Jesus asked him a third time, “Simon, son of Jonas, do you love me?” Peter was hurt. He felt as though Jesus was questioning his love for him.

So in my moment of displeasure, I asked myself this same question: “Do I love the Lord more than these?” I would say, “Yea Lord, I love you.”

A second question comes to me, which is, “Do I love this work?” My answer is, “Yes, I love it!” I love to have worship service with church members, sing hymns together, have coffee hours, do works of charity, study the Bible, and read the writings of Swedenborg. Then the question comes to me a third time. “Do I really love the Lord?” And again, I would answer, “Yea!”

I know the Lord is the only God I can trust. All kinds of negative things are happening to us almost every day. The hate crimes and acts of racial discrimination toward the marginalized, such as the tragedy that happened in Orlando, the gap between the wealthy and the poor, terrorism that is taking place across the world, drug and human trafficking, etc. are all reali-

ties that give us anxiety and endanger our lives. All of these negative forces around me drive my faith in the Lord.

Despite my faith in the Lord, there are still many things that I didn’t do because I didn’t want to. Surrounded by such negative things, I often don’t wish to come out from my own space where I think it is safe. These kinds of attitudes are what I did not want to talk about, what I did not want to share with others. I wished instead to bury them deep down inside myself. I realized that these actions and attitudes are from my ego, my *proprium*. These attitudes are why I found myself displeased despite my faith in God and my good memories. Through my study of the Word, I realized that I must dig these negative things out. I know that my human selfishness might hurt me and the people I love. And I know that it is easy for me to cover these egotistic attitudes and forget them.

How can I uncover and expose my ego? Repent like the people of Nineveh did? Truly a most difficult task.

If someone pointed out my ego to me, as God did to Jonah, I would become angry and hurt. Perhaps many of us would. And without putting my selfishness on the table and seeking forgiveness from the Lord, I would stay in this state of spirit forever.

So the question is what do I have to do?

I looked once more to the story of Peter. Peter was pained when the Lord questioned his love three times. He was confused and unnerved at the Lord’s questioning. Perhaps Peter was unnerved because the Lord knew of Peter’s past rejection of Jesus. But the Lord provided Peter a path toward repentance when he commanded Peter to “feed my lambs and take care of my sheep.” Rev. William Bruce helped me to understand these words a bit more. He said that we should understand this command as, “Care for and minister one another. . . . Preserve and feed

the remains of innocence and charity which the Lord has treasured up in every mind (*Commentary of St. John*, Bruce, pp. 516).” The passages of Jonah and Peter show us that repentance of our selfish egos is the way to return to this first innocent love that we had for the Lord Jesus. Further, throughout our journey of repentance, we must continually tend to this love because—as the Lord showed to Jonah, Peter, and us—faith without love is not faith at all. And there can be no truth when it is separated from love. This naked innocent love—the first love we have toward the Lord Jesus—without the egos and selfishness of man’s will is the love we must tend to.

Jonah’s struggle in the fish’s belly and the Lord’s parallel struggle in hell after his crucifixion lasted three days. I know this struggle between my selfish thoughts and my faith-driven knowledge is a very long one and often seems endless.

Nevertheless, I try every day to examine myself and seek forgiveness for my wrong-doing from the Lord. I don’t know how much time is remaining for me in this world, so today I am going to rededicate myself and restore the first and most innocent love I had for the Lord. I will live following the Lord’s command. As we remember, Jesus declared, “I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again (Matthew 3:3).” Thus, I will embrace my most innocent love for the Lord and my faith in His will so that I can be reborn in a life according to His commandments.

I thank the Lord for the opportunity to witness this confession.

Perhaps, now is the time for us to shed our worldly egos, to rededicate ourselves as a church, and to restore our original and most pure love for the Lord, so that we may live more fully in the light. This we call *regeneration*. And this is the power of the Word. Amen. ☪

CSS Annual Meeting and Graduation Ceremony

The Center for Swedenborgian Studies (CSS) at the Graduate Theological Union (GTU), which is also known by its original name, the New Church Theological School, held its annual meeting on the evening of June 29. Members of the Swedenborgian Church may become members of the school; new members join by signing a membership book at the start of the meeting.

The dean, Rev. Dr. Jim Lawrence, addressed the meeting, summarizing the history of the seminary since moving to Berkeley in 2000 and explaining the structure and direction of the school.

Attention turned to the commencement ceremony. Rev. Jenny Caughman delivered the commencement address, and the students receiving certificates of Swedenborgian Studies from CSS came forward to receive them.

Dean's Address

Rev. Dr. Jim Lawrence

General Convention's seminary, the Center for Swedenborgian Studies at the Graduate Theological Union (CSS), has just completed its fifteenth year since moving to Berkeley in the summer of 2001. When the school closed in the Boston area, there were no students left in the pipeline. Counting this year's graduates, the West Coast version of our Swedenborgian seminary has facilitated forty-one successfully completed academic journeys in M.Div., M.A., and M.T.S. degrees and Induction and Licensed Pastor programs. In addition, fifteen students are in the pipeline now.

Many members have expressed concern that the school is producing too many graduates for the Church. While it is true that there are not enough jobs in General Convention to absorb all of



the graduates, employment in a Convention ministry is only one of several vocations open to graduates.

Because all of our ordinands obtain an accredited master's degree (usually the M.Div.) while studying at CSS, they have an employability status that did not exist before we moved to Berkeley, except for students who undertook it upon themselves to enroll in degree programs at other seminaries. Our ordination-path students pursue their degrees at accredited theological schools while taking courses at CSS, making our graduates eligible for a much broader spectrum of jobs working in the world as a Swedenborgian.

We have had ten graduates in chaplaincy ministry, working for hospitals and hospice organizations; four who are serving congregations in other denominations; thirteen who have pursued entrepreneurial ministries; and nineteen who have served established Convention ministries.

We certainly celebrate our graduates this evening: ordinands Thom Muller, who has a call from the Swedenborgian Community Church at Hillside [El



Jim Lawrence presenting a gift to Tom Neuenfeldt in recognition of his 8 years of service on the CSS Board of Trustees, 3 years as chair

Cerrito, California] and Lisa Solwold, who is moving to Florida and will be developing an entrepreneurial ministry while also exploring chaplaincy; and inductee Terry Schnarr, who has envisioned an itinerant ministry. This evening's graduates also include Karen Feil, who leads the Swedenborg Library program in Chicago and who has successfully completed the Certificate of

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Swedenborgian Studies, and licensed pastor candidates Christine Campbell for Temenos in West Chester, Pennsylvania; Paul Deming for the Church of the Open Word in St. Louis; and Linda Callander for the New Church of the Southwest Desert in New Mexico.

Due to our success in training consecrated leaders for tomorrow's church and world, the board's decision to reorganize the school's relationship to the many institutions at the Graduate Theological Union creates a stronger position to work toward the objective in our mission statement that calls us to serve not only as a center for Swedenborgian scholarship but to be on the leading edge of Swedenborgian scholarship. By shifting from being a house of studies

within the Pacific School of Religion to being an independent center at the Graduate Theological Union, while retaining the capacity to support just as fully students working toward degrees at Pacific School of Religion and other seminaries, our faculty have greater freedom to pursue scholarship more devoted to Swedenborgian scholarship.

We have taken to calling our new model "The Two Towers of CSS": One tower, so to speak, is devoted to ministry studies for our vocational students in their professional formation, and the other tower is devoted to Swedenborgian scholarly outreach into world thought. We have built an impressive faculty with Dr. Devin Zuber, our associate professor in Religion and Art and in Swedenborgian Studies at the GTU, and with Rebecca Esteron, lecturer in Sacred Texts and Traditions and in Swedenborgian Studies. As prominent faculty at the largest theological consortium in the United

States, our faculty are becoming more visible in the world. I often wistfully wonder where we might be today if the "four lions" (Revs. George Dole, Bill Woofenden, Bob Kirven, Cal Turley), with whom I studied to such great benefit, had been teaching at institutions where the world could have more directly experienced their amazing wisdom and skills.

Our goals at CSS are to build and maintain glistening towers of productivity for both professional formation and scholarly outreach in the world.

A quick word is in order about our library and archives. When we moved the collection from Boston to Berkeley, we obtained a significant grant from the Teagle

Foundation to recatalog the collection in order for it to be integrated electronically into the GTU Library catalog,

which boasts the third largest theological collection in the United States, and for every volume to be cleaned; preservation materials were used for new, sophisticated maintenance of our specialty collection, which is largely antique. The collection has been in ideal climate conditions for the past fifteen years, and it is a delight to report that all year long the collection is in use by authors, historians, and documentary filmmakers, in addition to students.

To conclude on financial matters, we finished the last fiscal year ending June, 2015, with an approximate \$12k surplus over our budget, though the total endowment of \$12,439,501 was down from the year before by about \$70k due to market fluctuations. We anticipate higher expenses due to new infrastructure for operations, so we have identified development as our number one priority for this year. We need and thank you for your support! ☸

Commencement Address

Rev. Jenny Caughman: Cultivating Lives of Compassion

Congratulations Christine, Karen, Linda, Lisa, Paul, Terry and Thom. In receiving this certificate you are also receiving from this body our blessing and our acknowledgement that you are now, in our estimation,



prepared to be the bearers of truth. And yet, as our theology so beautifully teaches us, this, of course, is not the whole story.

For Swedenborg repeatedly tells us that the truth is not truth if it is separated from goodness. So, as you move forward, as you put into practice what you have recently learned (or, for at least one of you, relearned), you are also charged to be the bearers of goodness, to be the voice of compassion, and, in our culture, this can be a difficult task. So let us now explore one view of what is involved in being a bearer of goodness.

The bestowing of these certificates [completion of a CSS course of study] is an external, public acknowledgement and recognition that you have acquired, that you understand, a certain level of truth as presented by Swedenborg. We, as a body, are saying that you have attained, at minimum, the basic understanding necessary to lead others in their quest to not only understand the teachings of Swedenborg, but perhaps even more importantly, to live out these teachings, to grow toward angelhood.

Because of this understanding of Swedenborg's teachings, you, of course, realize that true understanding is not simply an external thing—it is also an internal thing—and that, in fact, the greater the degree of under-

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Commencement Address

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standing the more internal it is. As we all know, there is an important difference between the acquisition of knowledge and the gaining of understanding. I can recite for you the quadratic equation (minus b plus or minus the square root of b squared minus $4ac$, all over $2a$) but I'm quick to admit I have no idea what it's used for! I have knowledge of the quadratic equation, but no understanding of it.

This certificate is much more than a piece of paper, for in giving you this certificate, we are publicly stating that we believe in you. We have confidence that not only are you capable of sharing Swedenborg's teachings with others; we are saying we believe that in people's quest for spiritual growth, on their path of regeneration, as they strive to live in heaven, that, because of what you have learned, you are equipped to guide them on this journey. So, again, I say congratulations—and blessings, as this is truly an awesome responsibility.

The good news is that Swedenborg sees regeneration as a process, that our goal is not so much achievement of a certain level, but instead to continually move toward greater love and wisdom. It is our intention, our desire, to move in that direction, which is more important than where we are on that road. So if this your intention, to truly understand, then the natural next question is, "How do we move from knowledge to greater understanding?" Fortunately, our theology makes this very clear: This change happens, (as at times it seems almost everything does) through the cooperation, or conjunction, of goodness and truth as we move from an outward focus toward a more inward focus, from a more worldly focus toward a more spiritual focus. This happens when we choose, to the best of our ability, the path of love, when our

intention is to live a life of caring and compassion for ourselves and for all others. For as Swedenborg describes,

[T]he progression of human rebirth [is] from the outer to the inner, that is, from the truth of faith to the good of compassion. The truth that belongs to faith is outward and the good that belongs to compassion is inward."¹

And what does a life of deep, true compassion, or charity, require? I believe such a life requires two things.

First it requires love and trust of God and an acceptance of our total dependence on God. We must constantly remind ourselves that all that is good, all that is true, in fact, all life, comes from God, and that without God we are nothing, we would not exist. When

This certificate is much more than a piece of paper, for in giving you this certificate, we are publicly stating that we believe in you.

our parishioners, or anyone else whom we serve, compliment and love us, let us remember it is God shining through us whom they love. If they think we are wise and insightful, let us remember that it is God speaking through us who they appreciate. A life of compassion requires an attitude of humility.

The second thing such a life requires is a fierce, unrelenting commitment to the truth, in the sense of being willing to recognize what gets in the way of compassion. When, in spite of our professed intentions, do our priorities get upended so that our self-interests impede our concern for others? When does our self-centeredness, often spurred on by well-hidden, well camouflaged hurts, fears, and anxieties, distort our perception of the truth and our desire to do good? When have we, often totally unaware, turned away from God and thus blocked the inflow

of spiritual light and warmth? For none of us here has yet reached the highest heaven. I believe all of our spiritual GPSs will tell us that there is still construction ahead!

When describing the path of regeneration, Swedenborg tells us it starts with repentance. In what has struck me, I admit at times, as an annoyingly simplistic manner, he tells us we are to merely "examine ourselves, recognize and admit to our sins, pray to the Lord, and begin a new life." And a bit later he tells us, "Actual repentance is easy for people who have done it a few times," but then, thankfully, acknowledges that "those who have not done it, however, experience tremendous inner resistance to it."² It is this inner resistance which we must acknowledge and work with, not ignore. For if we are to live a life of compassion, let alone try to lead others along this path, we must, with God's help, seek to see ourselves clearly and be compassionately honest with ourselves about our shortcomings, limitations, and pervasive tendency toward self-centeredness.

If we are to be effective as ministers, whether as licensed pastors or ordained clergy, we must do what we are asking others to do, just as parents must act as they want their children to act and teachers who want to be treated with respect must treat their students with respect. We must be more invested in actually helping those with whom we are charged to help grow spiritually than in being seen as wise and compassionate leaders. For "Spiritual warmth and light flow into us to the extent that we are receptive. We are receptive in proportion to our love of the Lord and our love toward the neighbor."³ Again, in Swedenborg's words: "As for the clergy, they are to teach people the way to heaven and also to lead them. They are to teach them accord-

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¹ *Arcana Coelestia* §3870

² *True Christian Religion* §561

³ *Divine Love and Wisdom* §4–5

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ing to the doctrine of their own church and lead them so that they live by it.”⁴ And we lead them not so much by our words as by our actions and our attitudes—attitudes toward others and toward ourselves. Thirty years ago, when I was studying music therapy, the leader of the program insisted that we be in therapy ourselves. She repeatedly warned us that we could not take anyone where we ourselves were not willing to go. Or, in the words of Marianne Williamson, “The Masters are ones who refashion the world by having been themselves refashioned.”⁵

We are “refashioned,” or regenerated, by the process of repentance; for in so doing we acknowledge what we truly love, and in honestly acknowledging what we love, we are in the truth. As Swedenborg tells us, “Love constitutes the whole person; the nature of any individual is determined by the nature of that individual’s love.”⁶ For we, as churches within ourselves, need to remember that “doctrine alone in a person does not constitute a church, it takes a life in accord with doctrine,”⁷ which, as I have said, is a life of compassion. Which brings us back to the point which Swedenborg makes over and over again, of the importance of the union of goodness and truth, love and wisdom, will and understanding. But he tells us this for our own good as well as for the good of those we serve, for this is the path toward joy and contentment, toward peace. He writes: “Divine peace arises from the union of the Lord with heaven, and, in particular, in each angel from the union of the good and true; so when angels are in a state of love, they are in a state of peace because then the good is united to the

true within them. . . . It is like this for people who are being regenerated.”⁸

This is important and helpful for us to remember, for just as divine peace arises from this union, I would also suggest that inner discord, if we are sensitive to it, can be a red flag of the lack of such a union. We can use this inner discord (as well as outer discord!) as a heads up that it is time for self-examination, to explore what might be the root of this disparity, what we are truly loving and not just what we are professing to love.

I am a pragmatist, and so I believe it is important to ask what can help us to do what we know we should do; so in this case, what can help us to be able to do this—to examine ourselves with the intent of honestly seeking the truth and not simply making ourselves look good to ourselves or others. For me, there are three things that help. The first is prayer and a deep commitment to a spiritual discipline. As regeneration is effected in us by the Lord, not by our own power, I believe the stronger our personal relationship with God the more likely we will be receptive to this process. The more fully we experience God’s love, the greater the transformation.

Second, I believe we greatly benefit from experiencing God’s love through other people. There are times, for whatever reason, I may have difficulty knowing how deeply I am loved by God. Other people, through their words and actions, through treating me with compassion, can help me reconnect and receive from God. This is the value and importance of community. I recently had an experience where someone deeply hurt me. I knew he too was hurt, but I had trouble finding within me the desire to reach out to him in kindness. It was only after others were kind to me that I was able to be kind to him.

And the third thing that I identi-

fy as helping us to embrace the path of repentance, of being open to the truth about ourselves, is to acknowledge that, at times we do want things for personal reasons. I was recently reading a book about Franciscan Prayer which said that Clare of Assisi unabashedly admitted that her ultimate goal was to join God in heaven. What was helpful for me was her willingness to be so open about a personal desire and intention. This reinforced the point that the goal is not to deny our own needs, for they are real and, I think, will always be there. Swedenborg does not tell us we are never to be concerned with ourselves, that we are not to love ourselves—no, not at all. Instead it is about balance, about making room for the other, it is about letting our love of God guide us so we express love of neighbor and not just love of self. We must strive to not have our love-of-self predominate; It must not lead; Instead it is to be subservient to our love of God and neighbor.

Ironically, it is in recognizing and acknowledging that we do have needs, that there are times when our love of self does take over, that we are able to put self-love back in its place. It is unrecognized needs that tend to wreak havoc. So, yet again, it is about the coming together of truth and goodness. In recognizing our needs, we are in the truth. And if our intentions are good, if we truly desire to be led by God and led away from our selfish loves, then we are in a position to receive the influx of warmth and light and be transformed.

So I leave you now with the words first of Thomas Merton, and then Swedenborg. Thomas Merton humbly recognized the limitations of his knowledge and perspective, as well as the importance of the desire to be grounded in love and trust of God. This, he expressed beautifully in the following prayer:

4 *Arcana Coelestia* §10794

5 *Illuminata: Thoughts, Prayers, Rites of Passage*, p. 50

6 *Arcana Coelestia* §10177:4

7 *Ibid.* §10760

8 *Heaven and Hell* §289

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Ordination

Annual conventions are the venue for the ordination of ministerial candidates who have met the requirements for admission into the ministry of the General Convention of the New Jerusalem. At this convention, two individuals were ordained, Thom Muller and Lisa Solwold, and Rev. Terry Schnarr was inducted. (He was previously ordained as a minister in the General Church of the New Jerusalem, the New Church.) The ceremony was conducted by Rev. Ken Turley. Following a tradition of laying on hands from ministers to the ordainands, ministers gathered behind each for the ceremony. Following are the addresses of the ordinands.



Ministers (L to R wearing stoles): Rev. Terry Schnarr, Rev. Thom Muller, and Rev. Lisa Solwold

Ordinand Address

Lisa Solwold: "The Road to Ordination"

This journey has been extremely rewarding but also very humbling. Change is humbling, whether it's elected or imposed. I forgot that in choosing change I was also agreeing to enter into meekness, that vulnerable and humbling state of admitting *I don't know*—an uncomfortable but necessary step toward growth.

I have to admit that when I began this journey four years ago, I didn't see this moment as a goal because, truthfully, all I could see were the obstacles. I'd built a fortress of reasons why this wouldn't work out: I was too new to Swedenborg; I didn't have deep Swedenborgian roots. In fact, I didn't grow up in a church, so much of the general "churchiness" was unfamiliar to me.

But God has quite a sense of humor. Just when I'd added another brick to the fortress, questioning whether I was too old to start this, I ran into a friend who announced that he had just enrolled in Purdue University and would only be *ninety* when he graduates! Re-

ally, God, *ninety*? Just in case I didn't get the message! (He graduated last year, in May of 2015. His wife sent me a charming You Tube video of his graduation.)

My spiritual journey, as many of you know, has been unconventional and began in my twenties, when life became rocky. I started in twelve-step programs then segued into personal growth groups. It was the eighties, I lived in Los Angeles, and everyone I knew was in a twelve-step group—or several. I am drawn to the mystical and esoteric, so over the decades since, I studied and practiced several other spiritual applications, including macrobiotics, Chinese face reading, and esoteric healing. Each of these taught a practical means of applying spirituality in daily life.

I was convinced my alternative background would preclude me from being accepted into seminary. Nevertheless, I filled out applications, and lo and behold, CAM [Swedenborgian Committee on Admission into the Ministry] said "welcome." Even the Lutherans at my St. Paul seminary said "welcome." So, I had no more excuses. I took a deep breath and plowed forth, excited for this new road ahead.

As we know from Exodus, when we embark on a significant life change, our initial excitement and euphoria will only carry us so far. We might think we've moved beyond old foes of fear, doubt, or cynicism but they tend to challenge us when we're in the wilderness, and it wasn't long before they crept in. I was often unsure how to write that paper. What the heck did that reading even mean? Was I the only one who didn't understand the question? Often tired, overwhelmed, or discouraged, I also had a great deal of support along the way. My husband and family, the school, CAM, and those at Virginia Street Church, were always encouraging and could point to a spark of light even when I was groping in the dark.

I found myself butting heads with a couple professors, whose messaging I disagreed with. Do I write a paper to please them and get a better grade, or write from truth as I understood it? I usually opted for the latter, though at one point I found myself so enmeshed in contention that I questioned whether I was on the right path. I knew something in me had to shift; either I had to leave this path or I had to find something in this head-butting battle that was valuable for my journey go-

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Ordinand Address

Thom Muller: "Why?"

I would like to begin with a reading from Swedenborg, *True Christianity*.

The one God is substance itself and form itself. Angels and people are substances and forms from him. To the extent that they are in him and he is in them, to that extent they are images and likenesses of him.

Because God is the underlying reality, he is also substance. Unless the underlying reality becomes substance it is a figment of the imagination; but as a substance it becomes an entity. And one who is substance is also form, for substance without form is another figment of the imagination. We can attribute both of these to God, provided he is seen as the sole, the only, and the archetypal substance and form. [§20].

I'm super happy to be here. I want to express my gratitude and honor to be here in this moment, in this space, with all of you, with family, and with very good friends.

Throughout this time of the Council of Ministers meeting and the convention proper, there have been a lot of discussions, addresses, and lectures that have, kind of strangely, led up to the thoughts I am going to share now. Jim and Ken have expressed a state of excitement at our movement, our community, our church. I, too, feel a great sense of excitement at this moment.

The question I get quite a lot from my different groups of friends is, "Why would you do that? Why do you want to be a minister—now—in the Swedenborgian Church? What's the Swedenborgian Church?"

One of the themes we talk about often as Swedenborgians is spiritual evolution, both individual and collective. And, as we know, we are in a very interesting time. People are asking a lot of

questions. And, if we just think about 200 years back, we had our first convention; this is the 192nd. Before that, we had seen the Age of Enlightenment, the time of Swedenborg, when people were faced with huge, deep, profound questions. Science and rationality were flashing, perhaps like never before. I see parallels to that inner and outer conflict to our time today.

Now, I believe we're seeing the New Church, as Swedenborg talks about, unfolding all around us, and sometimes in uncomfortable ways. So, yes, we as Swedenborgians might have to catch up a little bit with the Church. So I think things aren't great; I mean it when I say we live in a new time, and people are receiving and cultivating a new church, within them and around them—all around the world in their churches and temples and coffee shops, in their living rooms meditating. People are rejecting obsolete, regressive modes of thinking, of believing. This past year, we saw marriage equality in this country. And so many other things that are unprecedented in human history.

Now, the question remains—why? One way of answering that, personally, is that thoughts from Emanuel Swedenborg offer us, at this moment, a deeply relevant paradigm, with which we can embrace and cultivate this new age of spiritual evolution, within and around us. Swedenborgian theology invites us to integrate our love and our wisdom, our intellect and our affection, our rationality and our spirituality into a new connection with the Divine. So many times today, many of us in our society and people in societies around the world feel like they have to choose between the two. We get disillusioned by the illogical and unkind, sometimes ignorant elements of established religion and sometimes become

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Inductee Address

Terry Schnarr: "Everything I Know"

What a day for experiences this is. I never expected to be so excited or open or moved, so thank you for this opportunity.

In my sophomore year at Florida State University, I discovered what my calling, or use, was: to take Swedenborg's teachings to the world that didn't know of him. And I've been on that quest, more or less, ever since.

My plan, eventually, is to go to campgrounds and start talking to people and say here's what's going on. So this day marks a new beginning for me—one that I am counting on the Lord for help with.

I want to read from the first text I ever used, which was at Florida State. I did a half hour presentation on this text, talking about the New Church and the New Jerusalem. Here is Revelation 21 [King James version]:

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

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Ordination Address: Lisa Solwold

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ing forward.

I actually found the answer in a very odd place; the book of Leviticus, specifically in the rituals of sacrifice. I wondered why there was so much emphasis on this in the Old Testament. People tend to gloss over this because the descriptions of splashing blood and dissecting animal parts seem too archaic to hold value for life today. However, when I read it from an “inner meaning,” I began to imagine the “bull” as *the beast of all that I know so far*. And I’m bringing this “beast” in front of God with the intention that this is the best of what I have to offer right now, and asking, “What is usable here, and what is not?” As you know, in the ritual of sacrifice, generally, the animal was cut, the blood—the life—splashed on the altar, the most holy place. The animal was then dissected, inspected, and a portion thrown into the fire as an offering to God. A portion went to the priest. What is valuable for the priest in us? A portion was discarded. What’s no longer necessary? A portion was given to the offerer as their own nourishment to use and build their next cache of *all that I know so far*.

My father was scheduled to attend this event, but couldn’t, so I wanted to share an experience he had that helped me understand an aspect of this ritual more practically. My parents have raised bison for forty years. A couple of years ago my father began winnowing the herd to a more manageable size now that he’s eighty, so he sold a large



number of animals to other bison farmers, and it’s now down to about eleven. A few months later I asked him how life was with a more manageable herd. He said with a smile, “It’s great, but I shouldn’t have gotten rid of that many elders because there’s no longer any corporate memory in the herd. There’s no one to carry on what they knew before about life, order, structure, safety.” These little “teenagers” were running around jumping over the fence, going through the fence, fighting—they didn’t know how to act or what their role was. They didn’t know how to be a herd, who was to lead, or who was to follow. This illustrated, for me, a particular part of ritual sacrifice: In sorting through the cache of all we’ve accumulated so far, separating the sacred from the mundane, not everything is kept, nor everything discarded. It is a sacred form of sorting. There is value in what has been learned and it should become part of the foundation for the road ahead.

This journey has taught me that ministry isn’t about fixing people. It isn’t about having all the answers. It’s about listening. Listening deeply. Not to find out where someone is wrong but to find out where they’ve gotten stuck and to listen deeply for what’s yearning to come forth. When I found myself at an impasse with professors, I listened deeply to where I had gotten stuck. To hear what was yearning to come forth and ask, “What’s here for me to learn? What am I missing that could be of value here?” For me, a large part of this journey has been getting comfortable with being uncomfortable and realizing it may be a crucial part of effective ministry.

In closing, I stand before you as someone who does not have all the answers. I am honored to be here and will

Ordination Address: Thom Muller

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reactionary and cynical, materialistic. Or we choose to suppress our rationality for the sake of blind faith. I feel that what Swedenborg is saying is that that paradox itself is evolution. There’s a middle path that opens us up to a realization of our own roles, as vessels of and contributors to the Divine.

I feel that I am one of these people, products of this time who have been transformed by Emanuel Swedenborg’s writings. I feel a sense of calling and a sense of usefulness in facilitating this with others. That, in short, is my answer to the question, why?

I had some more things to say but thought instead to share a poem with you. This is a poem from one of my favorite poets, theologians, thinkers—St. John of the Cross.

I entered where I did not know,
And there remained unknowing,
All reason now transcended.

I did not know the door
But when I found the way,
Unknowing where I was,
I learned unheard of things,



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work very hard to walk with God in this new path. I am immensely grateful to my husband, to my children, to my father, who has been my spiritual advisor for many years now, to the school who supported me, and to Virginia Street Church [St. Paul] for helping me along this journey. ☪

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But what I heard I cannot say,
 For I remained unknowing,
 All reason now transcended.
 My knowledge was fulfilled
 With serenity and peace.
 In deepest solitude
 I found the narrow way:
 A secret giving such release
 That I was left there stammering,
 All reason now transcended.
 I was so fully drunk,
 So dazed and far away,
 My senses were released
 From feelings of my own.
 My mind had found a surer way
 A knowledge of unknowing,
 All reason now transcended.
 And he who does arrive,
 Collapses as in sleep;
 For all he knew before
 Now seems of little worth,
 And so his knowledge grows so deep
 That he remains unknowing,
 All reason now transcended.
 The higher he ascends,
 The darker is the wood;
 It is the shadowy cloud
 That clarified the night,
 And so the one who understood
 Remains at last unknowing,
 All reason now transcended.
 This knowledge by unknowing
 Is such a soaring force
 That scholars argue long
 But never leave the ground.
 Their reason always fails the source:
 To understand unknowing,
 All reason now transcended.
 This knowledge is supreme
 And meets a blazing height,
 Though formal reason tries,
 It crumbles in the dark.
 For one who would control the night,
 By knowledge of unknowing
 He will have all transcended.
 This is my final word,
 The highest learning lead
 To an ecstatic feeling
 Of the most holy Being;
 And from his mercy comes his deed:
 To make one stay unknowing,
 All reason now transcended. ☸

Inductee Address: Terry Schnarr

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I've heard the Lord speak to me three times in my life. The second time, he called me stupid. The third time, he called me dummy. And I'm going to tell you about the first time!

I was six years old, living in Japan because my father was in the US Air Force, and my mother went back to the United States. And I said to some adult, "Where's my mom?" It was not my father because he would not have answered in the following way.

They said, "She's gone back to the States." "Well, why?" "Because your grandmother and grandfather died." (They died suddenly nine days apart.) I said, "Oh, what does that mean?" They said, "They're dead. That means they're not there anymore." I said, "What do you mean? Where did they go? What happens when you die?" And they answered, "They put you in a box and bury you in the ground." I said, "Oh, what do you do there?" And they said, "Nothing." I said, "Yuck, who'd want to do that?" They said, "You have to; everyone has to die." I said, "No, not me. No way." They said, "Yeah, you too, Terry. Everyone has to die."

Now, I have to tell you, I was a very, very busy little boy. Today it would be called ADD. My parents used to send me out to run around the house ten times. And I'd come back in the house and say, "What can I do now?" And they'd say, "Can you do ten more?" And I'd say, "Sure." And we'd do this

over and over again; I'd run around the house 100 times or more. (I ended up becoming a track star. By junior year of high school I was undefeated in long distance running.)

So after they said you too, Terry, I went to bed, and I thought I better practice. So I lay in my bed and I tried to be still—and I couldn't do it; no matter how hard I tried, I kept moving—even involuntarily. (You know, when you're falling asleep and you start jerking a little bit?) I just couldn't be still. I ended up crying myself to sleep. I was scared. I thought, I can't do this. I'm not going to be able to die. So, that happened two or three nights in a row. I would go to bed and I would practice how to be still so I could lie in that box and be dead.

Now, about the third or fourth night of crying myself to sleep because I was afraid I couldn't do this thing that "everyone had to do"—and I don't

remember seeing a vision—I heard the Lord's voice, loud and clear saying, "Terry, don't worry. You're never going to die!"

That was the first time He talked to me. And that message filled every

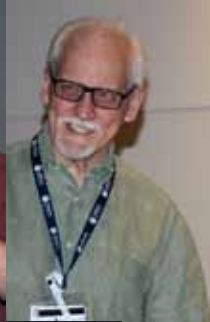
cell in my body—every *bone* in my body. So much so that I know it better than the back of my hand, better than my name. In fact, it's the only thing that I know. I *know* it. That was a gift He gave me, and I want to bear witness to you tonight: you're not gonna die either. I *know* that.

So, the title of my talk is, "Everything I Know." That's it. That's all I know! Everything else is what I believe and what I think.



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2016 Convention Photo Album



More Convention Photos at
<http://tinyurl.com/hotqjf9>



Annual Convention Report

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tion included receipt of reports from

- The officers and General Council
- The Council of Ministers (COM)
- The Nominating Committee
- Support units
- Convention Digital Presence Committee

(Reports of officers and support units will be published in the *2016 Journal of the Swedenborgian Church*.)

The convention was addressed by representatives of several entities with information of interest. Rev. Wilma Wake introduced members of Sweden-



Rev. Wilma Wake (standing) and (L to R) SwedenborgianCommunity.org members Val Brugler and Sue Kern

borgianCommunity.org, and reported on the variety of online activities and the extent of its outreach. Morgan Beard gave a PowerPoint presentation detailing the Swedenborg Foundation's increasing reach into the internet world. For Urbana University, David Ormsbee expressed appreciation to the Swedenborgian Church and updated attendees on changes and activities at UU and its parent, Franklin University, since the annual convention at UU in 2013. Rev. Anna Woofenden updated the convention on her recently established ministry in San Pedro, California, showing activities from planting and harvesting to taking meals together and sharing in worship services.



Rev. Anna Woofenden

Elections

The Election Committee, chaired by Barb Halle, conducted elections. They yielded the following results:

- Vice-president: Tom Neuenfeldt
- Recording secretary: Karen Conger
- Treasurer: Polly Baxter
- General Council, minister: Rev. Betsy Coffman (Rev. Junchol Lee



Barb Halle (LaPorte Church) explains the balloting process

and Rev. Dick Tafel for unexpired terms)

- General Council, layperson: Debbie Dolley, Carl Helm
- Communications Support Unit (COMSU): Tam Mounce
- Education Support Unit (EDSU): Rev. Jim Lawrence
- Financial and Physical Resources Support Unit (FPRSU): BJ Neuenfeldt
- Information Management Support Unit (IMSU): open
- Ministries Support Unit (MINSU): Sharon Williams, Bob Reen
- Committee on Admission into the Ministry (CAM), minister: Rev. Jonathan Mitchell
- CSS Board of Trustees, representative class: Nancy Little, Robert Morrill
- Nominating Committee: Connie Helm

Social Concerns Resolution

Rev. Nadine Cotton, speaking

for the Social Concerns Committee, moved the following resolution:

The Social Concerns Committee requests that the General Convention adopt and affirm the National Council of Churches, USA "Resolution and Call to Action on Ending Gun Violence" (<http://tinyurl.com/ht5dbez>) and encourages the denomination, officers, associations, member churches, ministries, and individual members to write letters in support of this resolution to their federal representatives.

The motion passed unanimously.



Rev. Nadine Cotton

Worship Services

Thursday meetings began with the annual Memorial Communion Service, in which worshippers were invited to come to the front, light a candle, and state the names of departed family or friends.

On Friday, meetings concluded with the Swedenborgian Church Youth League (SCYL) Worship Service. The



The teens of the Swedenborgian Church Youth League

teens produce a service annually, creating it on the preceding day. The service was in the form of a skit with a spiritual message, complete with talented instrumentation and singing.

The convention sessions ended with the Convention Communion Service, where Rev. Young Min Kim gave the sermon (page 90), and the newly ordained ministers assisted Rev. Ken Turley in the sacrament of commu-

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Dorothea Harvey Memorial Dedication

BY Bonnie Quist

Several dozen friends and colleagues attended the Dorothea Harvey Memorial dedication service held on Saturday, July 2, 2016, at Urbana University (UU). We were blessed with perfect weather as we gathered around the Memorial, in front of the Student Center and nestled amidst a cluster of pine trees close to Hazard Hall.



Barb Mackey performs a special piece

Dr. Barb Mackey played music on the cello she composed for the occasion. The reflections of Dorothea shared by Bill Bean (mayor of Urbana),

Rev. Wilma Wake (right column), and John Titus blessed all in attendance as we were enlightened about the life of this faithful Urbana University faculty member, chaplain, colleague, and friend. They spoke of their deep love for Dorothea and recounted their experiences of her as students (John and Bill) and as a colleague (Wilma).

Unexpectedly, as the clock struck 2 PM, we heard "Eternal Father, Strong to Save," the Navy hymn, ringing across campus from the Harvey Carillon, a reminder of Dorothea's service in the United States Navy.

The Dorothea Harvey Memorial is the result of the generosity of several UU friends. Phase 1 of the project is completed. It included the refurbishing and relocation of the steeple from the former Harvey Chapel to its current site, along with upgrading and relocating the Harvey Carillon to the clock tower where it can be heard across campus.



Rendering of the memorial created by Mike Major, local Urbana artist and long-time friend of Dorothea Harvey

Phase 2 involves installing a large patio adjacent to the steeple. This area will welcome students, groups, friends, and other visitors to enjoy the serenity of the site while interacting. Depending upon final construction quotes and adequate funding, we hope to pour the patio in time for students and others to enjoy it this fall.



UU grad and Urbana mayor Bill Bean

will begin once sufficient funds are received to ensure its completion.

UU invites you to participate as a donor to the memorial. To get involved please contact the Urbana University Advancement office at 937-772-9246 or at advancement@urbana.edu. Your contribution to this project will extend Dorothea's legacy on the campus and

enrich the lives of the many students and others who experience the site in the future. ☩

Bonnie Quist is vice-president for university advancement & strategic relations at Urbana University.

My Memories of Dorothea

BY WILMA WAKE

I'm honored for this opportunity to share some of my memories of Rev. Dr. Dorothea Harvey.

I first heard about Dorothea in the early Eighties, when I was in seminary at the Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, Massachusetts. The "Philadelphia Eleven" had been "irregularly" ordained in 1974, opening the way to the ordination of other Episcopal women. But, it was still hard for women to get ordained. I was required to see a psychiatrist, who sent a report to my Bishop. The Bishop informed me that I was unfit for ministry due to negative findings by the psychiatrist. What were they? I had no children. Clearly I was sublimating my maternal instinct in wanting to be a minister!

I was devastated! But then in talking to other women students, I learned that one whose children were grown was told she was unfit because she had "empty nest syndrome." Then someone with small children told me she had been rejected because she would be abandoning her motherly duties going to seminary while she had young children. There clearly was a pattern there!

About that time, I learned about

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UU grad and Urbana Church member John Titus

General Council Convention Meetings

Pre-Convention Meeting

The General Council pre-convention meeting took place on Wednesday, June 29. This council was succeeded by the newly-elected council, which met for its post-convention meeting. Individuals are identified by their positions at time of meeting.

Council members present were Rev. Ken Turley, president; Rev. Betsy Coffman, vice-president; Karen Conger, recording secretary; Polly Baxter, treasurer; Lon Elmer; Barb Cullen; Rev. David Fekete; Debbie Dolley; Tom Neuenfeldt; Stan Conger; and Rob Lawson. Not present were Rev. Susan Turley and Rev. Sky Paradise, both of whom resigned.

Guests present were Rev. Kevin Baxter, chair of the Council of Ministers (COM); Rev. Jane Siebert, president-elect; Rev. Rich Tafel; Chris Laitner; Rev. Dick Tafel; Rachel Madjerac and Cory Bradford Watts, ordination-track students at the Center for Swedenborgian Studies; and Rev. Gardiner Perry, chair-elect of COM.

Reports

Treasurer Polly Baxter reported that, on the advice of Convention's CPA firm, Johnson O'Connor, the Wayfarers Chapel and the denomination's financials should be reported separately, because combined financials would appear to distort the operations and position of the General Convention.

COM chair Rev. Kevin Baxter reported that there were twenty-eight ministers in attendance at their meetings. There are eight students pursuing ordination and six students in the licensed pastor process. The Roll of Ministers will reflect the passing of Rev. Dr. Ivan Franklin and Rev. Judith Dennis; in addition, Rev. Carl Yenetchi and Rev. Kin'ichi Kuniyeda not having been in communication with



General Council 2015–16. Back row L to R: Rev. Kevin Baxter (COM chair, guest), Tom Neuenfeldt, Lon Elmer, Rev. David Fekete, Rob Lawson. Front row L to R: Debbie Dolley, Barb Cullen, Rev. Betsy Coffman, Polly Baxter, Stan Conger, Karen Conger, Rev. Ken Turley (Absent: Rev. Sky Paradise, Rev. Sue Turley)

COM, their names will be moved to the Roll of Former Ministers.

Chris Laitner delivered a report on the Denominational Digital Presence Group (DPG). The group is composed of Rev. Jenn Tafel, Dr. Page Morahan, Rev. Kevin Baxter, Val Brugler, Kathryn Pruiett, Polly Baxter, and Chris Laitner (facilitator). They used a Pew Research study to help them define their target audiences and are envisioning consistent contact geared toward those audiences using specific devices (smart phones, tablets, computers). Their launch target is the 2017 Annual Convention in West Chester, Pennsylvania. They are beginning a search for a website developer.

Old Business

Guest Rev. Rich Tafel, recently called to ministry at the Washington D.C. National Church, shared his observations about the church. The Washington Society has voted to have an audit, and all groups that are using the building have signed insurance waivers.

Polly Baxter reiterated that what the General Convention needs in the case of all buildings that it owns is a formal agreement that clarifies each party's responsibilities in the relationship. There is not such an agreement with the Washington Society. The building is insured by the Society, but General

Convention's name is on the deed, and it would, therefore, be liable in a claim.

Polly Baxter suggested that administration of the Wayfarers Chapel's new Fund for the Future could be more orderly. She suggested that the president work with the Wayfarers Chapel Board of Directors to improve the management structure of the Fund.

Ken Turley proposed a constitutional amendment for removal of individuals who are inactive on support units, committees, or elected positions. It was voted to submit the proposal to the Amendment Committee, with the provision that the amendment be returned to GC in time for its November 2016 meeting.

It was voted to develop and propose criteria for disbursing funds that have been left in the denomination's trust from dissolved societies or ministries. Stan Conger, Tom Neuenfeldt, and Polly Baxter were appointed, with Stan Conger as chair.

New Business

Marilyn Nielsen Worsham was presented as a lifelong baptized, confirmed Swedenborgian who is requesting member-at-large status in the denomination as she lives in Maryland, far from a church; her membership passed.

Debbie Dolley started a discussion

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about designing a new sort of annual meeting, something that would draw more people and include more truly enjoyable activities. Jane Siebert placed a discussion of how convention meetings are organized and run on the fall meeting agenda.

Kevin Baxter reported that the annual convention will be held July 5–12, 2017, at West Chester University, West Chester, Pennsylvania.

Post-Convention Meeting

The following appointments were approved (term expiration in parentheses):

- Investment Committee: Jennifer Lindsay (2021)
- Wayfarers Chapel Board:
 - Rev. Susan Turley (2018)
 - Rob Lawson (2017)
 - Steve Mason (2017)
- SwedenborgianCommunity.org: William Rotella
- Committee of Inquiry: Rev. Wilma Wake:
- Building Fund: Rev. Sage Cole
- Structure Review Committee: Rev. Susannah Currie, Rev. Lisa Solwold, Bill Coffman, Kurt Fekete:
- Retirement Committee: John McIntosh (2019)
- Central Office Review Committee: Carl Helm
- Delegates to the National Council of Christian Churches (NCCC): Rev. Rich Tafel, Rev. David Fekete
- Committee on Amendments: Rev. Kevin Baxter
- Iungerich Fund: not filling at this time per request of fund chair

The Council elected Nancy Little and Robert Morrill, to the Center for Swedenborgian Studies Board of Trustees, reflecting the vote of the Convention.

The New York Society has asked General Convention for help and advice in determining their future. Tom

The Swedenborg Library at UU

New Lobby Welcomes Students & Scholars

BY JULIE MCDANIEL

Summer 2015 brought many changes to the lobby of the Swedenborg Memorial Library at Urbana University. Through a generous gift from an anonymous donor, we were able to replace our ceiling, flooring, and lighting, and the electricity was upgraded. The lobby was repainted with a black, silver, and Urbana blue theme. Benches that provide data and electrical ports offer wired seating in the lobby. A stand-up kiosk for two computers features the UU logo

and allows students to stop in the library and quickly check email or print assignments.

An attractive custom-built front desk provides a focal point for library services. The desk features two glass display cases. The new front desk incorporates computer and data capabilities in a way that the old desk never imagined.

The Library continues to provide access to materials related to the history of the New Church. We have pastors' records, meeting minutes, and letters. We also have items from the history of the University. For New Church members who attended Urbana University (and previously, Urbana College), we may have records of them in the stu-

dent newspapers, the alumni magazines, or yearbooks. Our collection also includes multiple editions of Swedenborg's writings: books, journals, and pamphlets related to, interpreting, and understanding his writings. The collection has been used by scholars



New desk and lobby decorated for fall; Julie McDaniel, librarian, seated at the desk

visiting campus for the annual Swedenborg Scholar in Residence program held each spring at UU and by others doing research. ☪

Julie McDaniel is the head librarian at Urbana University's Swedenborg Library.

Inductee Address: Terry Schnarr

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I remember thinking the next day, "Well, everyone else can die if they want to, but I don't have to."

As I grew up I gradually learned that, well, okay, we're all going to leave this world, but I'm gonna keep living, and everyone else is too.

And then, when I was a junior in high school I went to Bryn Athyn New Church Academy and I learned about heaven and hell and life after death, and—ah! That's what happens. That's what's really going to be going on.

Anyway, I wanted to share everything I know, which is, we're all gonna live forever. Thanks. ☪

Neuenfeldt and Herb Ziegler visited the church and submitted a report on the status of the building and the society. Jane Siebert will appoint a committee to review the situation and

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On Choice and Change

Kathy Cleveland Bull gave the keynote address, "Choice & Change." Part of her presentation covered the fable in the 1998 best-seller, *Who Moved My Cheese?* by Spencer Johnson, M.D.

BY KAREN FEIL

“What can we gain by sailing to the moon if we are not able to cross the abyss that separates us from ourselves? This is the most important of all voyages of discovery, and without it, all the rest are not only useless, but disastrous,” said Kathy Cleveland Bull, keynote speaker at the 192nd session of the General Convention, quoting Thomas Merton. Merton’s statement resonates with Swedenborg’s teaching on the hazards of attempting to be of use at the *proprium*’s direction alone.

Cleveland Bull, a consultant and one of only a few speakers authorized by *Who Moved My Cheese?* author Spencer Johnson, M.D. to offer programs based upon his book, was invited by the Education Support Unit (EDSU) to discuss change and its role in expanding our usefulness as individuals and organizations. She followed up the keynote address with a ninety-minute mini-course that expanded on the ideas. Cleveland Bull is the owner of N-Compass Consulting in Columbus, Ohio.

Cleveland Bull gathered together the wisdom of many thinkers on human behavior, change, and effectiveness. For example, she shared the “Response-Ability” mode of behavior, from Stephen Covey, author of *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*:

STIMULUS → FREEDOM TO
CHOOSE → RESPONSE

Versus the more typical:

STIMULUS → REACTION

“Between stimulus and response, there is a space, that freedom to choose what we will do, rather than just immediately reacting the way we’ve been conditioned to react” she said, saying that Covey called that moment for choice “the magic quarter-second.” Cleveland Bull reflected that we often become champion reactors, suffering no fools and quickly protecting what we think of as our domains, be they material or intellectual.



Kathy Cleveland Bull

This concept of “the magic quarter-second” enticed me to review what Swedenborg said about the dynamics of communication from the Lord, through angels, to us, when I returned home. He says in *Heaven & Hell* (NCE) §252,

For people who talk with angels, heaven is actually united to our world, and our world to heaven...when angels turn toward us they unite themselves with us so completely that it seems to them exactly as though whatever is ours is actually theirs. This applies not only to elements of our language but to what is involved in our sight and hearing. In addition, it seems to us exactly as though the things that are flowing in through the angels are really ours.

Could that “magic quarter-second” be the moment when we invite the Lord’s input? If so, it would be good to learn to expand that moment in our decision process!

Cleveland Bull shared the fable about change that is the basis of *Who Moved My Cheese?* and gave us the opportunity to consider whether we were more like “Sniff, Scurry, Hem, or Haw” in our reaction to clues indicating the need for change in our situation.

Another piece of wisdom Cleveland Bull shared, which may resonate on a

personal and institutional level comes from journalist Sidney J. Harris, who said, “Our dilemma is that we hate change and love it at the same time; what we really want is for things to remain the same but get better.”

When Cleveland Bull asked the audience whether their church community included any CAVes (those who are Consistently Against Virtually Everything), a chuckle was heard throughout the room. Realizing this paradox, perhaps when we attempt to encourage change, filling in the picture of what “better” might look like may be more effective for institutional change, than jumping directly to what we think the change should be. “Happiness is a direction,” said Sidney J. Harris, “not a place.”

Among the living sages that Cleveland Bull discussed was Brother David Steindl-Rast, a Benedictine monk at Mount Savior Monastery in Elmira, New York, and a leading figure in the House of Prayer movement. He said:

“Our problem in the West is that we have a lack of lack.”

From here, Cleveland Bull concluded her keynote address with some reflections on gratefulness and played Brother David’s video entitled “A Good Day,” (<https://tinyurl.com/zvn8cno>)

In the follow-up mini-course, Cleveland Bull delved more deeply into strategies for managing change and challenged us to assess the habits of mood that we cultivate. The participants took five minutes to jot down thoughts on “What Would You Do If You Weren’t Afraid?” She shared her personal grief journey from the loss of her twin sister to illness, and recommended the work of Rev. Michael Mayne, who wrote *The Enduring Melody*, on loving, living, and dying. She also shared with us author David Foster Wallace’s commencement address to the Kenyon College class of 2005, “This is Water,” on being awake to life

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Memories of Dorothea

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Swedenborgians. I had enjoyed the writings of Swedenborg but had no idea that there was a church based on his writings, and even a seminary just miles from the Episcopal Divin-

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and its choices (“everyone worships; the question is what you worship”) (<https://tinyurl.com/lbmvbnpn>). To cultivate a positive perspective, Cleveland Bull encouraged participants to “become aware of the beautiful images or moments in your day, and wire them in so that your assessment of your day is truer.”

The members of the Education Support Unit (2017: Karen Feil, chair; Paul Deming; Jim Lawrence) welcome feedback on Kathy Cleveland Bull’s presentations at convention, and the other mini-courses—Morgan Beard on “Using Social Media”; Jim Lawrence on “Wilson Van Dusen’s Breakthrough on Uses”; and Barb Mackey on “Life-long Learning as Preparation to Life in Heaven.”

In 2017, the annual theme of the Swedenborgian Church is “The Word,” and the annual convention will be held in West Chester, Pennsylvania. If you have suggestions for a mini-course, including notable scholars and speakers from the Philadelphia area who are not members of our denomination, please forward your suggestions to Karen Feil at info@SwedLib.org. ☛

Karen Feil is chair of the Education Support Unit and director of the Chicago Swedenborg Library and Spiritual Growth Center.



ity School! I went to meet the folks there, and was very excited. I knew I had found my theological home. But I was worried about what it was like for women seeking ordination. I was told to talk with Dorothea Harvey.

She was delightful to talk with. She had been ordained in 1975, a year after the Philadelphia Eleven. There was some opposition in General Convention to ordaining a woman, but not like the Episcopalians had encountered in their church. She said that there was a lot of support from men as well as women. However, some male ministers reminded her that Swedenborg wrote in his diary that a woman should not preach, like a man. She would respond: “I never preach like a man. I preach like a woman.” Her ordination was a joyous event, but one male minister did walk out.

I had an opportunity to work with Dorothea later when we both taught at the Swedenborg School of Religion in Newton. She was greatly loved and trusted by both students and faculty. Even in times of conflict between faculty and students, we could talk to her, and she understood everyone’s point of view.

For many years after my ordination in 1990, Dorothea and I were peers. I learned so much from her about being a woman minister. There was one piece of advice she kept giving me: “Wilma, you do too much! You’ve got to say ‘no’ more!”

Dorothea impacted the lives of so many of us—students and friends in Urbana, ministers who studied with her, and the thousands whose lives she affected.

I miss her a lot. But I know that she lives on in my heart—as well as in all of us who knew her.

She has certainly changed my life in so many ways. I still hear her voice in my head saying, “Wilma, you have to learn to say no!” But then, I never saw her say no to someone who needed her

help, and I live more by her example than her words.

Let us pray.

Dear Lord,

We give you thanks for the incredible blessing of the life of your faithful servant, Rev. Dorothea Harvey. We miss her greatly but we know that she is in the heavenly realms, and that her spirit lives on in the countless people who were so touched by knowing her. Let this memorial be an opportunity for us to remember her life, which was filled with such love, wisdom, and action. May it always inspire us to model our lives on the compassion she showed in hers. Amen. ☛

General Council Meetings

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make recommendations.

Barbara Boxwell was appointed to the Tafel Fund.

The Social Concerns Committee was made an independent ad-hoc committee: Rev. Nadine Cotton, chair; Rev. Catherine Lauber, secretary; Sue Ditmire, Rev. Carla Friedrich, Rev. Robert McCluskey, and Rev. Wilma Wake.

The following were reappointed to the Digital Presence Group: Kevin Baxter (COM), Jenn Tafel (LGBTQ and nontraditional ministry), Dr. Page Morahan (SwedenborgianCommunity.org), Polly Baxter (General Council), Katie Pruiett (COMSU), Val Brugler (Information Support Unit), and Chris Laitner, facilitator. Paul Deming (EDSU) and Rebekka Lange (teen/young adult) were appointed to the group.

Dick Tafel and Kevin Baxter were appointed to look into voting privileges and quorum issues.

General Council will hold its fall meeting November 4–5, 2016, in Framingham, Massachusetts. ☛

Closing Sermon

The Importance of One

Rev. Jane Siebert became the president of the Swedenborgian Church at the conclusion of the 2016 Annual Convention. She gave this sermon at the closing convention service, held at the Urbana Swedenborgian Church on Sunday morning, July 3.



- To be a good representative American to each person in the village and show them that Americans are good people who care about them
- To learn about the individuals in the country being served in order to take that knowledge back to the US and share it with others.

While I have been thinking about moving into the role of Swedenborgian Church president and preparing for what lies ahead, these lessons came back to me. Sure, I would love to do big things, really make a difference, open new churches, give new energy to our existing churches, and help grow the Swedenborgian church—get the word out about our unique and inclusive theology in new and inviting ways. And I do promise to do my best to support you all in your love of our Church and your efforts to keep things going and the doors open, and to work for new forms of church and innovative ideas.

And, as I was spending time in this year of preparation, the Peace Corps goals came back to me and I was reminded that the most important number is one: the one person called to study to be ordained as a minister; the one person willing to step forward to train and serve as a licensed pastor when there is no minister; the one new person who we invite to our churches, retreats, or camps; the one person who is drawn in to learn more from our websites and outreach. The only way we proceed is one at a time—with all of us together as one and yet as unique individuals. Each of us has a part to fulfill within the Divine Human that is our denomination, and all are essential.

As I pondered these Peace Corps

goals, I realized they can be fashioned into goals as Swedenborgians. We are truly all in this together and we are all called to do our part, and we do this by reaching one person and making a difference in one person's life.

So I reformed these goals:

- To help one person at a time, who may be searching for what we have to offer
- To live our religion as best we can as good representative Swedenborgians to each person we come in contact with so others might say, "That is a good person who cares about me."
- To learn about and understand those who follow different spiritual paths, different religious traditions, or different lifestyles, which will help us better understand ourselves and how to love our neighbor.

Every interaction we have to speak with someone about our church is an opportunity to save them. Did I get your attention there? As Swedenborgians we often have a distaste for that word, *save*. But I believe and I have seen that we *do* have a saving theology that can make a big difference in someone's life. I know it made a big difference in mine.

Let me share an example from our church in Pretty Prairie. I asked a relatively new member of our church why she joined.

I came the first time because one person invited me and I liked what I saw and what was on the website.

Swedenborgians see life as a profoundly spiritual experience that provides opportunities for learning, changing, and growing. For us, the church is a community where people feel safe to share, explore, question, worship, learn, and love—a place of spiritual nourishment and empowerment where one's own unique relationship with God is enriched. More than simply sharing a place to

When I joined the Peace Corps, I had big visions and high idealism. I was going to the heart of Africa as a health volunteer. I was going to make big changes in my village: dig water wells, build latrines, teach healthy nutrition, reduce the infant mortality rate so that twenty percent of the children would not die before they reached five years. I had big goals when I signed up for my first two years.

How well I remember the first lesson they drilled into us when we arrived in Zaire (now the Congo): Your first goal is to make a difference in one person's life. You are not here, in Africa, to change the world, the country or even your village. Your goal is to make a difference in one person's life.

Why would they put the bar so low? Why one person? I came all this way to make a difference in one person's life? I found it rather deflating, but it was the best advice given. It led me to get to know people individually, work to remember each name, listen to individual hopes and dreams rather than imposing my hopes and dreams on them.

There were three goals the Peace Corps taught us to carry throughout our service.

- To help one person's life be better

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worship, we seek to be a community that affirms God's presence in all areas of our lives. We invite you to adopt our church as your own and to help us create a spiritual home for all who desire the inner peace and joy which only God can give. We affirm the dignity and worth of all people, and you are welcome to join us in any part of our church life. We hope your association with our congregation will give you the spiritual fulfillment that you seek.

She goes on,

I started attending Sunday school and church, and there were certain things that happened that I will be forever grateful for. I was an unhappy, angry person, and what we studied helped me to stop feeling sorry for myself and redirected my focus to trying to improve myself to be a kinder, more spiritual person. I dealt with problems at work so much better and noticed the world around me as the amazing gift from God that it is. I really love the church members of the Pretty Prairie New Jerusalem Church. Probably the most amazing thing I have found in this church is they let me ask questions. No one tells me how to think or belittles my need to understand. And I have found out that it is okay not to completely understand everything. I really appreciate the holistic philosophy of the Church. I don't just think about God on Sundays, I think about what we discuss throughout the week and how I can be a better person—more helpful and caring. I notice kind actions I see in other people and I notice the beauty of the world around us. There is a lot of goodness in our congregation—they are wonderful people I enjoy spending time with.

Now that is a testimony! Her life

was changed by attending church, by studying the Dole Notes¹ in adult Sunday school and putting them to use in her life. She was "saved" from who she was and what she was becoming. She found a way to change and find a new life, with new purpose. And she continues to experience the saving truth of a theology that embraces questions, opens our hearts to a new way to live, honors variety in religions, and promotes usefulness. Being saved means living a heavenly life here on earth, the



Closing service at the Urbana Church of the New Jerusalem

life that God planned for us. A life that prepares us for the next life.

There is a plethora of people in each of our communities that have been turned off by Christianity and church. We have a gift to offer them through an inclusive Christian theology that has a depth of wisdom and purpose, a depth that can be studied for a lifetime in a structured church and can be offered in a casual conversation over dinner with our personal explanation of why it makes a difference in our lives to be Swedenborgian. We should all have our "elevator speech" ready and thought out.

We seem to live our inclusive Christianity best in our camps and retreats, where all feel welcomed and loved. Within our camps lies the secret to reaching out—making all feel welcomed, a part of the whole and accepting each person's individuality.

Another relatively new member sent

me this explanation of why she and her husband attend:

I started coming when I visited family in Pretty Prairie and finally moved to the Midwest and joined because family members attended. Imagine my delight and appreciation when I moved from Boston. In a church community of supposedly bread basket conservatives I found instead a community that promotes equality for race, ethnic group, sexual orientation and interprets the Bible in a way that makes sense.

"Interprets the Bible in a way that makes sense." How often do we hear this? We have an incredible gift in the inner sense of the Word. And we have begun The Year of the Word in our seven-year cycle of themes.

We have an opportunity to make that inner sense

more accessible. As Helen Keller said,

Were I but capable of interpreting to others one-half of the stimulating thoughts and noble sentiments that are buried in Swedenborg's writings, I should help them more than I am ever likely to in any other way. It would be of such a joy to me if I might be the instrument of bringing Swedenborg to a world that is spiritually deaf and blind.²

In Swedenborg's teachings she found support for what she believed to be true in her own heart—that every human life is of sacred importance and that there is dignity in all true religious paths. That is why she could declare, without reservation,

I am a Swedenborgian. . . . Its spirituality and idealism appeal to me. It also fosters all kinds of true freedom, places humanity above party, country, race, and it never loses sight of the essence of Jesus' gospel—the supreme and equal worth

¹ *Bible Study Notes* (six-volume set). Anita S. Dole, William Ross Woofenden, ed. Swedenborg Foundation

² Letter to Rev. Paul Sperry. 10 October 1926
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The Alicia Titus Memorial Peace Fund

Dear Friends,

On September 11, 2016, we will commemorate the fifteenth anniversary of the 9/11 attacks that took the lives of nearly three thousand people, including our daughter, Alicia. We've heard many heart-rending stories from the loved ones of those who were killed on that horrendous day, and we have grieved with each of them. I often reflect back on life as it was before 9/11 and since then, and ask, "Why?" Why did this happen and how could it have been prevented? What have we learned as a nation to ensure this never happens again? Has our course of action made us safer? And, how do we bring about a peaceful resolution to those places where we are in conflict?

These are difficult questions, but they need to be asked. If we don't learn from our past, then we are destined to repeat it. God forbid! Bev and I have done an incredible amount of research on these and related issues since 9/11. We chose early on to use our pain and sadness to grow our compassion for all who are suffering in our world, to increase our understanding about how and why this tragedy happened and to find ways to, "be the difference we wish to see in the world." This is a journey we could not do without you and many other wonderful people who have graced our lives since. We thank you from the bottom of our hearts!

The Alicia Titus Memorial Peace Fund came into being in 2002 through the efforts of the Swedenborgian Church, Reverend Betsy Coffman, and the Titus family. Urbana University graciously agreed to house Alicia's Fund. The purpose of the Fund is to carry out the legacy and spirit of Alicia's life by sponsoring programs for the University and community that promote and support a culture of peace. Since 2002, the Alicia Titus Memorial Peace Fund has raised more than \$73,000. Over the years we have enacted nearly forty events, activities, appearances, guest speakers and classroom presentations on issues of peace, social justice, kindness challenges and community volunteerism through Alicia's Fund. In addition, Bev and I have made hundreds of appearances all over the country and around the world to talk about these important issues. We've done numerous interviews for documentaries, television, radio and other media outlets. Why? Because we want to do our part to make a difference. We yearn for a world in which we can live in peace and harmony with all our brothers and sisters, regardless of their national origin, beliefs and differences. We believe this is what God wills for all of us. After all, we see diversity throughout all of God's creation, an aspect that makes our world such a beautifully rich and intriguing place.

Our world has become a battleground in so many ways. It is our hope that we can make a difference in our corner of the world and beyond in Alicia's name and in remembrance of all who have suffered and continue to suffer needlessly. Our belief is that peace is not just the absence of conflict. It is rather a state of harmony which occurs when human beings live together with active respect for one another and when they act as responsible stewards of our natural environment, seeing all of life as integral to the health and well-being of the whole of creation.

It is with deep gratitude that we thank you for your continuous support, contributions, and heartfelt donations. We have included a list of activities from 2015 as well as information describing our September events for the 15th Anniversary. We look forward to seeing you there!



*God's Peace,
John and Bev Titus, parents of Alicia*

Events and Activities Sponsored by The Alicia Titus Memorial Peace Fund over the Past Year

- **A Day of Service** in which thirty-three Urbana University Students and other community volunteers learned the useful art of giving back to our community. By practicing

service to others and being useful, productive citizens, we can better serve our world in creating a culture of peace.

- For **The Season of Nonviolence**, we invited local schools to accept **The Great Kindness Challenge** from January 25–29. This interna-

tional event was designed by Kids for Peace to provide schools with tools for creating a positive environment by teaching children that "even the smallest of acts of kindness can mean a great deal to another person." Eighteen hundred

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students from Urbana East Elementary, Madison Elementary in Columbus, and Driscoll School in Dayton joined 190 Ohio schools, 86,239 students, and internationally, 5,014,368 students performing 250 million acts of kindness from 8,000 schools in sixty-one countries! Just imagine the ripple effect from this!

- We were able to award our first endowed scholarship of \$500 through Alicia's Peace Fund to Urbana University student Madison Davis, a wonderful young lady who espouses many of the values Alicia manifested. Next year we will offer \$1,000 for the academic year to an incoming freshman woman.
- In collaboration with the Urbana Police and Fire Departments, we identified "Safety Town" as a worthy cause for our youth to contribute 20% of your last year's contributions from Alicia's Fund, which amounted to \$1707. Thank you to all who made this possible.

Upcoming Events for the 15th Year Anniversary of September 11, 2001

- The **Alicia Titus Memorial Peace Run/Walk** will be held on Saturday, September 10th, at 9:00 AM, starting and finishing at the UU Student Center. There will be live music, food, peace-building activities for the kids, and all kinds of good people. Please join us if you are able!
- On Sunday, September 11th, at 3:00 PM on the Urbana University Campus, our special **Community Day of Remembrance** activities will include a brief talk from John and Bev Titus, Alicia's parents, and a keynote address from Marianne Williamson, an internationally acclaimed lecturer and *New York Times* best-selling author. Marianne

Importance of One

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of each individual soul. That doctrine is the heart of Christianity.³

Her words ring true today: "Every human life is of sacred importance." "Each individual soul": one person at a time, "the essence of Jesus' Gospel is the supreme and equal worth of each individual soul": one person at a time. "That doctrine is the heart of Christianity": one at a time.

The correspondence of *one* is good and perfect; *one* is the perfect and good number. One God. One soul. One body. One opportunity to teach, touch, and heal. We can do this.

At Wayfarers Chapel, one of the longtime employees just joined the Swedenborgian Church. She explains,

This was a journey I have wanted to take for many years, but caring for my dad the past fifteen years took most of my energy. He passed away last year, so I thought this was

3 Unpublished letter to a New York magazine

is also the founder of The Peace Alliance, a nonprofit grassroots organization dedicated to fostering a culture of peace. Also, we welcome performances by the wonderful Worldhouse Choir. We would cherish your presence in commemorating those who died on that fateful day and as a result of 9/11. Please RSVP to Tammy Leiker at Urbana University at tammy.leiker@urbana.edu or call 937.772.9246.

Wonderful things are happening in the Urbana area with so many community members giving of themselves for the betterment of the whole. Thank you for your loving support and generous donations which have given us strength and hope, and allowed us to continue our peace-building efforts in our community. ☸

the perfect time to take Rev. Dave's [Fekete] Swedenborg 101 class. My sister joined me as well. I felt drawn to join the church because it welcomes all religions and people from many different walks of life. Now that weekends have opened up for both of us, we have started a new tradition by going to Sunday service at the chapel followed by a walk along the bluffs to reflect on the spiritual message for the week. It has been a wonderful journey! Emanuel Swedenborg believes all religion relates to life, and the life of religion is to do good. I believe this is essential for the future of our generations to come. We are all bound together in a network of God's love. I am truly blessed! I hope my short story helps inspire others to join our church and to help make a difference in those around them."

In the Old Testament, Isaiah tells us, "The Lord who created us and formed us, called us each by name. (Isaiah 43:1)" Knowing our name is beyond just knowing what we are called. *Name* corresponds to our essence, our nature and quality. God knows us—individually. This is how God loves us. That is the lesson of one.

In the New Testament we read of Jesus healing one at a time. He could have healed masses. The stories in the Gospels tell about individual healing, one person at a time. They tell the stories of many individual interactions that Jesus had, treating each one with love and compassion and fulfilling the individual need each one had. This is our lesson: Treat each one right, learn about who they are, and tell them what we have to offer. It is not about numbers, grandiose visions, or churches full of bodies. It is about the importance of one.

One is not the loneliest number that you will ever hear; one is the holiest number. "Anything you did for one of the least important of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did it for me." ☸

Annual Convention Report

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nion. At the conclusion of the service, Rev. Turley called Rev. Jane Siebert up to be installed as president of the Swedenborgian Church. Rev. Kevin Baxter gave the blessing.

Children's Ministries

The Swedenborgian Church

Children's Ministries Annual Meeting was convened by the vice-president, Rev. Kit Billings. Suggestions were made for future activities. Election results were: presi-



Children Ministries officers Debbie Dolley (treasurer), Kit Billings (vp), Kevin Baxter (secretary)

dent, Rev. Alison Lane-Olsen; vice-president, Rev. Kit Billings; treasurer, Debbie Dolley; and secretary, Rev. Kevin Baxter.



Rev. Ken Turley and Karen Conger

Recognition

Karen Conger gave recognition and thanks to Rev. Ken Turley for six years of service as president of the Swedenborgian Church. He received a standing ovation. ☪

Commencement Address

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My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end. Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so. But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you. And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing. I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire. And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road, though I may know nothing about it. Therefore I will trust you always though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death. I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.⁹

And now, as you embark or continue in your ministries, I offer these encouraging words from Swedenborg:

But my friend, avoid evil and do good and believe in the Lord with your whole heart and your whole soul, and the Lord will love you and will give you the love that leads to doing and the faith that leads to believing. Then you will do good out of love and believe out of that faith that is trust; and if you are steadfast in this effort, the result will be that mutual and eternal union that is salvation and eternal life.¹⁰

God bless you all. ☪

⁹ *Lift Up Your Hearts: A Prayer Book for Anglicans*, \$4

¹⁰ *True Christian Religion* \$484



Gonna lay down my burdens there....

Down by the riverside....

Kansas Association Fall Retreat (Everyone Welcome)

October 7-9, 2016 at Camp Mennoscah

Featuring our Guest, Rev. Dr. James Lawrence

Dean of the Center for Swedenborgian Studies

At the Graduate Theological Union

Activities include:

- * Friday night - relax and enjoy one another's company at the soup supper
- * Saturday— breakfast followed by discussion led by Jim on **USEFULNESS—**
 - A Way of Personal and Spiritual Growth By Wilson Van Dusen
 - Lunch followed by casual walks and talks along the river
 - And special classes on how to lead and create worship by Jim
 - * Dinner followed by the famous Bingo and game night
- * Sunday—Breakfast by the men followed with Sunday service led by Jim

Capped off with the noon Potluck as Kansas knows best.

Cost for the weekend \$30 for family, \$20 individuals

Daily rate: \$7 adults, \$4 kids

Bring: Bedding, pillow, towel, food to share

If flying in we will provide bedding and make extra food. Call please.

MORE INFO CALL. LINDA 620-727-4352

Passages

Baptisms

Oliver Rhys, was born April 6, 2015, to parents Colleen and Brant, and grandparents Sarah and Dan and Bonnie. He was baptized April 3, 2016, at the Washington DC Church of the Holy City, Rev. Richard L. Tafel officiating. ☪

Iungerich Fund Announces RFP

The Iungerich Fund is requesting proposals for grants, to be used in 2017, by letter (there is no application form), which are **due by September 30, 2016**.

Please submit letters to the Central Office (manager@swedenborg.org) or, if necessary, the chair, Chris Laitner, at 10 Hannah Ct., Midland, MI 48642.

The Purpose of the Iungerich Fund

Established in 1874, the Louis C. Iungerich Fund makes grants at its trustees' discretion "for the publication or printing and gratuitous distribution of the theological writings given by Emanuel Swedenborg among the Protestant clergy of the United States and Canada, including theological students and professors of theology."

(Note: As time and technology have moved forward, the Trustees of the Iungerich Fund, using the discretionary powers given to them by the terms of Mr. Iungerich's directions, allow grants that include electronic creation, printing, posting and dissemination and have broadened the use of the fund to include explanations and summaries of Swedenborg's writings.)

If you have questions or cannot meet the deadline, please contact the chair at chris.laitner@gmail.com. ☪

Call for Papers: Swedenborg and the Arts International Conference

Organizers are inviting submission of papers for the Swedenborg and the Arts International Conference to be held at Bryn Athyn College June 6–9th, 2017.

This international conference will explore the substantial influence on artistic culture and aesthetics made by the scientist, mystic, and theologian Emanuel Swedenborg. In what will be the first gathering of its kind, we are inviting scholars who work in religious studies, literature and literary theory, art history and visual culture, the history of ideas, and other cognates in the humanities for paper proposals that would situate Swedenborg's place in the history of the arts, broadly-defined.

As "one of the mastodons" of world literature, in the words of the American Transcendentalist Ralph Waldo Emerson, who was "not to be measured by whole colleges of ordinary scholars," Swedenborg's ideas have affected an astonishing variety of painting, music, sculpture, novels, short stories, poetry, architecture, film, and performing arts, from the end of the eighteenth century and continuing up until the present day. We are interested in paper proposals that do more than simply

trace the historical dimensions of such influence around particular figure(s), but also explore the dynamics of exchange, the movement between the religious and the aesthetic. What can the case of Swedenborg in the arts tell us about broader constitutive relationships between esotericism, spirituality, and culture?

Keynote speakers include: Wouter Hanegraaff (University of Amsterdam), Linda Dalrymple Henderson (UT Texas, Austin), Massimo Introvigne (CESNUR, Italy)

For more information and submission details, go to the conference website <https://tinyurl.com/swedarts>. Deadline for submissions: September 30, 2016.

Sponsoring Institutions include: CESNUR (Center for Studies of New Religions); Bryn Athyn College; Glencairn Museum; the Center for Swedenborgian Studies at the Graduate Theological Union (GTU); the Swedenborg Foundation; and the Swedenborg Society of London.

Conference Organizers: Massimo Introvigne (CESNUR), Jane Williams-Hogan (Bryn Athyn College), Devin Zuber (GTU). ☪

Women's Alliance Luncheon

The Women's Alliance (WA) held their annual luncheon at the Annual Convention on Friday afternoon. BJ Neuenfeldt spoke affectionately about the life of John Chapman (AKA Johnny Appleseed) and what he stood for. Cheryl Ogden, the director of the Johnny Appleseed Museum, housed on the campus of UU, elaborated on the mission, collections, current exhibits, and other activities of the museum

and the great traditions that inform it.

Treasurer Chris Laitner explained the financial status and activities of the WA, and vice-president Jenny Caughman delineated the challenges and opportunities facing the WA given great changes in society and culture affecting women in particular since the WA was founded. A range of options was presented, from disbanding to reorganizing activities and refocusing the role of WA in funding and otherwise supporting ministries and activities in the Swedenborgian Church. ☪

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.



INSPIRATION

Dreams, visualizations, creative inspiration, random acts of kindness and senseless acts of beauty are all energies that are directed by our desires. As we grow and develop spiritually, directing our loving nature to the Divine and our neighbors, more energy flows to power our dreams into reality – all for the mutual joy of our angel-selves and our community. The spiritual teachings from Swedenborg and a variety of traditions will be offered to open our minds and hearts to this reality.

PROGRAM

Our time together will include fellowship, fun, inspirational sessions, free time, games, guided meditation, a dream workshop – all concluding with a Devotional Service on Sunday morning. Meals from Friday dinner through Sunday breakfast are provided.

SETTING

Rolling Ridge Retreat Center offers beautiful outdoor settings to enjoy and explore as well as a range of spa services to enhance your retreat experience. Located at 660 Great Pond Road in North Andover, MA, you can learn more about Rolling Ridge at www.rollingridge.org.



All ages are welcome to this multi-generational weekend! Donation of \$125 per person requested. Deadline: Sept. 15th. Special rates for couples & seniors. Children are free. Scholarships available. To request registration materials, contact retreat facilitator Rev. Susannah Currie, M.Div BCC at pastor@bridgewaternewchurch.org.