



The Golden Rule vs. The Bottom Line: Is Capitalism Okay?

BY TERRIE CRENSHAW

From a very young age, I was a dedicated capitalist. I saved every dime and pestered my mother to open me a savings account in third grade where I deposited \$500. I babysat, walked dogs, sold Halloween Insurance¹, and finally got my first official job at age 14, earning the minimum wage of \$1.42 per hour plus one grilled cheese sandwich per shift.

But I also had a soft side. I felt a strong affinity with plants and animals, didn't want to hurt any living thing, and hardly knew where to draw the line. As a young child, I spent too much time apologizing to and petting insects, trees, and even my own toys, for stepping on them, or even just neglecting to say hello to them when I was in a hurry.

After college, after a too-long stint working for a stingy nonprofit, one day browsing a magazine rack, I picked up an issue of *Fortune*. Peter Lynch, the superstar portfolio manager of the then groundbreaking Magellan Mutual Fund, was profiled in detail. His base salary, a small percentage of the massive assets of the fund, was mentioned. On the spot, I decided to enter the field

of finance. I had never imagined that a salary could be so huge.

In our spiritual education, the message of love and truth, and of the Golden Rule, are basic and pervasive. In business school, that value is The Bottom Line.

After a couple of years selling insurance, being a commodities broker, then a stockbroker, I went to business school. Until this time, I had stayed within my own environment in Detroit. I still pursued music as a hobby, playing in local bands. My friends were a motley collection of artists, eccentric trust fund kids, fellow members of the middle class climbing the corporate ladder, and of course, my friends from church.

My business school cohort was another story. From the first gathering, I became conscious that real friendship did not exist there. Over French cheese and wine, I watched as we picked each other apart, seeking weaknesses, or any interesting asset such as good contacts or family money. And from the first-class sessions, one of which was a cursory nod to the then current fad of "business ethics," we were indoctrinated with a simple, clear, repetitive

message. In our spiritual education, the message of love and truth, and of the Golden Rule, are basic and pervasive. In business school, that value is The Bottom Line.

In every discussion, every project, every answer, it was drilled into us that profit was the only goal in business. We learned to craft vision and mission statements, to write marketing plans, develop strategy, to mention *goodwill* when other arguments failed, and to say we considered *human capital* as an asset. But every decision was evaluated in financial terms, and, if it wasn't profitable, was to be discarded.

Legal, moral, and ethical considerations were subject to the same process. If a law could be broken to increase profit, the cost benefit analysis was done including the possibility of the financial impact of fines, lawsuits, or risk of having to cease operations. I want to be clear. Profit in business has the same role as Love in one's spiritual life.

And that "ethics" class? The first case study involved an oil rig off the coast of North Africa. Employees were a mix of Europeans and Africans. The Europeans had contracts guaranteeing an airlift to a Swiss hospital in case of a serious injury. Of course, the Africans did not. In the case study, an

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¹ I would go around to neighbors before Halloween and they would pay me \$1.50 to clean up any damage trick or treaters might leave. I only had one claim—and I was not able to get the soap off the windows—that was the end of my enterprise!

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the Messenger

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Guest Editorial

Self-Defense?
Or Second
Amendment
Gone Awry?

I write this just three days after the most recent mass shooting in Atlanta, Georgia, on March 16, 2021. A young white male, armed with lethal weapons, shot and killed eight people. Seven were women and, of those, six were Asian. The issue of motive (racism and misogyny) is still being debated. (Really? Yes, really!) But I am concerned here with the conditions which allow for these ongoing travesties of justice.

On June 30, 2019 at its annual convention, the Swedenborgian Church adopted a 2017 resolution from the National Council of Churches in the USA on Gun Violence. It reads in part, in an average year, 100,000 Americans are shot or killed with a gun. Every day (on average) 300 Americans are victims of gun violence, with 85 lives taken daily as a result.¹

The United States is rapidly moving from a land of hospitality and freedom to a land of the fearful and the besieged, with gun violence being the driving force behind this change. *We have become a nation at war with ourselves and numbed to the sacredness of human life.*

Responsible gun ownership can be consistent with our constitutional rights; however, it must be stressed that there are relatively few shootings by average citizens defending themselves.²

1 Brady Center to Prevent Gun Violence, with data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (2006, most recent year available), <http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/wisqars>.

2 A gun in the home is eleven times more

Rather, most fatal and non-fatal shootings result from abuse or misuse of guns.³ Over 40,000 deaths annually are caused by citizens shooting and killing citizens, whether these shootings are intentional, accidental, suicidal, drug, or gang related.

Annually, there are 1.5 million crimes committed where firearms were used. 68% of murders are gun related and 55% of suicides are by using guns. More than 69,000 shootings each year are non-fatal, yet still leave in their wake a trail of pain, suffering, disabilities or disfigurement, and anguish and grief for family and community.⁴

A few days ago, I opened my March, 2021 issue of *Harper's Magazine*, and found this article: "Another World is Possible," by Hari Kunzru. Following is an excerpt:

British police have the same problems with bias as their American counterparts, and my home country [England] has a history

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likely to be used in an attempted suicide than to be used to injure or kill in self-defense.

Brady Center to Prevent Gun Violence, with data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (2006, most recent year available), <http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/wisqars>; <http://www.bradycampaign.org/issues/gvstats/suicide/>

3 In a given year, roughly 642 people killed accidentally are killed accidentally in gun violence. Likewise, 15,698 people survive being accidentally shot. On average, nine children are killed by gun violence each day in the U.S. Brady Center to Prevent Gun Violence, with data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (2006, most recent year available), <http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/wisqars>; <http://www.bradycampaign.org/xshare/pdf/facts/2008-death-and-injury-stat-sheet.pdf>.

4 Office of Statistics and Programming, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, CDC Data Source: NEISS All Injury Program operated by the Consumer Product Safety Commission for numbers of injuries. Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (2007). <http://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/index.html>.

Letter from the President

The Year of the Spiritual World: 2020–21

Dear Friends,

We have been given a precious gift.

The restrictions and isolation and fear surrounding all of us living through this pandemic have brought us closer together as a denomination with a variety of blessed opportunities for connection.

We share in the suffering. We join in the grief. We care for those enduring financial hardships. We are concerned about the unequal challenges people face due to this pandemic. The year behind us has darkened our days and, as we begin to see light, we look at the experiences the Lord has led us through with thanksgiving. We pray not to go back to “normal” but for a new awakening during this time of regeneration.

In the midst of this, I feel a new energy and resourcefulness within our ministries as I hear the stories from associations, churches, camps, ministers, and our seminary.

Assistance during the Pandemic. In 2020, \$31,900 was donated and distributed to eight churches struggling during the pandemic. So far in 2021, over \$35,000 has been donated from General Council, associations, churches, and members to assist families and individuals. So far eighteen \$500 grants have helped members from Canada to New Mexico, from California to Maine, from New York to Massachusetts, and from Michigan to Kansas. Requests are still accepted. (email president@swedenborg.org). Also, some churches and camps have started their own food donations and financial assistance to help their neighbors.

Convention 2020 was turned upside down into a virtual gathering and was a big success. The Keynote address by Rev. Dr. George Dole was attended by over 100 guests online and many others watched later. Each of the six mini courses also had remarkable attendance. Everyone loved the virtual parade of ministries where we traveled together around North

America to visit thirty-eight churches, camps, retreat centers, and other ministries. And *we shared the traditional convention worship services as a big family, separated by space, and joined by love for one another.*

Convention 2021 will be virtual again. There will be business meetings with virtual voting for new committee members, the president-elect, and by-law changes. With virtual voting, every church can be represented, and we expect almost 200 delegates compared to the sixty delegates we had in 2019. *It is an amazing opportunity for more members to have a voice and be a vital participant in convention.*

We will worship together, filmed at the churches in Massachusetts so you can virtually visit Bridgewater, Cambridge, Elmwood, and Newtonville. There will be opportunities to learn through a wide variety of mini-courses and top-notch speakers.

Convention 2022, hopefully, will be hybrid with in-person and virtual options, in Southern California, hosted by The Garden Church and Wayfarers Chapel. *No longer will meetings be restricted to those that have the time, good health, and resources to travel to annual conventions.*

Camps. As *the Messenger* reported, 2020 was a Summer of Virtual Reality, including Almont Summer School and Fryeburg New Church Assembly. *Both were well attended, drawing people from around the U.S. and Canada—beyond the regular campers.* Dependent on how things come together this summer, they will utilize what they learned to open camp to a broader audience than may be able to attend in-person.

The Center for Swedenborgian Studies has a new initiative, *Virtual Educational Offerings for the Planet*. In the fall, people from around the globe joined



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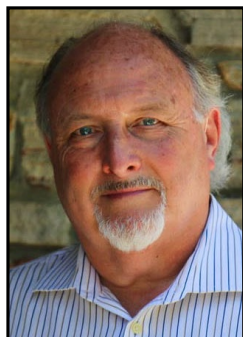
Nominations for Elected Positions in the Swedenborgian Church

The Nominating Committee nominates at least one candidate for each open elected position. Elective offices and nominees to date are listed on the chart shown on the right. If you are interested in being nominated for any position, contact the Nominating Committee through Central Office. The following candidate statements have been received by *the Messenger* to date.

The candidate elected to be president will become the president-elect and then take office as president at the 2022 Annual Convention.

Rev. Jim Lawrence, D.Min., Ph.D. President (three-year term)

The future holds grand promise for our special brand of Swedenborgianism in Convention, and I am excited for the prospects of an emerging new phase of our Church's life. We inherit a rich history of witness and presence in North America, and we enjoy a beloved collection of remarkable ministries supported by so many wonderful people. New-start ministries in recent years show vision, innovative approaches in our historic churches, demonstrate creativity, and fresh vision for virtual spaces in Convention's work all augur for a healthy partnership with divine providence. Maintaining the recent energetic, generous, and farsighted leadership for our beloved community is my personal hope and passion, as I also believe an exciting new phase



Position to be Filled	Term (Yrs)	Candidate
President	3	Jim Lawrence
Vice President	1	Kurt Fekete*
Recording Secretary	1	Karen Conger*
Treasurer	3	***
General Council: layperson (2 to be elected)	3	Barb Halle* Herb Ziegler
General Council: layperson (unexpired term)	2**	Tom Murphy
General Council: layperson (unexpired term)	1**	Beki Greenwood
General Council: minister	3	Thom Muller*
Standing Committee for Communication & Information	3	Tara Conkling
Standing Committee for Communication & Information (unexpired term)	2**	Holly Bauer
Standing Committee for Education & Resources for Spiritual Community	3	Shada Sullivan
Standing Committee for Financial Accountability (2 to be elected)	3	Tom Neuenfeldt Kurt Fekete*
Standing Committee for Financial Accountability (unexpired term)	1**	Rachel Madjerac
Committee on Admission to the Ministry: layperson	3	BJ Neuenfeldt
Committee on Admission to the Ministry: clergy (unexpired term)	2**	Alison Lane-Olsen
Nominating Committee	5	Paul Deming

* Incumbent

** Years remaining in unexpired term

*** No candidate to be elected this year

of our denomination's life will require ongoing thoughtful and energetic care.

Long ago, while in a mainline seminary, I continued exploring Swedenborg, whose works kept rising above everything else I was studying. After investigating all the branches of Swedenborgianism, Convention clicked on a personal level in a very engaged way. Yet, I hesitated to make the jump due to its smallness. What overcame that hesitation is the deep sense of community and profound congruity with the ideas and spirituality I experienced in Convention. Tiny or not, it felt like home. Yet, so many times I've smiled in remembrance of a cartoon depicting an astonished perplexity of a man who thought he had walked into a

small grotto but found himself beholding an immense and sumptuous palace. You can never exhaust the bigness of our spirituality.

Indeed, Convention has steered me into room after room of profound relationships and experiences through my service in congregational ministries in St. Louis, Fryeburg, and San Francisco, in publishing ministries as editor of *the Messenger* and director of J. Appleseed & Co., and in higher education as dean and professor at the Swedenborgian House of Studies and the Center for Swedenborgian Studies. Along the way, I have served as President of the Pacific Coast Association for six years, on the Advisory

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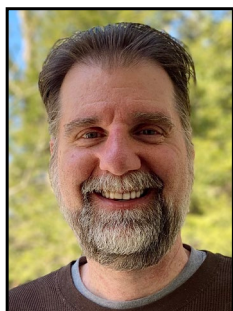
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Placement Committee for twenty years, on our Educational Resources for Spirituality Committee for the past few years, and on the Board of Directors of the Swedenborg Foundation for twenty-five years. Additionally, I have enjoyed being an active member at the Swedenborgian Community Church at Hillside for the past seventeen years.

I made the right decision forty years ago to jump. Now I am delighted to be feeling the promise of an ongoing future—one that holds as much promise as ever before. We have a most beloved community to share through our special Convention brand of Swedenborgian spirituality: spaces for an inclusive, egalitarian, collegial community exploring together some really big ideas about what's up in this universe and in each of our lives.

Kurt Fekete
Vice President
(one-year term) &
Standing Committee for Financial
Accountability
(three-year term)



I am pleased and honored to accept the nomination to the position of Vice President as well as the Standing Committee for Financial Accountability. I was raised in a Swedenborgian family and have been involved with the Swedenborgian Church for my entire life. I attended Sunday school at the Detroit Church which moved to Royal Oak, Michigan when I was a teenager. I was fascinated by Swedenborg, and my mother, Joyce, and I loved talking about theology when I was an adolescent. She took me

to Almont Summer Camp every year where she taught the fourth and fifth grade class and sold penny candy after lunch as “The Candy Lady.” I loved Almont and when I became a teenager, I attended youth retreats. Like Swedenborg, although I loved studying religion, I also enjoyed the sciences and engineering. I graduated from Wayne State University with a B.S. in Chemical Engineering and worked as a bench chemist, department director, and quality engineer into my forties. However, all the while working as an engineer, I continued to love learning about Swedenborgian theology and being active in the Swedenborgian Church. I had an instrumental role in launching and leading the young adult group known as Transitions in the 1990s and early 2000s. I was also a board member of the Almont New Church Assembly and served as president for a partial term. My real passion was youth retreats, and I left my career in chemical engineering to become the Youth Director for the Swedenborgian Church of North America. Now in my twentieth year serving the youth of the Church, I still love working with teens and pre-teens at retreats and summer camps. The pandemic has made this work very challenging, not being able to gather in-person with youth. However, the crisis has also opened up the opportunity to assume a leadership role in the denomination as interim vice president. I assumed that position in autumn 2020 and I have enjoyed working with my colleagues on the forward vision and day-to-day decisions and activities of the Church. If elected to the vice president position in the coming year I look forward to continuing to provide a youthful perspective to the organization while honoring the heritage and foundational principles of our beloved faith community. I live in Maine with my fantastic wife, Shelley—who I met at a youth retreat—and our two teenage daughters.

Karen Conger
Recording Secretary
(one-year term)



Greetings! It's once again an honor to accept nomination for the office of recording secretary of the General Convention, a position to which I was first elected

in 2015. I am a lifelong, third generation Swedenborgian who was raised in the Church of the Holy City in Washington, D.C. I have been a member of both the Urbana and Los Angeles Societies, and am currently a member-at-large of the Pacific Coast Association (PCA). I have served on the Ministries Support Unit for several years, the Nominating Committee more than once, and was the secretary of the PCA for several years, as well as holding elected positions on the Board of Directors of the Los Angeles Society and the Wayfarers Chapel Board of Directors. I continue to very much enjoy working as secretary and hope to continue in the position. Thank you for your consideration.

Barbara Halle
General Council-Layperson
(three-year term)

Having served my first three-year term (plus one year, due to the pandemic) on General Council and very much enjoying the denominational involvement and



the dear friendships that have evolved, I am honored to be nominated for a second term. It is my hope to continue on that path for another three years. I

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am a long-time member and current treasurer of LaPorte New Church in Indiana, as well as treasurer of the Illinois Association.

The last four years seem to have flown by as I have been serving on various interesting committee projects. By continuing to serve on General Council, I look forward to being able to help our denomination reach its spiritual and earthly potential in an open-minded, caring, and discerning manner. I will do my best to serve well, with faith in God's guidance.

Herb Ziegler General Council–Layperson (three-year term)



I would like to thank the Nominating Committee for asking me to run for General Council. I look forward to this opportunity to serve the Swedenborgian

Church and help it through these rapidly changing and sometimes perilous times to the extent my talents, knowledge, and efforts allow me. I have extensive experience with the Church having served on General Council, the Board of Directors of the Center for Swedenborgian Studies, and the Investment Committee. I am a member of the Cambridge Church and served as president of the Massachusetts New Church Union for many years and I am a trustee of the Gray Fund. As well, I was an employee of the Church for twelve years, serving as editor of *the Messenger*. The Church has given me much in terms of spiritual, social, and material well-being, and growth in wisdom and perspective. I would like, with your approval, to give back.

Tom Murphy General Council–Layperson (unexpired two-year term)

Growing up as a Catholic in Northern California, Tom Murphy didn't know, or learn, much about Emanuel Swedenborg until later in life. Tom attended Jesuit High School (Bellarmine College Prep) and University (Santa Clara University) on the West Coast, where he was introduced to a broad spectrum of traditions (Buddhism, Yoga, Druidry). It wasn't until 2012 that he discovered the San Francisco Swedenborgian Church while planning his wedding.

That was such a positive experience, Tom and his wife learned more about the church and became members. After a few years attending, and then helping to plan the Annual West Coast Swedenborgian Retreat, Tom was elected to the San Francisco Church Council in 2015, where he has served terms as president, vice president, and secretary.

Time on the Council has taught Tom the fiscal challenges of keeping a local church solvent, the constant energy required to keep the members engaged, and the delicate art involved in keeping things relevant to potential members.

In addition to his service with the Church, Tom spent six years on the Board of the San Francisco Chapter of The Recording Academy, where he served as secretary and Advocacy Committee chair. During that time, he led a number of both local and national initiatives to create new income opportunities for musicians. Locally, he helped create a new Limited Live Performance Permit for the City of San Francisco—for new methods of income. Nationally, Tom travelled to Washington D.C.



twice to lobby on behalf of artists for the passage of the Music Modernization Act, which granted new rights and revenue streams to musicians. These efforts taught Tom the balance of bringing people together for larger social change, the political incentives to move things forward, and the patience needed for true long-term change.

I am honored to be considered to serve on Convention's General Council.

Beki Greenwood General Council–Layperson (unexpired one-year term)

I have been involved with the Swedenborgian Church for as long as I can remember. Growing up, I attended Blairhaven Summer Camp in Duxbury, Massachusetts, participated in youth league retreats as a teen, and was confirmed as a member of the Bridgewater Church at the age of eighteen. I have been attending the Fryeburg New Church Assembly for forty years—spending the past fifteen of those as an active member of the Board of Directors. In September of 2019, I was contacted to fill an unexpired term on the General Council and was honored to be asked. Since then, I have become the editor of *the Messenger*, been an active *ex officio* member of the Standing Committee for Communication and Information, part of the planning committee for Virtual Convention (2020 and 2021), and serve on a variety of sub-committees. My husband, Jason, and I live in Massachusetts near Cape Cod with our two children, Serena and Nate, and our three cats. I look forward to continuing to serve the denomination on the General Council.

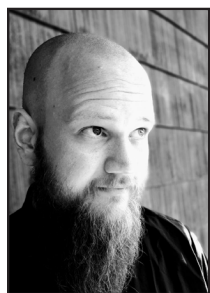


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Rev. Thom Muller General Council–Minister (three-year term)



Rev. Thom Muller is the pastor of Hillside Community Church, an Urban Sanctuary, in El Cerrito, California, as well as managing editor of *Our Daily Bread* at spiritualquesters.org, and

Assistant Night Minister at the San Francisco Night Ministry. His passions include interfaith spirituality, civil rights work, comparative mysticism, and the western esoteric tradition.

Tara Conkling Standing Committee for Communication & Information (three-year term)

Thank you for this nominating me for the Standing Committee for Communication and Information (SCCI). Originally from Pretty Prairie, Kansas, I grew up going to the New Jerusalem Church there, and even though we often didn't attend regularly, our presence in the congregation was always welcomed with smiles and open arms. Many of our closest friends and neighbors have been Swedenborgians, and I have always considered our church members to be part of my *extended* family.



Leaving Pretty Prairie for college was my first experience of realizing that Swedenborgian churches were few, and often, far between, and the opportunity to attend one (in my tiny

hometown, no less) was a special gift. In the years since I have lived in many places for school (Kansas State University (BS –Wildlife Biology/Biology), Texas A&M (MS-Wildlife and Fisheries Science), and Mississippi State University (PhD-Forest Resources-Wildlife)) and work (California, Utah, Texas, Kansas, Florida, and even Australia) in my career as a Wildlife Biologist, but I have only been close enough to congregations a few times to be able to attend a Swedenborgian church.

Now living and working in Davis, California, I have enjoyed my couple of visits to the Hillside Swedenborgian Church, but the pre-pandemic distance (and the California traffic!) made more frequent visits difficult. The presence of the COVID-19 pandemic has both challenged our ideas of traditional church and at the same time provided the opportunity to expand our outreach and connectedness in this time of isolation, including improving the opportunities to participate for those of us without a local congregation. Thanks to Zoom, I have been able to attend *local* events such as church services and guild meetings with friends and family in Kansas, as well as participate in insightful denomination-wide programs, such as the Swedenborgians in Action Against Racism last fall. Although nothing is quite like the experience of in-person worship and fellowship, this past year has shown me the benefits that these (along with our traditional) methods of communication have in maintaining our sense of connection with others. I look forward to this opportunity to participate on the Standing Committee for Communication and Information to help continue these valuable efforts in our Swedenborgian community, using technology problem-solving skills I have gained through my research positions as well as my strong interest in technology to help grow our tech innovations.

Holly Bauer Standing Committee for Communication & Information (unexpired two-year term)



After graduating from the University of Maine in 2016, I lived in Manhattan for four years working in marketing at a technology start-up. I

moved back to my hometown of Portland, Maine, during the COVID-19 pandemic, doing marketing contract work for a business author. Travel is my greatest passion, so over the next few years I'd love to continue marketing contract work while living abroad. At the age of twelve, I attended my first Maine Youth League event, a sleepover in the Portland Church. I was an avid member of the Swedenborgian Church Youth League (SCYL) as a teen and served as the SCYL president in 2011. From 2012–2015 I worked as the corec director at Almont, and I have been volunteering with the SCYL at retreats for the past six years. I also helped run the childcare and teen programs at annual conventions in 2018 and 2019. Over the past fifteen years I have gotten so much out of my involvement in this church community. I have been serving on SCCI for the past year and would welcome the opportunity to continue to serve the organization in this role.

Rev. Shada Sullivan Standing Committee for Education & Resources for Spiritual Community (three-year term)



Rev. Shada Sullivan is the pastor at The Church of the Holy City in Wilmington, Delaware. She also serves

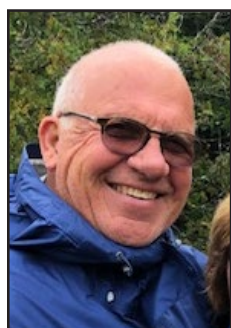
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as an at-large member of the Council of Ministers (COM) Executive Committee, a member of the Social Justice Committee (SJC), and a member of the Swedenborgians in Action Against Racism (SAAR) Leadership Team.

Tom Neuenfeldt Standing Committee for Financial Accountability (three-year term)



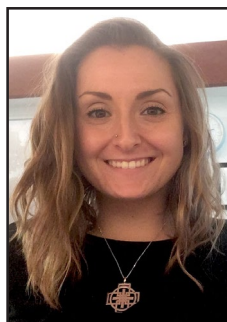
My life as a Swedenborgian began when I met my wife, BJ. She introduced me to the Detroit Church and Almont—I was hooked. I have learned

that Swedenborgian theology is more than blind faith; it is a life of service and regeneration.

Most recently I served as vice president of the denomination. When BJ and I made the commitment to help our grandchildren with virtual learning, I realized that I could not fulfill my responsibilities as vice president at a level that I felt was needed. My brain and my daily schedule could not keep pace with both duties. I chose the children over the position. The children have now returned to in-person school. My brain is still somewhat suspect, but my schedule has opened back up.

I have also served on General Council and on the board of the Center for Swedenborgian Studies. I believe that my involvement in the denomination at the national level gives me the background and knowledge to review funding requests and budgeting requirements associated with the Standing Committee for Financial Accountability. This is an important committee, and I am honored to be nominated.

Rev. Rachel Madjerac Standing Committee for Financial Accountability (unexpired one-year term)



Rev. Rachel Madjerac currently serves as the ministry coordinator and as a rites and sacraments minister at Wayfarers Chapel in Rancho Palos

Verdes, California. Previously, she worked as a hospital chaplain in Hawaii and San Diego, and she is originally from New England.

BJ (Betty Jean) Neuenfeldt Committee on Admission to the Ministry-Layperson (three-year term)



My church affiliation has been lifelong; growing up in Detroit, I regularly attended the Church of the Holy City until I moved away to go to college at Central Michigan University. I received a Bachelor of Science in Education degree at CMU and a master's degree in the Art of Teaching from Marygrove College. My husband, Tom, and I met at CMU and married after college, both pursuing careers in teaching—I worked in many special education rooms, then kindergarten and first grade before I retired. Since retirement, we have been busy with grandchildren—including a return to teaching as we spent September to March of the pandemic helping them with virtual school from their home.

Beyond the Detroit Church (which is now in Royal Oak) I've had an active

role at Almont New Church Assembly, serving as treasurer for over forty years. I have attended many annual conventions over the past fifty years and have served on the Education Support Unit and the Financial and Physical Resources Support Unit.

After a couple years of hiatus, I am willing to serve again as a member of the Committee for Admission into the Ministry. I look forward to sharing in the excitement as new folks strive to serve the Swedenborgian Denomination in many ways.

Rev. Alison Lane-Olsen Committee on Admission to the Ministry-Clergy (unexpired two-year term)

Rev. Alison Lane-Olsen currently lives in Fryeburg, Maine, where she has been serving the Fryeburg New Church as pastor since 2013. She lives there with her husband, two children, and pets.



Paul Deming Nominating Committee (five-year term)



Paul is the pastor of the Church of the Open Word / Garden Chapel in St. Louis, Missouri, where he was installed in 2016. He is also a music specialist at Rohan Woods School where he teaches elementary students three days a week. In his spare time he writes music, plays lead guitar in a local band, and teaches Karate. Paul is married and has two grown sons with families of their own. ☪

The Importance of a Good Social Media Strategy When Your Church Is Virtual

BY BEN PHINNEY

Social Media is often thought of as just another thing we have to do to stay relevant—a trend that must be adopted in order to appear hip to the times. We just need a Twitter handle or an Instagram account to connect with the younger generation, right? Maybe you are a little more “glass is half-full” and see it as a good, cost effective way to market yourself. Unfortunately, while those things may be true, if any of those statements reflect your attitude about social media, then you likely aren’t leveraging its most useful aspect—the ability to connect with people regardless of *where* they are.

People are smart—everyone intuitively know things without even realizing it. If you are using a social media platform because, for one reason or another, you feel like you have to, then that is exactly how your interactions with your audience will appear—forced. The result being that even though you are doing it, you probably aren’t getting much of a return on investment and only connecting with a very limited audience.

Isn’t social media just another marketing tool? Well...yes and no. It can be a very powerful marketing tool, but if you use it as a marketing tool, people likely won’t even pay attention to what you are doing. Instead, use social media as a communication tool. This is especially relevant today in our pandemic world. While your instinct might be that you first need to deliver a church service in some form digitally, and then use social media to advertise that service, the reverse thought process will actually get a better bang for your proverbial buck. Instead, use social media to simply deliver the message of your church and communicate

(not advertise) to your members. Then when you have a “traditional” church service to advertise (digital or otherwise) your audience is more apt to be engaged and paying attention to what you have to say.

Use social media to simply deliver the message of your church and communicate (not advertise) to your members.

In my view, the most successful social media strategies are the ones that don’t appear to have one—not to be confused with being disorganized. What they are is a voice, not a strategy in the traditional sense. The beauty of this approach is, in order to have a successful social media strategy you only need a small handful of things. You don’t need a big, elaborate plan.

1. Think about who the audience is that you are trying to reach. Is it just your congregation, or something bigger?
2. Decide who is speaking. Not who is in charge of posting. What voice and point of view are you speaking with?
3. Figure out what kind of information you want to communicate to your audience.
4. Pick a social media platform that specializes in that kind of communication.
5. Finally, just commit to posting regularly.

You can actually answer all these bullet points with this one thought experiment: If your church building had a personal social media account, how would it use it? It might tweet short

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Technology Grant Applications Now Being Accepted

The Standing Committee for Communication and Information (SCCI) has been given a charge by General Council to assist our member communities develop, implement, and improve their online worship, education, and community presence. The first step was to bring on Ben Phinney as a consultant who can work with our congregations with these efforts.

We are now announcing phase two! A grant opportunity to help our communities achieve the goals they have been developing. Grants at this point can be up to \$3,000 depending on the application. A successful application should be a written statement that:

1. Clearly outlines using technology to improve the community’s function and outreach.
2. A detailed list of the equipment the organization is seeking to acquire.
3. Show congregational buy-in through a committed core of volunteers dedicated to making the addition of A/V equipment successful, with a suggested financial commitment from the churches of 20% equipment cost.
4. A clear statement of the financial need it has and the local commitment they are able to offer.

Applications should be made with direct consultation from Ben Phinney (AskPhinney@gmail.com) and may be emailed to Holly Bauer at: Bauer.HollyM@gmail.com

The SCCI is made up of three elected members: Val Bugler, Chair; Holly Bauer, and Rev. Kevin Baxter. We meet monthly with a committed group of volunteers: Rev. Dr. Jim Lawrence, Beki Greenwood, Rev. Thom Muller, and Brittany Price. 

The Year of the Spiritual World

Teens Respond to Swedenborg's Writings Concerning the Spiritual World

BY TEENS GRADUATING FROM THE SWEDENBORGIAN CHURCH YOUTH LEAGUE

Heaven and Hell, §548

We can now see that the Lord does not throw anyone into hell. We throw ourselves in, not only while we are living in this world but after death as well, when we arrive among spirits.



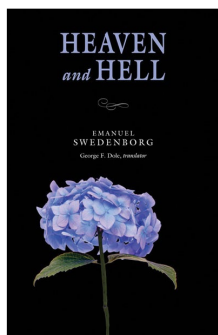
Humans blame everyone but themselves for the consequences of their life choices. It is no one else's fault but their own. The Lord gives everyone a chance

into heaven. Like the quote says, "not only while we are living in this world but after death as well." No matter if you are living in the physical or spiritual world, you can get stuck in hell and never leave, with the mindset of "the Lord put me here." There is always a second (or thousandth) chance to be reborn and live in heaven.

—Ivy Little,
Mount Pleasant, Michigan

Heaven and Hell, §491

On the other hand, people who have been profoundly malicious but have outwardly worn a guise of goodness, people who have therefore filled their malice with guile and used goodness as



a means of deception are cast directly into hell. I have seen people like this cast into hell immediately after their death. One of the most deceitful went head first and feet last.

Though the quotes above may seem in direct competition with one another, *HH* §491 is actually a perfect example of *HH* §548. Simply put, to use goodness as a means of deception is to stomp all over the line drawn in the sand. When it comes time to stand on the right side, how will you know which is which? Wherever we cast ourselves in the afterlife will be a testament to how many times we've ridden that line, so it makes sense that a chronic deceiver should face-plant into a mouthful of sand!

—Josh Moore
Saginaw, Michigan



Secrets of Heaven, §687

No angel or spirit can have any life unless he is in some society, and thereby in a harmony of many. A society is nothing but a harmony of many, for no one has any life separate from the life of others.

I love this quote as it makes me think of our church and our camps and how we can feel disconnected from camp when we aren't there. Especially this last year, with everything that's been going on we may feel more disconnected



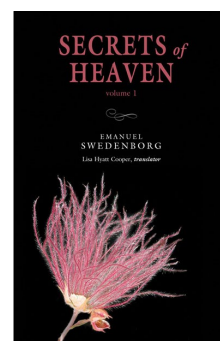
than ever. But our society is stronger than a year or two of quarantine, and I like to think that once all of this is over, when we come back to camp, the harmony will still be

there just as strong as before, because even as we are disconnected physically right now, our spiritual harmony as a society has always been there and always will be.

—Nathan Hamilton,
Lansing, Michigan

I see this quote (*SH* §687) as saying that you cannot live as an angel or spirit after death until you have lived your life on Earth working toward the greater good of your neighbors. Harmony to me means a

cohesive unit of those working together to benefit themselves and everyone else. Living in harmony is important to living a happy life, and it is comforting to know that living this way will allow you to live like this in your next life. I believe that it is important to help out each other in a society. When it says society, I read that as a society of all beings no matter their background. This



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Teens and Swedenborg

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quote tells us that all of our lives are intertwined and that we have to work together in order to live a fulfilling life.

—Jack Cadden,

Mattapoisett, Massachusetts

Disabilities in the Spiritual World

I will first make it clear that I do not believe in a personal deity or a conscious, eternal afterlife. I am a humanist and I love humanity; therefore, I am fascinated by the religions and mythologies it has developed for itself. One of the most interesting human views of the afterlife conveniently happens to be the one I was taught about at church as a child: the Swedenborgian spiritual world. I have spent a lot of time reflecting on this vision of a life after death and asking questions about it. I have gotten many answers from many different people, but since Swedenborg himself is long gone, some are just personal beliefs or inferences about what he may have thought.

A common inference I have been given during sermons and discussions is that all worldly ailments and illnesses are lifted when a spirit enters their life beyond death. All people become youthful, healthy angels if they love goodness and truth; the evil and dishonest become sickly, disfigured demons or evil spirits. This is a simple, satisfying answer to most people. It does not satisfy me. Why?

I am autistic. In the eyes of the world and the state, I am ill. In the eyes of myself and my community, I am exceptional. Which, then, am I to God?

Right away, anyone who knows me will rush to my defense.

“You are special! Your difference makes you, you!”

“God gave you a gift, Ava.”

“Those people are talking about people with cancer...or people with low-functioning autism, the nonverbal kind. They aren’t talking about you.”

Apart from the ambiguity and prejudice that comes with calling some autistic people low-functioning and some high-functioning, we encounter a further problem. This is not a matter of a lecturer’s belief; it is a matter of a thought leader’s belief. Swedenborg did, in fact, write on mental disorders:

No one is reformed in a state of mental disorder (*animus*), because disease of the mind takes away rationality, and consequently freedom of acting according to reason. For the mind (*mens*) is sick and unsound, and a sound mind is rational, but a sick one is not (*Divine Providence*, §141.)

This goes in a different direction than the original inference. Rather than finding some incomprehensible way to separate my autism from my core spirit, God will not reform me at all. I will therefore not be able to go through regeneration and will never go to heaven. I am not sure where this will put me (hell? back on Earth? Catholic-style limbo?) but I wager that it is nowhere I want to end up. At this point, my strawman friend or relative might say something like this: “Ava, you are a rational person, your mind is sound. You wrote this piece!”

If that is true, if my autism is not an irrational disorder, what about my anxiety? What about the ADHD of a friend, or the bipolar disorder of a classmate? Mental illness is very common

today. Most everyone has a family member or friend profoundly affected by it, even if it remains undiagnosed. Also, who says what is normal? These mental illnesses were defined by humans. Perhaps God has a different definition. Perhaps some overactive hormones do not a sick mind make. However, even if I squeeze through the process of regeneration, I will pity those who do not. What an unfair hand to be dealt—having to struggle with severe mental disorders your whole life, and then be told that you will not even get respite in death!

On the other hand, Swedenborg may be wrong about this detail and the strawman may be right. Physical ailments and illnesses may all be cured, but illnesses of the mind may only be tempered so there is no undue suffering. If this is true, what about the deaf community? There are some people who consider their deafness part of their identity. This may prove a problem, even if the physical sense of hearing is not a part of the spiritual world. If a form of communication resembles sound, some deaf people will be quite upset! If there is no communication resembling sound, though, that seems rather boring to me. I would not want to live in a heaven without music.

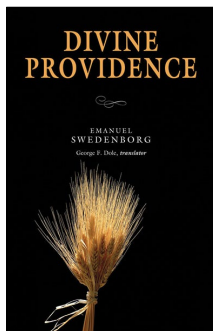
No matter which way you spin it, the



Swedenborgian spiritual world sounds pretty awful for those of us with disabilities. If you would like to discuss this with me and make the spiritual world more accessible, I would

be happy to talk it over at Almont this year. And no, celestial wheelchair ramps will not cut it!

—Ava Dolley,
Gorham, Maine



From the Social Justice Committee

Immediate Antiracism Action Ideas

BY PAGE MORAHAN

With thanks to Swedenborgians in Action Against Racism (SAAR) members for the original list and links

How can White people (members of the White caste¹) show antiracism support, partnership, and allyship? This can be tricky, because White people historically rush to action with good intentions that often have unfortunate outcomes. This performative allyship is “when someone from that same non-marginalized group professes support and solidarity with a marginalized group in a way that either isn’t helpful or that actively harms that group.”²

First (and continual action)

White people need to take the time to inform ourselves. For example, the history I was taught growing up in Virginia was that General Robert E. Lee was a wonderful patriot; I have only learned recently how false that was.¹ What is the true history of Swedenborgians with race and with Native Americans? One simple way to keep being educated is to sign up for Manifold Angels and the SAAR newsletter.

Here are other actions to consider (Note: Sizes refer to the amount of preparation required, not to impact!).

Extra-small

In your daily activities, take note of any individuals who are different from you, or from the people you normally see. Take a brief moment to direct a friendly gaze or hello—to acknowledge with dignity. Avoid a prolonged look or in

some way indicate you feel they might not belong.

Small

*If you overhear or encounter someone making bigoted statements, treating anyone differently and unfairly, **speak up** (if there is any personal danger, act as a witness from a safe distance). Telling the truth is always good, like: “What did you just say?” “I’m uncomfortable with that.” “I note we do not have any people of color in this group, and we are making decisions that affect them.”*

Purchase some Black Lives Matter (BLM) gear or signs for your home, car, or body. They have great “freedom” and “justice” black masks! <http://blacklivesmatter.com/>.

When doing shopping, support Black-owned small businesses (or any women-owned, or other less-advantaged group’s business). Explore these resources: app for finding businesses, <https://app.bblkapp.com/>; <https://we-buyblack.com/>; <https://www.refinery29.com/en-us/2020/06/9849096/find-black-owned-businesses-online-apps>; <https://officialblackwallstreet.com/directory/>; <http://www.nmbc.org/>. And this Fast Co article lists ten: <https://www.fastcompany.com/90512942/how-to-find-and-support-black-owned-businesses-whenever-you-are>.

When purchasing books, use Black-owned stores vs. Amazon. Explore these sites: The #1 Black Children’s Bookstore!; <https://www.oprahmag.com/entertainment/books/a33497812/black-owned-bookstores/>; <https://bookshop.org/>; aalbc.com/bookstores/list.php.

When ordering food, try the app <https://www.eatokra.com/> to locate Black owned restaurants. And I buy most of my spices from Penzey’s Spices, which models what it preaches: <https://www.penzeys.com/>

Medium

When you need a new supplier, replace with minority-owned business. Your patronage helps make things equitable.

Look around your workplace/organization. Do individuals in marginalized groups have mentorship? If you can, offer this. Also, sponsor people of color by recommending for opportunities or actively facilitating getting known by decision-makers (e.g., committees, collaborative projects, writing articles, etc.). I focus my mentoring and sponsoring with women of color professionals these days.

Support groups that focus on changing systems. Dr. Kendi emphasizes this as essential.³ I am focusing on non-partisan efforts: correcting election processes (www.commoncause.org), being a two-minute social activist (www.aauw.org/act/two-minute-activist), and ensuring a thriving democracy ([https://americansofconscience.com/](http://americansofconscience.com/)).



Dr. Page S. Morahan, has spent her career in academic medicine as a faculty member and university administrator, and creating leadership programs to advance women faculty and health professions faculty around the

world. She serves as the lay representative on the Committee for Admission to Ministry.

1 Isobel Wilkerson. *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents*. 2020.

2 Holiday Phillips. *Performative Allyship Is Deadly (Here’s What to Do Instead)*. May 9, 2020. Access at: <https://forge.medium.com/performative-allyship-is-deadly-c900645d9f1f>

3 Ibram X. Kendi. *How to be an Antiracist*. 2019.

Is Capitalism Okay?

Continued from page 33

African foreman lost a hand. Our decision was whether to airlift him to Geneva where he could have the hand re-attached. It was our second day in B school. We were told that there was no right or wrong answer; of course, that was a lie. None of us dared to advocate for the airlift, but looking around my study group, many of us felt a little sick about it. We all knew that humanitarian values had no place in our chosen career path. I remember a lackluster discussion and a pit in my stomach. As in most case studies, the facts were real. I do not remember the actual outcome. I'm pretty sure he did not get his hand re-attached.

As Swedenborgians, in fact as Christians, we have rampant support in our values and doctrine for an economic system that is closer to socialism than to capitalism. Remember that the basic values of capitalism include doing anything you can get away with, and maximizing profit to yourself, with no limits to that profit. If others are hurt, it's their own fault for being vulnerable.

Capitalism is based on an alternative morality that consciously supplants spiritual values with the profit motive. In business, there is the concept that fiduciary responsibility is the apex of altruism. Should you, in the process of maximizing your bottom line, destroy the environment, exploit workers,

or defraud consumers, you're ultimately justified, and even virtuous, because you are protecting your shareholders, disingenuously characterized as widows and orphans, by maximizing profit, and therefore, their dividends.

In economic theory, other factors keep the profit motive in check: regulation, and the Free Market. As we have seen over the past few decades in the real world, corporations work effectively to rid themselves of these controls.

If personal gain is the only, or even the strongest motivator, how can we explain the multitudes working as teachers, musicians, nurses, and social workers?

I have often heard the argument, even in our church community, that human nature requires the motivation of gain in order to spur achievement. I would even say that this view is widely accepted. I disagree. To say that material gain is the most essential, even necessary motivator is to say that evil impulses are stronger than good. Most people—and I have been fortunate to encounter mainly good people in my life—have a basic tendency to helpfulness, to kindness, to generosity. Humans inherently want to work with and for each other. Despite social conditioning that labels us suckers

for being giving, for not extracting the most advantage in every situation, most people, just like the six-year-old me, just don't want to hurt anyone. If personal gain is the only, or even the strongest motivator, how can we explain the multitudes working as teachers, musicians, nurses, and social workers? Why is it that so many people donate money without a tax benefit, and help their neighbors shovel snow? In a system that overtly and disproportionately rewards certain other activities, many toil passionately in helping and creative professions. Nearly all of them are motivated by something other than personal enrichment.

In love, you do the right thing, and if there is a material benefit, that only enhances your real reward. In business, the benefit to self is the only reward. I cringe when I hear people in our church giving verbal support to capitalism. My spiritual life in recent years has drawn me farther and farther from an area where I feel gifted, but not okay—capitalism. I hope that we can draw a distinction in our approach to church business between effective, efficient management, and the values and priorities that capitalism espouses.



Terrie Crenshaw is a member of the Hillside Swedenborgian Church in El Cerrito, California, and a member of the board of trustees of the Center for Swedenborgian Studies

Gary Lachman Keynote Speaker for Convention 2021!



A former rock star with the band *Blondie*, when he went by the name Gary Valentine, Gary Lachman has transformed over the past two decades as one of England's best-known writers on religion and spirituality, specializing in the deep waters of figures such as Jung and Swedenborg. His recent biography, *Swedenborg: An Introduction to His Life and Ideas*, has been very well received by many Swedenborgians worldwide. At the convention he will give a talk live on Zoom on the language of correspondence followed by question and answer. His most recent Swedenborgian book (March 2021) is *Introducing Swedenborg: Correspondences*. Look for more information in the May *Messenger*.

Social Media Strategy

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inspirational things. Well, it might share funny posts from other churches on Facebook. Heck, it might share pictures of interesting things found lying around the building on Instagram. Depending on your church, it might do something completely different. Make it casual and fun. While there are often serious things to talk about, remember that a good sense of humor goes a long way online. Social media is weird in that it gives you diminishing returns if you appear to be trying too hard.

How often should I post? The easiest answer is simply, regularly: not too many times a day and not too few times a week. If you think about how people use personal social media accounts, there are no quotas they are trying to meet. So, if you want your church's social media to appear authentic, I wouldn't recommend strict quotas either. You probably serendipitously come across social media fodder already on a regular basis and aren't realizing it. Keep your eyes open and when it happens, just casually post it.

Now that being together in person has become a challenge, social media presents an opportunity to find more ways to communicate with your congregation and community members as we get through the pandemic. It is an opportunity to think differently on how to deliver your church's message. It is an opportunity to connect with more people in new and different ways.

Many are searching for ways to keep the positive aspects of running their church service virtually once the pandemic is over and we've reached the "new normal." This will be a moving target as the future reveals itself, but I do believe social media is one piece to that puzzle. An effective social media presence directs your audience toward your virtual services online today. The

same social media strategy has the potential to direct more people back to your physical building tomorrow. 📱



Ben Phinney is a professional librarian contracted to help churches with technology concerns during the COVID-19 pandemic. He is a member of both the Bridgewater New Church and the Fryeburg New

Church Assembly. He lives with his wife and cats in the greater Portland, Maine area and is an avid foodie, hobby musician, and lover of all things sci-fi.

Guest Editorial

Continued from page 34

of corruption and excessive use of force, but one notable difference is lethality. It's hard to compare international statistics about deaths in custody, partly because there's no consistent reporting and partly because the definition of custody is slippery, but one clear point of comparison is in shooting deaths. The British police, who rarely carry firearms, shoot only one or two people a year, often in the context of antiterrorism operations. They have killed a total of seventy-five people since 1990. In the United States, there were 1,099 fatal "officer-involved shootings"—to use the evasive official jargon—in 2019 alone.

The difference between the United States and its peers is not culture, let alone some metaphysical quantum of freedom that leads Americans to be more violent. It's the presence of guns. Sooner or later all foreigners remark on the perverse outcomes of the Second Amendment, or rather of the overbroad interpretation of it that seems to render pragmatic gun control impossible. I will not break with that tradition, because however long I live here

I will never come to think that my liberty requires military hobbyists to have unfettered access to high-powered weaponry. If civilian gun ownership is supposed to be a protection against the power of an overmighty state, it's at best symbolic. If it's for protection against other citizens, it doesn't seem to be working. Sentimental fidelity to eighteenth-century civic norms doesn't seem like a good trade-off for Sandy Hook.

My point? If we are to take seriously our commitment to reducing the scourge of gun violence, we must achieve a more mature and balanced understanding of the Second Amendment: "A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed." A good deal of the empty rhetoric surrounding this issue stems from a selective reading of that amendment. Gun advocates seize upon the second clause ("the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed"), and neglect the first clause ("A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State.") Those advocating gun control often do the reverse.

These extreme reactions are not helpful. It is unreasonable to think that we could ever ban any and all guns, whether for hunting, sport, or self-defense. Equally unreasonable, though, is to think that we can continue to amass and use a wide variety of weapons without some sort of control or regulation. Even a cursory glance at the long-standing prevalence of White nationalistic "militias" is enough to make it clear that virtually none are regulated, let alone "well regulated."

I pray we can be courageous enough to engage this hot-potato issue, and wise enough to address it in a balanced and holistic way.

—Rev. Robert McCluskey
Chair, Social Justice Committee

Letter from the President

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Dr. Devin Zuber to learn about Pandemic Theologies using Swedenborg's *Divine Providence*. This spring Devin is teaching on Death and Beyond, engaging with *Heaven and Hell*.

The biggest gift of all that many of our ministries are experiencing is added participation in virtual Sunday services. Isolation and lockdown have offered time to slow down for reflection about our faith and what really matters. New friends can listen at home and join from a distance.

And now our challenge is to keep in touch, offer online live services, and build community with those attending virtually. Our Swedenborgian family is growing.

Thank you all for reimagining church,
—Rev. Jane Siebert

Annual Convention 2021—Virtual

Navigating the Rapids in the Stream of Providence

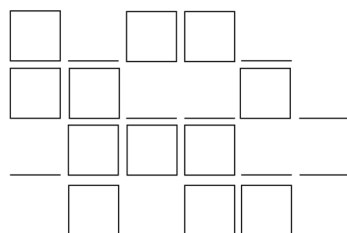
Friday, June 25th– Sunday, June 27th

Registration will open May 15th

Be sure to check out the May issue of *the Messenger* for details on how to participate.

Special Guest Speakers • Worship Services
Business Meetings • Mini Courses • Youth Programs
Social Gatherings • Plus More

We look forward to seeing you all in June!



LETIF
TORFUH
RTTOHA
PRIMTO

After dropping all the papers,
the clerk had to ask if there were any nominations:

Jumble by Jason Greenwood
Answers will be printed in the next issue.

Answers to the March Jumble:

Wrung, Bellow, Opaque, Sermon

When asked to clear the roads after a blizzard, the driver of the truck said,
It's "Snow Problem"

What's Happening



Nature & Spirit Begins April 29th with Three Events Opening Week

All are invited to join us for our virtual event *Nature & Spirit*—an eight-week symposium celebrating the 125th Anniversary of the San Francisco Swedenborgian Church National Historic Landmark. Beginning April 29, the subjects of the first week of presentations are two men profoundly moved by nature. First, see *Unruly Mystic: John Muir*, the documentary on the spiritual story of the legendary naturalist. Watch and hear *In the Woods*, by the late Toru Takemitsu, performed by guitarist Xavier Jara. Sunday, May 2, come participate in a moderated, live question and answer panel with the director of the documentary and the musician you will see performing in the historic sanctuary of the San Francisco Swedenborgian Church.

Many more details will be available on the church website sfswedenborgian.org and on the Facebook page [The SF Swedenborgian Church](#) early in April—follow us for the latest updates!

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.

Virtual Education Offerings for the Planet

The Home Planet

*Three-part online program by Rev. Dr. George F. Dole,
Professor Emeritus at the Center for Swedenborgian Studies.*

*Wednesdays, at 7:00 PM, Eastern Time
April 14th – 28th*

Talk One: Reading Nature

Talk Two: The Art of Reading

Talk Three: Cosmic Kinship



nature. Our home planet has a lot to tell us about our eternal home."

In the 1980s, the most popular of the early Swedenborg Foundation films came from the mind and pen of Prof. Dole, who wrote the film script for the award-winning *Images of Knowing*. A stunning visual poem exploring our place in the universe interpreted through the vision of Swedenborg, the film offers brilliant commentary and reflection penned by Prof. Dole but

narrated by Academy Award winning actress Anne Baxter. Garnering many film festival awards, including Cindy Award, Chris Award, Cine Golden Eagle, and Gabriel Award, this remarkable sixteen-minute film will be shown during the course.

This is a free online learning initiative being held on three successive, post-Easter Wednesdays at 7:00 PM Eastern Time on April 14, 21, and 28.

Each session is sixty minutes with the first part devoted to a talk delivered by Prof. Dole and the remainder of the hour to a general conversation in a question and answer format between participants and Prof. Dole. The talks will be recorded so as to be available for viewing at a later time.

Participants will be limited to forty.

**Please register in advance with the
Center for Swedenborgian Studies
office assistant Alex Sicular:**

asicular@gtu.edu 