

THE MESSENGER

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CHAPLAINCY OFFERS INSPIRING ALTERNATIVES IN MINISTRY

Francesca McCrossan

Serving as an ordained chaplain is a rapidly growing vocational direction that offers rewarding opportunities for ministry beyond the local church. Increasingly, clergypersons are working as pastors and counselors in settings outside traditional church walls—in hospitals, hospices, the military, airports, and in large corporations.

The advantages of chaplaincy ministry are many. Some who feel called to serve God do not always see themselves suited to the particular challenges of parish ministries. Swedenborgian ministers equipped with an accredited Master of Divinity degree are discovering that many organizations need clergy trained to provide quality pastoral presence to people in various situations of stress. Chaplaincy ministry for a Swedenborgian clergyperson offers a career path that does not rely on denominational funding or constant outreach to find people to whom to minister. Chaplaincy ministry comes with a salary and with a caseload of people to serve.

This career direction appeals to those who may feel called to serve God as a Swedenborgian, but who have not felt traditional parish ministry to be the place where their talent could best be used. You can enter seminary at the Swedenborgian House of Studies at

Pacific School of Religion with the goal of becoming an ordained chaplain qualified to serve in settings such as hospitals, hospices, prisons, the military, or the corporate world. While studying you can prepare for chaplaincy while becoming grounded in the areas of competency basic to all forms of ministry—biblical studies, theology and ethics, for example.

Swedenborgian seminarians who wish to pursue chaplaincy ministry design a course of study to include field education (a nine-month experience) in a setting other than a parish church, choose an accredited CPE (Clinical Pastoral Education) program to begin their training and fulfill one of their ordination requirements, and weight their coursework towards pastoral care and counseling.

Swedenborgian Ministers Who Are Doing It Now

“Walk Beside Them—Not In Front Or Behind”



Rev. Jane Siebert

Rev. Jane Siebert, of Pretty Prairie, Kansas is a part-time chaplain at Wesley Medical Center, a 700 bed level 1

trauma center in Wichita. Jane recalls, “My call was to ministry. For ordination I was required to take one unit of CPE. During this first unit I found a personal affinity for chaplaincy. I’m a pharmacist,

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Celebrations

The Lansing Swedenborgian Church held its first official congregational meeting on January 21, 2007. The newly elected board includes President Dave Vigas, Secretary-Treasurer Rose Backman, and Trustees Fawn Lange and Betsy Lau.

The Wilmington, Delaware Church of the Holy City, celebrating its 150th year, was featured in the January 27, 2007 *Delaware News Journal* (www.delawareonline.com). Rev. Randy Laakko and Rev. Sage Currie were interviewed about the church and its history. Rev. Sage Currie is working part time with the society. ☩

IN THIS ISSUE:

Elders Porch Project: Collecting Our Wisdom
Tell Me a Story: The Power of the Narrative In New Church Theology
In Company With Angels Makes Its Debut • Wayfarers Chapel Celebrates New Book

Herb Ziegler, guest editor



Some of my fondest childhood memories are from summer stays with my grandparents in

Elwood City, Pennsylvania. In those days, when no one had air conditioning and the house was a hot oven by late afternoon, everyone retreated to the front porch after an early supper to while away the evening on wicker chairs, a glider, and wide steps while talking, singing and laughing. Sometimes the focus was on we children, and we enjoyed the attention, but often the adults talked among themselves and we listened while we played. Sometimes it was gossip or family news, but often it was stories of extended family and ancestors—funny or sad, remarkable or prosaic, rambling or pointed. We children loved the stories. We didn't always pay attention, but the stories became part of the fabric of our experience.

Stories have amazing power to entertain, to connect, to interpret, and to educate. A good story engages us by enveloping us in a new and interesting world of experience where we become emotionally involved. A good story contains a narrative line, interesting and unsuspected information, personal involvement and revelation.

But the profound impact of a story derives from the movement it portrays, the resolution of a

problem or the completion of a circle through insights or emotional or spiritual growth of the protagonist. By identifying with the story and the protagonist's experience of growth, revelation or understanding, we, as listeners, share in that experience.

All religions rely on the power of stories to teach their history and meaning and to provide avenues for the spiritual growth of believers. The Bible, after all, is mostly a collection of stories. Think back to the farthest reaches of your childhood, and what you find in those inchoate memories are the sharp outlines of stories—stories told and read to you, family stories revealed in the happy glow of family gatherings, Sunday school stories, and stories we made up for ourselves and each other.

Human culture lives and is passed down through stories. Literature and history began as stories. Homer's stories were embodiments of the lives and ideals of his culture. They are literature, history, spiritual journey, myth and revelation magnificently combined.

Swedenborgians have a particular affinity for stories. *Heaven and Hell* would not have had its impact on Christian thinkers nor its continuing allure for us had it not been a collection of stories. Swedenborg's expositions come alive with his "memorable relations."

In this issue of *The Messenger* stories emerge as a theme. Rebecca Esterson's article about the Elder Porch project shows us how one society is archiving the wisdom of its elders through their stories. Rev. Andy Stinson explores the essence of spiritual existence through stories. Francesca

McCossan explains chaplaincy as vocation through the stories of four ministers who have taken that path. A new book tells the story of Wayfarers Chapel. A new exhibit of Temonos' angel windows tells two stories—the story of the worldwide church represented by the seven angels and the story of they windows' journey to Temenos. Rev. Renee Machiniak shares a powerful story of personal discovery at an Annual Convention. As you read you might marvel at how our own stories intertwine and resonate with these.

Thank you reader, and thanks to the contributors to this issue of *The Messenger*, the Communications Support Unit and Patte LeVan for this opportunity to be guest editor. I hope your experience reading it is as rewarding as was mine in producing it.

Herb Ziegler is a member of the Cambridge Society and General Council, and a Trustee of SHS. ☩

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Chaplaincy Offers Inspiring Alternatives in Ministry

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and the connection with my medical background and hospital chaplaincy was a natural for me."

Jane has created a formula that could work well for many Swedenborgians serving a small parish: doing both part time. "I like the synergy with chaplaincy and parish ministry. I use illustrations from chaplaincy in my sermons and I use my parish experience to offer pastoral care in the hospital. For me it is a good balance—a both/and rather than an either/or."

Reflecting on her Swedenborgian identity and orientation as a hospital chaplain, she says, "Swedenborgian theology is a perfect fit for this ministry. I know that I have only a perception of ultimate truth, and I try to be a ready learner to expand and enhance the truth as I know it. I do not judge another's truth claims. My goal is to listen, to

reflect with them, to offer compassion and to assist them during their time in the hospital.

Swedenborgian theology is one of inclusion. We are Christian, and we accept that the Lord has made provision for a variety of paths to God." This fits nicely with the goal of chaplaincy in its widest sense.

Jane continues, "As chaplains we are trained to meet people where they are on their spiritual journey. We are to serve them in a non-judgmental and non-confrontational manner. We walk beside them—not in front or behind—as a non-anxious presence."

"The Perfect Ministry for Swedenborgians"

Rev. Kathy Speas followed a chaplaincy path after graduating in SHS's first class. She

chose hospice chaplaincy at Hospice by the Bay in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Kathy feels that Swedenborgians are well suited for hospice chaplaincy because of their focus on a connection between the world we see and world we don't see. "Swedenborgianism also offers such a healing and positive approach to Christianity. Its theological orientation can be very helpful to people who have been Christians all their lives and now, nearing their death, are facing fears of a hell where they must eternally pay for their sins. Sharing with them Swedenborg's eternal cycle of regeneration as the truth, rather than death as a judgment event gives them an opportunity for comfort and peace."



Rev. Kathy Speas

Kathy was drawn to chaplaincy because of a sense that spirituality was emerging from the traditional structure of "church" into other parts of life. She notes, "Lots of people are spiritual, not religious ('I don't want to see a chaplain; I'm culturally Jewish')." The work of a chaplain with people in hospice in particular regularly reflects this. Kathy notes, "Really what Swedenborg was talking about is how we take spirituality beyond church walls." That allows her to cross many lines of traditions and beliefs and take a conversation about death and dying, or the basic elements of a lived life, to the next level.

She continues, "Swedenborg's faith that we all continue to move closer to God for all eternity is very comforting to them. The dying are not in need of an intellectual [understanding] of the Bible." As a hospice chaplain, Kathy is more focused on pastoral uses of the Bible; repeating the 23rd Psalm and the comforting words from Romans. And through this work, she continues her own personal journey because she can see, sometimes quite literally, the reality of the Word becoming flesh and dwelling among us.

"Part of the Grand Man"

Rev. Andy Stinson had been in the U.S. Army for 10 years before he discerned his call to chaplaincy. In a recent

discussion he noted, "If you want to work with folk in crisis...there is no greater place than in military chaplaincy. It can be hard physical



Rev. Andy Stinson

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Chaplaincy Offers Inspiring Alternatives in Ministry

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work with men and women from a largely blue-collar background." He continued, "You become intimately part of hundreds of people's lives, and will do more counseling in a week than others do in a year. There are 223 different faith groups represented in both the ranks and the clergy."

Andy sees military chaplaincy as an almost perfect path because Swedenborgians truly understand the value and importance of ecumenical and interfaith ministry. "It is dear and core to our hearts to nurture the church inside everyone no matter their faith."

Andy's daily ministry included about 500 people in the building where he worked. He tried to see them everyday to at least say hello and be available. "Someone would always talk with you and need prayer." The intense nature of human experience in wartime brings with it an ongoing and incredible need for pastoral care in the military. "There is measureless human pain in the military right now; deployments, post traumatic stress disorder, loss, grief—it's all there."

He noted another important reason for having a Swedenborgian presence in the military, "Liberal theological traditions have all but abandoned the military chaplaincy and...their voice is so needed." Andy found the experience of being a liberal in uniform very powerful. He felt solidly positioned to work with soldiers because they could see that he was not working from a moralist and judgmental position. He socialized with his military flock in the way some other chaplains were not able to. "You can get gritty the way Jesus got gritty and participate

where they are. Our faith tradition bridges a huge gap; it's theologically sound but human as well." This theological soundness underpinned a strong satisfaction in his interactions with other chaplains and also resonated with his superiors who came to respect both him and the tradition.

Of course, the military's structure and culture won't appeal to everyone and does require joining either the reserves or the active duty forces. But it is important to note that military chaplains do not carry a weapon. "If you really want to challenge and experience what it is to be a part of the Grand Man, the entire mosaic of faith traditions in the US and globally, there is no greater place to do that than the military chaplaincy."

"An Environment That Challenges Your World View."

Rev. Susan Turley is a CPE Supervisor, at the Palo Alto VA Hospital, in Palo Alto, California. Sue found herself drawn to chaplaincy in part by a process of elimination.

Her current career, as a CPE supervisor, marries three of her strongest loves—counseling, ministry and education. As a seminary student, she loved the CPE process. At the time, she was even encouraged to train as a supervisor, but she wanted more life experience before she began that work. "CPE and chaplaincy require first and foremost a deep pastoral heart ... tenacity and toughness, and a love for the work." Eventually, she realized that the work of a CPE supervisor was the logical conclusion to, and confluence of, her loves of ministry, education and counseling. CPE supervisors are both educator and chaplain, responsible for oversight

of CPE interns and residents who train in their programs. Sue likes working with CPE students and focusing on their inner life and growth, a strong focus of a supervisor's work. She wanted to move out of the isolation that a parish minister can sometimes feel, and engage in an interfaith and collegial environment. As a CPE supervisor she could become part of a larger ecumenical team, working with colleagues to learn from and be accountable with.

Her work at the Palo Alto VA hospital brings her all those opportunities and challenges. Sue explains, "Patients come here for life, and their families come with them. The staff here is highly educated and committed, loyal, dedicated, collaborative. The work done here is cutting edge—research and treatment—because of the severity and variety of the injuries we must treat. And soldiers are taught to use chaplains from the moment they enter the service, so we're very integrated into the life of the soldiers and their families." Since Swedenborgianism teaches respect for an interfaith world and the human journey within it, the teachings work very well in military culture. And the theology is used in the service of others without talking doctrine. As a Swedenborgian chaplain, Sue listens, respects their point of view, and ministers to them from their own world.

"Swedenborgianism renders itself to that very easily. It brings a certain perspective on life, death, regeneration, transition, and the dying process. It's a very grounding ministry [set] into a doctrinal framework that teaches how to be present for another person in their own theology—it's non-judgmental, compassionate and without struggle. Swedenborg asks us to

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Chaplaincy Offers Inspiring Alternatives in Ministry

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step into another world and allow it to have an impact on your life that is life altering. Isolation reduces a person's ability to really absorb the suffering of another. Humans all live in a certain amount of isolation *because* they are human. Chaplaincy requires a commitment to be intimately involved with the human experience every day."

One Student's Journey: "So Different From Seminary Teaching Model"



Rev. Sage Currie

Rev. Sage Currie enjoyed her CPE unit as a student. She liked the process, especially because it

included so many components of the minister's tool kit—psychology, religion, personal growth and transformation. She did her work at a private hospital in San Francisco that is known for its integrative medicine approach.

After graduation and ordination, Sage decided to enter the hospital's CPE Residency program, which included earning a Certificate in Integrative Medicine along with four units of CPE credit. As is typical, it was a year-long, full-time program that included a stipend. Along with their workday routine, residents were on an on-call rotation. A typical week was structured to include work on the hospital floors interacting with both patients and staff, meeting time with the entire group of residents and their supervisor, reflective writing sessions and

other structured learning opportunities.

As a Swedenborgian, Sage felt well suited to the cultural edict to learn to effectively minister in an interfaith setting. "Being Swedenborgian and always being conscious of interfaith realities helped me function. Theologically there is a fit between focus on regeneration and life process and how God interacts and unfolds. You are hearing people's life stories and this really fits in with the goal of the church to help them feel loved and move toward God's love."

As a resident, Sage realized how much learning happened over time, and that a summer internship could be too short to truly understand how the process unfolds. In the summer intensive setting, Sage noted, "The group process sometimes feels like you are constantly being challenged. It can be overwhelming." In the longer process of the residency, however, Sage learned to be challenged and yet stay true to her own calling and connection to God. The CPE learning process is, "...so different from the seminary teaching model...it's a growth model and the goal is to learn about yourself. We are all wounded healers, and we struggle to be conscious and present...with others who are wounded."

Taking the First Step

Our hope in sharing these visions of ministry is two-fold. We want people in the church to know about the numerous ways our Swedenborgian ministers can serve in the world and second, we want to reach out to those who have wondered about a call to ministry for themselves, but who have not felt called to congregational minis-

try. The Pacific School of Religion hosts a weekend every semester for people to come to the campus and have a chance to examine the seminary program and consider the path of ministry from many angles. This is a time to get better acquainted with the Swedenborgian program as well. The Swedenborgian House of Studies assists prospective students in attending these Ministry as Vocation (MAV) weekends. Pacific School of Religion is the only seminary in the country that incorporates Swedenborgian coursework fully into its accredited degree programs. Please feel free to visit our website, www.shs.psr.edu, give us a call at 510.849.8228 or come visit us. We're always delighted to discuss our program and talk about the many opportunities it provides to explore a fulfilling career in the ministry.

Francesca M. McCrossan is Academic Affairs Associate and Office Manager for the Swedenborgian House of Studies. ☩

Important Church Dates 2007

April 13-14, 2007
SHS Board of Trustees, Berkeley, CA

April 24-26, 2007
Committee on Admission into the Ministry (CAM), PSR/SHS, Berkeley, CA

May 5, 2007
Investment Committee.
Central Office, Newton, MA

May 18-20, 2007
Swedenborg Foundation Board meeting, West Chester, PA

June 24-July 2, 2007
Convention 2007, Hope College, Holland, Michigan ☩

Elders Porch Project: Collecting Our Wisdom

Rebecca Esterson

For from earliest childhood to extreme old age a person passes inwardly through a number of states, which are those of understanding (or intelligence) and wisdom....The fourth or last state lasts from the sixtieth year onwards, which is a state of wisdom and of innocence within wisdom...which exists when a person is no longer concerned just to gain an understanding of truths and forms of good, but is concerned to make them part of his will and life; for then the person has wisdom....So it is that this state is also one of innocence within wisdom. From the way in which these states follow one another the person possessing wisdom can also see the marvels of Divine Providence, namely these: An earlier state serves as the basis for those following on continuously; and, The opening up or unclosing of inner levels advances in consecutive stages from the outermost right through to the inmost ones, till at length they have been so opened up that what existed initially on outermost levels—that is to say, ignorance and innocence—also exists finally on inmost levels. For anyone who knows that by himself he is ignorant of everything and that whatever he knows is derived from the Lord has the ignorance of wisdom and also the innocence of wisdom within him.

Arcana Coelesta 10225

What would we give to hear the voices of church ancestors whose pictures hang on our walls and whose names adorn our bookshelves? How would they give speech to the lessons of their lives? What would the tone of their voice be as they speak about their love for their church, or the

adventures of their childhood? How would the actual sound of their words differ from our inherited imaginings of them? To have the treasure of an audio recording of those who inhabited our sanctuaries before us would truly be magical. While those voices are lost to us in the natural world, this is something we can provide for future generations.

The Cambridge Society has initiated a project it is calling Elders Porch to digitally record the oral stories of the senior members of our congregation. The term “elders porch” is borrowed from a series of sessions held at General Church conferences in Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania, where people are given a chance to sit in session with older participants and ask them questions, hear their stories or seek advice. As conference organizer Lori Odhner told me, the term reflects “the visiting on the porch scenario that actually happened a generation or two ago.” It brings to mind images of hospitality, familial love, respect and the passing on of knowledge and tradition.

Rather than using a conference setting to give voice to our elders, we have chosen to record one-on-one interviews, modeled after the StoryCorps program created by the Library of Congress and heard on National Public Radio.

StoryCorp’s mission is “to inspire and enable people to record each others’ stories in sound.” People are invited to recording booths all over the country in pairs. One person interviews the other person for 40 minutes. The interviews can be about anything, but participants are encouraged to try and capture specific memories and stories as this is when people

come most alive. The stories are then kept at the Library of Congress, and once a week an interview is aired on the radio.

This simple form of communication can be deeply inspiring and effective. The sessions are structured enough so that the participants are clear on their roles, yet open enough to provide for a kind of intimacy that allows people to open up and speak about things they would otherwise not put words to. This format seems perfect for our community. It not only allows us to get to know and learn from the older members, but also to archive their voices and stories for future generations.

Inspired by the StoryCorps format, we have paired six members of our congregation who are over 80 years old, each with another member who arranges, conducts, and records an interview with them. Rev. Kevin Baxter has provided a mini-disk recorder that meets StoryCorps specifications for archival quality. We can send the recordings later to the Library of Congress, but they will go immediately into our church archives. In the meantime, each interviewer is charged with writing an article for the church newsletter based on the interview, in an “Elders Porch” column.

The interviewers have been provided a list of sample questions from the StoryCorps website, although they can bring their own questions or otherwise craft the interview to fit the person they are working with. Some of the questions provided are: Who was the most important person in your life? What was the most profound spiritual moment of your life? When in life have you felt most alone? How has your life been

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Tell Me a Story: The Power of the Narrative in New Church Theology

Andy Stinson

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and God was the Word. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life; and the life was the light of people. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father. John 1:1-4

The Power of Story

Nothing captures our imagination, our excitement or our attention the way a good story does. Whether it is the transporting power of *The Red Badge of Courage*, or a good yarn told in front of a fireplace with cocktails

or coffee, it is impossible to imagine the human experience without the narrative voice. The story is like gravity; we can argue, fight, debate against and deny its significance or affirm its grip on us, but either way it simply continues to be. It is impossible not to construct, with the action of our days, a narrative.

Story comprises the very building blocks of human relation and existence. Without it, we could not be human. Believing in God is not enough. Working for God is not enough. What God calls us to and evokes in us is that we exist in relationship. Great pictures and great art tell a story. In *The Hero With A Thousand Faces*, Joseph Campbell finds that the elements of the heroic journey are cross-cultural and that the fundamental

building blocks of that journey are in the form of story.

We know that to be human is to be a creator and teller of stories. How we do this—how we reveal our divine goodness and divine truth, what qualities we ascribe to it, what descriptors we use—is the way we reveal and live the life that God has granted us. Life is in the Living Word, and the Living Word is our story.

In the Beginning was the Word

The Bible is called many things. Some say it is a love letter from God, some say it is a divine guide book, some say it is an owners manual for living and some say it is literally the inerrant voice of God speaking to us. All of them speak of God's relationship with us. Yet, few emphasize as power-

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Elders Porch Project: Collecting Our Wisdom

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different than what you'd imagined? What advice do you have for young couples? What are your dreams for the children in your life?

In addition to preserving the voices of our community for future generations, the Elders Porch initiative has a more immediate goal. There is a wisdom in our community that awaits us. As the above passage from *Arcana Coelestia* states, there is a certain perspective on things that can only come with age. In order to plan wisely for the future of our church, we will do well to quiet down and listen to perhaps our greatest resource—those who have “the ignorance of wisdom and also the innocence of wisdom” within them. This was

made clear in one recent interview.

Rev. Sarah Buteux described her interview with senior member Marjorie Tusik as “delightful” and “so natural.”

Sarah was most impressed with the story of how Marjorie found the Swedenborgian church as a little girl, and was the only member of her family that showed any interest in it. As a child she attended services by herself while other family members went to different churches. Despite the various ways of expressing religious life in her family, the Swedenborgian church



Marjorie Tusik tells her story

always felt like home, and in every stage of her life she has found a way to stay connected to it. Reflecting on what she learned from the interview with Marjorie, Sarah said, “Our church might not be for everyone. But the church is so vital and precious for those who find their home here. It really is their place in the world.”

Excerpts and reflections from these interviews will be published in the Cambridge Society's newsletter, published semi-monthly, and is sent free to anyone who requests it (call 617.864.4552). Those interested in learning more about StoryCorps and its recommended format for interviewing, can visit the website at www.storycorps.net.

Rebecca Esterson is president of the Cambridge Society. ☒

Tell Me a Story: The Power of the Narrative in New Church Theology

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fully or as explicitly the importance of the narrative as does New Church theology.

Fundamental to the New Church understanding of the Bible is the biblical narrative. George Dole's *Promised Kingdom* outlines the narrative in the context of the human developmental process, which is a direct expression of New Church belief. For us, the Bible is the story of the Divine's relationship with us because it is God's journey with all of creation. On the outer level it is the simple story of God and the Israelites. On the macro level Bible is the account of God's relationship with epochs of creation. On the operational level the Bible is the story of Jesus' temptation, resurrection and overcoming of the hells for the entire universe. On the inner level Bible is the personal story of you and me as we journey through the same checkpoints of human development that Jesus did.

In *True Christian Religion* (TCR) Swedenborg clearly lays out the nature of the internal sense of the Word in the section on sacred scripture—that the layers of the Word from the literal, to the internal, to the inmost all refer to a story of God's relationship with his people, and that story is the Word. Swedenborg even goes so far as to say that the books of the Bible that contain an internal sense are those books that have to do with the story of the Israelites. Clearly, story is not simply a convenient way of organizing. It is fundamental to the very nature of both the creation and, particularly, to the Divine within creation.

Anyone who has been to a traditional New Church service

will hear it begun with these words, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God." As I have journeyed with my own faith, scripture that began as a sterile, distant description has become extremely personal. This simple phrase calls to me every time I hear it. It evokes the relationship that I have with Christ and my connection to God. It speaks to me in the most profound but basic way that it is my story that God desires for me to live out, that everything was created so that we might live out and tell our stories.

In the beginning was the Word— At the very start of everything there was the divine relationship with us, the story of God with the creation.

And the Word was with God— That story was a part of the divine. Christ's story of overcoming the hells and forging a new way of being with humanity happens with God as the operational and, more importantly, the relational force. God comes into the world to live out the divine story and thus sanctify the world.

And the Word was God— In the Christ the entire story of the divine exists. Christ's story is our story, as we are created in the divine image, and as we follow the divine template of the Word in our own lives we are following the same path as Jesus. The divine story is our story.

What we do, how we live, and how we understand and tell that to the world in the thousand small acts of our days is the manifestation of Christ in the world; it is the sacred story.

Our stories are as sacred as the Christ because they are Christ. This is not because we are gods, but because God has granted us the gift of living out of our own divine love and our own divine wisdom,

which flows into us from God. In TCR 263 Swedenborg writes, "Few people understand how the Word is the Lord. People think that the Lord is able to enlighten and teach us through the Word but we could not call him the Word on that account." It is our story that is our participation and relationship with the divine itself.

The Book of Life

It is impossible to have story without relationship. No thing or idea can supplant how important the people we love, and the people who love us, are in our lives. It is impossible to be in relationship without being engaged in a common narrative, a story. Story is the foundation of the human experience because being in relationship is the highest and most wonderful thing that God desires for us. Central to the Holy City in the book of Revelation is the Book of Life. It corresponds to the heaven that is within a person. Our relationship with the creation, with each person we meet and with the higher and lower parts of our own nature is the story of heaven itself.

We are being groomed for divine communities beyond this one. A story, unlike every other means of description, describes our relationship with other people, things, and events. The true divine story is that we have an eternity to tell our tale. We have adventures and wonders ahead that we cannot yet even imagine. The story that we begin in this life is simply prelude to the angel that we are to become in the next. Shakespeare's "the past is prologue" takes on a deeper, richer meaning when we understand this life is volume one of a story that will continue on into eternity.

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In Company With Angels Makes Its Debut

Susannah Currie

The Glencairn Museum in Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania hosted the debut of the exhibit *In Company with Angels* on Sunday, January 14 with over 150 donors, friends, guests and artists in attendance. Over a dozen members and friends of the Swedenborgian Church at Temenos, owner of the stained glass windows in the exhibit, were on hand for the dramatic unveiling.

After a short introduction and welcome by co-hosts Stephen Morley, Executive Director of the museum and Rev. Susannah Currie, pastor of the Swedenborgian Church at Temenos, the lights were dimmed and the windows were revealed as the beautiful original music, "Meditations on the Seven Angels," composed by Rev. Ken Turley, was played.



Rev. Susannah Currie at the *In Company with Angels* Exhibit at Glencairn Museum

This event was the culmination of a decades-long journey for revival of the extraordinary pieces depicting angels from the Bible.

The seven, eight-foot tall free-standing windows, created by Tiffany Studios in New York in 1903 and named "Angels Representing the Seven Churches," are at the heart of the "*In Company with Angels*" exhibit on display from January 20 through June 9.

The remarkable stained glass windows—showing the seven angels of the churches in Asia to whom letters are written in the Bible's Book of Revelation—haven't been seen together publicly for more than 40 years. Four of the panels were on display in April at nearby Bryn Athyn Cathedral, but all seven haven't been on view since they were removed from the Swedenborgian church

in Cincinnati, Ohio in the 1960s, when the church was demolished for highway construction and the windows packed away in crates.

Later, through donations from members of Convention across the continent, they were purchased for the Swedenborgian Church at Temenos in West Chester, Pennsylvania and stored.

In 2001, the windows were re-discovered. An anonymous dona-

(Continued on following page)

Tell Me a Story: The Power of the Narrative in New Church Theology

(Continued from previous page)

The Living Word: "...and the story was made flesh"

Section 261-263 of *True Christian Religion* is subtitled "While in the World, the Lord fulfilled everything in the Word..." There is nothing more personal, nothing more important, nothing more intimate than to know that whatever we go through, whatever the page in our book of life, God has been there and continues to be there with us in it.

Our call, our mandate, is to write the book of our own lives, bringing into the world the "Word made flesh." We are to give the

love and wisdom that is ours alone a living place in the world. We don't choose if the Word is with us, it simply is. The promise is that the love and wisdom that resides within us transforms the world when we permit our story, our promise, to become flesh.

The illusion is that we can hide from composing the pages of our lives, or that somehow the Word is not with us, that we do not have the ability to control what happens and so we can't write the story the way we would have it. And this is the illusion, because ours is not about crafting the events, but about crafting the story. Will it be a story of redemption or defeat, victory or sorrow, love or pain, hope or fear? We craft those words. We frame our experience.

The story collector Father Anthony de Mello spent his life as a Catholic priest collecting and editing stories and understanding their power in our lives. In a quotation credited to him, he says of the "story made flesh:"

"The Master gave His teaching in parables and stories, which His disciples listened to with pleasure, and occasional frustration, for they longed for something deeper. The Master was unmoved. To all their objections He would say, 'You have yet to understand that the shortest distance between a human being and Truth is a story.'"

Rev. Andy Stinson is pastor of the Washington, DC Church of the Holy City. ☛

Wayfarers Chapel Celebrates New Book

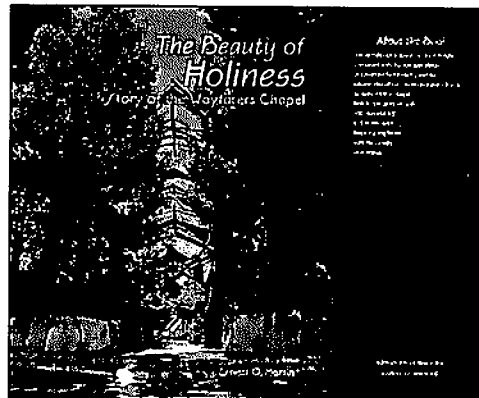
Liz Brown Swanson

The Wayfarers Chapel announces the publication of a special commemorative book, *The Beauty of Holiness: Story of the Wayfarers Chapel*. Former Wayfarers minister Rev. Ernest O. Martin wrote the 96-page hardcover, with more than 140 beautiful images.

"The story is about the architectural vision of Lloyd Wright, the spiritual vision of Emanuel Swedenborg and the perspective of the Swedenborgian Church which brought forth a chapel built to the glory of God with sun and light to free the spirit, inspiring wayfarers with the beauty of holiness," author Martin says. Martin, a fifth generation Swedenborgian, was minister at the Wayfarers in Rancho Palos Verdes, California from 1975-1984. He spent the past year writing the commemora-

tive book with the assistance of the Wayfarers Chapel administrator Rev. Harvey Tafel. Together they sifted through more than 1000 photographs, many of them rare.

The Beauty of Holiness shares the incredible story of the Chapel



dream and explores the Wayfarers 55-year history. For more than a half-century Wayfarers Chapel, a national memorial to Emanuel Swedenborg, has touched millions

of lives. The book sheds light on how renowned architect Lloyd Wright created a "glass church" and a garden oasis overlooking the Pacific Ocean.

According to Tafel, "The Wayfarers story is fascinating from its beginning in the 1920s through the selection of Lloyd Wright as the architect, and the concept of creating a sacred space within a tree chapel. The book examines the early years, the struggles that went on until the dedication in 1951. It shows what the ministry of Wayfarers is all about and looks at the Chapel's mission in the years to come."

With each passing year, more and more wayfarers are seeking out the Chapel for peace and spiritual growth. They come for worship services, weddings, baptisms and life celebrations.

(Continued on following page)

In Company With Angels Makes Its Debut

(Continued from previous page)

tion in 2004 inspired the *In Company with Angels* project, whose mission is to share the angel windows with the public. A museum exhibition, interactive website and contemplative DVD are envisioned. Since 2004, the project has raised more than \$125,000 to restore, promote and administer the effort.

Discovery of the windows has drawn national attention in art and glass publications, in a special presentation on ABC-TV and in a documentary film, "Following the Angels."

The administration of the project is being expanded through the formation of a non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation. The board seeks members with experience

and expertise in the following areas: history and art research, marketing, law and business, fundraising, website design, museum curating, video production, electronic communication and merchandising. Contact current board members at angels@temenosretreat.org to communicate your interest in this next phase of the journey of the "Angels."

In Company with Angels may be viewed in Glencairn's Great Hall for free Saturdays from 11 AM to 2:30 PM between January 20 and June 9, or by appointment weekdays as part of a tour. The 75-minute tours are \$7, \$6 for seniors, \$4 for students with I.D., and free for children five and under.

Glencairn Museum is located at 1001 Cathedral Road, Bryn Athyn. For information, call 267-502-2600 or visit www.glencairnmuseum.org.

Next on the calendar for the project is a multi-media presentation at West Chester University on June 21 at 7:30 PM. The journey of the windows will be presented in PowerPoint, and stained glass conservator Arthur Femenella will speak about the artistic and historical importance of these windows, describing the restoration processes in detail. For more information and tickets, visit www.wcupa.edu/visitingartists/perfAngels.asp

For general information about the project, and to sign up to receive email updates about the ongoing journey of *In Company with Angels*, visit www.incompanywithangels.org.

Rev. Susannah Currie is pastor of the Swedenborgian Church at Temenos. ☪

2006 SCYL Almont Winter Retreat

Sola
Thorhallsson

Even though I have attended only two Almont winter retreats in my leaguer days, I must say this one was a blast, even more fun than the last.

For all of you who didn't make it, you missed out on some serious fun.

This retreat's theme was "truth," which was a very interesting topic. Because it's a complex subject with many definitions, the ministers were left to whatever tangent they wanted to pursue. With such wonderful speakers as Rev. Kevin Baxter and Bill Baxter to bring new and fun ways to think about things, and Rev. Sage Currie, Rev. Junchol Lee, and Jenn Tafel to give their insight, the teen sessions were not boring in the least. Several craft and other group activities took place in which we all participated enthusiastically. For example, there was a paper bag activity that showed your outer self and your inner "true" self that everyone enjoyed. And, of course, there were the ever-present Star Trek vs. Star Wars allusions from Bill Baxter to keep us entertained.

This year's teen winter retreat was a success, and a fun one at that. All the teens that came were a lot of fun and we all got along well. If you couldn't make it this year, I suggest you make an effort to come next year.

Sola Thorhallsson is SCYL East and service officer. ☪



SCYL East and service officer Sola Thorhallsson

Visit Your New Church Without Leaving Your Home

Susan Wood

The Swedenborgian Community is the web-based congregation of the Swedenborgian Church. Our "church" features a new sermon each Sunday morning that you can either read or listen to, along with a scripture lesson and a reading from Swedenborg's writings. Accompanying music is available, completing the experience of attending church without ever leaving your house—a great option when you're snowed in.

What's that, you say? You're not home, but traveling abroad and miss the contact with your fellow Swedenborgians on Sunday morning? Well, tune in! We're available from any computer anywhere in the world. Several folks in our group from other parts of the world enjoy our discussions and chats, focusing on Swedenborgianism and its many aspects.

Our newest feature is a monthly focus on one of the other churches

in our denomination. Our initial feature is on the Church of the Holy City in Wilmington, Delaware. The article features photos of the church and the congregation and some of their projects, upcoming events and a quick link for emailing questions. If your church would like to be a featured congregation check out the website and send an email to Rev. Sage Currie.

We provide links to other Swedenborgian sites, including information on books, camps/retreat centers, churches and resources. We recently added a link to a seasonal digest of *Messenger* articles online.

Stop by for a visit—www.swedenborgiancommunity.org—and see what we have to offer. Donations can be made directly on the website, using PayPal or a credit card.

Susan Wood is on the board of the Swedenborg Community and secretary of General Council. ☪

Wayfarers Chapel Celebrates New Book

(Continued from previous page)

The book focuses on those celebrations and showcases the new visitors center, which opened in 2001.

The center welcomes thousands of visitors every month, and was built with the assistance of Lloyd Wright's son, Eric Lloyd Wright. Eric remains as a Chapel consultant, continuing the Wright family legacy started by his famous grandfather, Frank Lloyd Wright. On April 29, Eric will take part in a book signing at the Wayfarers Annual Art Show.

The limited-edition book preserves the Wayfarers history for generations to come. It is a treasured keepsake for everyone. *The Beauty of Holiness: Story of the Wayfarers Chapel* will be available in spring 2007 for \$39.95 plus tax and \$4.95 for shipping. For more information and to order your copy call the Wayfarers Chapel Visitors Center at 310-377-7919 ext 6. Visit the Chapel website at www.wayfarerschapel.org.

Liz Brown Swanson is public relations director at the Wayfarers Chapel. ☪

SCYL Elects New Officers at Almont Retreat

Kurt Feteke

At the Swedengorgian Church Youth League (SCYL) winter retreat at Almont (December 27–30) we experienced big changes, with three of the six elected representatives leaving their positions. We say farewell to 2006 officers Erika Penabaker, Alec Sheppard and Stephanie Wilson and league chaplain Rev. Kevin Baxter.

Erika proudly served the SCYL for five years, her last as president. She wrote and delivered an inspirational and heartfelt report at Convention. We will miss her as she departs the SCYL on her 19th birthday this year, but we know that Erika will certainly be an active and responsible adult leader in the church. We eagerly look forward to her future church leadership.

Alec and Stephanie each held their office for one year. Both of them turn 18 this year, completing their eligibility for league officer service. We are grateful for Alec and Stephanie's contributions to the league.

Rev. Kevin Baxter completed two years of service as league chaplain. Kevin has contributed greatly to the spiritual welfare of our church youth through his active and engaged participation in retreats, direction of Almont Summer Camp, attendance at the 2006 youth worker conference and spiritual articles in *Clear Blue Sky*. He will continue to support youth activities in the coming years and we are appreciative for his two terms as league chaplain.

Thank you Erika, Alec, Stephanie and Kevin for your outstanding and caring leadership in the SCYL.

We have a wonderful group of new officers this year. We welcome Ethan Turley as our new SCYL president. Ethan served as a special West officer liaison in 2005. He hails from Fryeburg, Maine where he is completing his last year of high school. Ethan has been involved with the church throughout his life. As a teenager he attended many retreats and conventions. He is an accomplished musician—last year he helped lead the convention music program. Ethan's experience, insight and maturity will help him be an excellent president. We look forward to his leadership.

We greet three first-time officers for 2007. We welcome twins Sam and Jake MacTavish as newly elected Midwest and Canada East and service officers, respectively. They are active members of the Church of the Good Shepherd in Kitchener, Ontario, where they participate in a thriving and energetic Sunday youth group. Sam and Jake have attended several national youth retreats and conventions. They will be responsible for assisting with youth league PR and activity coordination as part of their officer duties.

Sola Thorhallsson, from sunny Florida, was elected to the position of East Coast officer. She has attended retreats at Almont and convention for several years. Along with representing the East, Sola will carry the responsibility of being service advisor to the SCYL. The duties of the service officer include coordinating work projects at retreats and convention as well as

advising the SCYL on charitable opportunities to encourage, nurture and inspire social action and education.

Cody Steinhiser begins his second year of service to the SCYL, returning as the West and fundraising/finance officer. Together with his duties assisting teens in the West, Cody will help with the finances of the league and oversee our fundraising efforts.

Kristina Madjerac begins her second term as editor of the youth publication *Clear Blue Sky* (CBS) and also serves as the communication officer. Kristina attended two SCYL retreats in 2006 as well as Fryeburg Assembly summer camp. She is very active in the Portland New Church Youth Group and rarely misses a meeting or event. We are excited to have Kristina back in her second year as CBS Editor.

Rev. Junchol Lee was elected to the position of league chaplain. Junchol, pastor of Cleveland Swedenborg Chapel, has served as league chaplain in the past. Junchol is active in youth retreats and camps. We are honored to welcome him back to youth league service as our spiritual mentor. Please congratulate all of our 2007 SCYL officers and our league chaplain. This is a wonderfully talented group. I look forward to working with this team and I hope that you get to know some of them better in the coming year.



The Swedenborg Youth League on wheels

2007 SCYL Officers

President: Ethan Turley
Fryeburg, Maine; django_tzo@yahoo.com

East and service officer: Sola Thorhallsson
DeLand, Florida; solathor@att.net

Midwest and public relations officer: Sam MacTavish
Waterloo, Ontario, Canada; converse1282@hotmail.com

Canada and activities officer: Jake MacTavish
Waterloo, Ontario, Canada; bigmac313@hotmail.com

West and fundraising/finance officer: Cody Steinhiser
Michigan City, Indiana; hobobling@comcast.net

Editor, *Clear Blue Sky* and communication officer:
Kristina Madjerac, Portland, Maine; mad4greenday@yahoo.com

League chaplain: Rev. Junchol Lee
Cleveland, Ohio; junchollee@sbcglobal.net

Kurt Feteke is youth director of the Swedenborgian Church Youth League. ☪

Annual Convention: A Gathering for Ministry and Miracles

Renee Machiniak

There I was for the very first time, attending our church's annual convention in Puget Sound, Washington, back in the mid eighties. I was in my early adult years and, along with my family, decided to "check-out" what was happening within the larger church community at its gathering of members and friends from churches and centers throughout the United States and Canada.

I didn't know what to expect attending my first convention, yet my need to connect with other Swedenborgians from different areas and perspectives called to me. My initial inkling was that there was much more to know and feel about God than what I had experienced thus far in my isolated area and family life.

Annual conventions are organized to achieve several important goals: to bring people together from many different congregations and centers as well as isolated members who need the contact and fellowship of the larger church; to run the business of the denomination; and to celebrate the life of the Lord together in worship, youth ministry, educational workshops and outreach committees and ministries that bless the lives of both the volunteers who give and the people served.

At my first convention, I quietly observed not only what people were saying, but also how they treated each other and how they expressed their inner, personal faith and feelings honestly and with a twinkle in the eye. There was something different, something rare

and special about this gathering of people. Ah-ha! It hit me like a ton of bricks. The doctrinal ideas I explored and the spiritual experiences I was having back home were manifesting in a variety of ways here that were beyond my scope of reference and, suddenly, I was *home*. I listened carefully to the ministers as they talked and prayed. I heard people share their faith journeys, their fears and hopes, all in the beautiful backdrop of Puget Sound.

It was at this convention I received my call into ordained ministry, and I knew I had to share this with someone who would truly listen. I searched out Rev. Horand Gutfeldt and received the confirmation and support I needed to pursue my calling, my dream.

(Continued on following page)

~ OPEN LETTER ~

Reviving Transitions

To the Swedenborgian Community:

Have you noticed something? We have a lot of young adults connected to this church. Did you notice something else? The young adult group, Transitions, stopped holding retreats about two years ago. How many of us noticed?

The generation of young adults is starting to notice. As we leave SCYL, finish college and begin careers, we find something missing. We may have drifted away from the church. We want to return. We are going to find our way back to the friendships, discussions and spirituality that we knew in SCYL. In the process we will welcome new friends and members into the renewed Transitions. This is not just for a select few. We want to include as many like-minded souls as possible, aged 18 to 30.

Yes, my friends, it is going to happen. A small team is coming together to organize

a Transitions retreat for the fall of 2007. We are going to need your help, your support and your guidance. Most importantly, we are going to need young adults (a.k.a. transitions) to attend the retreat.

We would like to hear from potential transitions. We need to gauge interest and compile an email list. If you have any interest in attending or helping out, email us. If your journey has lasted longer than 30 years, perhaps you know a young adults who might be interested. Give them this letter and encourage them to contact us.

Questions and comments and "please-sign-me-ups" can be directed to transitionsgroup@gmail.com.

Merry Conant and Matthew Fleming (Merry Conant is a member of Bridgewater New Church. Matthew Fleming is a member of the General Council and a member of Royal Oak [Michian] Church). ☪

Mite Box Recipient

The Women's Alliance Mite Box recipient for 2007 is Rita Russell. Rita is a minister in the British Conference who would like to join us for the 2007 Annual Convention. Contributions to the Mite Box will help defer the cost of travel for Rita. Please send contributions now, as we will incur upfront costs. Make checks payable to The Women's Alliance, and send to:

Jeannette Hille
4240 Larch Place N.
Plymouth, MN 55442 ☪

SHS Library Update

Alan Thomsen

Since its relocation from Massachusetts to Berkeley, California over five years ago many members and friends of the Swedenborgian Church have visited the Swedenborg Library and Archives (SHS Library) in its new home at the Pacific School of Religion (PSR). Others have searched the stacks using GRACE, the on-line catalogue of the Graduate Theological Union (GTU) Library, located conveniently across the street from the PSR campus. Still others have contacted us by email or phone with requests for information or research assistance.

Our librarian, Michael Yockey, has led a Herculean effort to re-catalogue the entire collection so it can be accessed online. The result is much greater exposure of our holdings. Any student at the GTU can check out circulating books from the SHS library. Indeed, we now circulate more titles to other GTU students than to our own students at Swedenborgian House of Studies. This exposure to a wider public is an important facet of our outreach and will prove an increasingly important asset in the years to come.

We have paid a great deal of attention to how we accession, process, catalogue, care for and store rare materials—both books and archival material. Rare books and materials are housed separately from the circulating books, and the staff must be called upon to fetch them for use only on the premises under the watchful supervision of the librarian. All the materials are shelved behind a locked grate within the library.

From my knowledge of and experience with antiquarian books and ephemera, it became clear to me that the collection was in need of a deeper, more careful appraisal. Over the past several years, I have conducted informal market research with Michael. Together, we began to keep an eye out for the rare, began a file of our research and findings, and decided this past summer that the time was opportune to commission a professional appraisal.

The resulting appraisal document states, in part, "Throughout the entire library are resources to support and amplify researches in many diverse areas beyond the man, Emanuel Swedenborg, and his works. Theses research 'threads' run in every medium: books,

letters, pamphlets, church publications and periodicals, photographs, and portraits."

And, elsewhere, "The Library and Archives...is an important collection of research and education resources in many different forms. The actual replication of the unique features, such as manuscript material, letters, many of the rare books, and holograph church records, would be nearly impossible. The reconstitution of the Library's holdings of books, printed pamphlets, and periodicals, should that become necessary and could they be found in the market, would be an intensive undertaking...and could require additional staff to a degree that is impossible to specify at the present."

To be prudent, the appraiser advises an insured replacement value of at least six million dollars. Truly, we are the stewards and beneficiaries of a remarkable and largely unique piece of humankind's patrimony. It has been a joy and a privilege to help care for it for these last few years.

Alan Thomsen is the financial manager of SHS, a volunteer at the SHS Library and a member of El Cerrito Hillside Community Church. ☩

Annual Convention: A Gathering for Ministry and Miracles

(Continued from previous page)

Conventions are organized and planned to facilitate individuals' faith journeys and to further the ministry of the church locally, regionally and globally. The church needs your help to continue this ministry. The General Convention is grateful for every donation given to help further outreach into the lives of people—just like me—who

need a place to go to serve the Lord and share experiences on a regular basis.

As you search your heart for ways to contribute to the life of the church, consider a generous gift to the denomination for the work that continues to make a difference in people's lives. Just as the Lord's New Church needs steady and caring hands to do the actual work of the larger church, so, too, we need financial resources to build and to grow "the holy city, the new

Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God..." (Revelation 21:2). This is our task: to strengthen and fortify the church. As we give a portion of our treasure faithfully, the kingdom blesses us with the riches of the spirit far reaching and beyond measure.

Rev. Renee Machiniak is minister of Royal Oak (Michigan) Swedenborgian Church and a member of General Council. ☩

Nominating Committee Report

- **Vice President:** Jim Erickson
- **Recording Secretary:** Susan Wood
- **Treasurer:** Larry Conant
- **General Council** (three to be elected): Matthew Fleming, Rev. Renee Machiniak, Barbara Cullen
- **EDSU:** Steve Thomas
- **IMSU:** Rev. David Brown
- **COMSU:** Rev. Carla Frederick
- **FPRSU:** Rev. Lana Sandahl
- **CAM:** Rev. Ken Turley
- **SHS (two to be elected):** Rev. Young Min Kim, Rev. Andy Stinson
- **MINSU (two to be elected):** Rev. Doug Moss, Pete Brakman
- **Nominating Committee** (two to be nominated, one to be elected): Deb Smith (Canada Association), Rev. Deborah Winter (Southeast Association) ☩

PASSAGES

Adoptions

Milne—Kelly and Mike Milne, members of the Bridgewater, Massachusetts New Church, traveled to Colombia, South America in March, 2006 to adopt their son, Matthew Thomas Milne. He was 5 months old when they arrived. Their daughter, Emily, adopted from the same agency in Bogotá in November 2004, accompanied them.

Schroeder—20-month old Elijah Alexander Schroeder was adopted by Carl Schroeder and Kimberly English, members of the Cambridge Society, after a November, 2006 trip to Russia. Photos and story at

www.swedenborgchapel.org/eli.

Confirmations

Henderson—Edgar Leigh Henderson III was baptized and confirmed into the New Church

January 19, 2007 at the Swedenborgian Church of San Diego, Rev. Carla Friedrich officiating.

Biagi—Marc Adam Biagi was baptized and confirmed into the New Church January 19, 2007 at the Swedenborgian Church of San Diego, Rev. Carla Friedrich officiating.

Ferguson—Liz Ferguson was confirmed into the New Church January 21, 2007 at the Swedenborgian Church of San Diego, Rev. Carla Friedrich officiating.

Deaths

Trombly—Roy Trombly, son of Geraldine and Roy Trombly, entered the spiritual world January 15, 2007 at 12:30 PM at St. John's Hospital in Detroit, Michigan due to complications with a stroke and pulmonary disease. A resurrection service was held on January 18, 2007 Rev. Renee Machiniak officiating. ☩

News in Brief

The New York New Church in Manhattan is deep into renovations that include new office space, the addition of an elevator, updated restroom facilities, repairs to the front fence, and new plantings and landscaping for the courtyard. Church members and friends are looking forward to mid-spring completion.

The Virginia Street Church in St. Paul, Minnesota hosted a talk on February 4, introduced by Garrison Keillor, initiating a series of readings in partnership with Keillor's bookstore, Common Good Books. Elizabeth de la Vega talked about her book, *United States v. George W. Bush et al.*, The talk aired on C-Span's "Book TV" February 10.

The San Diego Swedenborgian Church donated \$500 to General Convention for its further good work.

Urbana University presented the fifth Swedenborg Lecture February 17, 2007 given by J. Gordon Melton, Ph.D., a scholar of international reputation in religion studies with a specialization in new or alternative religious movements. Dr. Melton's lecture was titled "Approaches to Biblical Truth: Emanuel Swedenborg, Biblical Allegory, and the New Thought Movement at the End of the Nineteenth Century." General Convention funded the lecture and Dr. Melton as scholar in residence for one week through restricted funds.

Dr. Sky Paradise graduated from PSR/SHS in mid-December, and will be ordained at the 2007 convention. Sky has returned to Santa Fe, New Mexico, where she is establishing a house-church ministry at the request of people in the area.

Rev. Kim Hinrichs is serving as Sunday school program coordinator for the San Francisco Church.

SHS ordination path student, Cathy Lauber, is going to England for three weeks to train with Rev. Rita Russell of the British Conference in Birmingham and Darby.

Rev. Alison Lane moved to Hartland, Wisconsin. She will be traveling to Chicago occasionally to lead services. ☩

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 15 years after his death. This 1787 organization eventually spawned the present General Convention of Swedenborgian Churches. As a result of Swedenborg's own spiritual questionings and insights, we as a church today 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. Swedenborg shared in his theological writings 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 would conclude, "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.

Convention 2007: "Crossing the Jordan"

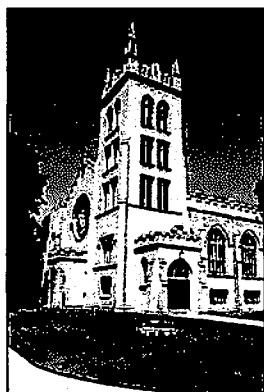
Wednesday, June 27–Sunday, July 1, 2007

at Hope College in Holland, Michigan

The members and friends of the Michigan Association are eagerly awaiting the arrival of ministers, delegates, families and friends to the 2007 Annual Convention, which will be held on the lovely campus of Hope College in Holland, Michigan.

Holland (www.holland.org) is a few miles east of Lake Michigan near the southern end. A city of Dutch heritage situated on Lake

Macatawa and the Black River, the city is best known for its Tulip Festival, its nationally recognized (National Historic Register) downtown, and as the home of both Hope College, a private residential liberal arts college, and the Western Theological Seminary, affiliated with the Reformed Church of America.



*Dimnent Chapel at
Hope College*

Hope College (www.hope.edu) has a lovely, tree-shaded campus with a variety of architectural styles represented.

Our theme this year, "Crossing the Jordan," is based on verses from the book of Joshua, chapters one and three. We will be focusing on

the process of crossing into new territory in terms of our denominational programs and focus. We will identify the steps we need to follow to cross over into a new land. Each of our days together will reflect an aspect of the preparation and undertaking of the journey.

On Saturday, June 30 we will hold our main worship service in Dimnent Chapel, led by the convention preacher, Rev. Sarah Buteux. In the late afternoon, we will begin social activities with a beach swim and barbeque, continue with an all-ages karaoke contest, and finish with dancing. On Sunday morning, we will close our meetings and share in a closing worship service in preparation for our journeys home.

Mark your calendars now. Look for registration forms in the April issue of *The Messenger*. Contact Sandra Coveart at 980-636-7674 for information about the pre-convention motor coach tour. We are excited about this convention, and look forward to our time together. ☺



*Windmill
Holland, Michigan*

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Newtonville, MA 02460

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