



## Virtual Programs for Convention 2023

*All times listed are in Eastern Time. Visit [convention.swedenborg.org/schedule](https://convention.swedenborg.org/schedule) for details.  
Livestreamed events will be able to be viewed by anyone anywhere live on [Facebook](#) or [YouTube](#).  
Zoom events require [registration](#)—attendees will be able to interact and participate.*

### Saturday Evening, July 1, 2023

- 7:00–7:30 Opening Convention ..... Livestream  
7:30–9:00 Opening Worship Service & Keynote Address by Rev. Sage Cole:  
“Becoming Everyday Mystics: Helen Keller and the Inner Call of the New Church” ..... Livestream

### Sunday, July 2, 2023

- 9:15–10:30 Business Session I ..... Zoom  
10:45–11:30 Children’s Ministries Meeting..... Zoom  
1:30–2:45 Business Session II ..... Zoom  
2:45–3:45 CSS Annual Meeting ..... Zoom  
7:00–8:30 Convention Worship Service & Communion ..... Livestream

### Monday, July 3, 2023

- 8:45–9:15 Memorial Service ..... Livestream  
9:30–10:45 Mini Course Section 1 (three options)  
“The Gay Talk” with Diana Logan Boggs & Rev. Colin Amato ..... Zoom & Livestream  
“New Stained Glass: Reimagining Sacred Space” with Shalonda Ingram ..... Zoom  
“Exploring the Optimism in Daoism and Confucianism” with Rev. Junchol Lee ..... Zoom  
1:30–2:45 Business Session III ..... Zoom  
3:00–4:15 Mini Course Section 2 (three options)  
“Saving Swedenborgian Stories: Planning and Implementing a History Project”  
with Gail Rodgers McCormick..... Zoom & Livestream  
“Acknowledging Truth, Honoring Landscapes” with Shalonda Ingram ..... Zoom  
“Looking Forward: What is the Future of the New Church?” with Rev. Rich Tafel ..... Zoom  
7:30–9:30 Ordination Worship Service ..... Livestream

### Tuesday, July 4, 2023

- 9:30–10:45 Mini Course Section 3 (three options)  
“Learning From Our Past, Healing Our Future:  
A Swedenborgian Perspective on Dismantling Colonial Dominance in Western Christianity”  
with Rev. Shada Sullivan ..... Zoom & Livestream  
“History of the Black Ministers in Convention” with Sue Ditmire & Shalonda Ingram ..... Zoom  
“An Introduction to Interoceptive Theory” with Eleanor Schnarr..... Zoom  
11:00–11:30 Business Session IV & Closing of Convention ..... Zoom

**Registration for virtual attendees closes on Wednesday, June 14**

**Register here: [convention.swedenborg.org](https://convention.swedenborg.org)**

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## Editor's Corner

### Opening Up

A group of about thirty dedicated members of the Fryeburg New Church Assembly (FNCA) opened up the camp at the end of May for the summer season. I wanted to use this space to share a few photos of our community working together.

—Beki Greenwood

[Messenger@Swedenborg.org](mailto:Messenger@Swedenborg.org)



## the Messenger

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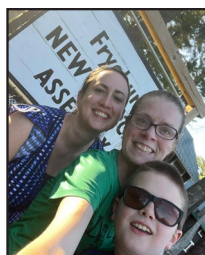
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Submissions are accepted at any time.

Submissions must be received by the 15<sup>th</sup> 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.



**Left:** Tweens Serena, Ada, Elin, Maudie, and Nate found time to have fun and work.

**Top Left:** Miriam Lexie, myself, and cool Nate hang up the FNCA sign.

**Top Right:** Colgate Searle, Willis Wood, and Dan Dyer repair a rotten beam under Goddard—the oldest cabin on campus.

**Right:** Martha Richardson and Emily Tergliafera are happy to reunite.

**Far Right:** Herb Ziegler clearing massive amounts of tree debris after a windy winter.

## Letters to the Editor

### Swedenborg and the Buddha

I enjoyed reading Pastor Lorraine Kardash's article in the April *Messenger*.

Lorraine's highlighting the connections between the two modalities convinces me I am a Swedenborgian Buddhist.

Deane Currie  
Riverside, Rhode Island

### Music and Video Article

I would like to offer my thanks for printing the article on Music and Video as a worship resource. I hope it is helpful, and I am available to offer whatever help I can if anyone has questions. I must add, however, that Rev. Ros Taylor was an essential part of the preparation, presentation, and creation of the article on the Mini Course that was the basis of the article. She is currently and regularly using this kind of technology in her ministry and is perhaps an even better resource for information and/or assistance in the practical application of video resources in various kinds of settings. It is a rapidly evolving world out there, and the dynamic of regeneration is perhaps nowhere more evident than in the realm of technology. If we are to remain relevant to the evolving cultural consciousness, we too must grow and change and evolve. Just an observation from the rocking chair on my back porch.

Rev. Ken Turley  
Bridgeton, Maine



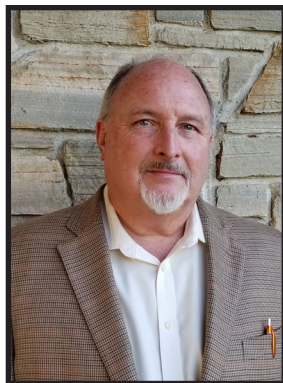
*Message from the President***Is Church a Consumerist Activity?***The Year of Regeneration: 2022–23*

The title likely indicates to most readers I'm going to criticize a growing commercialization in the spirituality marketplace. But I'm headed in the opposite direction. Consumerism gets a bad rap as a word. We cannot avoid being consumers every single day, and spiritual issues ride in the choices we make.

Long ago during my undergraduate years as an economics major, I became fascinated with how economic activity is a spiritual topic. Consumerism is all about community: we need to consume each other's goods and services to survive together. Consumerism provides ways of thriving as a community and as a world. That's why I value supporting my church. As a consumerist activity, I get something valuable by helping make Swedenborgian spirituality available to more than just me.

Swedenborg became a helpful companion in this regard once I came to explore his life. A contemporary of Adam Smith—the theorist of an invisible hand caring for the whole if everyone ethically provides a good use—Swedenborg blended economic and consumerist views into his own spirituality. His powerful doctrine of uses can be seen as arising from his lifelong interest in making things better for everyone through practical improvements in economic activity.

Professionally, the Swedish savant proved vital in the early industrial development of Sweden. Undoubtedly the most effective scientist and administrator developing Sweden's mining production, his impressive technical tomes advancing methods for smelting copper and iron were state of the art



throughout Europe for more than a century after his death. In the Swedish Parliament, where he held a seat in the House of Nobles for a half-century, he was especially renowned for his contributions to economic and monetary policies. And he provided a significant voice for democracy by advocating reduction of the monarchy and expansion of representation for the middle class.

When we open up his spirituality of usefulness, Swedenborg's moral consumerism as the way to a healthy society becomes clear. True usefulness combines love and wisdom in a concrete form: the goodness of the intended use arises from love, and the skillful means of making that intention functionally useful involves truth—or, to put it another way, the heart of wisdom. Thus, how we produce and consume is full of spiritual aims.

But I find that staying on course requires a lot of discipline. Have you ever taken your eye off the road thinking that you can continue in a straight line for a moment while you fiddle with something, only to discover to your horror that you're heading into danger almost immediately? I think that happens a lot with people spiritually because it happens so often with me. Inattention to spiritual life leads to straying into less excellent ways of living. That's where church comes in. Every week church is a useful place for resetting to basic purpose.

Our larger denominational family is also an example of how community arises from "like loves." Swedenborgian spirituality is a specially designed form that creates a distinctive contribution in the

*Continues on page 75*



# Center for Swedenborgian Studies (CSS) Board of Trustees Meeting Report

BY TOM NEUENFELDT

The Board of Trustees for the Center for Swedenborgian Studies (CSS) met on May 5 and 6, 2023. In person attendees met at the Mercy Center in Burlingame, California. Those attending virtually via Zoom were connected to those meeting in person via Owl Labs technology.

Dean, Dr. Rebecca Esterson, reported on a grant to CSS from the Boston Society of the New Jerusalem for \$16,789 to purchase an archival-quality scanner. The goal is to make materials in the CSS library archives digitally available to the public. VHS recordings of CSS lectures and Convention events will also be converted to a digital format. CSS recently received 133 boxes of denomination materials and records that have previously been stored with Iron Mountain in the Boston area for many years. Plans are underway to begin processing these materials to incorporate them into the library collections.

In January the Board approved funding for a *Nunc Licit* Fellowship program focused on ordination track students. The fellowship is a merit-based scholarship program designed to underwrite the tuition expenses for promising individuals who plan to serve in ministries of the Swedenborgian Church. The dean reported that there are currently three prospective and one current student who have expressed serious interest in the Fellowship.

Treasurer Jennifer Lindsay and Financial Manager Alan Thomsen presented a financial report and 2023–2024 budget proposal. The approved budget for 2023–2024 shows estimated revenues of \$625,448 and expenditures of \$680,281. The \$54,834 deficit is the result of the *Nunc Licit* Fellowship line item that could expend up to

as planned interactions with both Israeli and Palestinian families. Our travelers were immersed in the lives of local residents through meetings, meals, and home stays. This opportunity allowed for a more personal view and understanding of the current and historical conflicts between the families residing on these lands.

Another highlight was our time to gather and socialize as a CSS community. The Board, faculty, and staff were welcomed by the Rev. Junchol Lee and the San Francisco Church for dinner on Friday night. A few of our former board members were also able to attend.

The Board is very appreciative of the work that our faculty and staff do on a daily basis to provide the highest caliber of education and training for all of our students and the denomination at large. Dr. Rebecca Esterson has assumed the duties and

responsibilities of dean with incredible insight and energy. The Board, faculty, and staff are committed to providing a vibrant contribution to theological education. ☪

\$72,360 in scholarships and housing support this upcoming academic year. The Board has decided that strategically providing an affordable path to our future ministerial leaders is a justifiable use of funds. A highlight of the meeting was the presentation by Dr. Rebecca Esterson, Robert Carr, and Jennifer Lindsay on their March 2023 trip to the Holy Land with thirteen other Swedenborgians, including CSS students. The ten-day educational and spiritual experience provided visits to antiquity sites as well



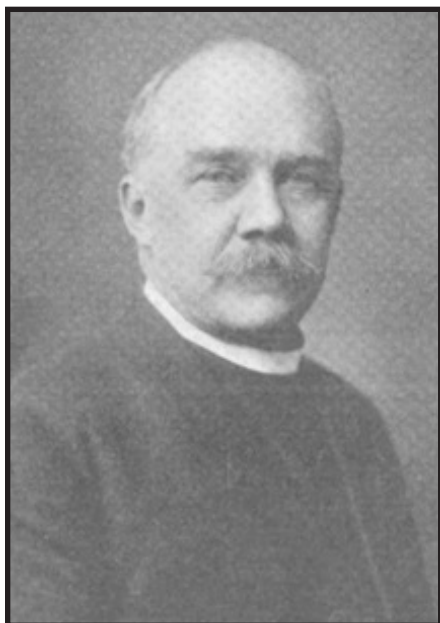
Starting with the bottom left, going clockwise: Rev. Gard Perry, Pastor Tassy Farwell, Rev. Junchol Lee, Susan Lucas, Terrie Crenshaw, Jennifer Lindsay, Paola Pruett-Vergara, Robert Pruett, Dr. Rebecca Esterson, Rev. Rachel Rivers, Robert Carr, Andrea LoPinto, Michael Yockey, Larry Americ Allen. Missing from the photo is photographer Tom Neuenfeldt



## The Year of Regeneration

## The Gist of Regeneration

COMPLIED BY JIM LAWRENCE



This photo is captioned: "Rev. Julian K. Smyth, President of the General Convention"

A classic in the genre of overviews of Swedenborgian thought, *The Gist of Swedenborg* was first published in 1920 by the prominent American publisher J.B. Lippincott of Philadelphia. Consisting entirely of carefully chosen and translated passages from Swedenborg for the general public on important matters of spiritual life, Rev. Julian K. Smyth (1856–1921), longtime minister at the New York New Church and also president of Convention, and Rev. William F. Wunsch (1882–1969), longtime scholar and president at the New Church Theological School produced with great skill a work that continues to be widely used and purchased on Amazon in new editions. These passages from *The Gist of Swedenborg* on regeneration have been edited for inclusive language and contemporary clarity. —Jim Lawrence

**By Little and Little**

When people are being regenerated, they are not regenerated speedily but slowly. The reason is that all things that they have thought, purposed, and done since infancy have added themselves to their life and have come to constitute it. People have formed such an interconnectedness within themselves that no one thing can be removed unless all are at the same time. Regeneration, or the implantation of the life of heaven in people, begins in their infancy and continues to the last of their lives in the world, and continues to be perfected to eternity (*Arcana Coelestia* §9334).

**The Moral Struggle**

Without moral struggle no one is regenerated, and many spiritual wrestlings succeed one after another. Since regeneration has for its end that the life of the old person may die and the new and heavenly life be implanted in them, there will be combat unflinching. The life of the old person resists regeneration and is unwilling to be extinguished, and the life of the new person cannot enter, except where the life of the old has been extinguished. From this it is plain there is combat—and ardent combat—because for the sake of new life (*Arcana Coelestia*, §8403).

**Repentance and Forgiveness of Sins**

Those who would be saved must confess their sins and do repentance. To *confess sins* is to know evils, to see them in oneself, to acknowledge them, to make oneself guilty and condemn oneself on account of them. Done before God, this is to confess sins. To

*do repentance* is to desist from sins after one has thus confessed them and from a humble heart has besought forgiveness, and then to live a new life according to the precepts of charity and faith. Those who merely acknowledge generally that they are a sinner, making themselves guilty of all evils, without examining themselves—that is, without seeing their actual sins—make a confession but do not do the work of repentance. Inasmuch as they do not know their evils, they continue to live as before. Those who live the life of charity and faith do repentance daily. They reflect upon the evils in themselves, acknowledge them, guard against them, and beseech the Lord for help. For of oneself one continually lapses toward evil; but with God are continually raised up and led to good (*New Jerusalem*, §159).

**The New Person**

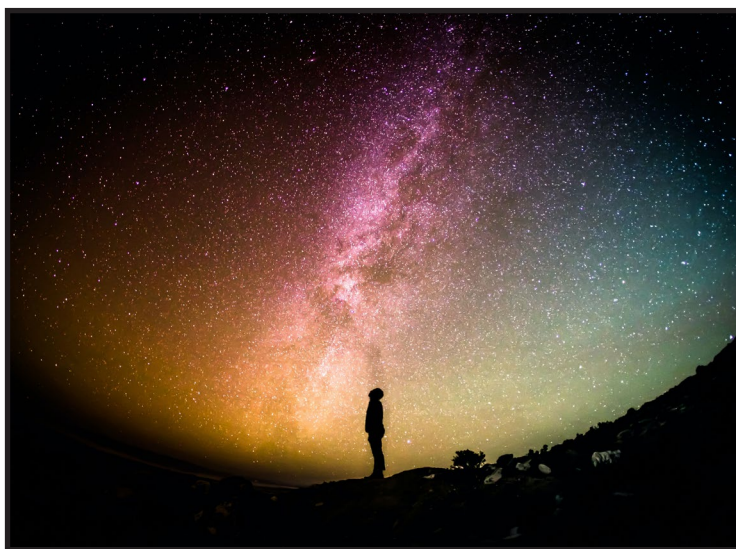
When a people are regenerated, they become altogether another—and a new—person. While their appearance and speech are the same, their mind is not. Their mind is now open toward heaven and dwells in a love for the Lord and for charity towards others that has now become the person's faith. It is the new mind that has made a new person. The change of state cannot be perceived in a person's body but in their spirit. That is why when the body is finally put off. The spirit continues—and in altogether another form when they have been regenerated. Through regeneration an inexpressible beauty of love and charity has replaced earlier inward forms that had been deformed through evil influences (*Arcana Coelestia* §3212). ☸

# Space, Science, and the Death of Imagination

BY TODD BEISWENGER

SpaceX made the news recently with their test launch and subsequent “rapid unscheduled disassembly” of the Starship rocket. Starship is exciting because it is probably the most realistic chance we have to finally send people to Mars, and yet, I don’t get the sense that people are particularly excited about prospect of putting people on Mars. My theory is that we just don’t have

Photo Credit: Greg Rakozny on Unsplash



any expectation of even any hope to find life there. It was only a couple of years ago when the folks over at NASA landed their Perseverance rover on the surface of Mars. To no one’s surprise they found no little green men walking around in snazzy, shiny suits with ray guns hanging off their hips. We used to have such a great imagination for what lies in outer space! I wish there was some disappointment around NASA’s failure to find anything but red rocks, but instead there seems to be a collective shrug.

It wasn’t always this way. Back when I was a kid—and you know every good tale starts off this way—I think there was still hope that there were people, preferably, but not necessarily, green, living on Mars. There were plenty of science fiction books and movies still in popular culture in the 1970s that depicted such a reality (anybody remember the TV show *My Favorite Martian*?), even if that hope was squashed like one of Gallagher’s watermelons ever since the Apollo missions were unable to find life on the Moon.

Of course, this created a problem for those of us who regard the writings

as more than just some good ideas, but a revelation from God. I’d say that these days there is not a more vexing book than *Earths in the Universe*, because nothing else in the writings is so provably wrong. This wasn’t a problem in the 1800s and most of the 1900s when followers of Swedenborg were setting up churches, groups, and societies throughout the western world. Now though, science and religion are in direct conflict!

It seemed that for a while the so-

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lution was to declare that the life described by Swedenborg was life that *used* to exist there, even if it isn’t there now. That position made it socially acceptable for Bryn Athyn Elementary School to have an assignment where, when I was a kid, we drew pictures of

the people on the various planets in our solar system based on Swedenborg’s descriptions. I doubt they do that these days because modern science is quite clear: not only are there not people on the Moon, Mars, or any other planet in our solar system, but there’s no evidence they have *ever* been there! At best we can hope for is traces of some past microbial life.

Yet I just don’t buy it. I don’t think science and religion are in conflict here. I just think we need a bit more humility, and a lot more imagination. Some people might call my solution *weird*, and I’m sure others will suggest that when the people from the mental health institution come that I should go quietly. Maybe so, but hear me out because believe it or not, Swedenborg isn’t the only one claiming life on other planets.

Way back in 1971, a man named Robert Monroe wrote a book titled, *Journeys Out of the Body*. It’s a classic if you are into psychic world kind of stuff. In it he tells his own personal tale of a man with an ability that he did not ask for. He worked in the radio business, and was experimenting with, “data learning during sleep” and using himself as the number one test subject. Shortly after this he started noticing that his body would start vibrating. This started happening to him at random times, and one night he lay in bed as the vibrations began. This time he noticed that during these vibrations he could put his hand through the floor of his bedroom.

*Continues on page 75*



## Space, Science, and Imagination

*Continued from page 74*

From there he learned how to leave his physical body behind and explore the world in a whole new way. He learned quickly that thought brings presence. If he was thinking about a person, he would immediately be there. Now when he visited people alive in this world, they could not see him. Eventually though he found that there were people who could see him. Some of them had already passed on from a life on Earth.

Others were intelligent species from—you guessed it—other worlds.

In fairness, Monroe does not say, “I met people from Jupiter” or name any other planet in the solar system. But he does say he’s traveled the galaxy and beyond and has talked at great length with many beings that he labels as “intelligent species.” He comes to the conclusion that there are billions of different species throughout the universe. That’s right: billions. They just live on a higher frequency than we do. Just because we can’t see them doesn’t mean they’re not there.

Most people give you the “you must be crazy” look if you mention other beings that we can’t see. But really, why not? After all, we have associate spirits with us all the time that cannot see us “because nothing that is in our solar world falls into their sight” (*Heaven and Hell* §292). Why not beings that we can’t see? Is our imagination so limited that we can only conceive of what we see? Isn’t that the sin of Adam and Eve? They trusted their senses over what God Himself told them. I also tend to think that the Lord, the creator of the entire universe, probably has the

imagination and creative juices enough to figure out how to make humans in more than just one way. If love and wisdom are the only true substances, why must we confine our thoughts of beings to those that are carbon based? Surely love and wisdom can terminate in some other, finer substance, to create life as well.

**If love and wisdom are the only true substances, why must we confine our thoughts of beings to those that are carbon based? Surely love and wisdom can terminate in some other, finer substance, to create life as well.**

Seeing the universe this way reconciles some of the other problems created by *Earths in the Universe* as well, such as how could we have had beings on a gaseous planet like Jupiter and no water for

the must-be-thirsty people of Mercury. We can release ourselves from the faulty idea that just because life works a certain way here that it must also work that way elsewhere too.

That said, I won’t be upset if the whole “there used to be life there” solution works for Mars. There’s still a part of me that really is hoping that a future Mars exploration will find some sort of fossilized humanoid alien skeleton with an oversized skull and antennae on its head. Maybe even the remains of a flying saucer or two. Is that really too much to ask? Perhaps I’ve let my imagination run a little too wild, but that’s because I believe with an infinite and loving God in charge that the possibilities truly are endless. ☸



Rev. Todd Beiswenger serves as the pastor for the Hurstville New Church outside of Sydney, Australia. He also has a YouTube channel called, “Lord, I’m Trying” that provides New Church interpretations of Bible stories.

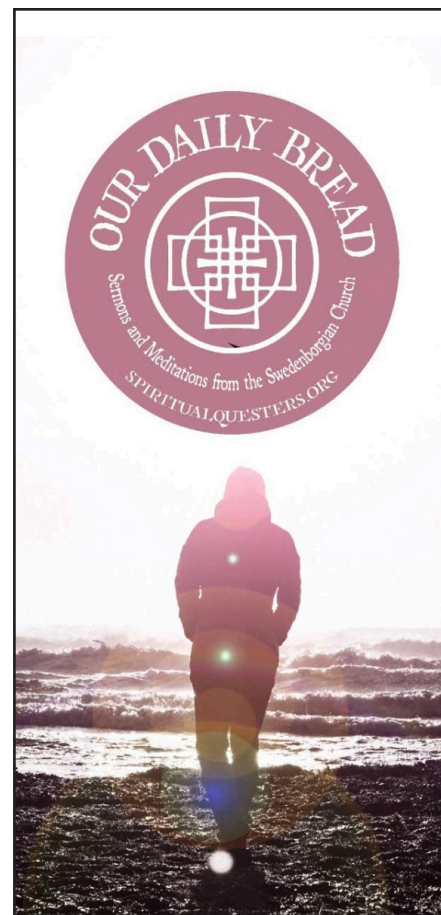
## Message from the President

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marketplace of culture. We have special loves in our theology and in our view of what’s really going on in this cosmos that is quite distinctive still from most other traditions. And by being consumers of this kind of spiritual food we love, we are also producers of it for others. Church is a production factory. We produce the goods and services of spiritual insights that so often mean a great deal to those who consume them.

So, is church a consumerist activity? Scandinavian American economist Thorstein Veblen long ago coined the phrase “conspicuous consumption.” When it comes to church, I’ll have another.

—Rev. Dr. Jim Lawrence  
[President@Swedenborg.org](mailto:President@Swedenborg.org)



# Goodbye Autoimmune Disease

BY RENÉE MACHINIAK

**A**s volunteer chaplain with our local hospital's One-to-One Ovarian Cancer Support Group, I rejoice when any of our Teal Sisters overcome difficulties related to their ovarian cancer diagnosis and treatment. Through all the ups and downs, we are there for each other sharing our individual journeys and helpful information about such things as medication side effects, family concerns, physician referrals, etc. Although I, myself, do not have cancer, I am able to offer empathy, compassion, encouragement, and supportive presence as I have lived with the chronic, life altering diagnosis of Lupus for almost a decade and have struggled mightily to keep going while living and working with nerve pain, fatigue, arthritis, and fear of the future.

During the spring 2022 clergy Peer Supervision session, I was confiding with my colleague in ministry, Rev. Junchol Lee, that, at the age of 56, I was feeling a decline in my health. I felt worried and sad because my Lupus was progressing, i.e. I felt weaker and blood-test results were discouraging. I wondered if I should retire early from ministry. He suggested that I read the books, "Goodbye Autoimmune Disease" and "Goodbye Lupus," written by a physician who, herself, suffered with Lupus as a girl and defied all the predictions that she wouldn't make it to adulthood. When Dr. Brooke Goldner was age sixteen, she promised God that, if she survived Systemic Lupus Nephritis with stage IV kidney disease, she would become a physician and research solutions for healing the body at the deepest levels.

I read the books and spent some time prayerfully assimilating all the information. Basically, Dr. Goldner's protocol uses inexpensive grocery store

foods without any drugs or supplements. While informing and working with my primary physician, I embarked upon a completely new way of living. I bought a high-powered Vita-Mix blender, and every morning filled it half full of cruciferous greens and chia seeds or flax seeds, water and fruit to add natural sweetness. I began by following a strict six-week Hyper-nourishing Rapid Recovery Program and within three months, my test results started to show! My liver enzymes, thyroid numbers (I have Hashimoto's Thyroiditis), cortisol and cholesterol numbers were declining. Once the six-week recovery period was accomplished, I relaxed a bit, incorporated other healthy foods and continued to eat according to the overall life plan she advocates.

**God has directed my path and I am well. Throughout my life, God has presented special people who have altered the course of my destiny.**

To reverse such autoimmune diseases as Lupus, Multiple Sclerosis, Rheumatoid Arthritis, Hashimoto's, Sjogren's, chronic pain, Scleroderma, Mixed Connective Tissue Disease and countless more conditions, Dr. Goldner advocates a six-step protocol:

- 1) Eliminate Animal Products;
- 2) Eliminate Added Oils;
- 3) Eliminate Processed Foods;
- 4) Hyper-Nourish Yourself with Raw Plant Foods;
- 5) Consume Omega-3s Every Day;
- 6) Water, Water, Water!

Of course, with each point of the protocol, there is much to understand, and it is very important to read the

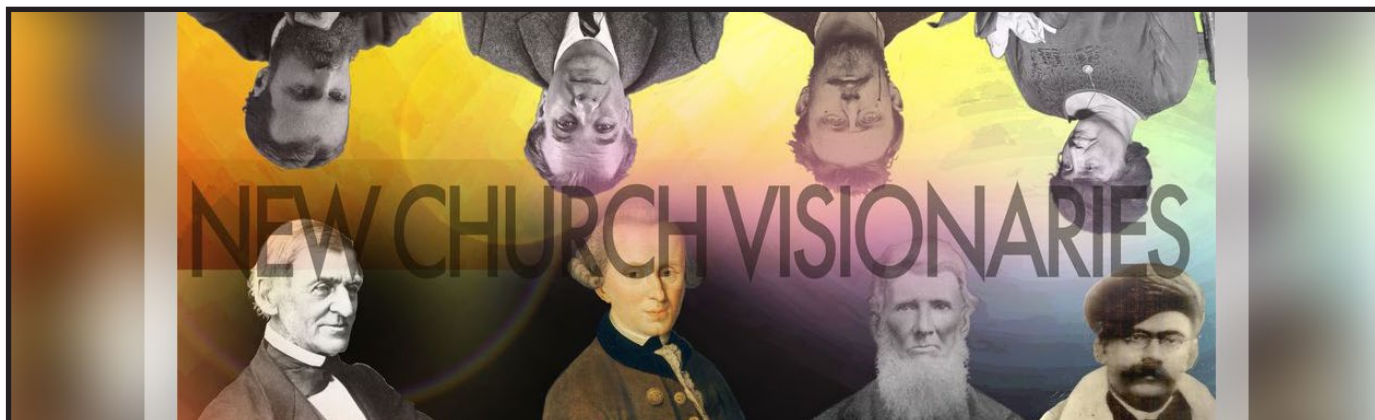
book(s) to gain the knowledge and understanding of the science and testimonials behind it all. At six months, all my blood test results and scans showed *no evidence of disease*. My high lupus markers were all gone, cysts on liver and kidney disappeared and my thyroid is getting healthier! Even my dentist noticed that the bone in my mouth is no longer receding! She asked, "Renee, what are you doing? Your mouth and teeth look great!" Personally, my favorite smoothie, and there are many in her booklet "Green Smoothie Recipes to Kick-Start Your Health & Healing," includes half a blender of fresh kale, ¼ cup chia or flax seeds, avocado, a frozen banana, frozen wild blueberries, a handful of frozen raw cranberries, a sweet dark red apple and fresh ginger! I enjoy these raw vegan smoothies twice a day and eat vegetarian basically. Because I am now at a point of good health, I enjoy salmon once or twice a week.

God has directed my path and *I am well*. Throughout my life, God has presented special people who have altered the course of my destiny. In this case, Rev. Junchol Lee who suggested these books, Dr. Brooke Goldner, M.D., who shared her wisdom and her own path to wellness, as well as each and every woman in the One-to-One Support Group who has bravely shared their experiences, their courage, and their wisdom on how to persevere and rise above the obstacles that come with the diagnosis of cancer. God will provide a way through. To access free information, upcoming events with Dr. Goldner or to learn more about personal consultations, go to: <http://GoodbyeAutoimmuneDisease.com>. In the words and spirit of Dr. Goldner: I wish you amazing health and joy! 🙏

*Continues on page 77*



## Virtual Education Opportunities



### Lecture Series: New Church Visionaries

Join us for the last leg of a 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.

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


#### Immanuel Kant with Dr. Rebecca Esterson

July 7 at 7:00 PM ET



Our final lecture will be offered by Dr. Rebecca Esterson and is titled, “Kant and Swedenborg at the Borders of Metaphysics.” Immanuel Kant (1724–1804), who shaped the course of western philosophy and ethics for centuries, followed the stories about Swedenborg coming out of Sweden with great interest, and became a reader of Swedenborg’s published works during critical stages in the development of his own thought. His lectures, letters, and especially his book *Dreams of a Spirit-Seer, Elucidated by Dreams of Metaphysics*, reveal a sustained curiosity regarding Swedenborg’s claims of communication with spirits. Many of Kant’s own ideas about the nature of spirit, perception, and language demonstrate a Swedenborgian influence,

despite efforts to distinguish his thought system from the Swede’s. As one essay puts it: “We presume that in Swedenborg Kant perceived a sort of twin brother, a counterpart, from whom he found it vitally important to distance himself.” This lecture will explore the ways Kant’s public equivocation regarding Swedenborg reveals his own journey of attraction to the kinds of worlds and ideas Swedenborg travelled in, even if he ultimately concluded they wandered too far outside the boundaries of philosophy.

Rebecca Esterson is the Dean of the Center for Swedenborgian Studies, Associate Professor of Sacred Texts and Traditions, and Dorothea Harvey Professor of Swedenborgian Studies. She serves the Core Doctoral Faculty of the Graduate Theological Union, where she is the chair of the Department of Sacred Texts and Their Interpretation. She earned her PhD from the Graduate Division of Religious Studies at Boston University and her Master of Theological Studies from Harvard Divinity School. Some of her research interests are the history of biblical interpretation, hermeneutics, Jewish-Christian relations, eighteenth century intellectual culture, Christian Hebraism, and comparative religious studies. 

#### Goodbye Autoimmune Disease

Continued from 76



Rev. Renée Maichiniak is the pastor of the Royal Oak Church of the Holy City in Royal Oak, Michigan, and serves as Youth Chaplain for the Swedenborgian Church Youth League (SCYL).

## Summer Camps

# Exclamation Point or Capital Letter?

BY TREVOR

We all have recurring pivotal points in our lives by which we mark time, both present and past. At a recent outreach meeting, it was remarked that for some people, the Fryeburg New Church Assembly (FNCA) is their exclamation mark, meaning the “Hurrah!” that marks the end of their “camp year,” and for others it is their capital letter that marks the beginning of their “camp year.” For all who attend, however, no matter when it falls in their life cycle, it is “A Little Slice of Heaven on Earth.”

Newcomers at camp this summer will find several new features in place to help you feel included and warmly welcomed into the FNCA community. And everyone from first timer to life-long attendee finds the Assembly’s natural setting to be stunningly beautiful.

Set on over twenty acres of pine forest on the banks of the clear and cool waters of the Saco River, the FNCA’s Main Building is the focal point of camp activity, housing the lecture hall, adult lounge, dining hall, kitchen, kids rec hall, teen girls dorm, single women’s quarters, and 9 private rooms.



**Registration for FNCA 2023,  
July 29 – August 13, is open.**  
[www.fryeburg.org/register](http://www.fryeburg.org/register)  
**Contact the registrar, Miriam  
Lexie, with any questions:**  
[registrar@fryeburg.org](mailto:registrar@fryeburg.org)

And a baker’s dozen of “rustic” family cabins with beautiful mountain views are ranged up along the top of the bank overlooking the river.

Despite the beauty of the natural location, however, the people and the program are the core of the Assembly.

The excellent FNCA lecture program and teen and children’s religion classes offer something for everyone.

*I’m in the Bible, and the Bible is in Me* is the first week’s lecture theme. From our physical birth to our resurrection into the world of spirits at our death, we are offered spiritual correspondences to guide our journey in the stories

of the Bible. Swedenborg specifically outlined the passages that advance the story of humanity’s development, and the spiritual growth of every person. Our lecturers will explore with us the many milestones we find when we follow this “story within the story” and how we can find guidance in the Bible stories for our lives here and now!

*Finding Holiness in the Word, Now and Every Day* will be the lecture focus the second week. It has been famously observed that the Ten Commandments are not merely prohibitions but promises. For example, regarding the eighth commandment “You shall not bear false witness” we are offered a promise: “You will learn why it is good not to lie, and the truth shall set you free.” Our topic aims to help you experience that the Word is holy and to feel its rich blessing in your life. Our lecturers this week will aim to open a way to the Word’s holiness and will invite us to experience its interior riches.

The FNCA teen and children’s programs are tailored to their needs and likes, with classes, games, swimming, outings, evening activities, and the formation of strong friendships, many of which last a lifetime.

In heaven, people sort themselves into communities of people with a similar purpose. *Heaven & Hell* §41 says, “Angels engaged in similar activities form a single community.” §44 goes on to say, “Kindred souls gravitate toward each other spontaneously, as it were, for with each other they feel as though they are with their own family.”

*Continues on page 79*





## The Gray Fund Trustees Establish New Grant Request Process

The Gray Fund was established by the will of Wesley N. Gray, a Reading, Massachusetts, roofing contractor, member of the Boston Society of the New Jerusalem, and dedicated supporter of the knowledge and works of Emanuel Swedenborg. His will, after provisions for his wife, extended family, and workers, left the remainder of his estate to a trust that would distribute funds according to his specifications and under the direction of three trustees. The original three trustees were named in the will with instructions that replacements would be selected by the trustees with the concurrence of the Massachusetts New Church Union and the General Convention of the New Jerusalem.

The key wording in the will (revised in 2005) follows:

“...the Standing Committee of the Massachusetts New Church Union, and the General Council of the General Convention of the New Jerusalem in the United States of America, to be held by said Board of Trustees for the following purposes, to wit: To keep safely invested and to pay over the net income after all expenses and the usual allowance for their services are paid, to such Church and missionary uses, preferably in Massachusetts first, then in the United States of America, and then

*in the whole world, as shall seem to them most deserving, and most useful toward the growth of the New Jerusalem Church....[italics added]”*

This rather broad goal allows the trustees to draw up their own rules and guidelines to satisfy this goal. The current trustees adopted the rules established by previous trustees, which were simply that the request for a grant could not exceed \$3000. There was no application process other than a letter of request and awards applied for and granted on a rolling basis.

The current trustees have established rules governing the method of calculating and distributing income of the fund. In the past, funds were deposited with and managed by a fiduciary (investment bank), and earned incomes or appreciation were distributed in a manner determined by the trustees. Recently, the trustees moved the funds from NYB Mellon to the Common Fund, the fund established by General Convention to invest, manage, and pay out investments by constituent and related entities of the General Convention. The new rules for expending funds are to make available for grants the payout as determined annually by the Investment Committee of the General Convention, generally at or close to four percent of funds

invested. Given an expected return on investment of about seven percent, averaged over ten years, this allows re-investment of three percent of the increase in value, thus maintaining the viability of the fund into the future, assuming annual inflation to be close to three percent over a ten-year period.

The Gray Fund has established a new set of rules and procedures:

- Call for proposals for the next calendar year will be made in *the Messenger*, and submissions will be due by August 15. Selections will be made by the trustees by October 1.
- Requests can be for the calendar year only or up to three years, renewable annually.
- Grantees will be required to provide a report.
- If funds remain to be granted for the following calendar year after awards are made, the Gray Fund will consider requests for funding of \$3000 or less on a rolling basis.
- Copies of the request should be emailed to the Gray Fund secretary at [Resterson@gtu.edu](mailto:Resterson@gtu.edu).

Gray Fund Trustees:

Dr. Rebecca Esterson, Secretary  
Herb Ziegler, Treasurer  
Nancy Little, Trustee



### Exclamation or Capital

*Continued from page 78*

The Fryeburg New Church Assembly invites all kindred souls to join together for learning and love, community and companionship, faith and family, affection and activity together from Saturday, July 29 to Sunday,

August 13, 2023, in beautiful Fryeburg, Maine. And for those who can't join us in person, our spiritual programming is available virtually.





## Church Membership and Delegate Statistics

Article I, Section 3, of the Constitution of the Swedenborgian Church states that it is composed of “Constituent bodies... which... unite with the Swedenborgian Church in performing the distinctive uses of a church.” The constituent bodies are the associations and groups listed in the table below. The constitution continues, “The members of the Swedenborgian Church shall be those persons who are adult, active members of a constituent body or who have been accepted as members-at large through Rite of Confirmation and by vote of the Swedenborgian Church.”

Article IV, Section 2, states, “Every constituent body of the Swedenborgian Church shall be entitled to two delegates and an additional delegate for every ten members.”

The table below displays statistics as of December 31, 2022. 📊

Association (Conference)	Churches		Ordained Ministers		Licensed Pastors	Members	Number of Potential Delegates
	Active	Inactive	Active	Retired		Active	
Eastern Canada (ECC)	1	0	2	1	0	56	8
Illinois Association	5	0	4	1	2	61	8
Kansas	2	0	1	0	0	55	8
Maine	3	0	1	4	1	110	13
Massachusetts New Church Union (MNCU)	4	0	5	1	1	53	7
Michigan	2	0	2	1	0	52	7
Middle Atlantic	3	0	6	1	0	103	12
New York	1	0	1	0	0	20	4
Ohio	3	0	2	2	1	45	7
Pacific Coast (PCA)*	7	0	18	3	4	224	24
Western Canada (WCC)	2	0	1	0	0	59	8
At Large	n/a	n/a	1	0	0	3	3
Unknown Affiliation	n/a	n/a	11	7	n/a	n/a	n/a
Sub-Total	33	0	55	21	10	841	109
Association/Conference Total	33	0	n/a	n/a	10	841	109
General Council (lay officers and members)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	9
Total Possible Delegates							194

\*Did not submit information for 2022, using 2021 information

## Mini Course Updates

We are pleased to announce that as a result of a generous grant from Pacific Coast Association and the Ohio Association that we now have the ability to offer three additional Mini Courses online!

We will be turning one of the classrooms on campus into a hybrid classroom. This means that the Mini Courses offered by Rev. Rich Tafel, Rev. Junchol Lee, and CSS seminarian Eleanor Schnarr will now also be available to our attendees who register online! Check our schedule for details

about each Mini Course and don't forget to register by June 14 to join us virtually!



Rev. Colin Amato is replacing Rich Tafel in co-leading the Mini Course “The Gay Talk” with Diana Logan Boggs.

Rev. Colin Amato currently runs a virtual new-start ministry four Sunday afternoons a month called Rainbow Church of the New Jerusalem, is clinical director of the Solano Pride Center in Solano County, California, and a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist in private practice. 📞

# Bishop Vashti McKenzie Named NCC President and General Secretary

*For Immediate Release from the Governing Board of the NCC  
May 23, 2023, Washington, D.C.*

The Governing Board of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA (NCC) is pleased to announce that Bishop Vashti Murphy McKenzie has been elected to serve as President and General Secretary of the ecumenical organization. She is the first African American woman to serve as both President and General Secretary of the organization. The Governing Board made the announcement during its annual Spring meeting, held in Washington, DC, May 15–16.

Bishop McKenzie has served in the position as interim since April 1, 2022, and immersed herself in the work of the organization without delay. During her year as interim, she led an extensive review of NCC's foundational documents, initiated Voter Empowerment 2022: A Church-Based Action Plan campaign, testified on Capitol Hill on behalf of low wage earners and poor children, and served as keynote speaker at the National Prayer Breakfast.

She has also represented NCC internationally at the World Council of Churches' Regional Ecumenical Officers annual meeting at the Ecumenical Center in Bossey, Switzerland as well as attended the eleventh Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Germany.

Bishop McKenzie has reinstituted the NCC's Health and Wellness Taskforce to dive deeper into health and healthcare priorities that impact persons of all races, ethnicities, and socio-economic and geographic status. As part of the taskforce relaunch, U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy was the keynote speaker at the recent Governing Board Health and Wellness

Taskforce Luncheon.

She also has initiated a new Policy Roundtable to create space for NCC's communions and partners to speak to and with each other and hear from policy experts on critical issues that strengthen its impact on public policy.

"The National Council of Churches is excited that Bishop McKenzie has agreed to serve in this pivotal leadership role. She brings the necessary insight, expertise, and ecumenical commitment to the Council to lead us into the future," said Board Chair Bishop Teresa Jefferson-Snorton, who is also the Ecumenical Officer of the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church.

"The entire Board is excited about Bishop McKenzie's vision and leadership. We are grateful for her willingness to use the full vessel of her ministerial gifts to lead the NCC," added Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and NCC Governing Board Vice Chair.

"I am honored to serve the National Council of Churches, and I look forward to building upon the strong foundation laid by the men and women who have led the way in ecumenism and advocacy work for more than seven decades. I look forward to engaging every communion within this great collaborative to serve the 100,000 congregations and the more than 30 million members that fall under its ecumenical umbrella," said Bishop McKenzie, who has been active in social justice issues for more than three decades.



Bishop McKenzie served as the 117<sup>th</sup> elected and consecrated bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church and was the first female elected to episcopal office in the AME Church's two centuries of operation. She is the first female to serve as President of the Council of Bishops and President of the General Board and has served as presiding bishop in Southern Africa—Botswana, Swaziland, Mozambique, and Lesotho—and in the United States in Tennessee, Kentucky and Texas.

Bishop McKenzie is a graduate of the University of Maryland, College Park, and Howard University School of Divinity, and has an earned doctorate from United Theological Seminary.

She was appointed in 2009 by

*Continues on page 82*

## Passages

### Deaths

**Lars-Erik Wiberg, 94**, longtime member of the Cambridge Society of the New Jerusalem, made his full transition into the spiritual world on January 19, 2023. Lars served as president of the Society for many years and was deeply loved. A memorial service will be held for him at Swedenborg Chapel on Saturday, July 22 at 2 PM ET.



### Births

Benjamin and Desiree Currie welcomed **Dylan Rocco Currie** into their new family on May 12. Weighing in at seven pounds, eight ounces and twenty-one inches long. He is the youngest great-grandson to Will Barbeau (98), and fifth grandchild to Rev. Susannah and Deane Currie. Doting Aunt Rev. Sage Cole helped the new family transition home.



### NCC President

*Continued from page 81*

President Barack Obama to serve on the inaugural White House Commission of Faith Based and Neighborhood Partnerships. This group worked on behalf of Americans committed to improving their communities, regardless

of religious or political beliefs. In 2014, she was named one of the Fifty Most Powerful Women in Religious Life in the World by Huffington Post.

She is the author of six books, including *Not Without a Struggle, Journey to the Well*, and *The Big Deal: Taking Small Steps to Move Closer to God*.



## Social Justice Committee

### Engaged Swedenborgianism's and Healing from Societal Racism

BY DRU JOHNSON

*"They who do not explore the evils of their thought and will, cannot do the work of repentance" (Emanuel Swedenborg, The New Jerusalem and its Heavenly Doctrine §12).*

*"The record is there for all to read. It resounds all over the world. It might as well be written in the sky. One wishes that Americans, white Americans, would read, for their own sakes, this record and stop defending themselves against it. Only then will they be enabled to change their lives. The fact that they have not yet been able to do this—to face their history to change their lives—hideously menaces this country. Indeed, it menaces the entire world" (James Baldwin, The White Man's Guilt 1965).*

Since the June 2020 vicious murder of George Floyd, there are many U.S. polls showing that Baldwin's wish is coming to pass, at long last. In fact many polls show that the U.S. has clarified its collective mind on its own racism. An April 2023 NBC News poll showed that 59% of people in the U.S. "think America is racist." And does it even need to be said anymore that changing individual minds is important, but not enough? People really

seem to be finally recognizing this fact. In the same poll a full 70% agreed that "Our country needs to do more to increase social justice." Since our denomination is overwhelmingly European-American, progressive, and coaxed by Swedenborg to engage in the difficult work of self-examination, I believe we have a sacred opportunity to lead the way among European-Americans towards increasing social justice in the U.S. Self-examination is never easy, but if we actually start practicing what we preach, embarking on our own anti-racism journeys, we are in a collective position to have a positive impact far greater than our small numbers would suggest. Swedenborg's perspective on how humans can go through the inner processes of first repentance, then reformation and finally regeneration is a message that applies not just to individuals, but to institutions and societies as well, and a message our society needs right now to get to where we need to get—a place of reconciliation. If you would like to join in with this vital work, Swedenborgians In Action Against Racism (SAAR) has resources to help, including an excellent periodic newsletter. Please go to the [swedenborg.org](https://swedenborg.org) website to connect with us.

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 their mentor, Rev. Dr. Jim Lawrence, use the phrase "Engaged Swedenborgianism."





## What's Happening

### San Francisco Dedication

On Sunday, June 11, 2023 the San Francisco Swedenborgian Church will dedicate a new architectural feature—a plaque acknowledging that the land it stands on is the uncended ancestral homeland of an indigenous people:

“As we gather here, let us remember that we live, work and worship on the uncended ancestral homeland of the Ramaytush Ohlone peoples. The Ramaytush Ohlone understand the interconnectedness of all things and maintained respect and harmony with nature for centuries. As Swedenborgians we share this conviction. We acknowledge the Ramaytush Ohlone peoples for their enduring commitment and stewardship past, present, and future of these lands.”

The dedication will be streamed live on the church's Facebook page ([The SF Swedenborgian Church](#)) as part of the regularly scheduled Sunday Service at 11:00 AM local time. 📺



[SwedenborgianCommunity.org](https://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/](https://Swedenborg.org/news-announcements/newsletter-the-messenger/)

### Church Calendar

- **July 1–5, 2023:** [Annual Convention](#), Bridgewater, Massachusetts
- **July 16–22, 2023:** [Paulhaven Family Camp](#), Ashmont, Alberta
- **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

### SWEDENBORGIANS IN ACTION

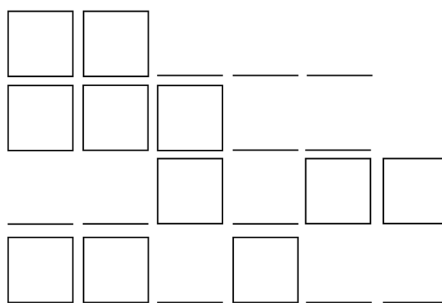


### AGAINST RACISM

#### 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](mailto:revshada@gmail.com) to join the email list.

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



B T Y A B  
O H R S T  
T E R I L T  
P R C A T E

*A day without a feline in your life is a pure:*

\_\_\_\_\_

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

#### Answers to the May Jumble:

*Train, Garage, Midway, Enable*

*Before heading to Convention, I need to head under the Sagamore to collect some:  
"Bridge Water"*

### About the Swedenborgian Church

Emanuel Swedenborg was born January 29, 1688, in Stockholm, Sweden. Although he never intended a church denomination to be founded or named after him, a society was formed in London fifteen years after his death. American groups eventually founded the General Convention of Swedenborgian Churches.

As a result of Swedenborg's spiritual questioning and insights, we as a church exist to encourage that same spirit of inquiry and personal growth, to respect differences in views, and to accept others who may have different traditions.

In his theological writings, Swedenborg shared a view of God as infinitely loving and at the very center of our beings, a view of life as a spiritual birthing as we participate in our own creation, and a view of scripture as a story of inner life stages as we learn and grow. Swedenborg said, "All religion relates to life, and the life of religion is to do good." He also felt that the sincerest form of worship is a useful life.

## Summer Camps

### Happy Paulhaven Camping Days are Here—This Time with a Twist

Recently, a motion was made "to have camp week become a family camp. To be revisited in five years." The motion overwhelmingly passed. So, get those RVs, trailers, tent trailers, and tents ready for a fun-filled and spiritually enriching week July 16 – 22. There may be some dorm space available as well, but that remains to be seen.

Paulhaven is comprised of forty acres of wooded land, about half a mile from the hamlet of Ashmont, Alberta. Ashmont is 120 miles northeast of Edmonton. All adults will be invited to share their time and talents to the camp week. A camp tuition fee will be set. Those contributing their time will have their tuition reduced accordingly. All will pay for their natural food that week. A Family Camp committee has been

formed and will have more data and registration information in the June Western Canada Conference (WCC) newsletter.

We expect to have some growing pains but hope to work most of the kinks out by next year.

For more information, please contact Sharon Williams by email at [sharonwilliams@shaw.ca](mailto:sharonwilliams@shaw.ca). Get in on the ground floor with this and help us put our beloved Paulhaven to more spiritual use! 🏕️

