

# Season's Greetings

## the Messenger

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### A Christmas Wish

May this truly be a Christmas of wonder,  
Allowing the Christ child to be born within.  
Releasing our skepticism  
That comes with requiring certainty.  
Concentrating on the gift of birth,  
Creation aglow. Life anew.  
Exploring what nature shows us,  
The Divine all around  
In everything  
and everyone  
and everywhere.

I wish you all a wonder filled Christmas!  
—Rev. Jane Siebert

We hope you enjoy this special greeting from *the Messenger*. We gave everyone the opportunity to provide season's greetings, updates, and well wishes to one another, as they were able. Please enjoy the messages and images from your fellow ministries around North America, with several links to upcoming Christmas services.

The pandemic has taken another turn and many more virtual Christmas Eve services are being planned. Please visit [swedenborg.org/events-activities/virtual-services/](https://swedenborg.org/events-activities/virtual-services/) for a list of virtual Sunday services and links to their websites. Please take advantage of what everyone has to offer.

### The Garden Church

San Pedro, California

"My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior."  
—Mary, Luke 1:46b–47a

Season's greetings from the Garden Church. It is with gratitude that we have returned to in-person worship and opened our gates to the public. To be sure, we continue to grieve our losses, and pray for those among us living with illness, yet it is a great comfort to be together again in the Garden. May you all walk in the spirit and live in community this Christmas season.

Blessings,

—Rev. Dr. Jonathan Mitchell,  
Rev. Dr. Amanda Adams Riley, and  
the Board of the Garden Church



Facebook  
Page



## Swedenborg Chapel

Cambridge, Massachusetts

Season's Greetings from Swedenborg Chapel!

We are feeling grateful for many reasons here at the Swedenborg Chapel as we enjoy the Advent Season.

First, the governing board of the Massachusetts New Church Union agreed to pledge two million dollars towards the restoration of our beloved Chapel and the construction of our new auxiliary building to house the Helen Keller Spiritual Life Center! As we continue our fundraising (eight million to go), we feel so blessed to have this support both financially and spiritually from our statewide community.

We are also working hard to organize our first Helen Keller Spiritual Life Center event to happen March 3, 2022—the day Helen met Annie Sullivan and honored throughout her life as her spiritual birthday. Dr. Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, bioethicist, author, educator, humanities scholar, and thought leader in disability justice and culture, is helping us to curate the event. Please keep an eye out for info (<https://hkslc.org/>) on how to participate in the new year!

We are so happy to be able to worship again in our space—masked of course. Our services are now being offered in person and online and we'd love to have you join us virtually! Links to our worship streams, and the bulletins for each service can be found at [www.swedenborgchapel.org](http://www.swedenborgchapel.org). Our Sunday services are at 11:00 AM ET and our Christmas Eve Service will be held at 4:30 PM ET.

Lastly, with the arrival of some new folks, we now have critical mass for a few more in-person offerings, including Friday Open Sanctuary hours from 10–2 PM ET for prayer and contemplation, and a spirituality discussion group Brown Bags and Big Questions Fridays, Noon–2 PM ET.

The spirit is moving at Swedenborg Chapel and we are moving with it!

Blessings,

—Rev. Sage Cole (she/her)

Pastor & Director Swedenborg Chapel  
Visionary Leader Helen Keller Spiritual Life Center



Mark Careaga, Rev. Sage Cole, and Dr. Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, a supporter of the Helen Keller Spiritual Life Center project.

### Christmas Eve Service

Friday, December 24<sup>th</sup>

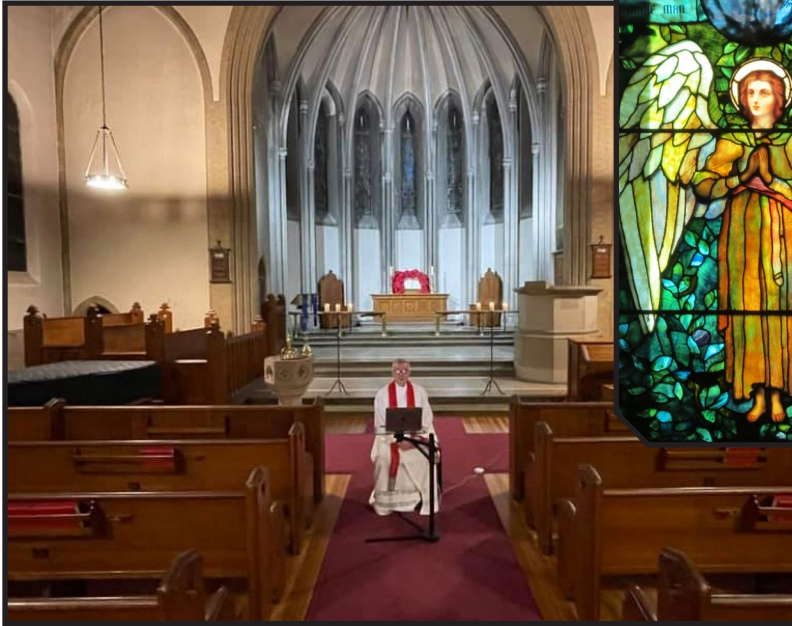
at 4:30 PM ET

Cambridge Swedenborg Chapel

*Candlelight Service*

**Online Service**



**Church of the Holy City – The National Church***Washington, D.C.*

Merry Christmas from Church of the Holy City, Washington, D.C.

All of us at Church of the Holy City in Washington, D.C. wish our church family around the world a very Merry Christmas. We enter this Christmas season with hopes of the birth of Christ in our world and in our hearts.

As I write you, we are experiencing another outbreak of infection among our younger members who are staying in for ten days.

This last year, we lost our church president, Helen Sioris, to cancer. Every Christmas she sang “Oh Holy Night” for us, but last year she didn’t feel well. We miss her and remember her. I’m glad she had a loving community to be with her through it all.

Our church has been through a lot this past year from pandemics, insurrections, and protests. We keep hoping and wishing we were through these challenges, but this all reminds me of the importance of building community and strengthening our relationship with the Lord.

We are blessed to have the technology to build a national community who comes together every Sunday at 5:00 PM ET on Zoom. We welcome anyone who wants to stop by on any Sunday. Make sure to save time to join our discussion after the service, too.

This Christmas Eve we’ll be celebrating on Zoom again, with me broadcasting from church. We’d love to have you join us for Lessons and Carols with a short message.

Despite the hardships and losses this past year, we are blessed to have built a wonderful community and we welcome you to be a part of that. You can sign up for our newsletter by sending an email to me for details.

We pray that this Christmas reminds us of the love that God has for us all.

Merry Christmas,

—Rev. Rich Tafel

[revtafel@holycitydc.org](mailto:revtafel@holycitydc.org)

**Swedenborgian Community Church at Hillside***El Cerrito, California*

Our community at Hillside is going strong and has been meeting indoors and enjoying the Advent season together. A special treat this year has been our new pianist, Mardi.

We will have a contemplative Christmas Eve service at 7:30 PM PT, which we will stream on Hillside’s Facebook page.

—Rev. Thom Muller

**Christmas Eve Service**

Friday, December 24<sup>th</sup>  
at 7:30 PM PT

Swedenborgian Community  
Church at Hillside  
*Candlelight Service*

[Facebook Page](#)

**Christmas Eve Service**

Friday, December 24<sup>th</sup>  
at 5:00 PM ET

Church of Holy City,  
Washington D.C.  
*Christmas Eve Service of  
Lessons and Carols*

[Zoom Link](#)

## Chicago Society of the New Jerusalem – The Swedenborg Library and Spiritual Growth Center

*Chicago, Illinois*

Merry Christmas from Chicago!

In 2021, the city has been commemorating the 150th anniversary of the Great Chicago Fire. The Chicago Society had been established thirty years earlier by Jonathan Young Scammon. From pages 175–185 of *The New Church and Chicago*, 1906 by Rudolph Williams, you will find the following:

The Chicago Society of the New Jerusalem was bereft of its lovely home, and many of the members were homeless. The old church family was dismembered. The organization was maintained, but the old conditions of complete unity in church purposes, church life and sociability were gone forever. Ten years after, the Society, with some of the old and many new members, worshiped under one roof again in a beautiful temple, but the conditions were different, and have so remained.

The following is a list of places from which sums of money amounting to \$25 and more were received:

Boston New Church Society .....	\$3,105	Yarmouth, MA New Church People .....	\$73
New York City New Church People .....	\$489	Baltimore, MD New Church People .....	\$58
Cincinnati New Church Society .....	\$475	Pawtucket, RI New Church People .....	\$55
Rhienfelden, Switzerland, New Church .....	\$438	Florence, IA New Church People .....	\$54
Glasgow & Paisley, Scotland, New Church .....	\$356	Bedford, PA New Church People .....	\$50
London, England, New Church People .....	\$273	Urbana University Students .....	\$45
Pittsburg, PA New Church People .....	\$230	Carrolton, LA New Church People .....	\$32
Wilmington, DEL, New Church People .....	\$212	Philadelphia, PA New Church People .....	\$32
St. Louis MO New Church People .....	\$140	Salem, MA New Church People .....	\$25
Berlin, Canada, New Church People .....	\$140	Napoleon, OH New Church People .....	\$25
Washington, DC New Church People .....	\$131		
Preston, England, New Church People .....	\$122		
No. Bridgewater, MA New Church People .....	\$104		
Abington, VA New Church People .....	\$78		

And enough from sympathetic and charitable individuals in many states and lands to raise the amount to nearly \$7,000.”

The New Church, as all others, had many friends generous and full handed. They supplied nearly seven thousand dollars in money, and necessities of life in vast unrecorded amounts.

The committee for the relief of sufferers, as shown by the record, consisted of Mr. Jonathan Scammon, Miss Hattie Small, Mrs. Dyer Burnham, Mrs. Alexander Officer, Mrs. Joseph B. Doggett, Mrs. George F. Root, and Mrs. Sarah Jane Sanford, with Mr. Frederick W. Root as clerk; and Mr. John J. Geiger was placed in charge of the store.

As we go forward into the New Year, let us remember that sometimes we, like the City of Chicago, experience a great loss on the way to becoming something better, that adversity brings people together, and that if you tell people about your adversity, you'll find your true and sympathetic friends.

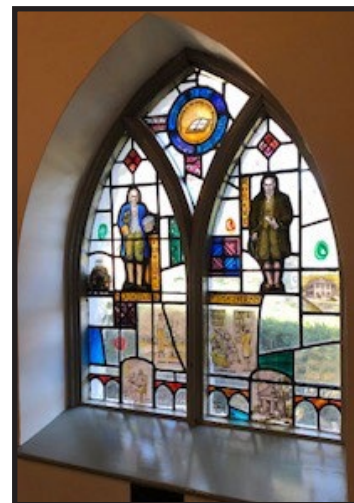
Twenty years after the Great Fire, in 1892, New Churchman Joseph Sears would sell his interest in a company to build the suburb of Kenilworth in Chicago's North Shore area, including the non-denominational Kenilworth Union Church. I was honored to speak to the Huguenot Society there in November, to explain why the first window depicting Protestant leaders features Swedenborg and Johnny Appleseed (shown above, Swedenborg at left).

Jonathan Scammon's law partner, Ezra McCagg, recounts in the same book:

“Mr. Scammon, as you say, was ever ready to talk the doctrine of Swedenborg, because he was even more interested in that than in his profession, but he never seemed to me to be trying to proselyte. He thought and often said, that the Lord leaves every man in a position best fitted for him as regards his religious belief; and as I have just said, while ever interested in Swedenborg, even to such an extent that many times I felt it would be better for our business if he were less so, he was not dogmatical, and never tried to make a convert. He would recommend with great earnestness Swedenborg's works, but, as I think, only because he found such absolute truth in them.”

May you meet those best fitted to discuss Swedenborg in 2022!

—Karen Feil, Licensed Pastor



**Agapao Church***Santa Ana, California***Merry Christmas & Happy New Year**

May Lord's peace, joy, and goodwill be with you  
and your loved ones

**Temenos – Sanctuary and Retreat Center***Westchester, Pennsylvania*

As many know, our Temenos Community suffered a great loss with the passing of our dearly loved pastor, Christine, last March. 2021 has been filled with deep love and compassion for one another as we all grieved in our own way, at our own pace, alone and together. And we continue to do so.

The Temenos Council's first priority was to bring in an interim pastor to serve our community and guide us spiritually forward—Rev. Cairn Neely graciously accepted the role. ([See p. 143 in the December Messenger.](#))

One of our neighboring churches graciously donated funds to help us purchase a replacement sign for our church!

In 2022 we will be dedicating a portion of our Peace Path to the late Pastor Christine Campbell. This memorial path will be a digitally curated Wonder Walk, featuring poems, prayers, and music of our late friend and spiritual teacher. The development of a labyrinth along the walk is under review.

We wish everyone, near and far, a beautiful Christmas season filled with love and peace. Merry Christmas and let's pray for a happy and healthy new year.

—With love from your friends at Temenos



## New Jerusalem Church

*Pretty Prairie, Kansas*

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year 2022 to all from the New Jerusalem Church of Pretty Prairie, Kansas!

Even as the world has continued its struggles with COVID-19, we have had much to be thankful for this year.

We are thankful for Zoom gatherings that have kept us connected, as well as for vaccinations which are sustaining our health, and thankful to be once again gathering and sharing togetherness at the church for Sunday School and church services. We treasured joyfully decorating the church, studying Advent, and preparing for Christmas services.

We have bonded together this year in remembrance of Rev. Zacharias as we worked collaboratively, reorganizing the church's old office storage space into a special Rev. Eric Zacharias Memorial Library (See p. 149 in the December Messenger) as well as planting seven rose bushes at the church's entrance. Everyone came together, instinctively knowing their part, conducting these projects in harmony. We also widened our perspectives of other world religions as we studied Hinduism and Buddhism as inspired by Barbara Brown Taylor's Holy Envy, especially enjoying a memorable and welcoming visit to a nearby Hindu temple where we shared an intriguing meal.

Perhaps the most valuable part of our Church was in looking after each other—checking in after surgeries, visits, delivered meals, and phone calls. It is a blessing to be part of a Church that really does work to live through loving acts.

—Jean Conkling and Joyce Barker



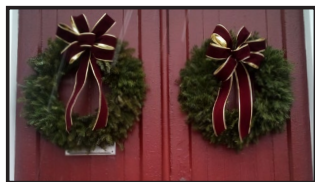
## Fryeburg New Church

*Fryeburg, Maine*

### Christmas Eve Service

Fryeburg New Church  
Thursday, December 24<sup>th</sup>  
at 7:00 PM ET

[Zoom Link](#)



Happy Holidays, to all and a joyous New Year as we welcome in 2022. I would like to thank everyone for their continued support, submissions, and volunteer help that keep our publication alive and beautiful. From the Greenwood family, and our Christmas cats, we hope you are able to relax and enjoy the beauty of this season.

—Beki Greenwood  
Editor,  
the Messenger