



In Memoriam

Ode to an Eternally Optimistic Mystic

The Life, Service, and Lessons of the Rev. Ernest O. Martin

Rev. Ernest Martin's obituary appears in "Passages," on page 145.

Today, November 3, 2016, the world lost an eternally optimistic mystic—today we lost our father. Throughout our lives we always knew that for him the spiritual world was incredibly real. Throughout this last week we have felt him moving ever more fully into that world. Today that transition was made complete.

While it is never easy to say goodbye to someone you love, someone who has cared for you and loved you your entire life, through this whole experience we have felt the love, support, and shared grief of the Swedenborgian Church community. The two parts of his life most important to Dad were his family and his church. And so now his family shares these words about him with his church.

Erni came into the physical world on November 11, 1923, in Brockton, Massachusetts. He hails from hearty, New England, Swedenborgian stock. His early ancestor, Isaac Stearns, arrived in Boston in 1630 on the *Arabel-*

la, the lead ship of the Winthrop party that founded Boston with the goal of establishing a "city upon a hill" that would be the ideal society of religious citizens living a moral and spiritual life in perpetual harmony. Erni used to joke that in over 350 years many of his

loves of his life.

Upon graduation from Oliver Ames High School in Easton, Massachusetts, Dad got a scholarship and chose to study business administration at Boston University. That all changed on December 29, 1941, when his six-year-old brother, Richie, tragically drowned. In an effort to comfort them, a minister told the family that on the ladder of life Richie had come to a rung where he was needed more in heaven than on earth. To our Dad this made no sense; it was not compatible with his understanding of a loving God. And so he

switched paths and chose to enter the ministry, driven by the desire to equip people with a theology that would help them face tragedies such as the one his family had endured. He wrote that his mission "has been to bear witness to the reality of the transcendent, the spiritual dimension of life, and its integration with the here and now." In so doing he also strove to learn everything there was to know about life after

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Rev. Erni Martin with his daughter, Rev. Rachel Rivers, his son, Rev. Paul Martin, and his granddaughter, Hilary Grumman, at the 2012 Annual Convention.

relatives had never moved more than thirty miles from where the boat landed! He was born into a Swedenborgian family; in fact, his great-grandmother's brother, George Stearns, was ordained into the Swedenborgian ministry in 1861 and enrolled in the first class of the newly established theological school in 1866. While growing up, Erni attended church at both Mansfield and Brockton. The Church and his family were the central, guiding

The Editor's Desk



The Cycle of Life

When we receive news of the death of a loved one, a friend, someone who gives meaning to our lives, we experience a rush of emotions. Then, over the next few days, months, years, we reflect on and process that death in light of our memories, our lives without that person, the passage of time, and the cycle of life.

I cannot remember when I met Erni Martin ([obituary page 145](#); [memoriam page 131](#)), but he has been an important presence in my life, just as he has been an important part of the life of the Swedenborgian Church. I have always looked to him for knowledge and wisdom regarding the church and his advice to me on *the Messenger*. I always delighted in talking with him.

I was attracted to Carol Lawson's ([obituary page 145](#); [memoriam page 134](#)) sparkling personality and intense passion for Swedenborgian publishing when I attended her mini-course at my first annual Convention. I learned a great deal from her about Sweden-

Peace on earth, good will to humankind

borgian publishing history and her vision for its future. I was fortunate to be hired as editor of *the Messenger* on the recommendation of the Communications Support Unit under her leadership, and I am eternally grateful to her for that. She retired from General Convention volunteer work shortly thereafter, but from time to time I would receive a phone call or email from her offering encouragement, praise, and appreciation for my work.

Sadly, two more people I knew and worked with on boards and committees are also reported in obituaries this month ([page 145](#)). Ron Frostestad had a keen intellect and a strong sense of propriety in the operations of non-profit organizations. I appreciated his reserved camaraderie during our shared tenure on the Board of Trustees of the Center for Swedenborgian Studies.

I met John Perry late in his life while serving on the Investment Committee. He was multi-talented, with a wide

range of knowledge and expertise, and he always added colorful background and interesting history to subjects that came up in our formal and casual discussions.

In my busy life, I did not spend much time with these people, but I miss them nonetheless.

We know we are on this mortal plane for only a brief time, living our spiritual path toward love and wisdom, but we mourn our losses in spite of that knowledge. From my vantage point, in the autumn of life, I look back over a decades-long journey and appreciate how much these people gave to their neighbors, including you and me.

—Herb Ziegler

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Church Calendar

- **December 27–30:** SCYL Winter Retreat, LaPorte New Church, LaPorte, IN
- **June 6–9, 2017:** Swedenborg and the Arts Conference, Bryn Athyn, PA (<http://tinyurl.com/j4dbkkm>)
- **July 5–12:** Swedenborgian Annual Convention, West Chester, PA (COM begins July 5, Outing Day July 8, convention begins July 9)
- **September 21–24:** Gathering Leaves Swedenborgian women's retreat, Punslich, Ontario

the Messenger

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Letter from the President



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

Dear Friends,

I walked the dog last night in the glow of the supermoon and did not even need a flashlight. The path was clear. The walk was meditative. A peacefulness engulfed us. My 14-year-old dog was glad to be out and stepping high in the moonlight.

The light of the moon is different from sunlight. It was calming; it softened the surroundings; it tamed the shadows.

The correspondence of the moon is faith, faith in the Lord, and the intelligence in natural humans. What perfect timing for a supermoon.

In the midst of this controversial election and its aftermath, I felt like God was assuring me, “All shall be well. All manner of things shall be well.” Not in a naïve or short term view, but taking the long view. Looking down on our tiny planet from the moon’s vantage point.

We get so enmeshed in what is right in front of us; it is good to step back and take the long look. We need to just breathe and get off Facebook and the internet for a while. News stories rile us up; they keep riling us up. They lure us back for more. I know. I am there. But this night of moonlight helped me to calm down, to look to my faith in the Lord, to remember that Divine Providence assures us God is in charge.

And we can only see Divine Providence (the Lord’s governance) looking back.

The moon waxes and wanes. So too, I realize my faith waxes and wanes. There are days when I feel confident, when I feel God leading me and encouraging me—and so, so close. And then there are days when my faith wanes and I feel like I cannot do what needs to be done. I feel that I am on my own and just don’t have what it takes to lead as president of this denomination.

When there is just a little slice of moon visible, there is not enough light to push away the shadows. The whole moon is still there but the earth is blocking out the light of the sun. Our earth is a good thing, but the loves of this world can block out the Lord’s love, which is the correspondence of the sun’s rays. And this is when my faith wanes, when I forget to call on God and forget that all good, all light, all truth comes from God. When love of myself and the world gets in the way.

So what a perfect time to have a supermoon, reaffirming that the Lord’s love is shining on our moon in full force, illuminating our faith, and lighting our way. A supermoon happens when our moon is closer than ever. We need super faith right now. And super human intelligence to wade through all that is being thrown at us. The moon can’t shine without the Lord’s love reflected from the sun, and this is the basis for our faith.

And we cannot look straight into the sun. It is too much, too bright, too strong. We need our faith, a reflection in the love of God, bringing love and wisdom together and making it useful so we can see our way.

May your faith light your way this Christmas as we reaffirm the Advent of the Lord’s birth in our lives.

—Rev. Jane Siebert

In Memoriam

Carol Skinner Lawson

Carol Lawson's obituary appears in "Passages," on page 145.

I celebrate Carol Lawson and her contributions to Swedenborgian publishing. Quite simply, Carol Lawson has done more for our denomination's publishing efforts than any woman in our history. As I scan the history of publishing in the three major branches of the New Church, it is hard not to conclude that no woman editor in the history of worldwide Swedenborgianism has done as much for New-Church publishing as Carol. A brief review of her resume supports this. You can arrange the *Messengers* going back to the nineteenth century and see from twenty yards away the "Carol Lawson Years," when she served as associate editor during the years 1955–1964.

The "new look" *New Church Messenger* (as it was then called) transformed from "gray matter" to a publication brandishing an artistic and stimulating design. Numerous covers from those years, especially in the six-

Quite simply, Carol Lawson has done more for our denomination's publishing efforts than any woman in our history.

ties, are, to me, still classics.

Since that time, Carol has served numerous terms on the Department of Publications (later Department of Communications and today Communications Support Unit) and has always provided prominent leadership and a legendary managerial discipline over innumerable church publications. Carol is especially known these days for her work since the early Nineties with the Swedenborg Foundation as executive editor of the journal

Chrysalis and the *Chrysalis Reader*. She has provided relentless leadership in creating a publishing legacy in Swedenbor-

gianism that is free from in-house jargon, that applies Swedenborgian ideas to living, and that is visually appealing.

On a personal note, when I became *Messenger* editor during my final year in seminary, Carol was just beginning a term as chairperson of the Department of Communications, and in rapid order "Aunt" Carol became my most



Carol Lawson with three of her children: Thanksgiving 2015

important mentor on the publishing side of my ministry. Her wisdom has carried over into many aspects of my life as well. Carol modeled organization, discipline, indefatigable energy, artistry, and eloquence. A taskmaster who knows how to pull a team together, create an esprit de corps, and produce a high volume in gorgeous style, she is an amazing spirit.

Both sides of Carol's family (the Lawsons and the Hargraves) have roots reaching back into nineteenth-century Swedenborgianism. She grew up in the Cincinnati New Church and was an active supporter as an adult of that congregation. She was an active member of the Washington, DC Society in the years she lived in the nation's capital while working for the Environmental Protection Agency in the Hazardous Waste Site Control Division.

In retirement from the EPA since 1986, Carol built a publishing team at her farm in Virginia that has edited and designed magazines including *Birding*, *North American Birds*, and *Needle Arts*, as well as *Chrysalis Reader* publications of the Swedenborg Foundation.

I salute a New-Church worthy of the first order.

—Rev. Jim Lawrence



A *Chrysalis* editorial brainstorming meeting on themes at Fryeburg New Church Assembly in 1989. L to R: George Dole, Alice Skinner, Robin Larsen, Jim Lawrence, Carolyn Judson, Steve Larsen, Marian Kirven, Leon Rhodes, Kate Davis, Sylvia Shaw, and Carol Lawson.

Rev. Erni Martin

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death, a passion he continued throughout his life.

In the midst of his education he, as did most able-bodied young men of that time, enlisted in the military service. Erni served from February 1943 until his discharge, on December 8, 1945. He was a personnel sergeant major, participated in the Battle of Normandy, and received the Bronze Star Medal.

On July 31, 1949, Erni married Perry Skinner in the Church of the New Jerusalem in Cincinnati, Ohio. He graduated from both the New Church Theological School and the Harvard Divinity School in 1952 and was ordained into the ministry of the Swedenborgian Church on June 28, 1953. Along with his wife Perry and two sons, David and Paul, he moved to Wilmington, Delaware, where he served his first congregation, the Church of the Holy City, from 1952 until 1959. From there he moved on, along with three more children, Ruth, Rachel, and Ben, to the Church of the Holy City, Washington, D.C., where he served from 1959 until 1968. It was in Washington that one last child, Jenny, joined the family. In Washington he organized the Washington, D.C. Area Chapter of the Spiritual Frontiers Fellowship, and served as the Chair from 1959 until 1968. He became friends with renowned psychic, Arthur Ford, who told him his brother Richie was always close by. This led Dad to be convinced not only of the reality of the spiritual world, but of the closeness of this realm to our workaday world.

In addition to serving many congregations, Erni was at the forefront of many significant innovative changes within the denomination. He was chair of the Board of Managers of the New-Church Theological School (a position his daughter Jenny now holds)

at the time of the sale of the school property to Harvard in 1966 and their transition to Newton. He initiated application of our denomination into



Newly ordained Rev. Jenny Caughman with her father, Rev. Erni Martin in 2012

the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA. We were voted into membership in 1966, an accomplishment of which he was particularly proud, and he served on the Governing Board of the Council from 1968 to 1975. In 1968 he began his role as President of Convention and estab-

... his going into the ministry was based on his desire to ease the path of those who had endured the devastating experience of the death of a child.

lished and served as the director of the Central Office in Newton until 1975.

After serving in these capacities Erni and his wife Perry, along with their two youngest children, moved to California where he, alongside Harvey Tafel, served at the Wayfarer's Chapel. His time there was very meaningful, and it gave him great pleasure many years later, when he wrote the coffee table book on the Chapel entitled *The Beauty of Holiness—the Story of the Wayfarers Chapel*.

After nine years at the Chapel, Erni and Perry, now empty nesters, moved to Pennsylvania, where Dad served the

First New Jerusalem Society of Philadelphia. His goal and his dream, which he worked toward tirelessly and which he achieved, was to establish a denominational retreat center, The Swedenborgian Church of Temenos, *temenos* meaning sacred space. Upon retirement from Temenos, Erni, wanting to be closer to family, moved to the Seattle area where he assisted his son Paul with his work at the Stonehouse Book Center, Mosswood Hollow, and the Swedenborgian Church of Puget Sound. He lived with Paul and his family very happily for the last seventeen years of his life. Viewed with hindsight, it is poignantly significant that in late September he asked Paul if he could conduct the Sunday service, something he hadn't done in several years. The focus of that service was "A Fall Review and Life Perspective with Rev. Erni Martin," and during that service, Erni shared what he had learned looking back on his life. This service, held on October 2, 2016, was the last service he ever conducted. The final, fully engaged weekend of his life was very happily spent with members of the Pacific Coast Association as it met at Mosswood Hollow. It was only then that he told his daughter Rachel that he was ready to have his name put on the list of Retired Ministers of Convention. Unbeknownst to us, he had begun his transition.

While Dad served many different congregations and other areas of ministry, what he always most keenly valued was people's spiritual well-being. In fact, he saw the challenge of ministry as providing informed and passionate leadership in fostering the spiritual well-being of people. He always did this, of course, from his context as a Swedenborgian minister. For him the three central doctrines of Swedenborg are the reality of the spiritual dimension to life, the relationship of the spiritual and natural dimensions to life,

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SPLATz Explore the Four Basic Elements

BY KURT FEKETE

The four basic elements—water, earth, air, and fire—were literally everything to the ancient Greeks. Hundreds of years before the birth of Jesus, the great thinkers of that time believed that everything in existence was composed of these four fundamental substances and that a God ruled over each one. Eleven SPLATz (Super Powered Lovable Almost Teens) aged 10–13 gathered at Manna House, the LaPorte (Indiana) New Church Spiritual Growth Center, on the last weekend of October to learn about water, earth, air and fire. At this retreat we played, crafted, and discussed the science, history, art, and mythology of these four elements. We also looked at a Bible story or two for each element and learned its vital inner wisdom.

For earth, we talked about the wise and foolish builders (Matthew 7:24–27) and the sower (Mark 4:1–9). We can be like rocky soil, thorny weeds, or we can be like good fertile ground where truths take hold, grow, and flourish into a rewarding crop of useful actions. Our earth lesson was, “Take care of yourself. Seek to understand who you are. You are important, you are here for a reason. You are a child of God, and God does not make mistakes. Be good to yourself so you can be good to others.”

We looked at air and discussed how the Lord created Adam by breathing the breath of life into his nose (Genesis 2:7) and also how Moses and God used a strong east wind to part the Red Sea

so the Israelites could cross (Exodus 14:21). As air represents influx from the heavens our air lesson was, “You are not your thoughts, you are your actions. Choose to act on the good messages you receive, not the evil. Be peaceful, not destructive. Be still and listen to the whisperings of the angels.”

Next, we looked at water. Our water Bible story was Moses and the rock at Horeb (Exodus 17:3–6). We talked about the difference between the hard, foundational rock truths and the fluid,



SPLATz work to untangle during a game of “Knots”

moving, malleable water truths. Our water lesson was, “Use your mind to understand what works for you. Learn something every day. Discover and re-

discover your talents. Cultivate what you know to be true. Do not fight, go with the flow. Find Your Way.”

Lastly, we explored the fascinating element fire. Fire represents divine love, and we chose to explore two stories of Moses and the Israelites. We looked at the pillar of fire leading the Israelites by night (Exodus 13:21–22) and later at Mount Sinai where we learned, “Mount Sinai was covered with smoke, because the

Lord descended on it in fire” (Exodus 19:18). Our fire lesson was, “Be passionate and feed your inner fire. Follow the guidance of your heart. Do more of what gives you positive energy. Release your energy constructively, whether it be anger or love. Live Your Love!”

After each of the four element group discussions, the SPLATz worked on designing a costume devoted to the element of their choice. They decorated masks and used fabric to make themselves into water, earth, air, or fire. Saturday evening was very special. First, we held our candlelit worship service in celebration of our 13-year-olds graduating into the SCYL teen league. Immediately after, the SPLATz got into their costumes and headed off on an outing to a spookily festive Halloween party with a bonfire, DJ, and lots and lots of delicious food and treats (thank you Tammara Mounce!). It really was a great night.

We closed the retreat on Sunday morning. Rev. Kit Billings gets the fifth Sunday of the month off, so I helped him lead the “Charity Sunday”

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The elemental SPLATz

SPLATz Explore Elements

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worship service. I talked about my work as youth director and how the SPLATz group started through the charity of the LaPorte congregation. After this abbreviated worship time upstairs, the congregation joined the



Tree SPLATz Christa, Boston, Paolo, Isabella, Oliver and Devon (high up the tree)

SPLATz downstairs to sit in on our session time. Here, we were able to share what we learned about the four basic elements and show the congregation



SPLATz give their rapt attention to Kurt at the final group session.

what our discussion time looks like. We said our goodbyes after lunch with love in our hearts and a new appreciation for the natural and spiritual gifts of water, earth, air, and fire. ☪

Kurt Fekete is the youth director of the Swedenborgian Church.

Rev. Erni Martin

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and the goal of life being to grow into angelhood and to love wisely.

Those who most benefitted from his efforts to love wisely were his family, especially his six children, David, Paul, Ruth, Rachel, Ben, and Jenny. It was his family, and especially we children, who were his personal inspiration and the joy of his life, which we know, at times, he made perhaps painfully obvious! We thank you now for indulging the proud papa as he recounted tales of our exploits. We are very aware of, and grateful for, the many ways in which we each benefitted so fully from his credo: What does love require? We were all strongly fed by his love, and influenced by his views and his compassion, as all six of us have found diverse but important ways to serve, whether that is by teaching children music, enabling schools to better serve children with special needs, helping fledging countries to develop budgets, or, as three of us did, following Dad into ordained ministry.

Dad always considered himself a “practical mystic.” He believed that his brother Richie was with him continually, and this presence came through in very helpful, practical ways such as opening a book to the exact page of the sought-after quote, a honk of the horn when Dad dozed off while driving down the highway, an internal message that the baptismal certificate was on his desk—not at the church as he thought. He always saw Richie not only as his guardian angel but as the guardian angel for our entire family as well.

As mentioned earlier, the impetus for his going into the ministry was based on the desire to ease the path of those who had endured the devastating experience of the death of a child. This is what led him to write his pamphlet, originally published in 1956 and re-

sued, in expanded form, in 2012, *Children in Heaven*. One of the particularly moving moments in his last week of life was we children sitting around his bedside listening to a recording of him reading this book. It was incredibly powerful to hear his strong, expressive voice describing the beauties of heaven, knowing that he was well on his way to experiencing them first hand. His pamphlet concludes, “As we realize that God has created each one of us for heaven and that God’s care surrounds all of us eternally, it can lessen our sorrow at the temporary parting of death. We shall be reunited. We are all children of God, and our offspring here are loaned to us for a time. Through these gifts of God, we are given glimpses of heaven, which will never pass away.”

So now that he has made this final transition, now that he has joined his brothers and sister, parents, other family members, friends, and colleagues on the other side, we who are left behind thank God for the gift of Erni, our Dad, for his long full life, guided by love, filled with a good balance of humor and wisdom. We are left to be challenged by one of his favorite statements: “Well, this will be a true test of my good nature!” We are extremely grateful for the depth of his caring and his love, and how he demonstrated, through his words and actions, just what is most important in life. And so we finish our tribute with his own words, words which express his attitude toward life and faith:

Our church teaches that life is a dynamic process, beginning here and continuing on to eternity. . . . Life here is a training ground for heaven. May we continue to make faithful use of the gifts and talents that the Lord has provided, that the Kingdom of Heaven may come, within us and around us, to the glory of Almighty God, now and forever more.

Amen.

—the Martin family

GTU: Grow in Knowledge, Thrive in Spirit, Unite in Solutions

BY ALAN KELCHNER

When Jim Lawrence approached me to see if I might be interested in serving as a member of the board of the Center for Swedenborgian Studies, it occurred to me that it might prove *useful* to both the Center and the Graduate Theological Union for me to serve as a CSS trustee. Little did I know how appropriate that thought was! Now that I have read Wilson Van Dusen's treatise on Swedenborg's philosophy of *uses*, I have a much richer understanding of usefulness as a pathway to spiritual growth.

The truth is that over my many years as a pastor and a seminary professor, I have had an appreciation for, but only limited understanding of, Emanuel Swedenborg. I'm grateful for the opportunity I now have to explore his ideas more deeply. I find the Swedenborgian theology of usefulness to be especially helpful, including useful actions as a form of prayer, and the spiritual depth that comes through seeking to be useful.

In my current role as vice-president for advancement at the Graduate Theological Union (GTU), I seek to be useful by overseeing all communications and fundraising, and by developing new relationships and new partnerships. This means that a large part of my job involves describing and explaining the GTU: who we are, what we do, and why the GTU is so unique and so vital. So let me take this opportunity to introduce you to the GTU as the new institutional home of the Center for Swedenborgian Studies.

The Graduate Theological Union



in Berkeley, California, is the largest interreligious and interdisciplinary graduate school in religion in North America, with more than 200 doctoral students and more than 800 students in M.A. and M.Div. programs. The GTU

consists of twenty-two schools, centers, and institutes, which include Jewish Studies, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Jain, Sikh, Chinese religions, and the broad range of Christian traditions: Protestant, Catholic, and Orthodox.

The GTU was founded in 1962 and is fully accredited by the Western Senior College and University Commission and the Association of Theological Schools. GTU students may take classes not only at any school in the consortium but also at the University of California, Berkeley.

The GTU's Flora Lamson Hewlett Library is one of the largest theological libraries in the United States, and it is by far the most comprehensive. Built on the foundation of the original collections brought together from the eight seminaries of the GTU, the Hewlett Library collection has now come to reflect the profound interreligious character of the GTU, with extensive collections not only in Christianity, but also in Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, and many other religious traditions as well.

The collection has not only the breadth to support a full range of theological scholarship but also considerable depth in many areas of theological inquiry, such as religion and the arts, religion and science, and the sociology

of religion.

In our modern world, it has become increasingly important for members of various religious traditions to better understand one another. The GTU is unique as a graduate program where all the major religious traditions have a place at the table. Aware of our deep heritage in the Christian tradition, the GTU is now moving intentionally toward becoming a truly interreligious institution, rather than "Christianity plus others."

One thing that has long distinguished the GTU among other academic programs in religion is that our faculty members, by and large, are *scholar-practitioners*. This means that a professor teaching the New Testament is likely to be a practicing Christian, while a professor teaching the Vedas is apt to personally engage in contemplative practices of Hinduism.

While the standards of academic scholarship are rigorously practiced and valued, faculty and students at the GTU tend to understand themselves as adherents of a particular religious tradition that informs their own identity, beliefs, and practices.

To be sure, meditation or contemplation can be studied by a careful neutral observer who describes what he or she sees or understands from external study; but the GTU also welcomes consideration of the interior knowledge that comes with actual religious experience and practice. This is a key distinction that separates the Graduate Theological Union from other university programs in religion, where faculty members are expected to be more neutral and detached.

One example of this issue comes from a professor of Hindu Studies and

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GTU: Spirit, Knowledge, Solutions

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Sanskrit at a major university, who says that she recorded a traditional Hindu chant on her university phone as a blessing to those who might call her when she was out of the office. This created quite a backlash from her colleagues, because this simple action revealed her own personal belief system. This was considered to be a violation of academic professionalism and the objective, scientific study of religion.

At the GTU, we don't ask scholars to be objective about their own beliefs and practices. Instead, we encourage our scholar-practitioners to bring a well-informed, sympathetic, yet critical eye to their own tradition. We know that within any given religious tradition, there are a variety of interpretations and beliefs. The GTU welcomes diverse traditions, as well as a wide range of opinions within those traditions, in an atmosphere of mutual respect and appreciation for one another's beliefs and practices.

Every time we add a new religion to our graduate programs, we face the task of finding and hiring appropriate faculty who fit the scholar-practitioner culture of the GTU.

For example, we are currently working with the Higher Education Council of the LDS Church in Northern California to fund a Chair in Mormon Studies at the GTU. Questions arise: Will the professor who holds this chair have to be Mormon? Does being a church member automatically mean that the professor is incapable of critical judgment or of holding non-orthodox positions? These are questions that are particularly asked when new religions, or less familiar religions, are brought into the GTU culture.

In an educational environment like ours, where academic freedom is essential and rigorous scholarship and critical thinking are highly valued, it is

essential that search committees find candidates who are comfortable living in both the academic world and within a particular faith tradition. At the GTU, we know that persons can achieve excellence as scholars, teachers, and mentors, while being transparent about their own religious affiliation.

In addition to the growing interest in interreligious study, another reality of the North American religious landscape these days is that more and more people describe themselves as not being affiliated with any particular religious tradition.

As a result, an increasing number of our students report that they did not grow up attending a church, mosque, synagogue, or temple. They may not situate themselves within any particular religious tradition, or they may follow a wide and eclectic set of beliefs and practices drawn from multiple traditions.

In order for a graduate education program in religion to be truly *useful*, it must provide great flexibility and

an opportunity for students to shape their own study. It must also equip its students to bring the wisdom of the world's religious traditions to the challenging problems that confront us today. These are strengths of the GTU, and the addition of the Center for Swedenborgian Studies and its excellent faculty only makes us stronger.

Our hope is that our capacity to offer deep study in a vast array of religious traditions, from Judaism to Jainism, and great religious thinkers, from Siddhartha Gautama to Swedenborg, will provide a unique and much-needed platform for interreligious and interdisciplinary study in the twenty-first century. ☸

Rev. Dr. Alan Kelchner is vice-president for advancement at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley and is an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ. He is a member of the Board of Trustees of the Center for Swedenborgian Studies, and lives in Petaluma, California

Visit the website of the Center for Swedenborgian Studies: <http://css.gtu.edu>. Visit and "like" CSS on Facebook.

CSS Fall Meeting

BY KAREN CONGER

The Board of Trustees of the Center for Swedenborgian Studies held its fall meeting in Berkeley, California on September 23–24, 2016.

Dean Jim Lawrence reported that the Center for Swedenborgian Studies (CSS) has pioneered new modalities for students to study, and there are more students studying at the Center at this point than in decades, and CSS has a superlative faculty. The Center is still looking at options for moving the library collections (the Pacific School of Religion is ending the lease), but the deadline for moving is probably three years from now.

The emphasis of CSS continues to

be on the spiritual formation of our ministers and world outreach through leading edge scholarship. The new location of the school as a Center of Excellence at the Graduate Theological Union helps considerably with the second goal.

CSS will offer an all-community intensive course again this winter; the dates are January 23–25, and the subject this year is "Spiritual Formation for Ministry."

Associate professor Dr. Devin Zuber was awarded tenure status this fall. Both his mid-track review and final review were outstanding, and the Graduate Theological Union supported his being made an associate professor last year, so the recent move to the GTU is timely and appropriate. ☸

Karen Conger is the recording secretary of the Swedenborgian Church.

Wilmington Church Call for a Minister

The Wilmington Church of the Holy City in Wilmington, Delaware, is seeking a full-time minister to begin as early as January 1, 2017. The right minister will be able to lead, inspire, and guide our congregation spiritually and lead in management of the church. Essential in this guidance are the following:

- Inspirational worship services and sermons that engage and inspire the congregation to explore our personal spirituality
- Increasing membership and congregational size by attracting members of the community who share our values and beliefs
- Strong, impactful community outreach programs
- Spiritual leadership and service to members through times of need and personal challenge
- Children's Bible study, including teen engagement programs
- Conducting all sacramental rites of the Church
- Serving as the acting minister for weddings (according to availability)
- Strengthening relationships with other Swedenborgian congregations as well as area churches of all denominations.

As our Church has a relatively small congregation, there is not an administrative or building staff to perform many of the needs essential to the day-to-day operations of the Church.

While we do have an active Board of Trustees, including an experienced president and treasurer, the minister is often responsible for daily correspondence, record keeping, community outreach, and managing his or her schedule of commitments.

Challenges

Of course, all churches have their challenges, and ours is no exception.

Included in some of these challenges a minister can expect are the following:

- Although our church is beautiful, it is old and in need of repair (some structural, mostly cosmetic). The maintenance and upkeep of the building and grounds are some of the larger expenses of our Church.
- Our congregation prides itself on the deep and close relationships of its members. Of the active members and friends of the Church, about a third have been attending the Church for over twenty years, and about a third for less than five. This is an interesting dynamic in a congregation of our size, as the Church looks to balance a strong sense of history and tradition within an ever-changing religious climate.
- Because our membership is small, members are often on multiple volunteer committees.
- Our church is financially stable and in good standing with General Convention. However, we do rely on a few generous annual gifts as well as our annual Lobster & Wreath festival fundraiser to remain so.

Community Involvement and Traditions

Although small in size, our Church is active and plays a unique role in our community.

- The Lobster & Wreath Festival: Each December, many Wilmington residents kick off their Christmas season by visiting the Church of the Holy City's Lobster & Wreath festival. Every year, lobstermen from Maine make the trek to Wilm-



ington with over 1500 pounds of fresh Maine lobster and handmade balsam wreaths. The primary fundraiser for our Church, the Lobster & Wreath festival has been a Wilmington tradition for over twenty-five years.

- Emmanuel Dining Room: On the third

Thursday of each month, members of our church give back to the community through hosting and serving lunch at a community food center, the Emmanuel Dining Room.

- Adopt-a-Family: The congregation has a history of sponsoring families during the Christmas season, providing clothing, food, and necessities. Each year the members pull together to provide for those less fortunate.
- Copeland String Quartet: Our Church has a unique relationship with a popular area string quartet. The Copeland String Quartet has been entertaining area residents by providing four or five concerts a year at the Church. It is a tradition unique to our Church, and is very well attended.

Compensation Package

The compensation package is negotiable, commensurate with experience. It can include housing, health insurance, and retirement benefits in addition to salary.

Application Requirements

All interested ministers in good standing with General Convention are encouraged to apply. Applications will be considered confidential until both parties agree to communicate their in-

Continues on page 141

Wilmington Call

Continued from page 140

tent outside of the application process.

The application process will consist of several phone conversations or interviews with members of the Minister Search Committee, followed by a candidating weekend. Expenses related to the candidating weekend will be covered by the Church.

A Small Church, Big in History and Potential

The Wilmington Church of the Holy City has been a central part of the community since 1856, when construction on the building began. Originally in the heart of downtown Wilmington, the church was relocated stone by stone in 1916 to make way for the growing city.

Today it sits in the area of Cool Springs, next to the Trolley Square neighborhood, both popular areas for young, working professionals who commute less than a mile to the downtown area for work. The church is a beautiful example of Gothic revival architecture in the midst of the very modern and busy city of Wilmington.

Throughout its history, the Church has included some notable Wilmington area residents in its congregation, including artist and author Howard Pyle, Alfred A. Dupont, and Pierre Dupont.

The church sanctuary seats 100 people comfortably, and the Sunday service hosts an average of twenty worshippers. The congregation, including members and friends, numbers close to fifty.

Because of its unique architecture, beautiful sanctuary, and accommodating wedding committee, the church is a popular wedding location for couples living within the Delaware Valley area and has regular bookings throughout the year.

Our church is a close-knit fami-

Structure Review Progress

From The Structure Review Committee and President Siebert, a huge thank you to all who responded to our questionnaire. We are delighted to report that we had over eighty-four responses. You've offered plenty of insight that will help to assess areas that are working well, those that need re-tooling, and those that need attention.

The information you provided has been briefly reviewed by General Council at their November meeting. They've offered some comments of their own and it is now in the hands of the Structure Review Committee, which will pore through the items in depth. They will present topics for discussion and suggestions at the 2017 Annual Convention. In the meantime, thank you again for con-

tributing your time and thoughts so generously!

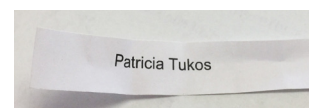
Just as important, of course, is the big question: "Who won the drawing?!" At their November meeting,

members of General Council were asked to draw the winning name. (Structure Review Committee and General Council names were exempted from the drawing.) We are

happy to announce that the person who has won a paid registration fee to Convention 2017 is . . . Pat Tukos. Pat is a member of the LaPorte New Church in LaPorte, Indiana. Congratulations, Pat! ☩



Karen Conger holds the bowl aloft while husband Stan picks the lucky winner.



ly that pulls together to achieve great things. We welcome anyone who wishes to worship with us and host an open communion. We believe there is a place in heaven for all who live their lives caring for and loving others, and want to share this message as we look to grow our membership.

We are excited about this period of transition for our Church and are looking for a minister who shares our beliefs and desire to grow.

The Deadline for Receiving Applications is February 28, 2017.

All applications should include a resume, cover letter, salary requirements, and two or three samples of your sermons (audio, text, or video—Youtube

videos are preferred). Included in your cover letter should be a statement of your vision for the Church of the Holy City.

Minister Search Committee Contact Information

All inquiries should be directed to Jean Dougherty, Board of Trustees president.

To keep applicant information confidential and ensure fair and consistent review, we ask that you contact the search committee only:

- thechurchoftheholycity@gmail.com
- 302.416.0550. ☩

www.churchoftheholycity.com

Annual Appeal

Dear Friends,

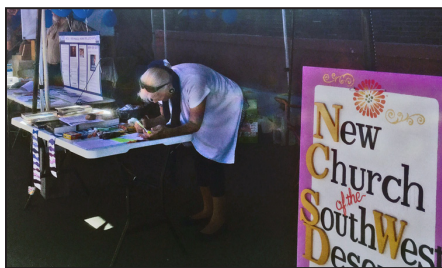
As your new president, I am asking you to consider a donation to the Swedenborgian Church in 2016. We need your gift to support a variety of initiatives, both new and longstanding. Good things are happening and we would like you to be a part of them.

I have been impressed with the careful use of financial gifts to the Swedenborgian Church and the variety of useful ways the money supports our youth work, our grants to churches (both missions and established churches), our ministers, the work of our volunteer committees, and overall sharing the gift we have in the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg. Please be assured the money you donate will be used judiciously and lovingly, and you can designate how you would like it used.

I asked a few of the groups that receive funding from us to share their stories:

The New Church of the Southwest Desert in Silver City, New Mexico: a mission church, planted in 2007, which continues to grow and serve the community

Thanks to the funds received from the denomination in 2015–16, NCSWD has expanded its ministry of service, contracted an ordained part-time minister and supported the training of a licensed pastor. Our Go-Fer Program provides transportation and runs errands for the housebound, infirm, and homeless. We continue to support area services to the homeless,



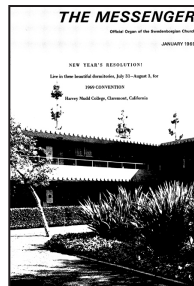
The NCSWD at the Healing Arts Fair

providing emergency shelter, meals, and more to those in need. “Wine and the Word” Bible and Swedenborgian classes continue to be well attended at The Toad, a local brew pub. The Healing Arts Fair returned this year, with area practitioners and vendors.

—Rev. Carla Friedrich and Linda Browning Callander, licensed pastor

The Messenger: the newsletter of the Swedenborgian Church, connecting church members and friends since 1856

The Messenger has been providing news and information about local and national activities and events, articles on theology and Swedenborgian history, personal views, and other items of



interest to Swedenborgians for 160 years. Throughout that time it has changed its publishing schedule, format, and focus many times, reflecting changes in

leadership, reader interests, and society at large, but *the Messenger* has always brought us all a little closer together. With partial funding from dedicated church funds, the denomination has always seen *the Messenger* as a vital communication link and provided steadfast support for its ongoing publication.

—Herb Ziegler, editor

The Council of Ministers of the Swedenborgian Church: preparing students for ministry, and offering support and learning opportunities to ordained ministers

There are a variety of skills that the spiritual leaders of our denomination bring to their work. Creating sacred space, counseling, administration, and knowledge about current trends in religion and spirituality are a few. Funding from the Swedenborgian Church helps to offer continuing education through



Post-COM meeting at the Annual Convention (L to R): Rev. Jenny Caughman, Rebecca Esterson (CSS faculty), Rev. Anna Woofenden, Rev. Catherine Lauber

peer groups and at annual conventions to develop the skill of “facilitating the spiritual well-being of people,” which is the foundation for regeneration.

When this happens in spiritual community, people and groups within General Convention can grow and thrive. I believe Swedenborgians bring an inclusive form of community, deep respect for depth in human process, and a view of divine providence that is needed more than ever in today’s world. Your participation in this important work makes a difference. Thank you for your support!

—Rev. Dr. Gard Perry,
chair of the Council of Ministers

Please be a part of the bigger church picture with your donation to support the work being done around the US and Canada.

—Thank you,
Rev. Jane Siebert, president,
the Swedenborgian Church

What Can I Do To Get Involved?

- Visit a church in your area (visit www.swedenborg.org to find one).
- Subscribe to the Messenger (email manager@swedenborg.org, visit www.swedenborg.org, or call 617.969.4240).
- Visit and follow the recently re-launched *Our Daily Bread* ministry at www.spiritualquesters.org.
- Join the conversation on Twitter by following @Swedenborgians.
- Donate (visit www.swedenborg.org, call 617.969.4240, or mail a check or money order to The Swedenborgian Church, 50 Quincy St., Cambridge, MA 02138).

Swedenborg Foundation

Continued from page 146

borg himself took to press.

In the early twentieth century the board authorized minor corrections and changes to the Library Edition, reduced its trim size, and added a few works that Swedenborg did not publish. This set, the American Standard Edition, is affectionately better known as “the green thirty” to indicate the number and color of the hardbacks. During the 1990s and with the aid of electronic editing software, under the management of Rev. Dr. William Woofenden, the entire edition was republished in a more attractive and readable page design while continuing with the same trim size and green casings, and is known as the Redesigned Standard Edition.

In the 1980s, in a step that coincided with the advent of desktop publishing, the board amended the mission statement to venture beyond publishing only Swedenborg’s theological works:

The mission of the Swedenborg Foundation is to foster an affirmative, informed, and increasingly broad engagement with the theological message disclosed by Emanuel Swedenborg. To carry out this mission, the Foundation publishes Swedenborg’s works, books applying their principles to contemporary life, scholarly monographs, and sponsors educational and informational programs.

In addition to such popular films as “The Man Who Had to Know” and “Images of Knowing” among several others, the eighties and nineties saw a spate of colorful softcover trade books issued under three imprints: Chrysalis Books, Swedenborg Studies Series, and the Swedenborg Foundation.

Also in the nineties as the new millennium was looming, executive director David Eller encouraged the board to consider developing a scholarly

edition of Swedenborg’s theological works—an edition on par with similar critical editions produced for the most important theologians such as Augustine, Luther, and Calvin. After a several-year development plan, the New Century Edition was born in 1997,

... the New Century Edition also represents the first-ever complete set of Swedenborg’s writings published under a uniform translation standard . . .

with Rev. Dr. Jonathan Rose named as senior editor and Dr. Stuart Shotwell as managing editor. Its first volume—*Heaven and Hell*, translated by Rev. Dr. George Dole—successfully rolled off the press in time for the new millennium in the year 2000.

In addition to being the first scholarly edition with introductory articles and a raft of endnotes in every volume, the New Century Edition also represents the first-ever complete set of Swedenborg’s writings published under a uniform translation standard for all works—a translation style shaped for ease of comprehension. The project has proven immense in both cost and in the amount of work needed, however, and as of now, though most of the translation is completed, only about half the edition has been brought off the press and another few years are very likely going to be needed to finish it.

In the meantime, however, another momentous change has recently occurred. As the desktop era began to give way to virtual publishing generally in American culture, the board considered anew how to reach new audiences. At a vision retreat in 2013, the board tilted sharply away from a traditional small press model to an online and virtual mode of connecting with audiences. A media team of the brothers Curtis and Matthew Childs was hired to produce short films, and a

staff was shaped with expertise in navigating the virtual world. Thus far, the success has been phenomenal in terms of a new audience reached. The top films have hit such numbers of a quarter million views, and the number of subscribers to the Foundation channel has hit 40, 000 as of this writing.

Publishing books remains in the strategy of the Foundation, and the increased traffic through the web site has lifted sales of books to new heights. Yet, the future is virtual publishing, and the board is strongly encouraged by the results in the first phase. Part of the recent shift involved more consciously adopting a service organization business model, and instead of pricing for maximum revenue possibilities the Foundation now gives away many works in PDF form. Hundreds of thousands of Swedenborg books have been downloaded in the past few years. Maybe the New Age is indeed continuing to unfold! ☪

Rev. Jim Lawrence is a current board member who has served in various capacities at the Swedenborg Foundation since 1985.

Hymnals, Bibles Available

The final push is on to clear out the contents of the San Diego church and hall in preparation for its next owners to take possession.

We have a number of hymnals and Bibles, I would be happy to ship to anyone is willing to pay for the shipping costs. We also have several decades of *the Messenger* and quite a number of ODB’s.

Any materials I can’t find new homes for by May 1, 2017, will be discarded.

If interested, please email me at RevJonathan4144@gmail.com or text me at 310-435-4907 for spreadsheets that give quantities and condition for the hymnals and bibles.

—Rev. Jonathan Mitchell

Passages

Continued from page 145

Town of Harpswell on the Budget Advisory Committee and later on the Board of Appeals.

John served as Treasurer of the General Convention of the New Jerusalem for a number of years, and subsequently on Convention's Investment Committee. He served the Bath Church on the Executive Committee up to the time of his passing. He was elected Director Emeritus of the Swedenborg Foundation in 2008 in recognition of his many years of service on the Foundation's Board of Directors.

John is survived by his wife, Anne, his three daughters, Lauren, Gail, and Carla, and one granddaughter, Acacia. Also many nephews and nieces including Rev. Gardiner Perry of Conway, New Hampshire.

A memorial service will be held next spring. In lieu of flowers contributions may be made to the The Swedenborgian Church, 50 Quincy Street, Cambridge, MA 02138, to the Swedenborg Foundation 320 N Church St. West Chester, PA 19330, or to the Appalachian Mountain Club, 5 Joy Street, Boston, MA 02108. ☛

Classic Translations Available

One of the uses of the Heavenly Doctrine Publishing Foundation is to keep the classic translations of the Heavenly Doctrine in print and available, such as those by Ager, Whitehead, Tafel, and Potts (the older green and blue translations).

Since then we have received quite a few books, including a couple of whole sets. We have many more books to offer, such as complete sets of *AC*, *AE*, *AR*, and *TCR* and several books of other works by Swedenborg.

General Council Fall Meeting

BY KAREN CONGER

The General Council met on November 4–5, 2016 in Framingham, Massachusetts.

The Committee on Amendments submitted to General Council (GC) a proposed amendment to the Bylaws regarding non-participation of members of support units, committees, and offices. GC voted that the following be proposed for action at the 2017 Annual Convention:

Any member of General Council, of any committee appointed by General Council, or of any Support Unit who fails to attend at least one duly called meeting during a calendar year may be deemed by General Council to have submitted his or her resignation, and shall be so informed by the Secretary. If no good and sufficient reason for said absence is offered, General Council may appoint a qualified individual to serve until the next meeting of Convention.

The Committee on Amendments also submitted a proposed amendment to the Constitution regarding quorum procedures. GC voted that the following be proposed for action at the 2017 Annual Convention:

Article VI. Meetings of the Swedenborgian Church

Section 1. Sessions of the Swedenborgian Church shall be held at least triennially, at such times and

places as it may determine. Meetings of the Swedenborgian Church must be called with 90 days' notice published in *the Messenger* or through a mailing to the members.

Section 2. A quorum to hold a convention shall consist of twenty percent of the numbers of persons qualified to vote as defined in Article IV, Representation and Voting.

Section 3. A quorum to conduct business at the convention shall be a majority of the registered voters at the convention, as defined in Article IV, Section 1, Representation and Voting.

GC formed three subcommittees to discuss issues and make recommendations to the whole Council.

- Finance Committee: treasurer Polly Baxter, chair; Stan Conger; Carl Helm; and Debbie Dolley
- Society, Association and Outreach Committee: secretary Karen Conger, chair; Rev. Dr. Gard Perry; Lon Elmer; Rev. Betsy Coffman; and Rev. Dick Tafel.
- Support Unit and Personnel Committee: vice-president Tom Neuenfeldt, Chair; Rev. Junchol Lee; Rob Lawson; and Barb Cullen. ☛

Karen Conger is the recording secretary of the Swedenborgian Church.

2016 Journal Available

The *2016 Journal of the Swedenborgian Church* is available in printed form or as a downloadable PDF. It comes in two forms: the full version (which includes bylaws, reports, and other governance information) and the version with directory only. Pricing is based on the version and to where it is mailed. The PDF is free. To order a copy, call 617.969.4240 or email manager@swedenborg.org. ☛

Let us know if you would like to obtain a specific work, or set of works, or even a whole set. You can request any book or books, just for the cost of postage. Please contact one of the following: If you live in the US, Stephen Cole (Stephen.cole@brynathyn.edu or 215. 938.8663) If you live in Canada: Nathan Cole (519.748.5802 or AsstPastor@carmelnewchurch.org). ☛

Passages

Deaths

Ronald Frostestad entered the next life on September 14, 2016. Interment was in Brooklyn, where he grew up. A memorial service was held at the San Francisco Swedenborgian Church on November 19, 2016, with Revs. Jun-chol Lee and Jim Lawrence officiating. Ron was a longtime member of the San Francisco Church, serving once as president. He also served on the boards of the Pacific Coast Association and the Center for Swedenborgian Studies, as well as on the denomination's Investment Committee.

Carol Hargrave Skinner Lawson, age 94, of Dillwyn, Virginia, passed into the fullness of the spiritual world on November 17, 2016. She was born in 1922 in Cincinnati, daughter of Charles Wickham Skinner and Ruth Hargrave Skinner.

Carol was mother to six children. Over seventy years she helped her children lead lives filled with purpose and love.

With a passion for life, Carol touched the hearts and souls of many individuals. When you were with her, she made you feel special. Her generosity of spirit was contagious. Filling her house with guests, camaraderie, sparkling conversation, relatives, old friends, new friends, flowers, and delicious meals, she engaged community and family.

Memorable summers in Maine and travel adventures with her beloved brother and sister were times that she cherished. Gardening, flowers, and the appreciation of the countryside were a passion that brought her from Washington, D.C., to Buckingham County in 1985, where she made many more friends.

Carol was passionate about writing, publishing, and the arts. In high

school she wrote librettos for two operettas. She also acted in and directed these productions. During Carol's high school years, she was a supernumerary in operatic performances of the Cincinnati Symphony.

Carol attended the University School of Cincinnati and received her MFA in Literature from Bennington College. She served for more than a quarter century on the Board of Directors of the Swedenborg Foundation and held the title director emerita. She was a lifelong and third-generation member of the Swedenborgian Church of North America.

Carol loved to work. She was busy with editing and design projects until her final days. Dedicated to the artful use of language, Carol served as associate editor of the *New Church Messenger* (1955–1964); numerous terms on the New-Church Department of Publications; editorial assistant for Harper & Row's *The American Journal of Pathology* (1964–1966); publications officer, U.S. Public Health Service (1967–1970); public information and press officer, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, from its inception (1970–1985); editor-in-chief of the Swedenborg Foundation's journal *Chrysalis* (1984–2013); Art Director, American Birding Association's *Birding* (1988–2000); and Art Director of the Embroiderers' Guild of America's *Needle Arts* (2002–2007).

Carol will be missed by her brother, Wickham Skinner; her sister, Perry Martin; her six children, Ann Crittenden, Robert Lawson, Phoebe Loughrey, Susanna Buschmann, Laura Lawson Tucker, and Frank Lawson; her daughters- and sons-in-law; nine grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren, and numerous loving cousins, nephews, nieces, and friends.

A celebration of Carol's life was observed at Brown's Chapel United Methodist Church in Dillwyn on November 25, 2016. She will be buried at

Spring Grove Cemetery and Arboretum in Cincinnati, Ohio, where her parents and many of her ancestors rest.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that Carol's friends and loved ones find ways to contribute their creativity to their communities ([memoriam](#), [page 134](#)).

On November 3, 2016, **Rev. Erni Martin** left the earthly plane and transitioned completely into the spiritual world ([memoriam](#), [page 131](#)).

John Clark Perry, teacher, explorer, craftsman, leader, sailor, and engineer, died peacefully at his home in Harpswell, Maine, with his family at his side October 9, 2016. He was the son of Rev. F. Gardiner Perry and Helen Whitehead Perry, born February 2, 1929, in Newton, Massachusetts, and grew up in the Boston area. He was a member of the Bath Church of the New Jerusalem in Bath, Maine.

John studied mechanical engineering at Northeastern University and subsequently took up boating, later sailing his boat from Michigan to the east coast through the Great Lakes canal system with his family. He became proficient in rock climbing and mountaineering leadership through the Appalachian Mountain Club, eventually becoming its president. His photography included a large selection of wildflower slides which was the basis for slide talks given by John and his wife. In 1953 he entered the US Army in the quartermaster division and was sent to Germany after a stint in Fort Lewis, Washington. After his army duty he worked for the US Army Natick Labs developing field and hospital kitchens.

In 1954 he married Anne Brooks. With their three daughters they took up residence in Sherborn, Massachusetts, where they lived until 1985, when he retired and moved with Anne to Harpswell. He volunteered for the

[Continues on page 144](#)

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.

Swedenborg Foundation from Inception to the Present

BY JIM LAWRENCE

The Swedenborg Foundation, located in West Chester, Pennsylvania, where the bicentennial convention will be held this upcoming summer, will be involved in the festivities and programs being planned for the gala occasion.

Established in 1849 during a time of considerable growth of the Swedenborgian movement in the United States, the Swedenborg Foundation has ended up being the most far-reaching publishing operation for Swedenborgian thought in any country. A group of mostly New York Sweden-

borgians began meeting for the purpose of considering a charitable organization devoted to publishing and distributing inexpensive and sometimes free copies of Swedenborg's theological works. Their leader was Samuel Waldo, who was a life member of the American Bible Society, which distributed Bibles by the thousands. The group also had taken notice of the effectiveness of the British Swedenborgians in a similar charitable effort: the London Society for Printing

and Publishing the Works of Emanuel Swedenborg, founded in 1810. They believed the ready availability of Swedenborg's writings had been an effective factor in the rapid growth of the Swedenborgian churches in England in the first half of the nineteenth century.

After a few meetings, a constitution was drawn up to form the American Swedenborg Printing and Publishing Society, and they were off and running. Many decades later, in 1928, the name was officially changed to the Swedenborg Foundation.

The most significant achievements in its first century of operations were placing copies of Swedenborg's works in public libraries of every major and mid-size city as well as countless smaller municipality libraries, distributing complimentary copies of Swedenborg's most popular works to thousands of ministers of other denominations, and publishing in a uniform binding a library edition of all the theological works that Sweden-



Continues on page 143