



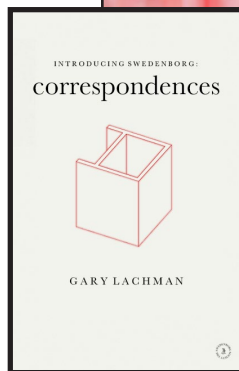
## Gary Lachman to Give Keynote Address, “Swedenborg and the Language of Correspondence”

*The most recent biographer of Swedenborg is also in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.*

BY JIM LAWRENCE

Over the past two decades, the American-British author Gary Lachman has established himself as an interesting explorer of western esotericism and spiritual philosophy. His nose for the most interesting and important stories has often included Swedenborg, such as *Swedenborg: An Introduction to His Life and Ideas* (Jeremy P. Tarcher / Penguin, 2012). He also has authored a new book released just this spring, *Introducing Swedenborg: Correspondences* (London: Swedenborg Society, 2021) that provides the platform from which his keynote talk will spring.

Lachman, though, came to full-time writing as a second career, after what he calls “a former life” as a founding member of the pop group *Blondie* when he was going by the stage name Gary Valentine. In 1977 he left *Blondie* to form his own band and enjoyed seeing his song “(I’m Always Touched by Your) Presence, Dear” reach the Top

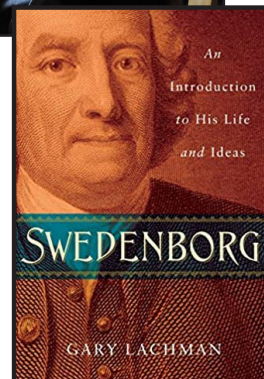


Ten charts in England. Throughout the 80s and early 90s he continued founding or playing in a number of bands, including with Iggy Pop, and writing many more successful songs. In 2006, roughly 500 experts across the world recognized his total body of work by voting him into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

His growing interests in religion and philosophy spurred him to leave the stage for another creative

arena—serious journalism and literature. After relocating to London, he sprang into full-time writing by contributing to *The Guardian*, *Mojo*, and the *Times Literary Supplement* among other journals while also imagining book-length treatments of vital topics exploring the pursuit of meaning and purpose. He discovered his prevailing vein of literary gold deep within in the terrain of religion and spirituality, often on cultural margins. *Turn Off Your Mind: The Mystic Sixties and the Dark Side of the Age of Aquarius* (2001) and *New York Rocker: My Life in The Blank Generation* (2002), and *A Secret History of Conscious-*

*ness* (2003) proved but the beginning of a fruitful rise as an author exploring topics delving into meaning and purpose questions as explored through major figures and topics. He delights in shaping introductions to major figures in a field recognized in academic circles as “western esoteric traditions,” in which Swedenborg is much studied. Joining Swedenborg in this group of



*Continued on page 55*

## Contents

Gary Lachman:	
Convention Keynote Address.....	49
Letters to the Editor.....	50
Letter from the President .....	51
Mini Course Line Up .....	52
Youth Artwork Needed .....	55
Reflections of Virtual FNCA.....	56
Technology Grants Available.....	57
Life of Chauncey Giles:	
Chapter 7 .....	58
From the Social Justice Committee .....	61
Passages.....	62
What's Happening.....	63
Almont 2021 Goes Virtual .....	64
Gathering Leaves Moves to 2022 .....	64

## the Messenger

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Submissions are accepted at any time.

Submissions must be received by the third Monday of the month to be considered for the next issue.

The opinions and views expressed are those of the authors, not of the Messenger, the Standing Committee for Communication and Information, or the Swedenborgian Church.

## Letters to the Editor

### Concerns of Conflict of Interest

I have composed this letter to the editor to voice my significant concern about the nominations for this year's convention. It is not considered best practices or healthy boundaries for paid employees to serve on boards of directors for non-profit organizations. The IRS in particular warns against the practice due to concerns about inurement and private benefit for public institutions. I noted that three of the people being nominated had direct conflicts of interests as employees or contractors of General Convention. One person with a financial conflict being nominated for a position on the Standing Committee for Financial Accountability.

All of the nominated people are great people, and I would like to think that I count them among my friends! I have no doubt that they are excellent committee members and honorable people.

We often have many reasons why we cross boundaries, but it is not a sign of healthy governance. We have best practices and warnings as rules and guides, not out of legal or political expediency but out of our sincere desire to elevate our actions toward what is good and true. In fact, I would argue that as a matter of faith we are called to follow those things that are best practices to call us from our desire to control and increase our ability to be open to divine influence. We are called to recognize what is not good and cease from practicing it. Paid employees on governing boards is widely understood to be bad. We should not be doing this. This is not relevant for an elected officer who is paid (which has its problems but is more generally acceptable). That pay should however be set at the beginning of a term and not change during it.

In reality, these issues are not limited to the national denomination. Local churches face issues with conflicts of interest all the time, boards where family members are making decisions about employment, pastoral salaries and even calls. The board's role is oversight and balanced leadership, so when the board has conflicts of interest, the fundamental role of the board is put in jeopardy. Churches are fined significant amounts of money and so is the pastoral leadership when these conflicts are exposed.

If either a church or the denomination has no choice but to be in these risky relationships, they need to clearly document in minutes how the conflicts of interest were mitigated through the employee or family members, or biased parties absenting themselves from the process. It is important to note that the chief officer (president or moderator) has less leeway in this regard. They should never be in places where they or a family member are receiving money, unless the money is due to a position as remunerated CEO/COO type position. However, in those cases, often the person does not have a vote on the board.

If you are interested in looking more into these issues and educating yourself, *Church Law and Tax*, which is part of the Christianity Today group, has excellent resources.

—Kevin Baxter  
*Hopkinton, Massachusetts*

### President's Response

Thank you for the offer to respond to Kevin Baxter's letter. He raises many important points that General Council and I are aware of and the Executive Committee of General Council has discussed.

All of the nominees that Kevin refers to are re-appointments and have been serving on General Council. Due to the pandemic, we were not able to

*Continues on page 60*

## Letter from the President

*The Year of the Spiritual World: 2020–21*



Dear Friends,

While studying at Friends University to prepare for ministry, I was introduced to Julian of Norwich. Immediately I resonated with the wisdom of this fourteenth-century Christian mystic, who chose to live confined in an anchorage next to a church in Norwich, England. She had a small room with one window that looked into the church and one to the outside world where parishoners brought her food and came to request her prayers.

When things have been difficult and contrary, I have been fed and lifted up by the familiar saying that is attributed to her: “All shall be well. All shall be well. All manner of things shall be well.” It does not mean all shall be happy, or always healthy, or easy, no matter how much we may want life to be this way. It is much deeper, and long-lasting, and comforting. It is the assurance that we are not alone in dark times when our world seems out of our control, and it is hard to find our way, and even our breath. The Lord is with us always, lifting us up when we fall, offering a light ahead for us to follow, and always and only, wanting what is good and best for us.

I do not want to come across as simplistic. There are things like mental illness, war, and childhood diseases that I don’t think I will ever understand on this earthly plane. But these simple words from Julian that the Lord gave her help me look back to see the gift of Divine Providence and help me look forward and receive the gift of Divine Providence and live with a certain peace that all shall be well.

Her actual words from Revelations of Divine Love, XV:

Thus the good lord answered all my questions and doubts, comforting me with these words: “I may make all things well, I can make all things well, I will make all things well, and I shall make all things well; and you shall see yourself that all shall be well.”

I treasure Jesus’ words telling me not to worry (Matthew 6:25). I hear that I do not add a single hour to my life by worrying (Matthew 6:27). But still I worry. And there are days I am sad and sometimes cannot pin down what has me in the doldrums. I try to be in the moment, the Now, but past hurts still hurt and future pain is inevitable.

We grieve. We worry. We cry. And, we sing. We laugh. We smile. We are created with all these emotions and they are good. The words from Julian remind me that God is in what I am feeling today and yesterday and will be tomorrow. It is not a smooth life; there are rapids. But we are never alone in our boat. And when it capsizes, we have a savior who can walk on water.

“... and I shall make all things well; and you shall see yourself that all shall be well.” The Lord’s words to Julian of Norwich.

With love and care to you all during the rapids and smooth sailing times of our lives,

—Rev. Jane Siebert



# 197<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL Convention OF THE SWEDENBORGIAN CHURCH

## Navigating the Rapids in the Stream of Providence

### Mini Course Line Up for Convention 2021

*Mini courses will be occurring on Zoom with two options to choose from at each time slot.*

#### **Glimpses of Goodness: Fostering a Perspective of Love**

Rev. Jenny Martin Caughman  
*Saturday, June 26 at 3:30 PM ET*



In the profound book *Made for Goodness*, Archbishop Desmond Tutu and his daughter put forth that as we were made in the image and like-

ness of God, we, each and every one of us, were made for goodness, and that goodness is a central part of our essence. While leading a book study, I was struck by the impact of such a foundational premise and how it fostered deep, meaningful, honest, and transformative discussion. This mini course will explore some of the tenets of this book from a Swedenborgian perspective with the goal of learning what we can do to cultivate intentionally a perspective of love and kindness. In our hour together, we will explore three topics: The call to goodness and Swedenborg's assertion that the goal of Divine Providence is a heaven from the human race; how truth and understanding can help us recognize that which in ourselves and the world works to separate us from God; and what we can do to enhance our response to God's call and thus grow into our

home in heaven. We will also discuss the role of creativity and the arts as a means of expressing both goodness and truth, thus helping us on this path toward angelhood.

Rev. Jenny Caughman is a Convention minister serving a United Methodist Church in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. She is chair of the CSS Board, serves on General Council, and has a keen interest in spiritual formation.

#### **A Swedenborgian Theology of Social Justice**

Rev. Shada Sullivan  
*Saturday, June 26 at 3:30 PM ET*

Swedenborg talks a lot about charity toward our neighbors, but it is mostly in the individual realm. He doesn't say much about social issues or social structures. Since Swedenborg's time, we have become an increasingly inter-connected world. The things that we now know, and understand about the social and systemic issues that affect our fellow human beings are difficult to ignore. What is our responsibility towards this social reality? Join us as we construct a Swedenborgian theology of social justice, based on our fundamental principles.



Rev. Shada Sullivan is the Pastor at The Church of the Holy City in Wilmington. She is active with Swedenborgians in Action Against Racism and is a member of the Social Justice Committee.

#### **John's Gospel in Its Own Words**

Rev. Dr. Dave Fekete  
*Saturday, June 26 at 4:30 PM ET*

Swedenborgians have a tendency to hunger for the internal sense of the Bible, but in doing so, we may miss what the Bible is trying to teach us. What about the literal sense, the sense of the letter? Swedenborg writes, "The Word is in its fullness, in its holiness, and in its power in the sense of the letter; and since the Lord is the Word... it follows that he is fully present in that sense, and that from it he teaches and enlightens persons" (TCR §225). This mini-course approaches John's Gospel from the power of the literal sense. I let John speak for himself, rather than force doctrines into his text. I derive meaning from John's own language, rather than by "decoding" his language with symbols taken from Swedenborg's commentaries on Genesis, Exodus, and Revelation. This course reads John's Gospel in its own words.



*Continues on page 54*

# Schedule of Events — Convention 2021

*Registration is required and will be open until June 15<sup>th</sup> – This event is free*

[Swedenborg.org/Convention2021](http://Swedenborg.org/Convention2021)

## Friday, June 25 All times are Listed in Eastern Time

- 12:00 PM — Opening of Convention followed by an open Business Meeting. Featuring reports from the President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, COM, and more.
- 6:00 PM — Welcome address by Rev. Jane Siebert, president, and a presentation of the churches in Convention
- 7:00 PM — Opening Church Service for Convention hosted by Bridgewater New Jerusalem Church, followed by Social Gatherings on Zoom with Evening Meditation

## Saturday, June 26 All times are Listed in Eastern Time

- 12:00 PM — Memorial Service/Virtual Communion hosted by Elmwood New Church
- 12:40 PM — **Keynote Presentation: Gary Lachman** (Rock & Roll Hall of Famer from the band *Blondie*): *Swedenborg and the Language of Correspondence*
- 2:00 PM — Second Business Meeting, Bylaws Change, Nominating Report, approve minutes and more.  
*All delegates are expected to attend and vote.*
- 3:30 PM — **Mini Course 1: A Swedenborgian Theology of Social Justice**  
with Rev. Shada Sullivan
- Mini Course 2: Glimpses of Goodness: Fostering a Perspective of Love**  
with Rev. Jenny Martin Caughman
- 4:30 PM — **Mini Course 3: John's Gospel in its Own Words**  
with Rev. Dr. David Fekete
- Mini Course 4: The Relevance of the Swedenborgian Perspective for Two Troubling Modern Issues**  
with Rev. Renée Machiniak
- 6:00 PM — Recognition Service followed by Zoom Social Gatherings, Games, and Evening Meditation

## Sunday, June 27 All times are Listed in Eastern Time

- 12:00 PM — Convention Worship Service and Children's talk by Rev. Sage Cole, convention minister, and hosted by Swedenborg Chapel in Cambridge
- 1:00 PM — **Swedenborgians in Action Against Racism**  
*Swedenborgian Spirituality: Our Journey Toward Social Justice*
- 2:30 PM — Business Meetings – CSS Annual Meeting followed by Elections and Standing Resolutions.  
*All delegates are expected to attend and vote.*
- 4:30 PM — **Mini Course 5: A Most Peculiar Paragraph: Unpacking Secrets of Heaven §634**  
with Rev. Robert McCluskey
- Mini Course 6: Beyond all Knowledge: Mystical Spirituality for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**  
with Rev. Thom Muller
- 5:30 PM — **Mini Course 7: The Lost History of the New Church in India: D. Gopaul Chetty and the Marriage of Swedenborg and Śaiva Siddhānta**  
with Eleanor Schnarr
- Mini Course 8: The Buddha of the North: Swedenborg's Deep Parallels to Buddhist Thought**  
with Rev. Cory Bradford-Watts
- 7:00 PM — Closing of Convention – Join us on a virtual outing and an invitation to next year in California!

Follow **Swedenborgian Church of North America** ([www.facebook.com/SwedenborgConvention](https://www.facebook.com/SwedenborgConvention)) on Facebook for the details, schedule, and updates as they become available. Look for more information at [Swedenborg.org/Convention2021](http://Swedenborg.org/Convention2021) and in the June 2021 issue of *the Messenger*.

*All Are Welcome. There is no fee for this event; however, donations encouraged.* [www.Swedenborg.org/Donate](http://www.Swedenborg.org/Donate)

## Mini Course Line Up

*Continued from page 52*

Due to time limitations, we will look at only the first chapter of John. The eight-week course I designed on the entire Gospel is currently being discussed as a possible offering through the Center for Swedenborgian Studies.

Rev. Dr. Dave Fekete is a proud graduate of Urbana University, Harvard University, and the University of Virginia. Having served as the president of the Edmonton Interfaith Center for Education and Action, he has attended and presented in numerous international interfaith conventions. He is on the Academic Senate, D.Min. Program Committee, and is associate faculty at Saint Stephen's College.

### The Relevance of the Swedenborgian Perspective for Two Troubling Modern Issues

Rev. Renée Machiniak

*Saturday, June 26 at 4:30 PM ET*



In this mini course, we will explore and discuss how Swedenborgian theology addresses the challenging issues of the pandemic and increasing violence in our society. We will incorporate such theological themes as the influences of heaven and hell, the purpose of this life and the Last Judgement.

Rev. Renée Machiniak has served as the minister of the Church of the Holy City in Royal Oak, Michigan, for over twenty-five years, serving also as a part-time hospice and oncology chaplain for nine years and volunteer police chaplain with the Royal Oak Police Department for seventeen years. She is happily married to her husband, Joe, and enjoys co-creating Sunday sermons with her mother, Sharon, and father, Rev. John Billings, a retired Swedenborgian minister. Renee was diagnosed with lupus five years ago, which has significantly deepened her spiritual path and focused her sense of purpose in ministry.

### A Most Peculiar Paragraph: Unpacking Secrets of Heaven §634

Rev. Robert McCluskey

*Sunday, June 27 at 4:30 PM ET*

Most people, raised in the New Church or newly coming into it, quickly learn about “the will and the understanding,” a key component of Swedenborg’s theology. The will is the realm of emotions, intentions and love; the understanding is the realm of thought, reason and truth. It is a useful model of the mind. It was well known in Swedenborg’s time, and remains so in ours. In *SH* §634, Swedenborg illuminates this pairing in an unexpected way. He suggests that unless our understanding of “will and understanding” is not rendered more precisely, we will have difficulty achieving a “will for good” and an “understanding of truth.” Without a clear and distinct understanding of these two faculties, we risk confusion over the whole issue of spiritual growth, including our belief in the afterlife. In this relatively short paragraph, Swedenborg offers a simple but profound model of the human being. Starting with the familiar division of will and understanding, he reveals a more complex dance between what we feel and what we think. It is a model that has aided and inspired me for decades in my own spiritual growth, and in my ability to empathize with others. I am eager to share it with others.



Rev. Robert McCluskey holds a BA and MA in philosophy, and a diploma from the Swedenborg School of Religion. He has served as pastor in Portland, Maine, and New York City, and currently administers rites and sacraments at Wayfarers Chapel. He serves on the Social Justice Committee of the Swedenborgian Church, and continues as founding co-chair of DEADSU.

### Beyond all Knowledge: Mystical Spirituality for the 21st Century

Rev. Thom Muller

*Sunday, June 27 at 4:30 PM ET*

In this mini course, we will explore, how Swedenborg, Rumi, St. Hildegard of Bingen, St. John of the Cross, Jiddu Krishnamurti and other great mystics can enrich our inner (and outer) lives and draw us closer to the divine and each other. We will both discuss and put into practice the inner spirituality of these teachers in a modern context.

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](http://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.



### The Lost History of the New Church in India: D. Gopaul Chetty and the Marriage of Swedenborg and Śaiva Siddhānta

Eleanor Schnarr

*Sunday, June 27 at 5:30 PM ET*

Between 1923 and 1953 Gopaul Chetty, theologian and social reformer, was president of the Hindi Swedenborg Society. Through his hard work, this period saw the explosive growth of a unique movement which married the disparate philosophies of Swedenborgianism and Śaiva Siddhānta. Under Chetty’s leadership, this community inspired a new theological perspective on Swedenborgian philosophy which married the dharma of East and West for the benefit of a new and ever-changing world.

*Continues on page 55*



## Mini Course Line Up

Continued from page 54



Eleanor Schnarr is an artist, poet, and Swedenborgian mystic who lives and works in the San Francisco Bay Area. Eleanor has an MFA from the San Francisco Art Institute, a Certificate from the Pennsylvania

Academy of the Fine Arts and is currently studying at the Center for Swedenborgian Studies at the GTU. A Seventh generation Swedenborgian, Eleanor has been involved in the practice and study of the work of the Swedish mystic since childhood. In her visual work, Eleanor uses oil paint on paper to recreate the visionary experiences of the interior world in a language of line and color; an esthetic which evokes the stained-glass windows of the cathedral in her hometown of Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania. Eleanor's study and practice centers around the refinement and understanding of the interoceptive sense, embodied spirituality, and internal breathing.

### The Buddha of the North: Swedenborg's Deep Parallels to Buddhist Thought

Rev. Cory Bradford-Watts

Sunday, June 27 at 5:30 PM ET

We explore what I believe to be some of Emanuel Swedenborg's surprisingly deep parallels to Buddhist scripture and writings, as well as touch on D.T. Suzuki's reason for calling Swedenborg "the Buddha of the North." These point to many of the practical applications of Swedenborg's ideas, highlighting helpful aspects of his thought that are overlooked.

Rev. Cory Bradford-Watts is the minister of the beloved community of the Church of the Good Shepherd, in Kitchener, Ontario, and





## Keynote Speaker

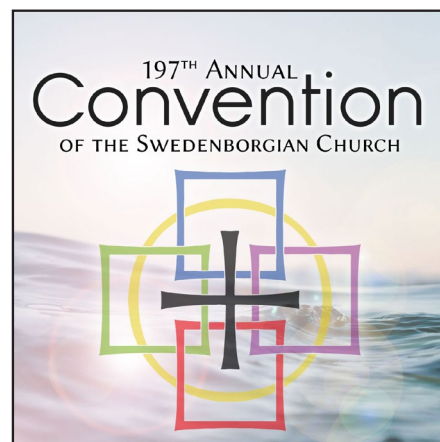
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books are P.D. Ouspensky (2004), Rudolf Steiner (2007), Carl Jung (2010), Aleister Crowley (2014), and Madame Blavatsky (2014).

Lachman also tackles complex socio-historical topics that include theological currents, such as his recent *The Return of Holy Russia: Apocalyptic History, Mystical Awakening, and the Struggle for the Soul of the World* (Simon and Schuster, 2020) or his earlier *Politics and the Occult: The Left, the Right, and the Radically Unseen* (2008), which explores such topics as the mysterious but ever-present Rosicrucian elements in seventeenth-century social critiques, high-grade Freemasons often playing significant roles in the social structures around them, French utopian occultists who had a role in the French Revolution, and Traditionalists in the twentieth century with strong ties to the Right. Swedenborg, of course, cared a great deal about politics and rarely missed a session in the House of Nobles across fifty years, believing that active support of the larger social order forms a decisive dimension for "loving the neighbor."

In his varied life journey, Lachman also has studied philosophy, managed a metaphysical book shop, taught English literature, and was once a science writer for UCLA. He is currently an adjunct professor of Transformative Studies at the California Institute of Integral Studies. Explore more about Gary by visiting the following pages: [garylachman.co.uk](http://garylachman.co.uk), [facebook.com/GVLachman/](https://facebook.com/GVLachman/) and [twitter.com/GaryLachman](https://twitter.com/GaryLachman) 

Spiritual Sunshine: Swedenborgian Community Online ([SwedenborgianCommunity.org](https://SwedenborgianCommunity.org)). With a background in finance, economics, and computer science, Cory found a calling to help empower spiritual health after a near-death experience and diving into Swedenborg's writings. 

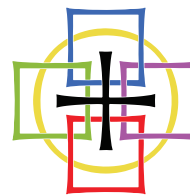


## Calling all Youth! Artwork Needed for Convention

We are looking for drawings, paintings, sketches, or photos of rapids or people in canoes or kayaks riding the rapids in streams and rivers. The theme of Convention this year is *Navigating the Rapids in the Stream of Providence*. We'd love to share your pictures with quotes from Swedenborg's *Divine Providence* with everyone attending virtual Convention. Email your pictures to [kfekete@hotmail.com](mailto:kfekete@hotmail.com) or text them to Kurt at 802.345.0169 soon so that we can make sure they are ready for inclusion in our program. We can't wait to see everyone's art and photos!

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# Well That Was Certainly Different!

*Reflections of the 2020 Virtual Fryeburg New Church Assembly*

BY TREVOR

Due to the global pandemic, in-person camp at the Fryeburg New Church Assembly (FNCA) was cancelled and camp was held virtually online the summer of 2020. An ad hoc committee of seven people, with the help of about another **forty volunteers**, put together and pulled off a nine-day online camp with as many of our traditional features as possible. There was the Opening Weekend Program, Sing-Along, Chapel services, Lectures, Adult Discussion Group, Afternoon Book Club alternating daily with Arts & Crafts, virtual dinner together on several nights (we sang the Johnny Appleseed Song together for grace at the first one), Evening Activities every night, virtual Outing Day on Wednesday, virtual Dole 3-Miler on the second Saturday, and Zoom worship with the Fryeburg New Church each Sunday morning.

included a public lecture on his “Adventures in Nepal” and a hands-on workshop on “Hearing the Lord’s Call.”

Our two weekly lecture themes were The Tabernacle and The Three Essentials of the Church. We were pleased to have a two of our core lecturers share with us online, Rev. Hugh Odhner and Rev. E. Rogers. We also were delighted with the return to our lecture staff, some after many, many years, of Rev. Dr. Jim Lawrence, Rev. Ken Turley, Dr. Devin Zuber, and Rev. Lee Woofenden. And we were thrilled to welcome first time FNCA lecturers Rev. Dr. Jonathan Mitchell and the 2020 Rev. Everett K. Bray Visiting Lecturer, Dr. Rebecca Esterson from our theological school, the Center for Swedenborgian Studies, who gave two very well-received lectures.

The Adult Discussion group following each day’s lectures, lead by FNCA

*Within*, by Rev. Dorothea Harvey.

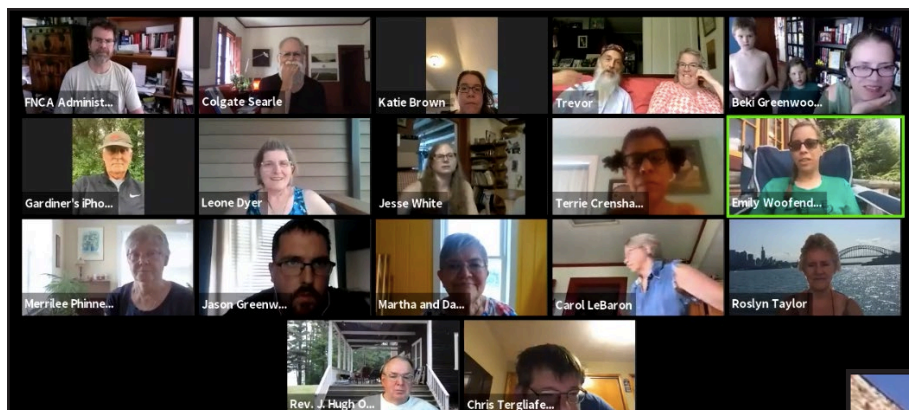
Arts & Crafts in the afternoon included a “**Leaf Stitch Meditation**” class by fabric artist Carol Lebaron, “**Po-choir T-Shirt Project**” by another artist, Amy Blackman Cooke, and a fun “mystery” collage craft project by Heidi Woofenden.

There was a special surprise opening day appreciation program for outgoing FNCA Camp Director, Jason Greenwood. Various campers prerecorded tributes to him which were seamlessly put together into a single video. Thank you for nine years of excellent service, Jason!

Other activities included: daily Sparks Games lead by Trevor, a New Zealand slideshow by Herb Ziegler, an Alaska slideshow by Richard and Debbie Cooke, String Figures and How to Make Them by Trevor, “How Sturdleys are Made” video by Adam Lane-Olsen, Jeff Lindy and Adam Lane-Olsen running the Dole 3-Miler on the Mountain Division Rail Trail video (filmed by Trevor on his bike!), virtual Frank Hall social gatherings, after hours Jackbox Games lead by Jason Greenwood, and a very successful online silent Sales Table Auction.

Although everyone missed meeting in person, vFNCA 2020 had the very

*Continues on page 57*



There was also a daily “Spirit Theme” (including this writer’s favorite: Unusual Hat Day!) as well as a social time each afternoon before supper with a different theme each day to help get the conversation started.

The Opening Weekend Program was led by Rev. E. Kent Rogers, which

Religious Program Coordinator, Rev. Susannah Currie, was a very popular part of the program. As was the Afternoon Book Club, hosted Dr. Rebecca Esterson, in their study of *The Holy Center: A Biblical Path to the Presence*





## Reflections of vFNCA 2020

Continued from page 56

positive perk that many people who have not been able to attend the FNCA because of the distance were able to join us this time. It was so good to see so many new faces as well as longtime, far-flung friends returning for the first time in years, with distance not being a challenge virtually!

I especially want to thank the On-line Summer Session Committee, who together put in hundreds of hours planning, organizing, and doing all the tech work before, during, and after this oh-so-successful new online adventure: Beki Greenwood, Bob Perry, Emily Woofenden, Nancy Little, Jesse White, Rev. Susannah Currie, and myself, as chair.

We got so many positive comments from so many different people—including all ages—newcomers and old timers, not only across the continent but across the ocean as well. Who could have possibly known that we would have such a rich, rewarding, spiritual experience meeting online for vFNCA 2020!

Links to vFNCA 2020 videos, and several other years of lectures, can be found on the FNCA's [YouTube Page](#). Updates on this year can be found on the [FNCA Facebook Page](#). ☒

	<b>CENTENNIAL T-SHIRTS AVAILABLE IN TWO COLORS!</b>
<b>\$15 EACH</b>	
<b>PRE-ORDER ON YOUR REGISTRATION</b>	

FNCA Centennial Celebration T-shirts are available. Order on the registration form or email [registrar@fryeburg.org](mailto:registrar@fryeburg.org)

## FNCA 2021 Session

Against all odds, the Fryeburg New Church Assembly is planning to hold this summer's camp session in-person from **Saturday, July 31 to Sunday, August 15**. This year's lecture themes: "The Sayings of Jesus" first week and "On Love to the Neighbor" second week. The Opening Weekend Program (July 31 & August 1) is "Reconnecting with Camp": singing, dancing, drumming, meditative walks on land and in the river, one-on-one and group sharing, aromatherapy, reiki, and rituals to bless our return to camp. The 2021 Rev. Everett K. Bray Visiting Lecturer is Rev. E. Kent Rogers, founder of the Loving Arms Mission orphanages in Nepal and Kenya. Following 2020's very successful virtual session, there will be lots of online content this year including lectures, discussion group, and many activities making FNCA 2021 a hybrid experience for all who are able to join locally or from afar.

For those who are able to join us in person, strict masking and social distancing standards will be vigorously required, so FNCA will be rather different this year, but the Summer Session Committee is working to include as many of our regular Assembly traditions as safely possible. Due to reduced capacity limits, there will be a very short window for in-person camp registration. Late registrations will not be accepted. Family groups are encouraged to attend the same dates. For current info, see [fryeburg.org/session\\_info](http://fryeburg.org/session_info)

**Registration is open until June 15.**  
[fryeburg.org/register](http://fryeburg.org/register)

## 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. At this point, grants can be up to \$3,000 depending on the application. A successful application should be a written statement that includes,

1. A clear outline on how using technology will improve the community's function and outreach.
2. A detailed list of the equipment the organization is seeking to acquire.
3. Plans for 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.

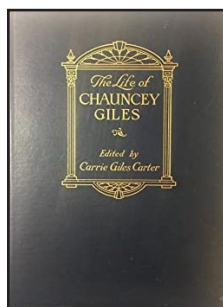
Applications should be made with direct consultation from Ben Phinney ([AskPhinney@gmail.com](mailto:AskPhinney@gmail.com)) and may be emailed to Holly Bauer at: [Bauer.HollyM@gmail.com](mailto:Bauer.HollyM@gmail.com)

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

# The Life of Chauncey Giles

## Chapter Seven

SUMMARIZED BY LOIS DOLE



*Somewhere I found a small pamphlet by Chauncey Giles titled "The Blessedness of Death," and I found it so comforting.*

*When rearranging a bookcase, I came across his biography, written by his daughter Carrie Giles Carter; I thought I would look into it. I found it so fascinating: it's mostly letters written to and from him that tell how important finding New Church teachings were to him, but also capture the feelings of the times about church beginnings in this country. This is the next installment of my summary.<sup>1</sup>*

### Chapter Seven: Cincinnati Pastorate, 1852–1862

Introduced by Mr. Stuart, who had so greatly influenced him, Chauncey preached his first sermon in Cincinnati on October 23, 1853. He wrote at the time, "I feel now that I am beginning a great new work. To perform it aright I should have entered upon it years ago, but I will do the best I can."

He felt discouraged at the seemingly indifferent response to an early lecture and hoped that the experience would do him some good. Shortly afterward he was much heartened by being able to bring New Church teachings on death to comfort a family whose child had died.

However, the initial social welcome of members of the society, requiring his presence at a party almost every night, was overwhelming for him. He

felt that evenings should be spent in study and rest.

Despite low attendance, he felt that there was increasing interest in what he had to say. His diary expressed his uncertainty as to his ministerial duties and his lack of experience in writing.

In early 1855, Chauncey was invited to become Rev. Thomas Worcester's assistant in Boston. In considering the offer, he said that he had no objection to the position of assistant as it would give him more time for study, but that the Cincinnati church members seemed to be in a genial mood and its younger members especially drawing closer to him. In September the society voted unanimously to elect him as pastor, and the warm sentiments surrounding the vote helped him decide to stay.

In September 1858, Chauncey, who was in Boston, wrote to Eunice on their anniversary. He recalled the trials of the early years of their marriage: "If we have suffered, have we not also enjoyed?" He thought about the four children who were growing up in heaven and was also happy about the four on earth. Although he sometimes felt the lack of material success, when he considered the state of many who have attained it, he was consoled. He wished that they had better health, but "we must make the best of what we have."

Early in his ministry, Chauncey contemplated the manner of New Church preaching. "It does not seem to me as if we have got hold of the right way of New Church preaching yet; ... [it] is rather dry to common minds.... It seems to me that the New Church truths must be brought into forms adapted to the states of those who hear, as far as possible."

In February 1856, Chauncey and Eunice opened their home to their uncle, Dr. Lakey, and cared for him in his last illness. Eunice had also given birth to a new son, Edward, born the previous December. The other children were five and three years old. Charles Henry was born in February 1858.

Carrie Giles Carter writes that her father was considered one of the best educators in Ohio. In 1858 he was elected president of Urbana University. Although he never lived in Urbana, he kept in constant touch by frequent visits and by letters regarding its organization to his friend Mr. Williams, who kept them bound in a volume. His suggestions included reducing the number of classes required of professors, hiring an auditor, and giving more attention to the natural sciences and less to languages.

In October 1858, all five of the children had whooping cough, keeping Chauncey "very busy."

In February 1859, he formed a class for young people, who responded to his interest in them and developed a love for the doctrines and the uses of the church. Then in October he added a class for young women, one of whom described a weekly climb of a mile and a half to his house for the class.

That year, after preaching in Cincinnati on Sunday, he went to Glendale nearly every other Sunday and had evening meetings at church.

In June he attended the annual convention in Philadelphia, where he spoke against the resolution for ministers to wear clerical dress. The amendment he suggested read "Resolved, that every minister dress as they please." No action was taken.

<sup>1</sup> See prior installments in the March 2021 issue, November 2020 issue and July/August 2020 issue.

## Life of Chauncey Giles

*Continued from page 58*

In January 1860, their son Eddie, four years old, “a beautiful loving child,” died of measles and croup. Carrie and Charley were also ill and Chauncey was feeble after much illness. He wrote that the afflictions were for their “spiritual good in some way.”

Mid-February found Chauncey en route to New Orleans, sent there by the Cincinnati Society to regain his strength. He remained until mid-April, sometimes preaching to the small society there. He took advantage of free time to think and reflect. He wrote home in March,

Oh, if I could be instrumental in making our Society a genuine New Church Society in life as well as doctrine; in bringing up the children in the love of the doctrines and in the purity of life of which they teach, I should be satisfied. I am afraid our religion has been too much of the head. We must try to get it more into the heart.

In April, finally at home, he wrote, “This has been a happy day for me. I stood in my old place and saw the old faces turned up toward me, heard the old music, and felt the warm sphere of love with which I was greeted.... I must study more, visit more, talk more with the young, and in every way do more for the cause of our Lord and Master.”

That June, Chauncey and Eunice attended the Annual Convention in Chicago. Eunice was ill and remained so until November, pretty much bedridden. Lucy, at sixteen, was housekeeper during her illness. In early September, Eunice was able to sit up for a few minutes at a time. Chauncey’s ability to use a pen was impaired by what he called erysipelas in his wrist.

Then in late fall 1860 he wrote a plea to the editor of *the Messenger* for more social intercourse and less of what seemed to him “a battlefield

upon which the champions of different truths marshal their forces.” He would rather hear how other societies are managing their Sunday schools and other topics of interest, and he wanted “comfort and strength” from them.

About the same time, he wrote to a colleague that he feared that the advance of spiritism would constitute an attack on Swedenborg and be a great trial to the New Church; that any advances church thinkers make should not be to correct Swedenborg’s teachings but to carry them out better. “How much happier we shall be if we make [the doctrines] our own by living and loving them.”

In January 1861, there were rumors of war, and though Chauncey confessed no great interest in politics, his letters became increasingly concerned with happenings in the south, especially in view of Cincinnati’s location across the border from Kentucky.

At the outset he said in a letter to a friend, Dr. Holcombe, that he did not vote for Lincoln, though later he said that he wasn’t sorry he was elected. He also said that he was not anti-slavery and thought that was not an issue with most people in the north. However, he is appreciative of the “essential nature of the African race and its future in the scale of humanity.”

Chauncey thought the South should be allowed to secede as it had wanted to do for a long time. Should war occur, he said, the South will “go down to posterity as the destroyers of the mildest and most equitable government ever established among men.” And if a separate government is established, it “will stand alone among the civilized and enlightened nations of the earth as the holders of human bondage.”

He continued in this letter that his writing was difficult to read because his hand was tired from copying it, as he had done for a year past: “not because I suppose many will be worth preserving, but it is sometimes desirable to know

what one has written.”

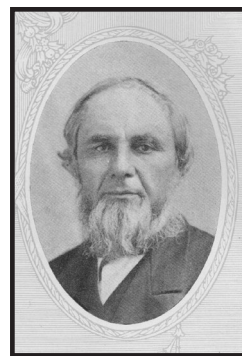
The same Dr. Holcombe wrote to a colleague in June 1880 about an incident in which a friend of his shot “a Negro man, his slave,” who was trying to escape, and was then arrested by the “Federals.” At this time Dr. Holcombe was a secessionist and thought the Federals wrong. He became so disturbed that he closed himself into his bedroom, took his Bible and prayed that he might be given light by what he read. He opened the Bible at random and found in Isaiah 58:6: “Is this not the fast that I have chosen? To loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?” He subsequently freed his slaves and took the oath of allegiance to the United States.

Chauncey wrote to a friend in New Orleans that, except for what is read in the newspapers, there was little talk about the possible schism in the country and that the true feelings of people in the North to those in the South was one of charity. At the same time, he wrote that the North would not let the South split the country without a fight.

Then he said, “The Lord never permits an evil to fall upon [nations or individuals] which is not for the prevention of a greater evil or in some way an instrument of good.”

And in a letter to his mother, Chauncey said, “Nothing but war is talked about now.” He added that the streets were full of soldiers, with thousands more encamped near Cincinnati. He wrote that he was proud that Massachusetts men were so prompt to answer the president’s call to arms.

In another letter, he thought it



*Continues on page 63*



## Letters to the Editor

*Continued from page 50*

have elections in 2020, so many of the various nominations are a carry-over from last year, where committee members were asked to add a year to their term as our bylaws state. Some were willing to do this, and others did not have the time or energy to continue so there were many additional nominations this year compared to previous years.

I sent out a request for names of possible nominees to send to the Nominating Committee and did not hear from anyone. I am mentioning all this as the 2021 Nominating Committee did an excellent job of filling all the positions early so the vitae of the nominees could be printed in *the Messenger*. They are not at fault here, and I appreciate that we had a conscientious nominating committee that divided the work, spoke to many individuals, and produced a full slate with good potential volunteers to serve Convention in various capacities. The guidance that was offered to the committee, which follows previous standards, is to first check with the person that has filled a position that is not terming off, if they are willing to continue in that position. The three that Kevin refers to had served previously on General Council and agreed to continue. There are fourteen total serving on General Council.

Fortunately, each of the three individuals of concern have positions within Convention that have oversight, evaluations and salary determined by one of three official bodies within Convention, not General Council: the Council of Ministers, the Standing Committee for Communication and Information, or the Standing Committee for Educational Resources. The General Council does approve the final budget as proposed by these groups and will be sure anyone with potential conflict of

interest will recuse themselves if a specific compensation discussion occurs that pertains directly to that purpose.

One more issue that Kevin brought up which is a serious concern not only within the governing bodies of Convention, but throughout our organizational structure, is the lack of qualified volunteers willing to serve in elected offices, including at the local and association level. Rev. Eric Zacharias, who just entered the spiritual world at age 101, and I talked a lot about how different it was for him to be president in 1975 and for me, now. In 1975, the Church was decreasing in membership but there were still many willing to run for offices, and elections were contested and prized. When I became president, the first elections I conducted we were begging people as they arrived at our annual convention to run for positions that the nominating committee had not been able to fill. The first thing we did was to consolidate committees and create a more streamlined and efficient governing structure. This was not out of a desire for control, but out of necessity.

It is time to look at our whole structure again and ask, does the association structure still serve its purpose? Some associations have a lot of money and some have none. How is that fair? Where are more consolidations of committees, boards and councils possible? What will serve us best into the future?

I promise you this: right now, we are doing the best we can with the people we know of who are willing to serve. Yes, there are areas we need to improve, and the General Council will be looking at this. It was already on our fall agenda.

Thank you and hope you will join us for virtual *Convention 2021: Navigating the Rapids in the Stream of Providence*,

—Rev. Jane Siebert, President  
Wichita, Kansas

## Treasurer's Response

Thank you for the invitation to respond to the letter submitted by Rev. Kevin Baxter. In an ideal world, General Convention would have an excess of willing and able volunteers for each of the committee and General Council positions that our current organizational structure requires. Alas, we do not. The Nominating Committee has filled the 2021 election slate with a wonderful set of candidates, even given the difficulty of working within a small membership with relatively few individuals willing to serve due to other life commitments.

Fortunately, there are avenues open to any member of General Convention who is unhappy with the slate of candidates provided by the Nominating Committee. One, our by-laws allow and encourage nominations from the floor of Convention. Two, any voting delegate at Convention may vote for a write-in candidate instead of a nominated candidate. Three, we encourage all members of General Convention to continually suggest potential committee and General Council candidates (including themselves) to the Nominating Committee throughout the year as it performs its work in preparation for Convention. Four, we invite anyone who is interested to volunteer to be nominated to serve on the Nominating Committee in order to have an impact on future nominations.

Regarding the budgeting process, it begins in August when I, as treasurer, invite each employee and committee chair with expected expenses to submit their budgetary requests for the coming fiscal year. These requests are considered when I draft the complete budget, which is then reviewed and revised by the Standing Committee for Financial Accountability (SCFA) at its September meeting. The SCFA then recommends the revised draft budget to be considered for approval by General

*Continues on page 61*

## From the Social Justice Committee

## “I Can’t Breathe” and Environmental Racism

BY WILMA WAKE



*Everyone who thinks from clear reason also sees that the universe was not created from nothing because nothing can be made out of nothing. Making*

*something out of nothing is self-contradictory. ... everyone who thinks from clear reason also sees that everything was created from substance [that is, from substance itself], which is the actual reality—esse—that makes existence possible everything that is. Since God alone is substance itself and, therefore, reality itself, there is no other source [other than God the Lord] from which things can emerge (DLW §283).*

It was April 22, 1970, and I was a high school social studies teacher in a small Illinois town. It was my first year of teaching, and I was excited to introduce the students to a momentous new event: the first Earth Day! I had been outraged since reading Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring* [1962] and knew that this issue had to be addressed. As a recent graduate of the University of Illinois, I saw myself as rather radical, protesting the Vietnam War, demanding peace and justice in the world.

Yet now I realize how incredibly naïve I was, living without awareness of my White privilege and blind to the racism at the core of environmental issues.

I’ve since learned about Black activist Benjamin Franklin Chavis, Jr., who in 1983 became involved in protesting the depositing of radioactive wastes in

poor, Black neighborhoods. The story is that on one of the arrests for his activism, he cried out “this is environmental racism.” The term has continued to grow in environmental activism. Chavis says “I can’t breathe” is true for countless numbers of people of color who live close to a plant or factory or to a toxic dump.

In 1986 Chavis did a national study, *Toxic Waste and Race in the United States of America*, that showed the statistical correlation between race and the location of toxic waste. Chavis is considered by many to be the “father of the post-modern environmental justice movement.”

In 1988, he was elected vice president of the National Council of Churches. He also served as chairman of its Prophetic Justice Unit as a Minister of the United Church of Christ. There he worked with our own Rev. Robert McCluskey, who was on the Prophetic Justice Unit at that time. McCluskey says,

*I worked with Ben on the Prophetic Justice Unit for several years when I was with the NCC. It was from that group that I learned the term “Black Belt” (cf. “Bible Belt”), referring to the high number of toxic dump sites throughout the Black South (Louisiana, Alabama, Arkansas, and Mississippi).*

Earth Day began as a movement that looked at plants and trees without considering the systemic environmental racism at their root.

Because of people like Chavis, and our own McCluskey, many of us are finally coming to recognize the environmental racism at the core of environment issues. Swedenborg tells us that all that exists is part of the

Divine. This brings us to environmental issues and to racism in our society. Our Swedenborgian lens now must focus on how these two issues intertwine, and how we can address both together.

For some practical suggestions on antiracism actions, see the article by Page Morahan in the April 2021 *Messenger*: “Immediate Antiracism Action Ideas.” Especially consider some involvement with Swedenborgians in Action Against Racism (SAAR) and Manifold Angels. ☒

## Letters to the Editor

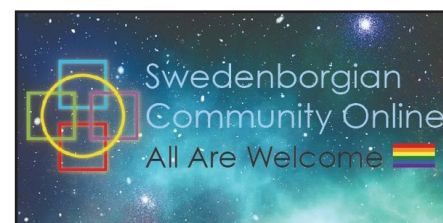
Continued from page 60

Council. I present the budget to General Council at its November meeting, where it is formally approved after any revisions made by General Council. At both the SCFA and General Council meetings, when a specific salary or compensation line item is discussed, anyone who is personally impacted by that line item recuses themselves from the discussion.

Both the nominating and budgeting processes are designed to be inclusive and transparent in support of General Council’s overall efforts towards good corporate governance within General Convention.

May you and your community continue to be well,

—Jennifer Lindsay, Treasurer  
San Francisco, California ☒



## Passages

### Deaths

**Rev. Eric John Zacharias**, 101, of Pretty Prairie, Kansas, entered fully into the spiritual world on April 8, 2021. He was born February 18, 1920, in Herbert, Saskatchewan, to Rev. John E. and Marie H. (Klassen) Zacharias.

Eric graduated from Herbert High School in 1939, Urbana College in 1941, and both Boston University and Swedenborg School of Religion in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1950. He served in the Royal Canadian Air Force from 1941–1945.

Except for serving the El Cerrito, California, Church from 1958–1962, Eric was minister at New Jerusalem Church, Pretty Prairie, from 1950 to 2006. He served two terms as mayor of the City of Pretty Prairie and two terms as president of the Swedenborgian Church of North America. Eric also worked for the welfare departments of Reno and Kingman Counties for several years and was instrumental in the beginning of Horizons Mental Health Center, where he also worked for five years.

On May 29, 1943, Eric married Alice E. “Betty” Melenbacher, in Ayr, Ontario. They shared sixty-six years of marriage before her death on October 15, 2009.

He is survived by children Richard Zacharias (Bev) of Wichita, Lynn Charlesworth (Bill) of Montoursville, Pennsylvania, Veneta Lane of Hutchinson, Kansas, Rebecca Colbert of Urbana, Ohio, Ames Zacharias (Sue) of Kennewick, Washington;

sixteen grandchildren; thirty-one great-grandchildren; two great-great-grandchildren; sisters, Laura Simpson of New Westminster, British Columbia, and Marian Hoeck of Copenhagen, and numerous extended family members.

**Christine Anne Campbell**, 68, of West Chester, Pennsylvania, who was a longtime local music teacher, choir director, and served as pastor and director at Temenos Community in West Bradford for many years, made her transition from this world on March 18, after a brief illness.

Born in West Chester, she was daughter of the late Lucian and Betty Manley and graduated from West Chester’s B. Reed Henderson High School in 1970. She began her career in music education after attending the Philadelphia Academy of Fine Arts and later Combs College of Music. She worked as a choir director and music minister for many churches in the area throughout her life. Christine was the music and fine arts director at Upland Country Day School through most of 1990s, where her passion for music and performance was lovingly passed on to many students. Christine started as music minister at Temenos in 2009 and became the pastor in 2011, where she continued to share her love of spirit and music until her passing. Throughout her life, Christine was passionate about all things Native American and ran many traditional drum circles in the area. Christine was also very passionate about wildlife conservation and the plight of wolves in the wild in particular.

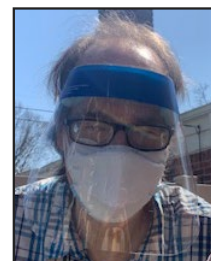


Photo by carinaannaphotography.business.site

She will be missed by so many people and communities: her many private students, of whom she was so proud; her friends and colleagues on the West Chester Religious Council; all the people of Temenos; the many students whose lives she touched at Upland Country Day School; and many, many more. Christine is survived by her son, Ian Campbell of Coatesville; her sister, Luanne Gates of West Chester; her nephews Aidan and Paul Gates; Paul’s wife, Anitra; and their son, Sam. So many who love Christine have been loved and treasured deeply by her. We celebrate Christine’s presence with us always, as we honor the gifts she shared and her trailblazing spirit. Please pass on a Random Act of Kindness to another person or animal friend in the spirit of her giving heart.

### Confirmations

**Charlie Beckhoff**, joined the life of the Royal Oak Church of the Holy City (Michigan) on Easter morning, April 4, confirmed by Rev. Renée Machiniak.



Charlie has been a friend of the church for several years and has faithfully attended worship and church programming, offering not only his friendship but also his ideas and time to bless the church in her mission.

**Seven new members** were confirmed into the Bridgewater New Jerusalem Church on Sunday, April 4, by Rev. Susannah Currie. Joining were, **Carol LeBaron** from Tennessee, her daughter **Emily Woofenden** from New York, and her daughter-in-law **Alia Woofenden** from Western Massachusetts. Local families were represented by sister and brother **Emily** and **Matthew Milne**, and mother and son, **Leanne** and **Sean O’Donoghue**. ☪



## Life of Chauncey Giles

Continued from page 59

correct that Dr. Holmes called Boston the hub of the universe.

A Mr. Smith, who may have been the church organist, wrote to Chauncey with an idea, to which he responded, "Your idea of a Congress of Nations in which each member would seek the good of all is almost too good to be true." He added that he hoped it would happen some time in the future.

In early October 1861, Chauncey reported three regiments marching through Cincinnati that day, with thirty more expected that week. He thought that the fortifications under construction were not sufficient and deplored the lack of serious alarm among the populace. He said that almost all the young men in the society had enlisted and felt that the perpetrators of the war "will get their due....The South is doomed; I can see no escape from it," and that cotton was no longer king.

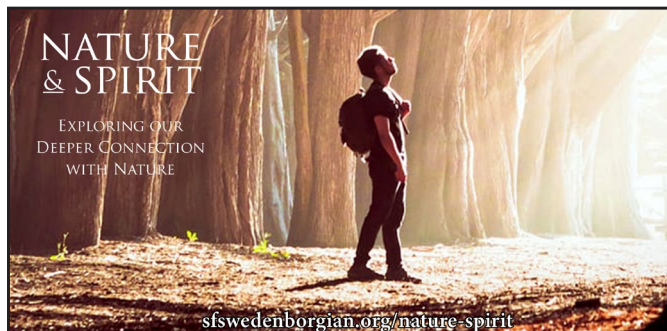
In November, Chauncey wrote that the Fort Sumter attack occurred the week after plans were formalized by the society for a new temple, and that they were abandoned at that time. And also that a large number of parishioners had moved to "the country," namely, Hebron and Glendale, where a new temple was built and where Mr. Stuart was preaching. He continued in the letter that few of the sons of the older membership had joined the church. But the Sunday school "is large and prosperous," and he had a Sunday morning class of twenty-five or thirty in addition to the Sunday service and evening lectures on Sunday and Wednesday.

In the same letter he wrote that the South had previously commandeered much that the North needed to fight the war, that some northern army officers were corrupt, Washington was demoralized, and it was very lucky that army bastions like West Point "were not in the command of traitors." He continued that the North now had an army of nearly a half million men, most of them well drilled and armed and that "The people of the North are perfectly confident of success."



The chapter ends with Chauncey again making a plea for *the Messenger* to become more relevant to the life of its readers, especially in view of this "terrible crisis." He said, "I have no belief in the method of teaching truth that begins and ends with the generalities that we must shun evils and do good. What evils shall we shun, and what good shall we do?" ☩

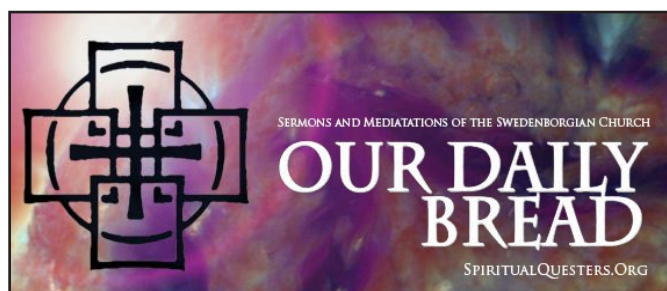
## What's Happening



### Nature & Spirit Continues through June 29<sup>th</sup>

Full series access to *Nature & Spirit*—and a bonus.

Sign up for "Full Series Access" and not only get access to all future presentations as scheduled, but also access past presentations and the recorded Q&A sessions with the presenters through June 27. Even if you missed earlier presentations, you can still see and hear all seven of them in their entirety and the Q&A sessions. *Plus* something extra: a bonus eighth event to close the series! Once the series ends, so does this offer. Just go to [sfswedenborgian.org/nature-spirit](https://sfswedenborgian.org/nature-spirit) and look for "Full Series Access." More details will be available on the church website [sfswedenborgian.org](https://sfswedenborgian.org) and on the Facebook page [The SF Swedenborgian Church](https://www.facebook.com/TheSFSwedenborgianChurch).



Our Daily Bread at [SpiritualQuesters.org](https://SpiritualQuesters.org) is your resource for recent sermons, meditations, reflections, lessons, interviews, and original content from within and beyond the Swedenborgian Church of North America.

**Do you write poetry,  
create puzzles or games,  
or have pieces of art you would like to share?  
We'd love to see them! Send it along to  
[Messenger@Swedenborg.org](mailto:Messenger@Swedenborg.org).**

### 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.

## Almont Summer Camp Session 2021 — Virtual



We are sad to announce the cancelation of the Almont Summer Camp Session 2021 due to the pandemic. As we know, our camp is about doing things together and often in cramped quarters—people coming from all over to learn and live together. All of these activities create risks for our youngest and most vulnerable campers. God gave us science, medicine, and the church so that we can live lives of service and use; we must respect all the channels of inspiration in our lives. While each of us can make our own decisions, the Assembly and Camp are held to a different standard—a standard of care that looks at the general welfare of a community. I sincerely hope that you understand the reasons for this decision and know that Almont is a deep part of my soul and that I feel the hole in my heart at its absence. I pray and trust that our camp sessions will return next year. This means that we will hold a virtual camp session as best we are able! We need Almonters to show their spirit and devotion by volunteering to help make this possible. —Rev. Kevin Baxter

## Gathering Leaves UK — Planning for 2022

In an effort to welcome as many overseas visitors to Gathering Leaves as possible, the international retreat for Swedenborgian/New Church women has been moved forward once again, to 2022. Gathering Leaves at [Purley Chase Centre](#) in England will be Friday, August 26 to Monday, August 29, 2022. All the generous donations from 2020 to cover Purley Chase room and board costs are still planned to be in place. Please contact [alison.southcombe@purleychasecentre.org.uk](mailto:alison.southcombe@purleychasecentre.org.uk) to move your existing booking ahead to 2022, or to make a new booking.

