



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)

The 199th annual convention of the Swedenborgian Church will be hosted by the Massachusetts New Church Union at Bridgewater State College in Bridgewater, Massachusetts, from Saturday, July 1 through Wednesday, July 5, 2023. This area of New England is known for beautiful Cape Cod summers, stunning fall foliage, and cranberries.

Last year's hybrid convention was such a success, bringing people from afar together both in-person and virtually, that we will be doing it again this summer. Every year we hope to make convention a little better, so you can expect even more participation and fun for those attending both in-person and virtually in 2023.

Delegates will be able to participate in-person or remotely using the Nemo-Vote online voting system for all of our

voting. (See [p. 38](#) for the list of this year's nominees up for election.) Contact your local church or association if you wish to serve as a voting delegate at convention.

In-person attendees will have the pleasure of visiting the Bridgewater New Jerusalem Church for an evening worship service and experiencing their hospitality at a reception afterwards. Elmwood Church will be hosting a cook-out for us all to enjoy July 4 together and will be followed by fireworks with the best seat in the house—on top of the parking garage at our dormitories!

Registration, like last year, is online. There are separate registration forms for in-person and virtual attendees so be sure to select the correct one. Thanks to all 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. 48](#).)

Room and Board for a four night stay in a double room at convention is only \$375, 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 and answers to your questions before registering.

Registration will close May 14 for in-person attendees and June 14 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 see you in July! 📺

Contents

Registration for Convention 2023 Opens April 15	33
Editor's Corner	34
Message from the President.....	35
CSS Winter Intensive	36
Nunc Licet Fellowship	37
Nominations for the Swedenborgian Church.....	38
New Church Visionaries Lecture Series	42
New Church of the Southwest Desert Seeks Minister	43
Meet the Digital Content Manger	43
Swedenborgian and Buddhism Parallels	44
My Friend Carl and Me.....	46
Convention Youth Programs	48
Gathering Leaves 2023	49
SCYL Memorial Day Retreat.....	49
Passages.....	50
What's Happening.....	51
Engaged Swedenborgianism.....	52

Editor's Corner



The Importance of Spiritual Family

I was really touched this month by Rev. Sue Turley's remembrance of her dear friend

Rev. Carl Yenetchi (see p. 46). It struck a chord with me as my spiritual family is also so important in my life. Some are far-flung and I only see every few years, some I communicate with every day. I spend all year looking forward to the time we get to spend together. It is this time of year when I start really thinking about reconnecting at those gatherings.

Over Memorial Day weekend, a group of dedicated members of the Fryeburg New Church Assembly

(FNCA) head up to the facility and open up for the summer season. I love this weekend with my FNCA family, and have been spending this weekend with them for almost twenty years. We work hard in community with one another and strengthen our bonds by being of use to the assembly.

Over July 4, we will all be together in-person and virtually at our annual convention. After April 15, registration will open and all the details will be available on swedenborg.org. We've been working hard to put together another great event, and I start to get really excited when I see it coming together. This year for the first time, I am able to bring both of my kids to Convention with me—they are so excited. Sometimes I think they love these spiritual family gathering more than I do! (See p. 48 for information on the Children's Program.)

My summer of spiritual gatherings peaks in August at the FNCA summer camp. (Registration for FNCA 2023 is also open at fryeburg.org.) For over forty years I have used this time to reconnect with old friends and make new ones. There really is something special about our Swedenborgian camp experiences that can be hard to explain until you've attended one. Since 2021, we have also made our spiritual programming available hybrid—just one more way to be able to connect with each other even in the years people aren't able to be there physically.

I love being a part of the groups organizing these large spiritual family gatherings. It is one way that I feel that I am useful to our Church. No matter how often one is able to attend, they are rejuvenating to the soul. I hope to see many of you in Bridgewater, Massachusetts, this year—in-person or virtually—one of the best chances to reconnect with our spiritual family, old and new.

—Beki Greenwood
Messenger@Swedenborg.org

the Messenger

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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.

Submission Deadline Reminder

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.



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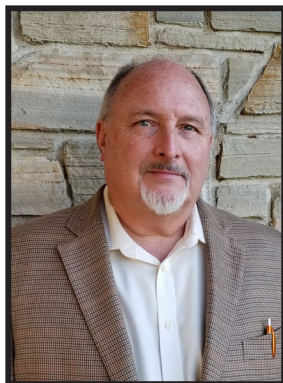
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*Message from the President***Let Us Gather and Come Together***The Year of Regeneration: 2022–23*

Let us gather and come together in-person and virtually for our upcoming 199th Annual Convention of the Swedenborgian Church of North America. Starting with an opening service on Saturday, July 1 we will be on the ground at Bridgewater State University in the lovely south of Boston community of Bridgewater, Massachusetts, as well as online for participation from any place!

These annual conventions have marked in large ways our history, and we often mark our past by referring to where convention was held for the time in question. Oftentimes attendees will speak of a particular convention for several years afterwards, and many of us never forget ones we have attended. I still recall my first one attended in 1982 as a first-year seminarian and meeting so many folks who would become my future spiritual community.

There is a certain “ritual of conscious convention” that earmarks these annual plenary gatherings generally regarded as the most important event of the year for our denomination. We experience our church in its fullest and most complex sense as people join from all our ministries as well as those who live too far from a ministry to be active in a physical site ministry. And increasingly, as we become more robust in our capacity to support a hybrid convention permitting people to participate virtually with both voice and voting rights, we have begun a new journey of how we gather that we could not have once imagined.



Significantly, these conventions provide an exciting menu of spiritual growth and education programs. About three decades ago we decided to evolve our annual gatherings into more of a spiritual education time rather than being so entirely consumed with business meetings. That intentional decision began the tradition we now call Mini Courses, which have proven to be fan favorites. A dozen of these participatory presentations

this year will engage leading-edge topics and adventurous spiritualities from a Swedenborgian angle.

Yet importantly, there's a certain factor of institutional accountability these momentous annual official gatherings support as they allow us to conduct both necessary and visionary business. We speak to the world through these gatherings as we consider important questions and often shape statements we publish in our denominational journal and on our website about justice issues and about good practices for a faith tradition.

And in these gatherings, we worship and pray together, and we bless journeys of ordination and pastoring into our ministry endeavors everywhere. In short, we strive with utmost intentionality to be faithful people of God. Whether near or far, I hope you can be a part of this 199th Convention and become a part of our ongoing history.

—Rev. Dr. Jim Lawrence
President@Swedenborg.org

A Reflection on the CSS Winter Intensive

BY JAY BARRY

At the recent Winter Intensive course at the Center for Swedenborgian Studies (CSS) a group of eleven met over the course of three days. Some joined virtually, and some met in-person at three locations: the CSS campus in Berkeley, the San Francisco Swedenborgian Church, and Hillside Swedenborgian Church. The following is a reflection from participant Jay Barry.



Some attendees at the CSS Winter Intensive held in January enjoy a discussion with a beautiful view.

The Winter Intensive was an inspiring event in many ways. As a newcomer to the Swedenborgian Church of North America, I learned a lot about the history of the Church, and how we are organized. I value the many new connections, discussions, and highlights I experienced, including insights from Dr. Devin Zuber and Jennifer Lindsay. One highlight that was completely unexpected was the pristine view of the San Francisco Bay from the Hillside Swedenborgian Church, where we spent our last day.

I grew up in the General Church in the 1950s, raised among a small group of New Church families in Phoenix, Arizona. We met as a congregation in a small, rented room at a YMCA. My first experience in an actual church was a visit with my parents to Wayfarers Chapel when I was about ten years old. The delicate beauty, and

strength of the structure—perched on a hillside over the Pacific—represented to me a beacon of light and hope for the entire world. I have never forgotten the depth of that moment.

The Winter Intensive actually contributed to that awareness; we listened, discussed, and contemplated the major themes in our church. One example is a sentence taken verbatim from one of our instructors: *our strongest teaching is the pluralism of heaven*. This truth is certainly a light that shines to all people. How could one God, who made every human being with the intention of creating a heaven from the human race, teach otherwise than there are many heavens, and where there is diversity in heaven, there is perfection also?

Another powerful moment during the Intensive was within a discussion led by Rev. Junchol Lee. He asked us to consider a principle in the Swedenborg's teaching that heaven opens for each individual to the degree that they fight within themselves against hatred and ill-will towards others. By doing so, we move closer to our true nature, and our spiritual path toward heaven. Not doing so increases the illusion of self-importance, shaping an

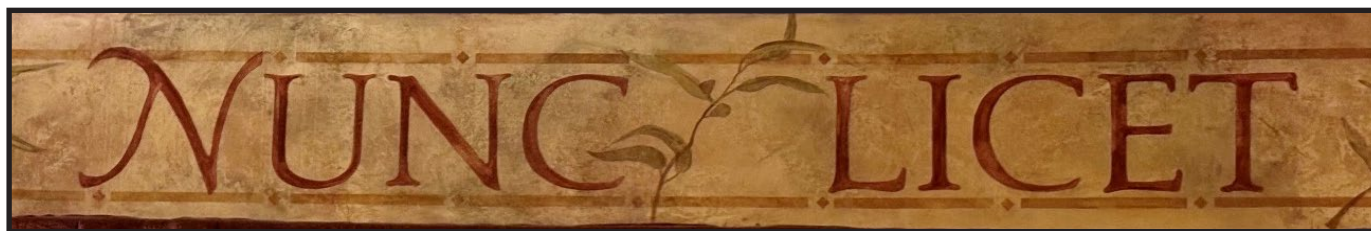
us-against-them mentality. Historically, this destructive thinking has pitted Christians against Muslims, Jews, and indigenous peoples, and in our day our LG-BTQIA+ friends and family. Rev. Lee summarized it thus: *we need to overcome ourselves to find the loving way*. So, personal work on our own self-improvement and development, and the values of inclusion are both hallmarks of the Swedenborgian Church of which I am proud to now be a part.

Another beautiful discussion was led by Dr. Rebecca Esterson—a spiritual reflection on the shape of the New Jerusalem. It is described as a perfect, golden cube, equal on all sides, with twelve gates (Rev. 21:10–18). The symbol is a timeless image of Divine love for all people. Comments in our discussion afterward included these: *this symbol represents the embrace of pluralism, integration, twelve pathways, and the desire to seek joy in the 'other.'* Rev. Dr. Jim Lawrence also commented that the description in Revelation 21 is *an open vision of a city, in contrast to the closed, ancient walled cities that kept people out*.

Our time together for three days was an inspiring intensive workshop in all the best ways possible, with insightful presentations, discussions, and not to mention wonderful lunches. I was grateful to be present. 🙏

Rev. Jay Barry works full-time as a staff chaplain in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and he has five grown children. Both he and his wife Barbara are actively engaged in professional, community, and spiritual development.





Announcing the *Nunc Licet* Fellowship: Providing Up to Full Seminary Tuition Support for Qualified Students

The Latin phrase “Nunc Licet” is taken from Swedenborg’s vision in the Spiritual World of a temple with the words written over the doorway. In English, they translate to “Now it is permitted.” Swedenborg explains: “it is now permitted to enter with understanding into the mysteries of faith” True Christianity §508.

The Nunc Licet Fellowship is a merit-based scholarship program intended to relieve the financial burden of tuition expenses for promising individuals who wish to serve the ministries of the Swedenborgian Church of North America. Approved candidates who have been accepted into a full-time Master of Divinity degree program at an institution approved by the Center for Swedenborgian Studies (CSS)¹ will be awarded up to full tuition for the first year of their degree. Furthermore, if they are admitted to the ordination track by the denomination’s Committee on Admission to the Ministry (CAM) before the beginning of their second year of matriculation and providing that they stay in good standing with CAM, this fellowship will be extended to cover cost of tuition for the subsequent years of study. In addition to the curricular requirements of their particular M.Div. program, candidates



must complete a seven-course Certificate in Swedenborgian Ministry Studies (offered free of charge to ordination candidates) from CSS.²

As CSS is embedded within the Graduate Theological Union (GTU) at Berkeley, California, one of the largest interreligious consortiums for theological education in North America, preference will be given to candidates who wish to enroll at a GTU member school. In recognition of the high cost of living in the Bay Area, students studying in Berkeley will receive an annual housing stipend to help defray expenses in addition to their Nunc Licet tuition scholarship.

There are three parts to the application process:

- An initial meeting with a CSS faculty member
- Submission of a writing sample demonstrating academic potential and/or capacity for theological reflection (4–8 pages). This could be from prior academic work, an article published somewhere, or from a sermon or theological reflection.
- A written statement that reflects on the following questions (ca. 3–5 paragraphs each):
 - ✦ Describe one or two key life-experiences that have informed your decision to begin an M.Div. degree journey.
 - ✦ What Swedenborgian principles or teachings have most inspired you, and how do you understand their integration into your life’s work or ministerial calling?
 - ✦ What do you hope to gain from your graduate education? In your response, consider what you are most curious to learn about and the areas of intellectual and spiritual growth that you would like to cultivate with Swedenborgian faculty and non-Swedenborgian faculty. 🏠

Contact the Center for Swedenborgian Studies to begin an application or request more information:

info@swedenborgianstudies.org

¹ In addition to an MDiv degree, students who enroll in the Master of Theological Studies program at the Pacific School of Religion or the Common Master of Arts degree at the Graduate Theological Union will also be eligible.

² Depending on the institution, some courses may count towards both the master’s degree and the Certificate.

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. 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 later moved to Royal Oak when I was a teenager. I attended Almont summer camp every year. I loved going to Almont and when I became a teen, I also loved attending youth retreats. I was fascinated by Swedenborg and as an adolescent I enjoyed talking about theology with my mother, Joyce. Like Swedenborg, I was fascinated by science 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. 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 was president for a partial term.

Position to be Filled	Term (Yrs)	Candidate
President	3	***
Vice President	1	Kurt Fekete*
Recording Secretary	1	Karen Conger*
Treasurer	3	***
General Council: layperson (2 to be elected)	3	Kelly Kennedy* Tom Murphy*
General Council: minister	3	Renée Billings Machiniak
Standing Committee for Communication & Information	3	David Brown
Standing Committee for Education & Resources for Spiritual Community	3	***
Standing Committee for Financial Accountability (2 to be elected)	3	Bill Coffman* Stan Conger*
Committee on Admission to the Ministry: minister	3	Gabriella Cahaley
Board of Trustees of CSS, representative class	4	Robert Carr*
Nominating Committee (unexpired term)	4**	Nancy Little
Nominating Committee	5	Robbin Ferriman

* Incumbent

** Years remaining in unexpired term

*** No candidate to be elected this year

I continued working as a church youth leader volunteer at camps and retreats throughout my adult life and discovered that youth work was my true passion and calling. So, I left my career in chemical engineering to become the Youth Director for the Swedenborgian Church in 2001. Now in my twenty-second year serving the youth of the church, I still love working with teens, pre-teens, and young adults at retreats and summer camps.

I have greatly enjoyed my work as vice president over the past year and think that I have made some important contributions to the denomination. As we all continue to learn and grow with our new President, Jim Lawrence, I aim to strive for excellence and steady reliability within your representative elected Executive Committee and General Council bodies. If elected to serve as your vice president in the

coming year, I look forward to continuing to provide a youthful perspective to the organization while honoring the heritage and foundational principles of our beloved faith community. I live in Maine with my fabulous wife, Shelley—whom I met at a youth retreat—and my two wonderful daughters, Ava and Zsa Zsa.

Karen Conger Recording Secretary (one-year term)



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

Continues on page 39

Nominations

Continued from page 38

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 for several years, the Nominating Committee more than once, and I was the Secretary of the PCA for many 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 this position.

Tom Murphy **General Council – Layperson** **(three-year term)**



Growing up as a Catholic in Northern California, Tom Murphy didn't know about Emanuel Swedenborg until much later in life. Tom attended Jesuit High School

(Bellarmine College Prep) and University (Santa Clara University) on the West Coast, where he was introduced to a broad spectrum of traditions (Buddhism, Yoga, Druidry). It wasn't until 2012 that he discovered the San Francisco Swedenborgian Church while planning his wedding.

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

vice president, and secretary.

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

In addition to his service with the Church, Tom spent six years on the Board of the San Francisco Chapter of The Recording Academy, where he served as secretary and advocacy committee chair. During that time, he led a number of local and national initiatives to create new income opportunities for musicians. Locally, he helped create a Limited Live Performance Permit for the City of San Francisco—which opened new venues and new sources of income for artists. Nationally, Tom traveled to Washington D.C. twice to lobby on behalf of artists for the passage of the Music Modernization Act. These efforts taught Tom the balance of bringing people together for larger social change, the political incentives to move projects forward, and the patience needed for true long-term growth.

Since 2021, Tom has served as a member of the Convention's General Council and would be honored to continue in service.

Kelly Kennedy **General Council – Layperson** **(three-year term)**

Hello from Spruce Grove, Alberta, Canada! I am honored, once again, to be nominated to be the Canadian representative for the General Council. I was first introduced to Swedenborg as a young child, attending church in my grandparent's basement in Winnipeg, Manitoba. My grandmother Helen's faith was inspiring! I



grew up attending Paulhaven Children's Camp as a camper, every summer since I was 6, traveling with my Grandma by train, learning all about her life. When I aged out as a camper, I continued on as a counsellor, cook, and eventually director. I made many lifelong friends and strengthened my faith. I was both baptized and confirmed into the Swedenborgian faith at this wonderful place that is so dear to my heart. I have passed on my love of Paulhaven to my daughter!

I served for several years on the Paulhaven Camp Committee, as a provincial representative for the Western Canada Conference, and am honored to have served a two-year term as Western Canada Conference President and have learned so much. I am now a member of The Church of the Holy City in Edmonton.

I work in a grade 5–9 middle school as an Educational Assistant and teach Foods class. I have a passion for baking and have a small home baking business.

I live in Spruce Grove with my first responder husband, Shaun, and my kids, Maegan (23), and Logan (19), and fur baby Skye. Maegan is an English major at the University of Alberta and wants to go into the publishing field and Logan is pursuing a career in the Canadian Armed Forces.

Renée Machiniak **General Council – Minister** **(three-year term)**

It would be my honor to serve on the General Council. I served two terms on the General Council early in my ministry and now bring to it deeper understanding and life experience from over twenty-seven



Continues on page 40

Nominations

Continued from page 39

years in parish ministry, nine years as Director of the Almont Summer School, eleven years in hospital and volunteer chaplaincy. On top of my church work, I serve locally with ongoing community service as a volunteer chaplain with the Royal Oak Police Department since 2004, and as a Director with the Royal Oak Lion's Club serving in honor of Helen Keller. I find joy serving as the Youth Chaplain for the Swedenborgian Church Youth League (SCYL) and as mentor for two of our Licensed Pastors. I love this church with all of my heart and soul and promise to serve in this capacity from my authentic faith, which shines with optimism and hope about our future!

Bill Coffman

Standing Committee for Financial Accountability (three-year term)



I live in Urbana, Ohio with my wife, Betsy and our fourteen-year-old grandson, Micah. Our blended family consists of three sons and one daughter, six grandchildren, and one great-grandchild.

My professional background includes thirty-two years in teaching and administration in the Ohio public schools. I served as an associate professor and Chair of Field Studies at Urbana University from 2002 until my retirement in 2012. In addition to teaching courses in education and economics, my responsibilities included oversight of all student teacher education and sports/health studies field experiences as well as leading the student teaching seminar. I have also served on

the Urbana University Admission and Academic Standards Committee, the Faculty Promotion and Tenure Committee, the Teacher Education Advisory Committee and various other University committees.

I am active in the Swedenborgian Church at the local level (treasurer), the Ohio Association of Swedenborgian Churches (past president), and the denomination level (currently serving on the Nominating Committee and the Standing Committee for Financial Accountability). I have also served for nine years on the Board of Trustees for our school of religion, The Center for Swedenborgian Studies at the Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, California.

Stan Conger

Standing Committee for Financial Accountability (three-year term)

Stan Conger has been a Swedenborgian since birth having grown up in the Los Angeles Church. He served on the Los Angeles Church board as president, vice president, and treasurer. He has served as the treasurer of the Pacific Coast Association (PCA) in the past and is now a member-at-large of the Pacific Coast Association. He and his wife, Karen, who is also a life-long Swedenborgian, live in Bishop, California, and attend the local United Methodist Church since there is no Swedenborgian church in the area. They serve together as the Financial Secretary of that Church. Stan is currently serving on the board of trustees for the Wayfarers Chapel and the Standing Committee for Financial Accountability (SCFA).



Dave Brown

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



Rev. Dr. David Brown is the Lead Minister at Wayfarers Chapel in Rancho Palos Verdes, California, and has been serving this spiritual community since the summer of 2006. Rev. Brown is also a part-time minister at the Garden Church in San Pedro, California, since the summer of 2022. He has been managing the social media, website, and digital advertising for Wayfarers Chapel and is always searching for better ways to communicate the teachings of Emanuel Swedenborg to the world at large. Prior to ministry, Rev. Dr. Brown worked in banking, accounting, and a high-tech startup.

Gabriella Cahaley

Committee on Admission to the Ministry – Minister (three-year term)



Rev. Gabriella Cahaley returned to school after many years of managing aquatic programming, teaching, and coaching swimming. Gabriella obtained her undergraduate degree from the University of Arizona and went into seminary; first at the Pacific School of Religion then transferred to Earlham School of Religion where she earned her M.Div. degree. Since her ordination in 2011, Gabriella has pastored three different congregations. Gabriella moved to Tucson and began working as a

Continues on page 41

Nominations

Continued from page 40

chaplain and bereavement coordinator. After her husband's death, she returned to Georgia where she served as bereavement coordinator and chaplain for two hospices. Recently, Gabriella left the hospice world to serve as pastoral counselor at Skyland Trail, a psychiatric residential treatment center. Gabriella has been with Skyland Trail for the past four years.

Robert Carr CSS Board of Trustees – Representative Class (four-year term)

Robert Carr received a B.S. and M.S. in Computer Engineering from Stanford, and has been an entrepreneur, manager, and inventor in the PC software and web software business in the forty-odd years since then. He received various industry awards for ground-breaking products in the PC software field in 1984 and mobile pen computing in 1992. He has been an active member of the San Francisco Swedenborgian church since 1995, twice serving as council president (and is currently the Treasurer). He is also a board member for the Center for Swedenborgian Studies, the Swedenborg Foundation, and Wayfarers Chapel (where he is also Treasurer). On boards such as these he tends to gravitate to the business and operations areas.

Robert is married to Andrea LoPinto, and they are blessed with two adult children they raised in the San Francisco Swedenborgian Church. His passions include outdoor sports (road cycling, skiing, and backpacking), reading, and living a life of uses.



Trained as an engineer, he always wished to study more in the humanities. In June 2022, he fulfilled this dream by receiving a masters of Liberal Arts at Stanford—his thesis examines American cultural fears of computers in the 1950s and 1960s.

Nancy Little Nominating Committee (unexpired four-year term)

With over forty years of involvement in the church at local, state, and national levels, I've gotten to know many of you and this makes me an excellent candidate for the Nominating Committee. I grew up in the village of Elmwood, Massachusetts, and attended the New Church there for many years. I was active in the youth group at the church and attended summer camp at Blairhaven in South Duxbury, Massachusetts. While attending my first church convention in 1979 in Urbana, Ohio, I was elected an officer with the national youth group and maintained my involvement, eventually being the first female elected president of the national youth group (1979–1985). While living in the Boston area, I served as secretary for the Massachusetts New Church Union (1987–1990). For many years, I served on committees at the Fryeburg New Church Assembly in Fryeburg, Maine (2003–2021), where I was recently appointed Camp Librarian. While attending a church convention in 2008 after a bit of a hiatus, I was elected president of the Women's Alliance, serving a three-year term (2008–2011). In 2014, I was elected to serve on the CSS Board of Trustees (2014–2018). Most recently, I served twelve years on the Library and Documents Committee for the



denomination (2010–2022), many of them as chair.

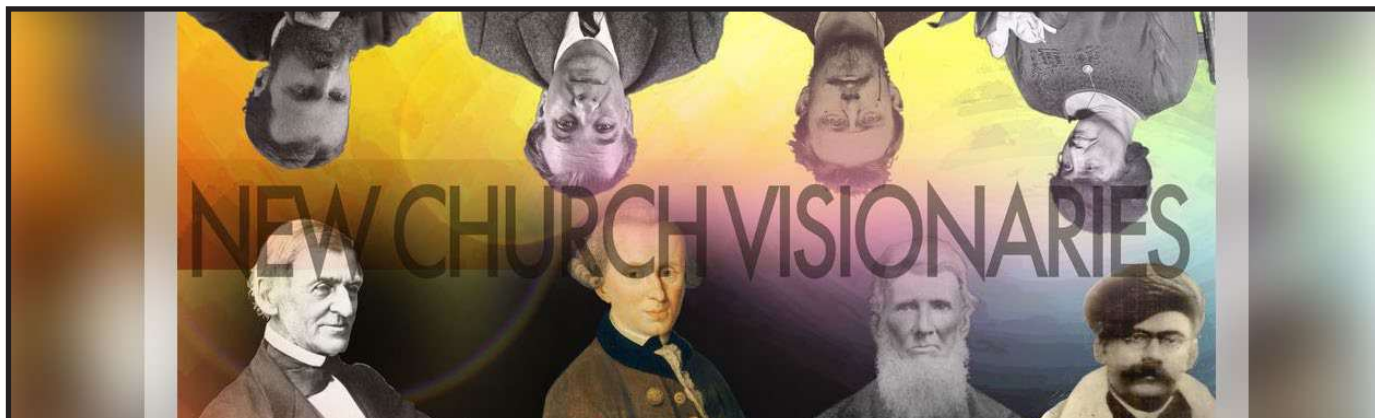
I live in Western Massachusetts with my husband, Trevor Woofenden, and my tuxedo cat Whitney. Trevor and I (and Whitney) attend hybrid worship services with the Fryeburg New Church every Sunday morning from the comfort of our cozy living room. I work as a librarian at a small private college in Springfield, Massachusetts, where I specialize in information literacy and health sciences, and hold a master's degree in library science from Simmons University in Boston, Massachusetts.

Robbin Ferriman Nominating Committee (five-year term)

I am honored to be considered for the Nominating Committee of the Swedenborgian Church of North America. I was born and raised just outside of St. Louis, Missouri. I moved around for many years, settling in Ohio ultimately. I received a B.F.A. from Ohio University in 2001. I joined the Urbana Swedenborgian Church many years ago, and I have been involved in the service of the church and denomination in many ways. At the church, in addition to co-leading worship services with Rev. Betsy Coffman, I have created an Outreach Committee and an Archive and Research Committee, as well as leading the Wedding Committee. I have been Recording Secretary for the Ohio Association for several years and created an Archive Committee for our Association. I am Secretary for *Deborah's Tree* and for the Rainbow Group. I also am part of the Convention's Library and Documents Committee. I would be very pleased to serve the church in another way. ☸



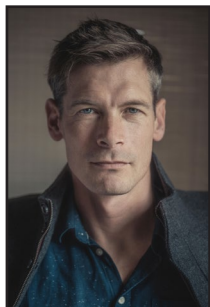
Virtual Education Opportunities



Lecture Series: New Church Visionaries

Join us as we continue our seven-part journey to learn about some of the greatest visionary minds of the New Church lineage. The influence of Swedenborgian ideas and spirituality has been one of enormous diversity and dynamism. This free online lecture series is offered by the Helen Keller Spiritual Life Center, an initiative of the Cambridge Society of the New Jerusalem at Swedenborg Chapel, with generous financial support from the Massachusetts New Church Union.

**Ivan Aguéli with
Dr. Devin Zuber
May 5 at 7:00 PM ET**



Our fourth lecture will be offered by Dr. Devin Zuber, who will be discussing Ivan Aguéli (1869–1917). Born John Gustaf Agelii in Sala, Sweden, and related to Swedenborg through his mother, Aguéli converted to Islam in

his late 20s. In 1902, he moved to Cairo and became one of the first Western Europeans to enroll at Al-Azhar University, where he studied Arabic and Islamic philosophy. Around the same time, he was initiated into the Shadhili Sufi Order. Aguéli is celebrated in Sweden for his work in contemporary art, having studied under the Symbolist painter Émile Bernard; most of his paintings are at the Swedish National Museum of Fine Arts. Aguéli is also credited as an important influence on René Guénon, a French intellectual who was influential for his work on metaphysics and Islamic esotericism. Dr. Zuber has conducted original research into the life and work of Ivan Aguéli, and his talk will explore how Swedenborg's writings facilitated "transcultural mysticism" for artists affiliated with Theosophy. Aguéli's innovative use of Swedenborg for conducting interreligious comparative hermeneutics with Islamic medieval mystics, such as Ibn Arabi, critically anticipates the later pioneering work of Henry Corbin by fifty years.

Dr. Devin Phillip Zuber is an Associate Professor of American Studies, Religion, and Literature at the Graduate Theological Union (GTU) in Berkeley, California, and he is currently

serving as Chair of the Department of Historical and Cultural Studies of Religion. He teaches in the GTU's Ph.D. program's concentrations for Art and Religion, New Religious Movements, and Religion and Literature. His position is housed at the GTU's Center for Swedenborgian Studies, and much of his teaching and research remains focused on the nineteenth-century cultural reception of the Scandinavian scientist-turned-mystic Emanuel Swedenborg (1688–1772). Dr. Zuber holds a Ph.D. in English Literature and a M.Phil. from the CUNY Graduate Center, an M.A. from Queens College, and a B.A. from Bryn Athyn College.

Please visit the Swedenborg Chapel Facebook page for information on how to attend these lectures via Zoom: www.facebook.com/CSNJsc/.

Upcoming Lectures All at 7:00 PM ET:

- **May 19:** Dr. Carl von Essen on William James
- **June 2:** Rev. Dr. Jim Lawrence on John Chapman (Johnny Appleseed)
- **July 7:** Dr. Rebecca Esterson on Immanuel Kant

New Church of the Southwest Desert Seeks Part-time Minister

The New Church of the Southwest Desert in Silver City, New Mexico is seeking a substantial part-time Lead Minister to work in a team ministry that includes the valuable experience of our Licensed Pastor, Linda Callander, and the rest of a pastoral team that includes Xander Toth and Wendy Spurgeon, who in the past served in the United Church of Christ as the moderator for the local church, as well as many volunteers. We view the substantial part-time position to be 30 hours a week, preaching three times a month, with regular days off and a month paid vacation.

Planted in the heart of historic downtown Silver City, our mission is to share New Church thought as we grow together in relationship with each other and the community. Founded in 2008, we are a faith community committed to a regenerative life of spiritual growth through worship, spiritual study, community service, and the arts. We like to say we are Bible-based, Christ-centered, and community-oriented. We have an eclectic congregation from many historical faith traditions who have found their way to us to hear a form of mystical Christianity and a new take on the Bible that reveals a loving non-judgmental God, and who enjoy a sense of real community where people go out of their way to make newcomers feel welcome. We

truly mean it when we say our doors are open to all, and we meet people where they are.

We have opened Oasis, a downtown coffee shop, where we also hold our services and where we hold events of various kinds to engage the community, including plays on our small stage, music events, and open mic nights.

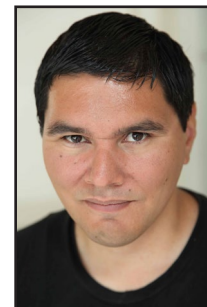
Silver City is a wonderful place to live, and you are encouraged to see the town's website to get a good sense of our vibrant community: www.visitsilvercity.org.

Interested candidates should contact Patte LeVan at patricialevan2@gmail.com or 760.703.5392.



Meet the New Digital Communications Manager for the SCNA

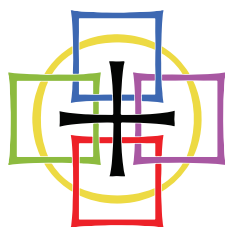
The Swedenborgian Church of North America (SCNA) is excited to welcome Rudy Caseres as our Digital Communications Manager. He will manage the website (swedenborg.org) and digital presence of the SCNA and focus on the virtual and hybrid components of our annual convention.



Rudy Caseres is an award-winning mental health advocate, public speaker, and live event host/producer. He has traveled the country delivering keynote presentations, worked with organizations such as the American Association of Suicidology, Mental Health America, the Foundation for Excellence in Mental Health, and has hosted various storytelling events at The Garden Church in San Pedro, California. In 2017, he was named one of The Mighty's Mental Health Heroes and NAMI California's Outstanding Peer of the Year. Rudy is especially excited to bring his skill-set to the SCNA and help make the Annual Convention a successful hybrid event.

Please join us in welcoming Rudy to our team as part of our ongoing effort to keep expanding our vibrant digital presence.

The Swedenborgian Church of North America



Annual Meeting of the Corporation of the New Church Theological School

The Annual Meeting of the Corporation of the New Church Theological School (d.b.a. the Center for Swedenborgian Studies of the Graduate Theological Union) will be held during the annual convention of the Swedenborgian Church of North America, Sunday, July 2, 2023 at 2:45 PM ET, The Moakley Center, Bridgewater State University in Bridgewater, Massachusetts.

Swedenborgian and Buddhism Parallels

BY LORRAINE KARDASH

The following is a brief comparison between my understanding of Tibetan Buddhism and my understanding of the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg. It seems to me that in both the writings of Swedenborg and the teachings of Buddhism what are foremost is Love and Wisdom. We read in Swedenborg that,

All the things in the created universe are recipients of God-Man's Divine Love and Divine Wisdom... every created thing is in its own nature fit to be a recipient of God—not by being a continuation but by being in contact... everything is an analogue, and by being united is a virtual mirror image of God" (*Divine Love and Wisdom* §56).

The image of God means His Divine Wisdom and the likeness of God means Divine Love. For wisdom is simply the image of love—love actually presents itself to be seen and recognized in wisdom. And since it is there seen and recognized, wisdom is its own image. Love, further, is the reality of life, and wisdom is the presence of life from love (*Divine Love and Wisdom* §358).

The recipient vessel and dwelling of love is called intention: the recipient vessel and dwelling of wisdom is called discernment (*Divine Love and Wisdom* §360).

Love and wisdom and therefore intention and discernment, make up a person's very life (*Divine Love and Wisdom* §363).

Love without discernment is

blind, affection without thinking is as though it were in deep darkness. Discernment is actually the light which enables love to see (*Divine Love and Wisdom* §406).

We read in Genesis 1:26 that humanity was created in the image of God according to His likeness.



A Buddhist saying is that compassion without wisdom is blind. Wisdom without compassion is cold. Buddhism teaches that

the ultimate goal of life is to be useful for other living beings. Even if one becomes useful for only one sentient being, the purpose of living is fulfilled. The wish to achieve enlightenment for the sake of helping others is called Bodhichitta. Bodhisattvas are those who take a vow to remain in samsara (the six realms, which include the hell and human realms), even though enlightened, until all beings are freed.

Swedenborg says that the true purpose of creation is the realization of uses for each of the universe's manifold

forms and concludes that uses progressively turn into the forms of creation.

All defects and sufferings, according to Buddha, are the faults of only one thing—the self-cherishing conception.

A poem by Shantideva, an eighth-century Buddhist monk, reads,

Whatever joy there is in the world
All comes from desiring others to be happy.
And whatever suffering there is in this world
All comes from desiring myself to be happy.
But what need is there to say more?
The childish work for their own benefit
The Buddhas work for the benefit of others.
Just look at the difference between them.

Swedenborg wrote that, "Love is not loving self but loving others and being united to others through love... Love consists of having what belongs to oneself belong to someone else; feeling another person's joy as joy in oneself—that is loving. But feeling one's own joy in someone else is not loving. This latter is loving oneself; the former is loving the neighbor. These two kinds of love are exact opposites" (*Divine Love and Wisdom* §47).

The major theme of the writings in Divine Providence is that the purpose of the universe is to establish a heaven from human beings. Both Swedenborg and Buddhism delineate a path to become free of the sufferings of the lower realms and to achieve a union with Love and Wisdom.

Swedenborg explains that we are influenced by good and evil spirits and

Continues on page 45

Swedenborg and Buddha

Continued from page 44

are constantly choosing to strengthen one side or the other. If we continually choose that which is full of ego and selfish love, the warmth of love grows colder. We can still have wisdom, but it is not real, and we are blinded by the light of self-love which we take for real light.

The path Buddha taught is called the Noble Eightfold Path to follow—right view/understanding, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration. The six perfections of wisdom are taught as being: generosity, patience, morality, joyous effort, and concentration/meditation.

I find that both modalities talk about realms and levels. In Buddhism there are three realms (the six realms of samsara, exist within these other three realms.) These three are The Desire Realm, The Form Realm, and The Formless Realm. We are born in a specific realm each lifetime according to Buddha's teachings. And the realm means the body and mind we're born with. Let's say you're born in The Desire Realm as a human. If you practice methods of meditation and your mind goes to a higher consciousness, your body still remains in the human (desire) realm. So, when you're in that state of deep absorption, when you come out of it, then you are back in your human consciousness. Your body still remains a human body even though you've actualized those states of absorption, and it is not that when you enter the formless realms that your body disappears: it's still there.

In *Divine Love and Wisdom* §345, Swedenborg wrote,

The spiritual flows down from its sun all the way to the lowest aspects of nature and does so through three levels. These levels are called the celestial, the spiritual, and the natural.

These levels are within people from creation and therefore birth. They are opened as the life admits. If the celestial level is opened, which is the highest and most inward, the person becomes celestial. If the spiritual level is opened, the person becomes spiritual. If only the natural level is opened, which is the lowest and most outward, the person becomes natural. If people become only natural, they love only physical and worldly things. To the extent that they love these, they do not love celestial and spiritual things and do not focus on God.

Swedenborg teaches that God is the creator existing in everything but not separate from itself. Therefore, God does not pour into a person, but the very life is God and exists in all things. We have no life of our own apart from this. I am going to venture a guess that the Buddhist teaching on *emptiness* relates to this.

Both emphasize the importance of one's last thought and that one's karma, in Buddhism or proprium in Swedenborgianism, survives death.

Buddhism does not talk about a supreme being but about "beginningless, endless mind," Buddha mind, and the importance of realizing that we are not selves apart from this.

There are also parallels concerning death. Both emphasize the importance of one's last thought (*Heaven and Hell* §449.3), and that one's karma, in Buddhism or proprium in Swedenborgianism, survives death. For both, there is a self-judgment in which the true nature of one's ruling affections become revealed to oneself. In the Buddhist system it happens in the bardo (the period between death and the next life), and then a person

is on to another life or realm, and in Swedenborg this is sorted out in the spirit realm before the being then chooses heaven or hell.

In Swedenborg's intermediate world of spirits, the outward elements must be changed until they conform with the inward. At this point one's inward can no longer be reformed. This is actually the same for Buddhists, except that there is the possibility of enlightenment in the bardos if the person recognizes the clear light as their own being.

Both are very descriptive as to the hell realm. In Swedenborgianism, the understanding is that one has a one life preparation for heaven or hell. In Buddhism, while it is not probable that a being gets out of hell, escape is always possible no matter where you are if you realize the sunyata (emptiness) of your own mind. Then there is the reparation and progress that can hopefully be achieved in successive lives.

If I were to pick the most obvious difference in the two spiritual paths it would be the enormous wealth of spiritual practices in Buddhism which incorporate centuries of Hindu and Shamanic practice with the distinctive teaching of the mahayana tradition, and the overwhelmingly intellectual bent of Swedenborgianism. Though for Swedenborgians, the practice occurs by simply using our own minds and hearts in daily life, with intention and discernment: an ongoing, unending devotion. ☸



Lorraine Kardash was ordained as an interfaith minister by The Chaplaincy Institute of Maine in 2006 and consecrated as a Licensed Pastor in 2019 by The Swedenborgian Church of North America. She is

currently the Pastor of the Portland New Church in Portland, Maine.

My Friend Carl and Me

BY SUSAN G. TURLEY

Reverend Carl Yenetchi and I were friends for forty-three years before his passing on March 2, 2023. He was an intelligent, funny, and spiritual man with a huge heart and calming presence. Carl went through a lot in his sixty-nine years of living. But his story is not mine to tell. I hope you get an understanding of who Carl Yenetchi was through my eyes and appreciate all he gave to others. For you can be sure by hearing how he was a friend to me is how he was a friend to many.



Rev. Susan Turley

I met Carl when we were both attending the Swedenborgian School of Religion in Newton, Massachusetts, at that time more commonly referred to as the SSR. (Now the Center for Swedenborgian Studies in Berkeley, California). He was from Massachusetts. I was from Washington. Carl was one year younger than me, about a foot and a half taller, both in our early twenties. He smoked a pipe. I smoked cigarettes. I suppose that's how we accidentally came about spending so much time together. We went to the same place for the same reason when on break in-between classes.

I was an angry young woman back then. Angry at the world. Specifically, I was angry at men. The Women's Liberation Movement, Civil Rights Movement, and anti-war protests were in high gear. I read everything I could about it all and watched the news religiously while in high school throughout college and into seminary. I participated in some protest activities. Carl was very aware, too. He was well educated, a history buff, articulate, and,

amazingly to me, he listened without judgement.

And listen he did. I vent, a lot. I had a lot to vent about. It was difficult being in the first group of women attending SSR. Out of the five of us, only two graduated and got ordained. I was one of them. The more crap I got from the church, the more I became determined to not give up. There were no classes on the women in the Bible, women's theology, or Liberation theology. I was told I should go to the nearby theological school, Andover Newton, if I wanted to learn about those things. The time came for me to get my Master of Divinity degree from a theological school certified by the Board of Ed-

Ah, the absurdity of it all. I believe in that moment our friendship was sealed for life.

ucation, but suddenly the SSR didn't have any more money to pay for it. I was the first student they refused to cover the tuition for the M.Div. So, I watched all my male counterparts get the masters of their choice for free. I left the seminary for a year to earn my master's in education in the event it didn't work out in the church. It was a good thing I did because, that is exactly what happened much later for both Carl and me. But I'm getting ahead of myself. While dealing with all the sexism and anti-women in the ministry sentiment, I worked my way through seminary and the extra year to earn my master's in education, while my male counterparts somehow managed not to work a day outside of school. More anger. More venting. More Carl listening to me without judgement.

Like I said, I had a lot to vent about. Most of my other male colleagues gave

me a wide berth. They couldn't handle my anger or want to hear what I had to say. They blamed and shamed me, argued that my perspective was wrong as well as my personal experience. How could they argue my personal experience wasn't true? They didn't live inside my skin or walk in my shoes. Their arrogance and lack of willingness to learn from me made me even more enraged. More venting. More Carl listening to me without judgement.

Carl was the exception to the "male rule." He listened with compassion and understanding. We'd be outside smoking like fiends or, should I say, like friends. He'd lean his head slightly to one side looking kindly in my eyes while puffing on his pipe. He quietly listened and nodded from time to time indicating he heard and understood. I had, and still do, a wicked sarcastic sense of humor. He had a soft subtle way of sneaking in a joke that made me laugh out loud. He'd crack up quite a bit at my jokes and I at his. We laughed a lot and that made me feel better. Carl was not without his struggles, too. I, in return listened without judgement, with compassion and understanding. Our mutual support saved us from going under.

Carl indeed was a funny guy, and his sense of humor endeared him to many, especially the kids to whom he devoted his ministry. After several tries at parish ministry both of us eventually went outside the church and entered another path of ministry. I went into hospital chaplaincy, Carl worked with special needs and at-risk children, who had additional challenges. He was effective and they adored him. He truly was a gifted teacher, counselor, and father-figure, who became a healing presence with kids of all ages. Perhaps

Continues on page 47

My Friend Carl

Continued from page 46

that is why he was so healing for me. My inner child was very wounded, and as an adult it came out in anger targeted at anything having to do with masculinity. He was not afraid, deterred, or offended by my rage. He was concerned, curious, respectful, and understanding. He often quoted scripture, asked questions about my faith, and helped me deepen my relationship to God. I learned forgiveness and self-respect.

One day, Carl and I were walking down a pebbled road. I believe we were attending an annual church Convention. We were smoking and talking. Well, truth be told, I was talking, and he was listening. We walked slowly, as that was Carl's pacing. That worked for me as for every step he took I had to take at least two. We were like a Great Dane and Dachs-hund walking side by side. I was ranting on about legitimate issues women have to deal with in a patriarchal world. He was attentively listening, as usual. He stopped and turned to me and said, "Sue, can I ask you something?" Oh no, I thought, here it comes the male lecture about how I need to get over myself. I said, "Sure." Then he stopped, turned to me and with such innocence and sincerity in his eyes it melted my heart, asked, "Why do you hate me so much?" I was stunned and stopped in my tracks. Tears came to my eyes. Hate? Carl was my best man-friend. How could he possibly think I hated him? I looked him square in the face, eye to eye and said, "Carl, I don't hate you. I just hate all men." A poignant moment of silence filled the air. We both looked away with thoughtful expressions on our faces. Then we turned and looked at each other and broke

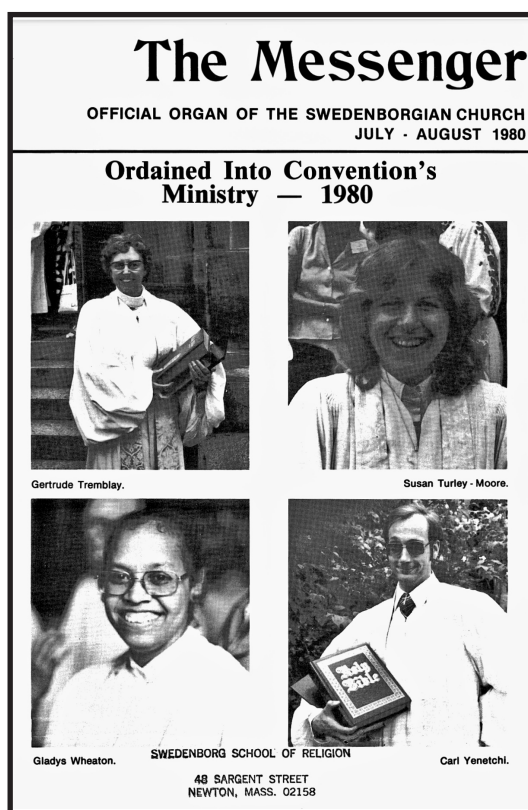
into fits of laughter. Ah, the absurdity of it all. I believe in that moment our friendship was sealed for life.

From then on our friendship deepened in trust, endearment, and support. Along with our friends, Gladys Wheaton, a born in the wool Swedenborgian, charismatic, Black woman, and Gertrude Tremblay, an older intellectual from Canada, Carl and I were ordained into the General Convention of Swedenborgian Churches in 1980. It was a watershed time in herstory for the church. The

to our son, Keith J. Moore, while I was in seminary. I was also working at Turley and Associates, my father's counseling center, as a pastoral counselor and field placement for the Boston Theological School with other seminarians. Cliff was a stay-at-home dad, one of the first. Later, he worked as my father's accountant. I got pressure to leave the seminary because I had a baby before Cliff and I got married by the state. That enraged me, yet again. I fought for my right to stay in seminary and Carl was a great support, along with my husband of course, and family. It was a stressful time for all of us but, somehow, we got through it all.

Keith was the most beautiful thing I had ever seen. He opened my heart and my mind in ways I could never have predicted. I loved him more than life itself and would give mine up to save his in a New York minute. Keith was very jaundiced and could not keep food down. It took us a while to find the right formula, and in the meantime, he cried and hardly slept. One day when Cliff was at work, I was at my wits end and walked down the dorm hall with baby in my arms screaming, "Would anyone be willing to hold my baby for a minute so I can have a break?" All I heard were the men's feet running into their room, doors slamming. Then I heard this soft, sweet voice coming from the back saying, "I would." "Really?? Oh, thank you so much," I said as I handed over with complete trust

the most treasured person in my life to Carl, of course. He took Keith in his arms turned and walked back down the hall talking softly to him and rocking him ever so gently. It was then that Keith and Carl commenced a relationship that grew over the years into uncle and nephew. Later, Keith would bond



Cover of the 1980 Convention Issue of the Messenger showing the ordination of Sue, Gertrude, Gladys, and their dear friend "Almost Woman" Carl.

first Black woman and the first two White women (to complete SSR prior to ordination), and our beloved friend Carl, who we respected and trusted so completely that we dubbed him the honorable title of "Almost Woman." He loved it and so did we.

In 1978, I married by husband, Clifford J. Moore, Jr., and gave birth

Continues on page 48

My Friend Carl

Continued from page 47

with Carl's wife, calling her Aunt Betty. In turn, Carl and Betty's kids would call me Aunt Sue. We were each other's chosen family and are to this day.

Eight months after Keith enlisted in the Army, he tragically died during active duty in Iraq in 2006. It was the worst day of my life and the journey in grief has been torturous. Keith was twenty-eight years old, and I miss him every day. Many people helped along the way, especially my family. Both Carl and Betty held me up all these years. For this alone, I will be forever grateful to both of them.

Carl was a devoted husband, deeply in love with his wife, Betty. Betty and I became close friends and continue to be to this day. We were like the three musketeers. We spent hours and hours talking and laughing and praying and crying and laughing again. We talked about everything—our children, the church, world events, our spiritual journeys, our hopes and dreams, sorrows, and tragedies. Our friendship only grew and stood the test of time. We knew that whatever happened we would be there for each other. We were each other's safety net. It felt good to be family.

When Carl and Betty moved to Nevada a year ago and Cliff and I moved to Washington—I had made plans to go see them. Then one day Betty called me at a weird time. When I saw her name on my phone, I knew Carl had passed. My heart sank and then it broke when I heard my dear friend weep as she cried out, "What am I going to do without my husband?"

I flew out to Las Vegas the day after Carl passed, officiated Carl's Service of Remembrance on March 4 and spent a few days with family. Many tears and

much laughter, memories, and moments with Carl were shared. There was a hustle to make plans for the near future, although the urgency to do so was perhaps more as a way to deal with our loss. It was a whirlwind of activity, sleeplessness, shock, and grief in the midst of this playland for adults. It was a strange dichotomy to be in deep grief and shock while walking through smoke-filled carpeted rooms crowded with the sound of slot machines and bad music. We passed the time by going to the Mob Museum and the Wax Museum, eating mid-west cuisine,

These kinds of deaths make one ask the big theodicy questions. What is it really all about? Why, why now, why so soon?

and admiring the open blue sky with puffy white clouds surrounded by the Sierra Nevada mountains. I wondered

how much being in a valley kept in the cigarette smoke. On one side of the town was wealth and luxury in excess. On the other were fentanyl overdoses, awful bands playing until 2:00 AM, the homeless, and everywhere despair and desperation. I kept thinking about how odd it is that Carl died in Las Vegas and wondering how he would see the spiritual significance of it all. Carl would have had much to say about it. He would have contextualized this duality in life in religious history and Scripture offering insights that would inform ministry and daily living. I miss his insights and interesting stories. I miss being with Carl and Betty. I miss being with Carl and family. I miss Carl and me. I miss Carl.

Carl's death was sudden and unexpected. These kinds of deaths make one ask the big theodicy questions. What is it really all about? Why, why now, why so soon? Why didn't God spare me, postpone his death for at least a few more days if not years? Why did God abandon me and our children? What will life be like now without him? How

Continues on page 50

Convention Youth Programs

We are so excited to announce that we've got two great youth programs lined up for this summer's annual convention at Bridgewater State University. All youth are encouraged to attend, and both our children's program and our teen program have great subsidies available to help families manage the cost. We realize that 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 children's program, for youth aged 6–12 will follow the Convention theme of "The Practice of Optimism." The youth will experience lessons and crafting workshops exploring this topic with an outstanding leader with great experience teaching and working with children. Our teens are also invited to attend. They will again be led by Youth Director Kurt Fekete. The teens will work hard on a theatrical worship service to be presented to the congregation. Of course, teens will also have lots of time to gather for recreation, play, and outings. We're so excited to have youth attend Convention as our spiritual community is not complete without them! Contact Kurt Fekete: kfekete@hotmail.com or 802.345.0169 if you would like more information. We would love to have you include Convention in your summer plans! 📱

2023 Annual Convention

The Practice of Optimism

Bridgewater, Massachusetts
July 1–5, 2023

Several events will be livestreamed for anyone to view. Follow our [Facebook page](#) or subscribe to our [YouTube channel](#) to join us!

Upcoming Retreats and Gatherings

Gathering Leaves: Delighting in Our Spiritual Variety

We are gathering again! Please join us August 24–27, 2023, at The Lord's New Church in Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania, for Gathering Leaves, the eighth international retreat for Swedenborgian and New Church women.

Gathering Leaves was started in 2004 to bring women of all the branches of our Swedenborgian tradition together to learn from one another, make new friends, and heal any misunderstandings or divisions that we might have. It was founded on Revelation 22:2 “The leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.” We measure its success by all the friends made and cherished over nearly twenty years, bringing the branches of the Swedenborgian community closer together.

The steering committee sent out a request for the 2023 program to Swedenborgian/New Church women and the response has been very positive. There will be enriching workshops to choose from, uplifting worship, and overall joy and fun in getting together. The steering committee is Susannah Currie, Ros Taylor, Liz Kufs, Elise Genzlinger, Tiffany Perry, Lori Odhner, Tirah Keal, Amy Glenn, Jamie Rose, and Jane Siebert. We have worked since September 2022 to bring together voices from all the branches, with four voices carrying the history of Gathering Leaves and six new voices that have never attended before to carry us forward.

Save the date to join us in “Delighting in Our Spiritual Variety.” Registration will open soon—watch our



website (www.gatheringleaves.net) or our Facebook group ([Gathering Leaves Swedenborgian](#)) to register. 📱

Building Daily Building

SCYL Memorial Day Teen Retreat for ages 13 – 18

and Transitions Retreat for ages 19 – 30

Almont New Church Assembly in Allenton, Michigan

Friday, May 26 at 7:00 PM ET – Monday, May 29 at 10:00 AM ET

On this Memorial Day weekend, we will host two retreats at one location! Our SCYL teens will gather with the young adult Transitions group. Some activities will be together, such as meals and recreation, some activities will be separate, like sessions and sleeping arrangements. This year's theme is “Building Daily Building.” Many Swedenborgians of all ages know the Building Daily Building hymn. It is a favorite at our camps as well as in many of our churches. At this retreat we will explore the meaning of the lyrics of this famous song

through discussions and workshops. We will seek to discover methods to improve personal and community spiritual building as we also work on building up the Almont Retreat Center through projects highlighted by the facilities manager. We will draw on the teachings and theology of Emanuel Swedenborg to help us along the way. I'm sure we'll all benefit from the lively discussions and activities. Bring a sleeping bag (if you are not flying), PJs, towel, personal items, musical instruments, and a friend!

At our retreats we offer life skills and

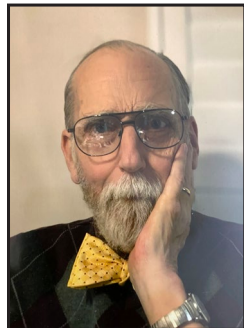
spiritual sessions based on the principles of the Swedenborgian Church. We strive for a safe, secure and inclusive environment to discuss and share relevant and meaningful ideas that help with challenges youth and young adults face today. We work, play, craft, and learn together as a community. We have fun! See you there!

The cost is \$75 with a household maximum of \$150. Register [online at Swedenborg.org](#). For more information, please call or text Youth Director, Kurt Fekete, at 802.345.0169 or email kfekete@hotmail.com. 📱

Passages

Deaths

Rev. Carl E. Yenetchi, 69, passed fully into the spiritual world on March 2, 2023, with his beloved wife, Betty of thirty-two years, close by. He was living in Las Vegas, Nevada with



Betty and his sister-in-law, Su Barnes.

Carl was born on March 17, 1953, in Southbridge, Massachusetts, to Eleanor Drake and George V. Yenetchi. They moved to Rockland where Carl and his brother George spent their younger years.

After graduating from Rockland High School, Carl earned his Bachelor of Science from the University of Norwich in Vermont. He then completed a year of Teacher's College training. In 1977, he was accepted as a candidate for the ministry by the membership of the Swedenborgian General Convention and enrolled in the Swedenborg School of Religion in Newton, Massachusetts, now the Center for Swedenborgian Studies in Berkeley, California, in association with the Pacific School of Religion.

Carl graduated and was ordained in 1980, where he embarked on a long career in ministry to the church, including camp and parish ministries as well as serving on many denominational committees. Among many talents, Rev. Yenetchi was an effective and inspirational preacher. His sermons were filled with helpful insights for daily living based on Scripture grounded in Biblical, historical context and illuminated by Swedenborg's writings. He loved the Scriptures and quoted them often. While he respected and enjoyed

traditional religious ritual and liturgy, Carl had a warm and friendly presence in the pulpit. This made the worship experience for the tried and true comfortable in familiarity and welcoming to the visitor. He had a good singing voice as well and knew by heart many of the church hymns.

In addition, Carl earned his Doctorate in Theology from the University founded by the St. Thomas Christians. Rev. Yenetchi gave thirty-three years of dedicated service to people of all ages and walks of life with compassion, understanding, and loving acceptance. Carl had a unique and effective approach to teaching. Carl worked as certified Special Education teacher with special needs and at-risk students at Massasoit School and Cardinal Cushing School in Massachusetts. In addition, he worked at the Saint Aloysius School in Cincinnati, Ohio, specializing in children who have experienced trauma. He also worked as a teacher in high school and middle school in Florida. The last year of his life he tutored children needing help with algebra in Las Vegas.

He was always a champion for the children, who succeeded because of his unending support and encouragement. He bent over backwards to teach in such a way that his kids would learn what they needed to grow and succeed in life. As one of his students wrote in a card he gave to Carl, "You have taught me everything I need to know." Carl was dearly loved and respected by all his students as he loved and respected them.

Carl found the love of his life and married Betty Barnes in 1991. He raised her children, Josh, Kim, and Andrew as his own. They enjoyed the love and security of an intact happy family throughout his life. One of his favorite sayings as they sat around the

dinner table was, "One man's family. How did I get so lucky."

Carl left behind, his wife, Betty, their children Joshua, Kim, and Andrew; grandchildren Meredith and Colt; great-grandchildren, Charlotte Elizabeth and Connor Christopher; his brother, George and his wife Liz and their two children; his sister-in-law, Su, and her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, all of whom became his extended family.

Carl is already sorely missed by his extended family, friends, and colleagues and especially by the children he ministered to with such unending love and dedication. Rest in peace, good and faithful servant. Job well done. ☪

My Friend Carl

Continued from page 48

will I go on? Will God be here to guide me?

In response to these questions Carl would say, "The answers will come from God. From one another. From deep within yourself. Therein, lies all the answers, love, and support you need. Take it slow. Go easy. Have faith. I love you. God loves you. All will be well." And then he'd say something funny, which I cannot think of as I am not as quick on my feet or as witty as he. I wish as I write this, I could channel your punchline, dear friend. But for now, I will just have to remember our time together, you and me; you, me, and Betty talking, laughing, praying, crying, talking, and laughing again. I can almost hear your laughter now and it warms my heart and puts a smile on my face, just as it did when you were here.

Rest well and be at peace dear friend until once again it shall be, my friend Carl and me. ☪

What's Happening



SwedenborgianCommunity.org

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.

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/

SWEDENBORGIANS IN ACTION



AGAINST RACISM

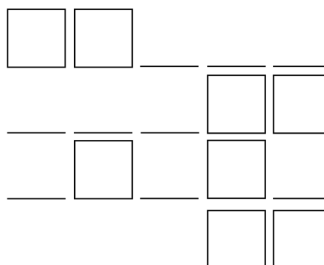
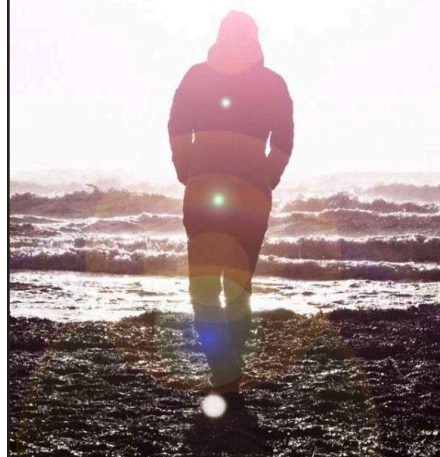
Swedenborgians in Action Against Racism

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/

Church Calendar

- May 27–29, 2023: [SCYL Retreat](#), Allenton, Michigan
- July 1–5, 2023: [Annual Convention](#), Bridgewater, Massachusetts
- July 22–30, 2023: [Almont Summer School](#), Allenton, Michigan
- July 29–August 13, 2023: [Fryeburg New Church Assembly](#), Fryeburg, Maine
- August 24–27, 2023: [Gathering Leaves](#), Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania



A S B S E
A L S E T
P A Y L P
T Y A P L

When the cubs couldn't find their sox, they went to watch some cardinals and blue jays:

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

Answers to the March Jumble:

Orchids, Tulips, Begonia, Planting
My pogosticks are all rusted. I guess it is time for some "Spring Cleaning"

Social Justice Committee

Engaged Swedenborgianism is the Way of the Cross

BY DRU JOHNSON

Whoever wants to follow me must set aside their selfish interests, pick up their cross, and follow me (Mark 8:34).

Discipleship, following Jesus,... is about following the way of the cross—commitment to the path of personal transformation... and... of confrontation with domination systems, equally symbolized by the cross (Marcus Borg, *Jesus: Uncovering the Life, Teachings and Surprising Relevance of a Spiritual Revolutionary*).

These falsities and evils are removed by the combats of temptations. This is what is meant by the “cross,”... and “to follow the Lord” means to acknowledge His Divine and to do His commandments (Emanuel Swedenborg, *Apocalypse Explained* §893).

The big picture message the Lord Jesus (a.k.a. Rabbi Yeshua) lived out has been summarized as “The Way of the Cross.” Swedenborg perceived Yeshua engaged in continual combats of internal and external, personal, and societal temptations all through his life, until his final moments on the cross. Yeshua’s state execution came precisely because he insisted on confronting the evil “Big Bad” domination system of his day—the Roman Empire—paralleled in our day by our own oppressing “Powers that Be.” Yeshua calls his followers to the path of generous loving Divine partnership. We are called to internally and externally confront the seducing, self-centered, falsity-driven shadow paths of domination and Empire.

Yeshua walked a lifelong path of the cross, concluding in the uniting of the human and the Divine. Yeshua completed his ultimate transformative accomplishment in unbounded, unsurpassed generosity of spirit. He

distributed overflowing forgiveness not just to the tool-like imperial and religious forces of torment that actually carried out the imperial execution that particular day, but to everyone, and everything, everywhere, all at once. Yeshua compared the Beloved Community to a tiny mustard seed exploding into an uncontrollable organic entangling network. Engaged Swedenborgianism is all about “The Way of the Cross”—mindfully partnering with the Beloved in personal and societal regeneration through the ultimately unstoppable Divine truth and love. ☸



Dru Johnson (they/ them) is a graduate of Pacific School of Religion and The Center for Swedenborgian Studies in Berkeley, California. Dru was especially excited to hear his mentor, Rev. Dr. Jim Lawrence,

use the phrase “Engaged Swedenborgianism.”