

Registration Opens for Both In-Person and Virtual Attendees on April 15th

Registration is Online Only

[Swedenborg.org/Events-Activities/Annual-Convention](https://swedenborg.org/Events-Activities/Annual-Convention)

This summer's 198th annual convention, from Saturday, June 25 to Wednesday, June 29 will convene in Southern California at California State University, Long Beach (CSULB). This annual convention is hosted by [Wayfarers Chapel](#) in Rancho Palos Verdes, [The Garden Church](#) in San Pedro, and Agapao Church in Santa Ana, California. Southern California is known for its sunny weather, beaches, and magnificent coastline.

As we have been virtual for the past two conventions, the need for continuing remote attendance has become clear. With travel and health concerns still at the forefront, for the first time we will be offering a hybrid style convention with options and activities for both in-person and remote attendees. This includes worship services, keynote presentation, Mini Courses, and business meetings.

Delegates will be able to participate

in-person or remotely using the Nemo-Vote online voting system for all of our voting. (See [p. 36](#) for the list of this year's nominees up for election.) The goal with this is to hear the different voices from all our churches and associations by filling all the delegate slots. Contact your church or association if you wish to serve as a voting delegate.

In-person attendees will get to take two outings this year: one to Wayfarers Chapel and one to the Garden Church and Feed and Be Fed Farm. They look forward to showing us their spaces, worshipping with us, and being of use together.

Registration this year is online. There are separate registration forms for in-person and virtual attendees, be sure to select the correct one. Thanks to all of your generous donations, we are able to keep the registration fees low, and free for all youth ages eighteen and under. (See more about the

children's program and travel assistance on [p. 43](#).)

Room and Board for a four night stay in a double room at convention is only \$360, and all youth eighteen and under pay half. Virtual attendees (including delegates) will only have to pay a small \$50 registration fee. Be sure to read our online Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) for detailed pricing, the most up-to-date CSULB COVID-19 protocols, and answers to your questions before registering.

Registration closes May 13 for in-person attendees and June 13 for virtual attendees. If you need assistance filling out the online form, contact Central Office during regular business hours. All the information and details are available on swedenborg.org, and more will be published in the next issue of *the Messenger*. We can't wait to be finally back together and see you in California! 🌴

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Editor's Corner



Working Towards Hybrid

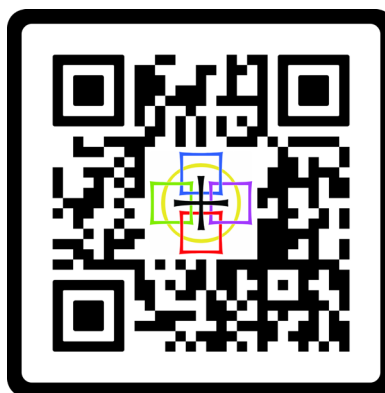
I hope by now that most of you have been to the updated [Swedenborg.org](https://swedenborg.org). Many people have spent their time on making it user friendly, informative, and appealing. The website committee is continuing to evolve its content and looks forward to everything it can offer for users everywhere. For our virtual convention last year, we started using a convention specific portion of the website for easy access to all the details and information you could possibly need as an attendee. We are so excited to be offering this convention specific page this year as well.

With our new voyage into a hybrid convention, there is a lot of information to be conveyed to a variety of attendees, and our convention specific website can do just that. Accessible

from any device, in-person attendees will be able to have all the information needed at their fingertips—from where the keynote is, to how to vote at a business meeting, to when the bus leaves for the outings—up-to-date information will be available on their smartphone wherever they may be. Remote attendees will have quick access to the links they need to watch live streamed events, participate in business meetings, and join Mini Courses. All the frequently asked questions are addressed right online, but don't worry, there is still a printable version if that is what you prefer!

Registration for convention opens up on April 15, and will remain open for in-person attendees until May 13, and for virtual attendees until June 13. Open up the camera app on your smartphone and scan the QR code below to get to the convention website—to register or for information.

—Beki Greenwood
Messenger@Swedenborg.org



New Submission Deadline

Time-sensitive articles submitted to *the Messenger* must be received by the 15th of each month to be considered for print in the following issue.

the Messenger

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Editor, design, and production: Rebekah Greenwood

Copy editing and proofing: Robert Leith, Brittany Price, Emily Woofenden, & Trevor

Standing Committee for Communication and Information: Holly Bauer, Val Brugler, & Tara Conkling

Editorial Advisory Committee: Rev. Jane Siebert, Rev. Dr. Jim Lawrence, & Herb Ziegler

Printing: FenwayGroup, Boston, MA

Email: messenger@swedenborg.org

Editorial, Business, and Subscription Address:

The Messenger, Central Office

50 Quincy Street

Cambridge, MA 02138

Tel: 617.969.4240

Email: manager@swedenborg.org

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Submissions are accepted at any time.

Submissions must be received by the 15th 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.

Corrections

In a letter to the editor in the March 2022 issue on page 30, the brackets in the letter from Perry Martin should have read "[my daughter]." Our apologies for the misprint.



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Letter from the President

The Year of Providence: 2021–22



The Golden Thread

Dear Friends,

One of the greatest joys of being president has been meeting Swedenborgians around the globe. There is a commonality, a “Godipity” moment of connection, a golden thread of relationship, that seems to be present even before we meet. I have found it in the countries I have been able to visit during my presidency, Australia, Sweden, England, Canada, and here in the United States, with new members, lifetime members, and some just testing the waters of our tradition.

I have been questioning what it is that makes them feel like long lost relatives? What is the light when lit, that causes many to say, “This is what I always believed, but didn’t know there was a church,” or “Well, of course this is true.”

What is the golden thread that draws us together to feel the link, to want to know one another better, to listen to each other’s spiritual stories, and to ask how they found their way into our unique Swedenborgian corner of Christian faith? We don’t have to agree on everything and yet the thread is still there.

Recently, I was in a Zoom meeting with a Swedenborgian from Canada, Esther Fyk. I felt the golden thread and called her after the meeting to get acquainted. She explained her Swedenborgian family connection in Manitoba and how she was raised in the little church there with a visiting minister. As an adult she left the tradition for a while and then felt a call back after many years. She shared, “It is and has always been essential to my faith journey. I love Swedenborg’s metaphorical explanation of the Bible and remember the stories from my Sunday School days.”

I also spoke with Rev. Kim Morrow, the first person to graduate from our seminary after it moved to Berkeley and be ordained. Kim helped with the move and transition and worked for the seminary for several years. When she moved to Nebraska, she continued in ministry in an UCC church in Lincoln and then followed her passion as a leader for climate justice throughout the state and beyond. She reflected with love on her Swedenborgian

The Thread

BY MARK NEPO

There’s a thread you follow.
It goes among things that change.
But it doesn’t change.
People wonder about what you are pursuing.
You have to explain about the thread.
But it is hard for others to see.
While you hold it you can’t get lost.
Tragedies happen; people get hurt or die; and you suffer and get old.
Nothing you do can stop time’s unfolding.
You don’t ever let go of the thread.

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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*.

Kurt Fekete Vice President (one-year term)



I am honored and excited to accept the nomination to the position of vice president. A bit of background on me.

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 that moved to Royal Oak when I was a teenager. I attended Almont summer camp every year. I loved Almont; and when I became a teenager, I loved attending youth retreats. I was fascinated by Swedenborg and as an adolescent I loved talking about theology with my mother, Joyce. Like Swedenborg, 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. While I never went on a personal quest to find the seat of the human soul, I did continue my study of Swedenborgian theology and

Position to be Filled	Term (Yrs)	Candidate
President	3	***
Vice President	1	Kurt Fekete*
Recording Secretary	1	Karen Conger*
Treasurer	3	Jennifer Lindsay*
General Council: layperson (2 to be elected)	3	Paul Deming Emily Woofenden
General Council: layperson (unexpired term)	1**	Kelly Schellenberg Kennedy
General Council: minister	3	Sage Cole
Standing Committee for Communication & Information	3	Kevin Baxter
Standing Committee for Education & Resources for Spiritual Community	3	Julie Conaron* Junchol Lee
Standing Committee for Financial Accountability (2 to be elected)	3	Rachel Madjerac Lisa Solwold*
Board of Trustees of CSS, representative class	4	Lewis Shaw*
Nominating Committee	5	Tammara Mounce

* Incumbent

** Years remaining in unexpired term

*** No candidate to be elected this year

spirituality while working as an engineer. I was involved 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, and I have barely been able to gather in-person with youth. However, the health crisis has also opened up the opportunity to assume a leadership role in the denomination as interim vice president in 2020.

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. I have enjoyed my work as vice president over the past year and a half and think that I have made some important contributions to the denomination.

As we usher in a new president, I aim to work to provide continuity and excellence within your representative Executive Committee body. 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 Swedenborgian faith community. I live in Maine with my fantastic wife, Shelley, whom I met at a youth retreat, and our two teenage daughters.

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Nominations

Continued from page 36

Karen Conger Recording Secretary (one-year term)



Greetings! It's once again an honor to accept the 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 served on the Ministries Support Unit (MinSU) for several years, the Nominating Committee more than once, I was the Secretary of the Pacific Coast Association (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.

Jennifer Lindsay Treasurer (three-year term)



Jennifer Lindsay is honored to be renominated as a candidate for Treasurer on behalf of the Swedenborgian Church of North America. Jennifer has served as

Treasurer since being initially elected in 2017. She came to know and embrace Swedenborg's teachings through the San Francisco Church, where she has been an active member for nearly twenty-five years. She served the church council as treasurer for seven years and is currently serving as president. She also previously served as treasurer for Wayfarers Chapel and is the current treasurer for the Center for Swedenborgian Studies. Professionally, Jennifer completed a twenty-plus year career as a Principal with KPMG in its Silicon Valley office where she led the Forensic Practice and served as the Partner-in-Charge of Corporate Responsibility for the office. Her focus was providing investigative services and compliance risk assessments for a variety of clients in the technology and energy industries. She graduated from Texas A&M University with both a B.S. in Economics and Aerospace Engineering. She received her M.A. in Economics from Stanford University. Jennifer has spent over a decade serving on the Board of the M.F.A. program at the American Conservatory Theater and supporting Texas A&M University by serving on the Development Council for the College of Liberal Arts, the Chancellors' Century Council, and the Board of the Association of Former Students. She is an avid world traveler who is anticipating the return of her global escapades in the near future.

Paul Deming General Council-Layperson (three-year term)

Paul Deming was installed as licensed pastor of the Church of the Open Word / Garden Chapel in 2016. He lives in St. Louis,



Missouri, and is married to Suzy Holper who serves as Wedding Coordinator at the Church of the Open Word. Paul is a musician and taught elementary music for over twenty years. Paul also teaches Shotokan Karate to adults and children.

Emily Woofenden General Council-Layperson (three-year term)



I am honored to be nominated to serve the General Council. I am a lifelong Swedenborgian that grew up attending the Fryeburg New Church Assembly (FNCA) in Fryeburg, Maine, and I am a member of the Fryeburg New Church. I am working on my Ph.D. in Educational Psychology and Methodology with a focus on Special Education, expected to graduate this May. I am a mentor for preservice elementary school teachers and an adjunct instructor at the State University of New York at Albany. I currently serve as secretary on the Board of Directors for the FNCA. I have served on this board for many years and have found the work to be quite fulfilling. I am also the Assistant Camp Session Director. I serve on the Swedenborgian Community Online Central Committee.

I am happy to have the opportunity to expand my service and experience to the greater Swedenborgian denomination. I live in the rural mountains of upstate New York with my fiancé, Chris, and our two pets—Sir Edgar the Cat and Lexi the Puggle. I am honored to accept this nomination and I look forward to further serving the Swedenborgian Church of North America.

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Nominations

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Rev. Sage Cole General Council—Minister (three-year term)



I am at this time in ministry pleased to accept this nomination to serve on the General Council. I've been blessed throughout my life by the Church. Since my entry at age

thirteen into the loving embrace of the SCYL, the Church has held me and then called me into ministry where I have been serving for the last seventeen years. I have been blessed to serve in a diverse array of settings: the first Pastor of www.swedenborgiancommunity.org; Associate Pastor of the Church of the Holy City in Wilmington, Delaware; as a hospice chaplain in Southern Maine; Pastor of the Fryeburg New Church; Family minister of St. Mary's Episcopal Church in Anchorage, Alaska; and then in my current post as Pastor of the Swedenborg Chapel in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Since coming to Cambridge in 2015, I have had the blessing of walking through a community truly at an ending point, then stepping into a new beginning as our community has grown in love and openness and come to embrace the vision of expanding our ministry with the development of a Center in our space dedicated to the faith and life of Helen Keller. I am excited to bring my experience to the work of General Council and to be a voice looking to the future, so that other 13-year-olds many generations from now will be blessed as I was. I live in Hyde Park, Massachusetts, with my husband Ted and two boys, Theo and Zach, ages 7 and 5.

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

Rev. Rachel Madjerac currently works at U.C. San Diego in the Office of Ethics & Compliance. Previously, she served at Wayfarers Chapel as the Ministry Coordinator and as a Rites and Sacraments Minister.



Rev. Kevin Baxter Standing Committee for Communication & Information (three-year term)



I am running for the Standing Committee for Communication and Information. Throughout my ministry and other areas of my life, I have sought to embrace technology to further the mission of the Swedenborgian Church in the world. As a youngster, I remember when the ImSU (Information Support Unit) provided an Apple 2 to the church for reporting and information purposes. Now we are in an information age and the church has been through four major web redesigns. Only being off the committee for a year, I was part of the team to create resources for streaming during the pandemic. While not often flashy, the technical aspect of ministry is essential for the future of the church. I would like to work with the dedicated team already in place to help further that mission along.

Rev. Lisa Solwold Standing Committee for Financial Accountability (three-year term)

It has been an honor to serve the Swedenborgian Church of North America by being part of the Standing Committee for Financial Accountability. Over the past three years I've gained a greater understanding of the important work they do to support our ministries and programs. I would like to be considered for another term and feel that my work in management as a hospital chaplain helps me understand a balance of needs, resources, and stewardship. Thank you for your consideration.



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



Julie (Law) Conaron was born and raised in England but arrived in the United States via Iran. She has four married sons, one of whom is now in the spiritual world with his dad. She spent the better part of forty years being a microbiologist, the latter including starting three labs from scratch. Julie has always been interested in education and chose to change professions after the death of her spouse, feeling called to be a *spiritual microbiologist*, she became an interfaith minister in 2012 then ordained in 2015 as a Convention minister. Now officially

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Nominations

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retired as a hospice chaplain after ten years, Julie continues to lead services three times a month to two facilities in her area. Her focus is on bringing the Bible alive to those to whom she serves.

Rev. Junchol Lee

Standing Committee for Education & Resources for Spiritual Community (three-year term)

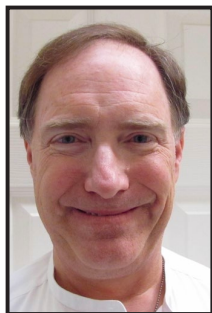


After his ordination in July 2000, Junchol served on many committees of the Swedenborgian Church of North America including Executive Committee of Council of Ministers (six years), Ministry Support Unit (three years), Committee of Admission into Ministry (seven years), the General Council (one year), and served SCYL as the Youth Chaplain for seven terms. Junchol has also offered Mini Courses during the annual convention and delivered lectures at the Almont Summer Camp for many years. Junchol is deeply interested in the spiritual aspect of education for all Swedenborgians and finding ways to connect people with the teachings of Emanuel Swedenborg.

Lewis Shaw

CSS Board of Trustees—Representative Class (four-year term)

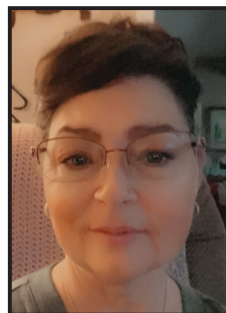
Husband of Tina, and father of Garret, Fitzhugh, and Meghan. Dedicated to Gospel and Buddha Dharma. Ph.D.



from Cambridge University. Buddhologist and scholar of church history. Professional baseball in various capacities for twenty-five years. Special assistant to head coach of Auburn University baseball.

Tammara Mounce Nominating Committee (five-year term)

My name is T a m m a r a Mounce. I am a thirty-five-plus year member of the LaPorte New Church, Swedenborgian, where I now serve as president on the executive board. I am a member of Almont New Church Assembly where I serve as secretary on the executive board. For the past twelve years, I have served as an advisor to the teens at Almont and the Almont Survivors. I also worked with our Transitions group within the denomination for many years. I would be honored to assist with the Nominating Committee. ☸



Annual Meeting of the Corporation of the New Church Theological School

The Annual Meeting of the Corporation of the New Church Theological School (dba the Center for Swedenborgian Studies of the Graduate Theological Union) will be held during the annual session of the Swedenborgian Church of North America, Sunday, June 26, 2022 at 2:45 PM PT, The Pointe Conference Center, California State University at Long Beach.

Letter from the President

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connections and said, "It will always be a part of who I am and how I live." The golden thread runs deep.

My children, Casana and Drew, still consider themselves Swedenborgian, although neither lives anywhere near a Swedenborgian Church. Drew shared, "The writings helped me understand my own spirituality and the Bible. I would have struggled with just a literal view because there are many troubling stories. The inner sense unfolds the deeper Divine meaning and makes it applicable to how I want to live my life. The only issue I have is when we (Swedenborgians) think we might have the only truth and that somehow makes us better than others. It's important to me that we accept all people and different traditions." The thread runs through families.

This brings us to in-person Convention 2022. I think this golden thread is why it is so wonderful to come together with other Swedenborgians. I feel it in the worship services, the Mini Courses and even the business meetings. We are all separated by distances and busy lives, but that golden thread draws us back to be together to feel the love of this unique community.

Hope to see you at Convention 2022,

—Rev. Jane Siebert



Op Ed

Black History Month Offers Churches the Chance to Reflect

BY RICH TAFEL

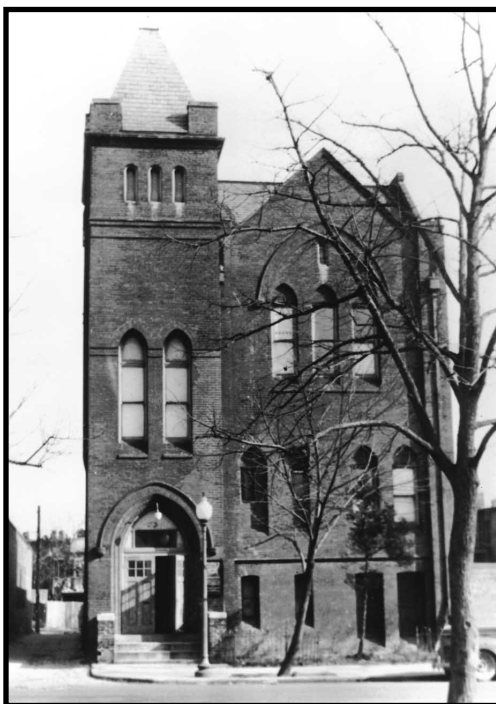
Every February, Black History Month offers Americans a time to reflect on their neglected history. Churches should use this month to reflect on our history when it comes to our relationship to Washington, D.C.'s African American community.

Last year, for Black History Month, our Church of the Holy City on 16th Street in Dupont Circle decided to examine our past in dealing with racism as we seek to become a more inclusive place to serve. The results were fascinating.

Our church was inspired by the teachings of Emanuel Swedenborg, an eighteenth-century Christian mystic, and his spiritual revelation that the "African race" is closest to God with a unique spiritual connection referring to those of Africans as having celestial genius. In our research, we learned those teachings impacted and led a few of our early members to become early abolitionists.

First, we discovered an early member of our church, Lord Fairfax, once the largest landholder in Virginia, freed his slaves in 1798 based on Church teachings. This story came to full circle recently when former Virginia Lt. Governor Justin Fairfax publicly shared that he was an ancestor of those freed slaves in a Washington Post article.

Digging deeper, we learned that a church member and abolitionist, Colonel Reuben Mussey, led the effort to enlist Black soldiers in the Union forces during the Civil War. In 1864, he was appointed colonel of the 100th U.S.



The first African New Church at 10th and V Street N.W., Washington, D.C. circa. 1930.

Colored Infantry. Upon returning to D.C. after the war, he maintained strong connections with D.C.'s Black community. Under his leadership, the 16th Street church helped launch a mission church at 10th and V Street N.W. called the "[First Colored Society of New Jerusalem](#)." The building stands to this day and is owned by the D.C. government. Our research found that Church of the Holy City funded Washington's first African American pre-school program attracting social luminaries to visit and model new programs around the nation.

The Church was later sold to a Pentecostal Church, and its active outreach to D.C.'s Black community seemed sporadic in the following decades.

The riots of 1968 led many of the predominantly White congregation to flee to neighboring suburbs. As crime increased, attendance dropped, and the building decayed. Despite this remarkable history, the Church never became known or publicly outspoken for civil rights.

These lessons, some good and some bad, helped us pledge going forward to become a more engaged and welcoming church when it comes to race. For humans to grow spiritually, they need to become self-aware. Only when we see the evil in our lives can it be addressed. Yet, we will spend much of our lives avoiding what's within us to point out the sin we see in others and the world.

Churches are no different. If churches want to evolve spiritually, they, too, need to come to terms with their past to address the present and grow toward a less racist future.

Our congregation has grown very slowly as we've tried to meet the community's needs. Today, our still small church has a majority African American leadership staff.

Our building manager, Shalonda Ingram, who runs [Born Brown: All Rights Reserved](#), is a national leader in diversity training and a descendent of the great American, Dred Scott. Her presence and leadership have made the church much more accessible to African American recording groups and events.

It's not unusual for event attendees who are Black visitors to tell us, "I've

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Swedenborg's Secret to Awakening to the I Am

BY CORY COBERFORWARD

The eighteenth-century sage, Emanuel Swedenborg, has greatly influenced many impactful, peerless thinkers and influential progressive radicals (from Immanuel Kant and Helen Keller, to Emerson, Blake, and William James), but he himself is little known to modern history. And although there are countless biographies of the groundbreaking scientist-turned-mystic, there is one important aspect of his history that I think could use a little more exploration and emulation: his spiritual awakening. His deep meditative approach to his quest for the seat of the soul resembles the types of inner inquiry that many ancient and modern sages invite in order to awaken from spiritual slumber, into what a Swedenborgian may coin “angelic flow,” or “Christ-consciousness,” or just plainly, Buddha.

The late Rev. Dr. George Dole told me that he believed that Swedenborg seemed to have a crisis during his attempt to locate where the soul resides during the late part of his impressive scientific career, when he stopped keeping up his scientific notes and seemed to withdraw into what I believe Dr. Dole surmised might have been similar to depression. This evidence, coupled with knowing Swedenborg's deeply contemplative and meditative approach to exploring his scientific inquiries and developing conclusions, also seems to clearly point to the perfect combination of topic and practice, one that Tibetan Buddhist scriptures and more modern sages like Ramana Maharshi and Mooji emphasize as a key tool for awakening to our true, heavenly selves and our intrinsic knowledge of God. In this way, I believe that it wasn't just the crisis of his inquiry that possibly helped lead to his well-known visions of God and the

spiritual realm, among other powerful personal transformations, but also the line of deep self-reflection itself that his meditative approach would have employed.

This exploration asks, what and where is this natural spring of the soul, where does our inner light of consciousness and love spring from within?

In Exodus 3, Moses encounters God in the wilderness as a burning bush near the mountain of God during his own crisis of consciousness. Further, God tells Moses that he is to be called “I am who/that I am.” In this encapsulation, I think we have a good description of the type of meditative inquiry that Swedenborg and other sages, say they employed before awakening. This generally involves taking some time to go to our inner mountain of God through meditation or prayer, sometimes inspired by crisis, and importantly, turning questioningly and reverently to the source of light and love within, the eternal fire that burns with no fuel, the part of life that needs no effort to gather motivation or will. This exploration asks, what and where is this natural spring of the soul, where does our inner light of consciousness and love spring from within? This type of inquiry naturally involves turning our attention away from the field of perception, what we see, hear, think, feel, and turning toward the source of the light of perception itself and the source of spontaneous, intuitive knowledge—the burning bush.

As you might see, we already have a good model for our own personal spiritual inquiry along these lines, seeking “where is the source of consciousness,

what is this burning bush within, and where is this seat of the soul?” What we have to keep in mind with this inquiry is that it is not a type of reflection that asks for input from the thinking, over-analytical mind, but one that seeks a lived knowledge through inner experience. We want to truly approach the burning bush reverently, taking off our shoes as Moses did, not with a lab coat, note pad, and a pen, circling the bush. Indeed, this light of consciousness is not dualistically perceptible in the same way that everything else is in our lives, from our changing sense of self and personality to our transient feelings and thoughts, it is the everlasting light of consciousness and wisdom itself, the seat of perception and our lives itself. It is the “I am that I am.”

Swedenborg was asking, “Where is the seat of the soul?” And in so doing in his meditative way, I can only imagine that he explored his inner landscape: “Well, it can't be this sense of self, as that is perceived by something—what perceives this? What perceives my body's feelings and form? It is like a dimensionless point or a transparent canvas on which all things fall into perception, but only thanks to the light that it itself provides and then observes as in a mirror.” It is just this type of inquiry that is said to clear the mind, allowing for more detached observations of our thoughts, a less selfish/private sense of self, and open us to the knowledge and growing experience that God him/herself is already within us and is at no true distance from us (Swedenborg believed that spirits and angels were at an appearance of distance from God due to their lived reception of God's qualities, but not a true distance). Although at first this line of reflection brings us to a space that seems empty and clear

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New Church Year of Jubilee

BY SAGE COLE

The Helen Keller Center and the Cambridge Society of the New Jerusalem, invite you to join them in celebrating a New Church Year of Jubilee in honor of Helen Keller's *spiritual birthday*, the day in 1887 when she met her teacher and lifelong friend Annie Sullivan. We will celebrate March 3, 2022, through March 3, 2023—and what will this New Church Jubilee Year be, you say?

After being thrown into the sea of uncertainty these last two years under a global pandemic, having to learn how to subscribe to YouTube Channels, and say the Lord's Prayer together over Zoom, as things start to return to something we will begin to call normal, we intentionally plan not to jump back in. We want to take this year to look around and reflect on what we've all been through, to acknowledge that we weren't totally sure why we were doing each and every thing we were doing the way we were doing them before

the pandemic hit, so it's worth considering which of the things we want to go back to. In addition, we feel the need for a truly New Church.

Our entire community has been on a journey, through COVID-19 and of course, long before that. We will take this year to tell our story, the story of the church we have been sharing together in Cambridge and the stories of the churches each of us have been creating within ourselves. And in these stories, we will listen for "signs of the New Church." We will learn from each other's stories of isolation, desolation, consolation, and jubilation. We will learn about each other. We will learn about ourselves. We will learn about God. And hopefully we will learn something about this New Church that we have been tasked with receiving.

We invite any and all people who are similarly tasked to join us on this journey in any way that you can and are able to.

Join us on this mission of collecting stories!

- Elders in your community you want to interview?
- Meaningful stories of your own experiences with regeneration?
- Visions of the New Church?
- People we should speak to?


Join us in our virtual offerings!

- Individually
- As a practice with your church
- Whenever, and however you wish

Join us through extending your love and support of this endeavor

- Pray for us
- Subscribe to our [Newsletter](#)
- Like our posts on [social media](#)
- Share what we are doing with others

Join us by making a financial contribution.

- Help us to be able to easily increase interview and IT staff as needed.
- Make sure no stories go untold! 

"Divine providence is in the most minute details of our thoughts and affections, which means that we cannot think or intend anything on our own."

~Emanuel Swedenborg, *Divine Providence* §287

Convention Children's Program

I am so excited to announce that we've got a great children's program lined up for this summer's annual Convention in Long Beach, California. Youth ages 5–12 are encouraged to attend, and great subsidies are available to help families manage the cost. We realize that this Convention is a very expensive trip for most families and we're working hard to find ways to help as many children as possible to attend. The registration fee has been waived, room and board are discounted to half the adult rate, and for those traveling from a distance, scholarship funds are available to pay for half of the child's airfare (up to \$300). We are blessed to have Holly Bauer lead the children's program this year. With a theme of *The Secret Life of Seeds*, the youth will follow the journey of a seed as it germinates, grows, and develops into a plant, flowers, and eventually



Calling All Splat!

Tweens ages 10 – 13

As Covid restrictions begin to ease up and people slowly and cautiously begin to gather together in-person once again, it's time to start to consider beginning our pre-teen retreats for ages 10–13. This age group, called SPLATz (Super-Powered Lovable Almost Teens), hasn't met in-person for a retreat since October 2019! Many of the youth from that retreat have aged out of Splat and into our teen program, the SCYL (Swedenborgian Church Youth League). I've kept up with some of the children who have grown into the SPLATz group but it is impossible for me to keep track of all of these children in our church family. So, it's important and necessary for me

to try to locate where our pre-teen youth might be to see if we have enough kids, staff, and interest to hold a retreat in your area. Here, I ask for help. If you know of any youth in this 10–13 year old range—whether they are your children, grandchildren, or church family friends—please send me an email at kfekete@hotmail.com or by phone at 802.345.0169 to let me know. I love to plan and staff Splat retreats, and I have a travel budget that allows me to help host these events. I am praying that our pandemic crisis continues to improve, and I am hopeful that we can find enough youth for our SPLATz to be able to gather again soon. Thanks for your help! 📧

produces fruit with seeds of its own. Swedenborgian imagery and correspondences will bring spiritual life and relevancy to this program so the children can learn important concepts and lessons along the way. The children's program will parallel the overarching theme of Convention *The Tree of Life*:

Into the Garden. We're so excited to have children attend Convention as our spiritual community is not complete without them! Contact Kurt Fekete at kfekete@hotmail.com or 802.345.0169 if you would like further information. We would love to see you at Convention 2022! 📧

Spirit in Action: Civic Engagement and Religious Life

Session Four: How do I raise my voice? Where do I go from here?

Monday, April 25, 7:30 – 9:00 PM ET

We all want to help our neighbor and help make the world a better place through useful action. But sometimes it is hard to know how to have a meaningful impact. Ours is a tradition that encourages people of faith to be active and conscientious citizens. We will explore this aspect of the Swedenborgian tradition as well as concrete ways to be civically engaged in a five-part series from January through May.

Join us for the fourth installment:

How do I raise my voice? Where do I go from here?

(Led by the Friends Committee on National Legislation)

- What does success look like?
- Build meaningful partnerships for advocacy in my community.
- Lift up these issues in the media.

This is a *non-partisan* event series, designed to support civic action generally, without preference to specific issues. 📧

**Save the Dates for the
Upcoming Installments
of this Series:**

**April 25,
and May 23**

Register here: <https://tinyurl.com/3athwm9a>

Or contact Rev. Shada Sullivan at
revshada@gmail.com

Passages

Deaths

Rev. F. Robert Tafel, 83, of Needham, Massachusetts, died February 12, 2022, after a long illness. Bob Tafel graduated from Illinois Tech,



New Church Theological School, and Andover Newton Theological Seminary. He served the Swedenborgian Church for fifty-four years. After Washington D.C., he came to Swedenborg Chapel in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and was the current pastor at Church of the Open Word in Newtonville, Massachusetts. His unpublished writings reconcile the Old and New Testaments with Swedenborgian theology in a worship and teaching group participation format. His kindness and sense of humor helped to brighten many tense moments; he was a friend to us all; we can carry on what he brought to the world. He is survived by his daughter Kathy Tafel; and granddaughter Tesla Skye Krech of Berlin, Germany; his daughter Rev. Jenn Tafel of Lansing, Michigan; and his wife Gretchen. A Celebration of His Life and Memorial Service is planned for Saturday, May 14 at 1:00 PM ET at the Swedenborg Chapel in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

A remembrance and prayer from longtime colleague and friend, Rev. Donna Keane

Rev. F. Bob Tafel passed into the spiritual world in February having completed a long and eventful ministry for the Swedenborgian Church. He was active in the leadership of the Massachusetts New Church Association, serving as Vice President and President for several years. He was a valued

minister at the Cambridge Church and then at the Newtonville Church. He was blessed with a good sense of humor and a wry outlook on many of life's idiosyncrasies. His passing came as a release from several years of struggles with many medical issues and we celebrate his beginnings of his new spiritual life without pain. He will be missed by all in Massachusetts, and we pray for his family and friends as they move into the future.

Merciful God, you strengthen us by your love and wisdom. Thank you for F. Bob and his presence in our lives. Thank you for the days of health and well-being and for your presence through the days of illness. Receive your servant into your arms with mercy and bless him with everlasting peace. Through Jesus Christ our Lord we pray. Amen.

Elsie (Lisa) Reddekopp, 103, transitioned to the heavenly world on February 13, 2022.



My mother was not born a Swedenborgian. She grew up in the Lutheran faith, attending church regularly. But she always had questions, and the minister could not answer them for her. Leaving her small village in Saskatchewan in her late teens, by her early twenties she made her way, eventually, to the big city of Calgary, Alberta. There she met a young man, a friend of her roommate's, who started telling her about Emanuel Swedenborg and the New Church. Things started falling in place for her. And of course, the icing on the cake was that she married this young man named, Erwin D. Reddekopp.

They started their married life living in dad's home hamlet of Sunnyslope, Alberta, with dad farming, truck driving, selling Fuller brushes—whatever he could find to provide for his family. But his religion was what was most important. He was already doing Sunday services, but he wanted to do more.

In 1947, mom and dad packed up their two young children and drove approximately 2600 miles from Sunnyslope to Newton, Massachusetts, to attend theological school for a year. During that time, mom and dad had their third child. Home and a missionary ministry were waiting for them in 1948 doing a reverse trip with diapers drying out the window of their vehicle. This was the start of their adventure in ministry.

First stop was in Winnipeg, Manitoba, for a couple of years. Mom opened her house to the children of Swedenborgians as well as neighborhood kids, teaching them Sunday School lessons. Next was Yorkton, Saskatchewan, where she once more taught Sunday school. During this time dad was like a circuit minister, going to various small groups of New Church people in both provinces.

Next posting was in Edmonton, Alberta. Rev. Pete Peters had been in Edmonton for some time, but dad took over when Rev. Peters decided to leave. Dad still did some traveling, but primarily ministered to the Edmonton folk. Again, Sunday school in our home, Mom playing piano and teaching.

After being there for a few years, dad thought it was time to build a church instead of continuing to preach in the funeral home where they had been meeting for many years. The bulk of the congregation were seniors, but serendipity brought some younger members

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Swedenborg's Awakening

Continued from page 41


like the sky on a mountain at a higher altitude, with clouds of thought passing below, our sages tell us that spending time with this openness and peace at the root of consciousness opens up a realm of experience, love, peace, and joy, unimaginable. As with Moses and the Israelites, coming into a reverent awareness and receptivity toward the burning bush within leads to freedom and salvation from our oppressive mental states. All of this seems to have been true for our favorite mystic, Emanuel Swedenborg.

In his theological writings, Swedenborg explains his belief that it is our deep sense of a self-powered personhood and its accompanying selfishness that are at the root of evil and destructive thoughts and actions. He writes that heaven's angels are people who have died that know and perceive that everything they have is from God, allowing this centeredness on God's light of wisdom and love to direct their path while having a deepening sense of an all-connected self in the diversity and unity of heaven and God's light. It makes sense that the part of our awareness that exists before any thought or even idea of who we are is more fundamentally rooted in the Divine One (known by many names) than anything that falls below it. This rootedness in the conscious light of love and wisdom is so intrinsic to our lives we often miss how empowering coming to know it better can be.

When we're caught up in our judgmental, ruminating, yearning, and overly analytical mind, we are centering from a place of division and actively identifying with our thoughts, bodies, and idea of self. These meditative inquiries help to bring awareness of something deeper than our always changing thoughts and even our mind's conviction that it just *doesn't* or

can't understand this. Our always stable, perceptive seat of self has no fleeting, shallow opinion about things in the way our minds do, which is why it can be shared between all beings as perceptivity itself, no matter their makeup, heavenly or hellish. And yet, it is the heavenly that is closer to it in appearance and that it more obviously empowers into peace, as the heavenly are open to a lived awareness of this open, loving, peaceful space—the root of all being, the great “I am that is I am.”

Our own sense of “I am” is typically bogged down by a subtle belief that we are a certain form, either mental or physical, historical and limited (“I am this and this and not that”). In Swedenborg's inquiry of the seat of the soul, he must have quickly known to dispel any notion that we fundamentally are what falls beneath our perception and what is always changeable: such as our idea of ourselves and our bodies. Indeed, his belief in angels and a life after death even before his visions would have informed this as well, and so in this critical reflection he would have moved higher and higher on the mountain of consciousness, striving to discern its highest peak within. And perhaps, as Rev. Dr. George Dole stated, the crisis of not having an answer that can be put into words spurred him on, with our exploration concluding that it was just this space of transcendence of words that woke Swedenborg up to the truth of the transcendent Word and the burning bush at the root of all freedom.

A video version of this message is available on Spiritual Sunshine's website at SwedenborgianCommunity.org. 


Rev. Cory Coberforward is the Swedenborgian minister for the Church of the Good Shepherd in Kitchener, Ontario and Spiritual Sunshine: A Swedenborgian Community Online. Born and raised in the mid-West U.S., he's enjoying life in community in Canada with his wife Alyssa.

Black History Month

Continued from page 40

walked past this church for years but never felt invited in.” As our group seeks to become an inclusive place for all people on a spiritual journey, we've made a special outreach to the Black community.

Every church has a history of excellent and flawed efforts regarding racism. We've been inspired by the early leaders by delving into ours, and we seek now to live into their legacy. We are also aware of the years of abandonment and silence. Only by confronting this past can we begin to live into the present as a radically inclusive church of all people that is willing to host the tough conversation on the impact of the sin of racism.

We encourage all churches to use Black History Month as their opportunity to dig deeper to see what can be celebrated and what must be confessed. Only when we truly understand this past can we engage in our present to build a more inclusive future. 



Rev. Rich Tafel (pictured with Shalonda Ingram) is deeply involved in the intersection of faith and the public square. He has been the pastor of the Church of the Holy City in Washington, D.C. for the past six years.

 **Spiritual
Sunshine**
A Swedenborgian Community Online

With broadcasts and written messages most weeks, *Spiritual Sunshine: A Swedenborgian Community Online* is your interfaith-Swedenborgian community—with a presence on YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, and your favorite podcasting platform. Join us as we seek to empower awareness of and connection to the spiritual sunlight from Divinity within all of us.


Passages

Continued from page 44

in to worship. They too, shared the vision of a church building of their own. In 1959, the first wedding was held in the new building. Before that, in preparation for this new beginning, we moved to a brand-new neighborhood, only a couple of blocks from where the church was to be built. Dad made the rounds to hundreds of residents in this new community, where houses were still being built. Soon the basement of our home was filled with Sunday school students and various activities.

Although this is a memorial for my mother it is necessary to include my dad because mom was such an integral part of their ministry. It was, in essence, a very successful team effort. When we left Edmonton for Detroit there were over 100 Sunday school pupils, a Men's club, Women's Auxiliary, Cubs, Scouts, Girl Guides, and Youth League—to name a few.

We left in 1963 for Detroit, Michigan, where mom and dad remained until 1970. They then moved to San Francisco where mom continued her activities, always making people feel welcome. She would invite friends and parishioners for coffee, or coffee and dessert, or dinner. There was always a bed for anyone who needed it. She worked tirelessly for her church.

During all this time she served on various boards for Convention. When they retired to Kelowna, British Columbia in 1980, she held positions on the Western Canada Conference Board. But wait—there's more—once again she was teaching Sunday school in her home. Elsie, or Lisa to some, lived a long and useful life. As a plaque in her home read: "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Joshua 24:15 —*Sharon Williams* 


The Swedenborg Foundation is Recruiting a Permanent CEO

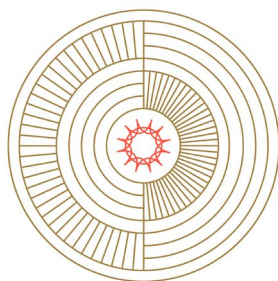
After a time of transition, the Swedenborg Foundation seeks a nonprofit business leader skilled in driving organizational success and empowering high performing staff. Reporting to the Board of Directors, the CEO will have overall management responsibility for a growing, impactful organization with a current investment portfolio of \$20 million, annual expense budget of \$3 million and twenty employees.

Combining inspirational leadership and sophisticated management abilities, the CEO will advance the organization in terms of culture, capability, processes, and impact. While working closely with the organization's executive team, the CEO will inspire innovation, and ensure that the organization is continually well-equipped to advance its mission "to foster an affirmative, informed, and increasingly

broad engagement with the theological message disclosed by Emanuel Swedenborg."

The Swedenborg Foundation is an independent, educational US-based nonprofit that serves to publish, preserve, and promote the life-guiding principles of eighteenth-century spiritual world explorer Emanuel Swedenborg. www.swedenborg.com

The Foundation is actively seeking candidates during April and early May. The application deadline is May 16, 2022. We plan a hiring decision in June 2022 for a start date in July 2022. The Foundation's offices are in the greater Philadelphia area; the CEO can work remotely for a good portion of their time; the CEO position is either full-time or three-quarters. For more information, please email ceosearch@swedenborg.com with the subject line "CEO position." 



Swedenborg Foundation

Get the Messenger by mail

US Address – \$25/year

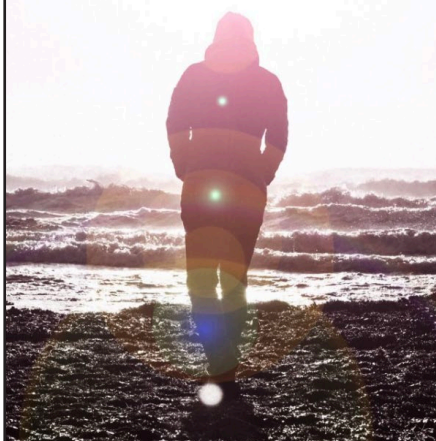
Canada Address – \$30/year

Other Address – \$40/year

Visit the website for details or to subscribe to the free online version of *the Messenger*:

Swedenborg.org/news-announcements/newsletter-the-messenger

What's Happening



Our Daily Bread at [SpiritualQuesters.org](https://www.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.



Did you know the Swedenborgian Church of North America has a YouTube channel? Virtual content that has been created, Convention and the Swedenborgians in Action Against Racism program, can be found here for viewing at anytime! **Click the YouTube logo above to subscribe!**



NEW! Follow *the Messenger* on Instagram!

Church Calendar

- **May 27–30, 2022:** SCYL Memorial Day Retreat, Allenton, MI
- **June 25–29, 2022:** Annual Convention, Long Beach, CA
- **July 23–31, 2022:** Almont Summer School, Allenton, MI
- **July 30–August 14, 2022:** Fryeburg New Church Assembly, Fryeburg, ME

SWEDENBORGIANS IN ACTION

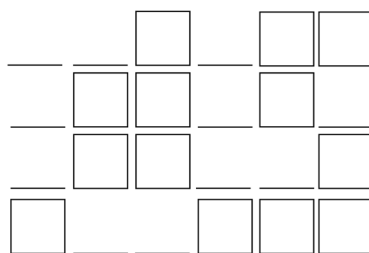


AGAINST RACISM

Swedenborgians in Action Against Racism

SAAR has a biweekly email newsletter that provides education around issues central to antiracism, ideas for actions to take, and inspiration to keep at it long-term. Email Rev. Shada Sullivan, revshada@gmail.com to join the email list.

Previous issues of the SAAR Newsletter can be found on our website: [swedenborg.org/community/diversity-equity-inclusion/swedenborgians-in-action-against-racism/](https://www.swedenborg.org/community/diversity-equity-inclusion/swedenborgians-in-action-against-racism/)



N P S I R G
S S O E N A
T T H C A A
I C E H A D N

The new hybrid rose bushes were planted directly:

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

Answers to the March Jumble:

Spring, Lilies, Ladybug, Harvest

*I prefer to do my shopping at 11:00 AM because I can typically find:
"Daylight Savings"*

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.

Swedenborgian Church Youth League

Apples and Oranges: The Quest for Common Ground

SCYL Memorial Day Teen Retreat for ages 13 – 20
Almont New Church Assembly in Allenton, Michigan
Friday, May 27 at 7:00 PM ET – Monday, May 30 at 10:00 AM ET

At our retreats we offer life skills and spiritual sessions based on the principles of the Swedenborgian Church. We strive for a safe, secure, and inclusive environment to discuss and share relevant and meaningful ideas that help with challenges youth face today. We work, play, craft, and learn together as a community. We have fun! This year's theme is Apples and Oranges: The Quest for Common Ground. We all know that we live in a very divisive world. It seems everyone is taking sides and fighting. This retreat will help us discover ways to find common ground and peace amid the division. I'm sure we'll all benefit from the lively discussions and activities.

Everyone attending this retreat must be fully vaccinated for COVID-19. We will take extra care to follow all established C.D.C. guidelines for hosting an overnight event.

The cost is \$75 with a household maximum of \$150. Cash or check

payable to ANCA should be brought to the retreat. Assistance is available with the cost.

Bring a sleeping bag (if you are not flying), PJs, towel, personal items, instruments, and a friend. See you there!

For more information, please call or text youth director, Kurt Fekete, at 802.345.0169 or email kfekete@hotmail.com. We also have a private [Facebook Group](#) that parents may ask to join for updated information. 📱

