



## Virtual Programs for Convention 2024

*All times listed are in Eastern Time. Visit [swedenborg.org](https://swedenborg.org) for details.*

*Livestreamed events will be able to be viewed by anyone anywhere live on [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com).*

*Zoom Events require [registration](#)—attendees will be able to interact and participate.*

### Friday Evening, June 28

- 7:00–9:00 Opening Convention, Worship Service, & Keynote Address by Dylan Hendricks:  
     “Planting Seeds for the Future of Swedenborg” ..... *Zoom Events & YouTube*

### Saturday, June 29

- 9:00–11:30 Business Session I ..... *Zoom Events*
- 12:00–12:45 Honoring Wayfarers Chapel ..... *Zoom Events & YouTube*
- 1:00–2:30 Mini Course Section 1 (two options) ..... *Zoom Events*  
     “Bound Together on Indigenous Land” with Andrew Dodd ..... *Zoom Events*  
     “The Pastor’s Corner” with Rev. Dr. Donna Keane & Pastor Kelly Milne ..... *Zoom Events*
- 2:45–5:30 Business Session II ..... *Zoom Events*
- 7:00–8:30 Convention Worship Service & Communion ..... *Zoom Events & YouTube*

### Sunday, June 30

- 8:00–8:45 Service of Remembrance ..... *Zoom Events & YouTube*
- 9:30–11:30 Business Session III ..... *Zoom Events*
- 12:15–12:45 SCCM Annual Meeting ..... *Zoom Events*
- 1:00–2:30 Mini Course Section 2 (two options)  
     “The Satanic Tyranny of Money:  
     August Nordernskiöld, Alchemy, Slavery, and the Tradition(s) of Political Swedenborgianism”  
     with Dell J. Rose ..... *Zoom Events*  
     “*Institutional Repentance*” with Rev. Shada Sullivan ..... *Zoom Events*
- 2:45–4:00 Business Session IV & CSS Annual Meeting ..... *Zoom Events*

### Monday, July 1

- 10:30–11:45 Mini Course Section 3 (two options)  
     “Have You Visited Swedenborg, Michigan?” with Rev. Shada Sullivan ..... *Zoom Events*  
     “Worship is Life: Be Love, Be Honest, Be Useful” with Rev. Sage Cole ..... *Zoom Events*
- 2:00–3:30 Induction Service Watch Party ..... *Zoom Events & YouTube*

#### Programming Available to Anyone

Find these programs (times listed above) on our [YouTube channel](#):

- Opening, Worship Service, and Keynote • Honoring Wayfarers Chapel • Convention Worship Service • Service of Remembrance • Induction Service Watch Party

**Registration for virtual attendees closes on Saturday, June 15**

**Register here: <https://swedenborg.org/events-activities/annual-convention/>**

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## Editor's Corner



### Following Up to "How Do We Grow"

I have received and overwhelming amount of positive feedback about my recent editorial titled "How Do We Grow?" and I want to thank everyone who took the time to either write to me or talk with me about it. I am really pleased that my recent editorials have been connecting with so many readers in one way or another.

After my April editorial was published, Rev. Sage Cole reached out to me about recording a podcast on her new substack platform "Worship is Life" as part of her "Be Love, Be Honest, Be Useful" movement that works towards a clarified vision of how we might move forward in building a new church that welcomes and supports diversity, creativity, and change.

I was hesitant at first, but mainly because no one wants to listen to their own voice, me included. However, the more I thought about it, the more it felt like a good idea to just sit and have an honest conversation with her about



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

*Click the YouTube logo above to subscribe!*

what church is to me. And to me, as much as I love and care for many of our buildings and properties (I, too, consider myself a steward of one of our 100-year-old facilities), that really isn't *church*. It's the communities, the people, the families—and how all of us live our lives interacting with those around us—Swedenborgians or otherwise. Living a life of use, and being in heavenly communities with others are really the fundamentals of what church means to me.

I encourage you to take a look and listen to what Rev. Sage is doing, and I look forward to being in community with you in a few short weeks in East Lansing, Michigan.

—Beki Greenwood  
[messenger@swedenborg.org](mailto:messenger@swedenborg.org)



Rev. Sage Cole and Beki Greenwood recording "Be Love: Living Honestly" on the "Worship Is Life" podcast.

## the Messenger

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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.

*Message from the President*

## Where Is the Line Between Church and Politics?

*The Year of Spiritual Uses: 2023–24*

At our upcoming convention two proposals will be put on the floor for consideration as "Standing Resolutions" in our official denominational proclamations. These are published on our website (<https://swedenborg.org/community/diversity-equity-inclusion/denominational-statements/>) and in our annual Journal of the Swedenborgian Church. The Social Justice Committee (SJC) is proposing a Standing Resolution on Climate Justice, and Swedenborgians in Action Against Racism (SAAR) is proposing a Standing Resolution in Support for Indigenous People in the form of a Land Acknowledgement Statement.

When the General Council in its spring meeting discussed these two proposals for the business session agenda in East Lansing, they created the most energized conversation of the entire meeting. There is a perception by some that the denomination is becoming more political, and the general question centered on whether that is a good, bad, or indifferent trend. As a church historian, however, I know that this question has come up many times before. It tends to wax and wane in relation to the nature of social dramas and the style of thought leaders at that time. Several program structures over the life of Convention in this issue have come and gone and come again. In recent times, a new program arose in 1995 within the Education Support Unit Social that



gave itself the name "Concerns Education Committee." They offered educational programs and wrote *Messenger* articles. At some point in the early millennium, however, that original committee grew quiescent and disappeared from EDSU reports until 2010 when the cause was revived as the Social Concerns Committee as a stand-alone committee not under the auspices of a Support Unit. Self-govern-

ing and self-generating, that group continued to provide a place for people wishing to support a place in the church where social issues could be viewed as an important part of "doing theology" in the larger culture. Mostly, this work manifested as *Messenger* articles and display tables at the summer convention.

In the denominational restructuring of 2018, the name was changed to the Social Justice Committee with this description in our annual Journal: "The Social Justice Committee is an ad hoc committee created by General Council as a forum to address social concerns for the purpose of bringing information to the body of Convention through the *Messenger* and other vehicles, and to offer resources for ways to be involved." In the autumn of 2020, a new ad hoc group arose, Swedenborgians in Action Against Racism (SAAR) that has been meeting regularly ever since and planning various programs to support the work stated plainly in the title of the

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# Wayfarers' Leadership Moves Forward with Disassembly of the Iconic Chapel to Save it from Imminent Destruction in Landslide

*Press Release from May 14, 2024*

Rancho Palos Verdes — Wayfarers Chapel is a National Historic Landmark, designed by renowned architect Frank Lloyd Wright, Jr. (Lloyd Wright). Resting on a peninsula, this site hosts the chapel and campus on a hillside above the Pacific Ocean where wayfarers could stop to rest, meditate, and give thanks to God. Lloyd Wright, the son of the American architectural innovator Frank Lloyd Wright, created a design with an emphasis on harmony between God's natural world and the inner world of mind and spirit.

Currently, Wayfarers Chapel and the surrounding grounds are closed due to the momentum of local land movement. The Portuguese Bend landslide has accelerated at an unprecedented rate and is dramatically impacting the Wayfarers Chapel campus and surrounding area. The Wayfarers community is committed to preserving the historic chapel and giving it a resilient future. Constrained by nature and the rapidly moving landslide, the goal is to save the chapel by collaborating with historic preservation experts, led by Architectural Resources Group (ARG) of Los Angeles, to carefully deconstruct the chapel to preserve as many materials (many of which are no longer being made or available) as possible for a future careful and thoughtful rebuilding of the chapel.

"The accelerating destruction of Wayfarers Chapel by the Portuguese Bend landslide complex is a looming tragedy felt by many. Our hearts go out to our many neighbors whose

homes are threatened." Rev. Dan Burchett, Executive Director, continued, "Wayfarers is committed to preserving our iconic chapel exactly as it has always been, either on the current site or a similar site close by in Rancho Palos Verdes. We are taking immediate action to carefully disassemble the chapel's historic materials as a necessary step in the preservation of the chapel for generations to come."

"Wayfarers Chapel has been a treasured part of our community for generations. The City of Rancho Palos Verdes is committed to working with Wayfarers Chapel to en-

**The Portuguese Bend landslide has accelerated at an unprecedented rate and is dramatically impacting the Wayfarers Chapel campus and surrounding area.**

sure it can be quickly rebuilt on a geologically safe location somewhere within the city, if possible. We are pleased that Wayfarers is working with the National Park Service and the preservation experts at Architectural Resources Group to ensure the chapel will be preserved according to the highest standards for historic preservation," stated Mayor John Cruikshank.



Photo by Henrik Kam

*Image of the broken panels on Wayfarers Chapel due to the accelerated landslide*

The movement on the site to date has caused damage to the metal framing in both the walls and ceiling, causing it to torque and bend, most of the glass panels have fractured, many doors are no longer operable, the concrete floor has heavily cracked, and even the cornerstone laid in 1949 has a long crack through it. In addition, services underground including electricity, water, sewer, and gas utilities are broken and currently unusable. The chapel will not be able to withstand much more damage before it becomes impossible to preserve.

"So many of the chapel's original materials that were part of the Lloyd Wright design cannot be replicated today: the old growth redwood glulam, the blue roof tiles, the elegant network of steel that holds the windows

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## Wayfarers Deconstruction

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together. With each passing day, more of this material is lost or irreparably damaged. Our team is working against the clock to document and move these building components to safety so that they can be put back together again," said Katie Horak, Principal of Architectural Resources Group.

It has been determined that the immediate deconstruction of the chapel is the safest and most viable preservation action to take at this time and will prevent further irreparable damage to the chapel's structure and materials. The team will begin the careful disassembly of the chapel, which includes cataloguing and documenting each piece, preserving as much of the chapel's original materials as practicable, and relocating all component parts to a temporary safe location until they can be reassembled. Simultaneously, the team will evaluate options for reconstruction on this site or one nearby.

### About Wayfarers

Wayfarers Chapel, or "The Glass Church," in Rancho Palos Verdes, California, is a spiritual center serving "the wayfarer" — that is, all who come, no matter their faith or status. Wayfarers provides a place of unique and exquisite beauty where wayfarers can experience the beauty of the created world, to rest, meditate, and reflect. Wayfarers has served the public for free since its opening in 1951. The Wayfarers Chapel, designed by Lloyd Wright, was declared a National Historic Landmark in 2023, just before the Portuguese landslide forced its closure in February 2024.

### Contact

Rev. Dan Burchett  
Executive Director, Wayfarers Chapel  
[danb@wayfarerschapel.org](mailto:danb@wayfarerschapel.org) 

# Wayfarers Chapel FAQ

Press Release from May 13, 2024

### What is the status of the landslide?

The landslide continues at a rapid pace. GPS surveys by the city of Rancho Palos Verdes shows this land movement by Wayfarers:

- Oct '21 to Oct '22: ~0.08" per week (or ~3" per year)
- Oct '22 to Oct '23: ~0.5" per week (or ~25" per year)
- Oct '23 to Jan '24: ~2.3" per week (or ~120" per year)
- Mar '24 to Apr '24 ~7" per week (or ~364" per year)

The earth under the chapel property and surrounding area is currently moving two feet or more a month. This is part of a historic landslide that has been occurring in the area for over fifty years.



Concrete and stone stairs buckling due to the increasing speed of the Portuguese Bend landslide.

### What is the status of the chapel?

The chapel itself is at risk for irrevocable damage if methods to save the chapel are not taken in the coming weeks. Currently the movement on the site is causing damage to the redwood structure, which will only be salvageable if no further damage occurs. In addition, metal framing in the walls and ceiling is torquing and bending; most of the glass panels have fractured; many doors are no longer operable; the

concrete floor is heaving and cracking; even the cornerstone laid in 1949 has a long crack through it.

Is only the chapel affected? The entire campus is affected including the parking lot and ancillary structures. Most notably, services underground including electricity, water, sewer, and gas utilities are broken and currently unusable.

### What are your plans for the chapel?

The team is committed to protecting and preserving the chapel as much as possible. In order to do that, we have engaged the services of Architectural Resources Group (ARG), an architecture and planning firm that specializes in historic buildings to evaluate the chapel and develop recommendations for a resilient future.

The team is proposing a careful disassembly of the chapel, carefully cataloguing, and documenting each piece, preserving as much of the chapel's original materials as practicable within a rapid timeframe to prevent further, irreparable damage. Simultaneously, as the materials are documented and preserved, the team will evaluate options

for reconstruction on this site or one nearby.

### What is disassembly?

Disassembly is a method of cataloguing, documenting, and preserving historic structures that is used to save and preserve buildings that are in danger from environmental factors and are unable to be moved in one piece. In contrast to demolition where buildings

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## Wayfarers Chapel FAQ

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are knocked down and materials are either landfilled or recycled, disassembly involves taking a building apart and carefully documenting each element in order to reconstruct the building elsewhere. In the case of Wayfarers, disassembling the chapel now before it is destroyed by the landslide is essential to its preservation.

### What role does the City of Rancho Palos Verdes play?

The leaders and staff at Rancho Palos Verdes (RPV) are supportive of the effort and understand the threat of destruction from the landslide. Going forward, our team is forging a partnership with City to create a future for Wayfarers in RPV that shows the resilience of the city and local community in the face of the landslide disaster.

### When will you rebuild?

This team is committed to opening a rebuilt chapel as soon as feasibly and safely possible.

### Where will you rebuild?

Currently many options are being explored. If the current property were to stabilize and the geologists are positive it is safe to do so, the site could be rebuilt upon. Realistically, the main part of the Portuguese Bend Landslide complex started movement in 1956 and has never stopped moving and the movement in 2024 has been described by the city geologist as “unprecedented.” While the current site is monitored, the team is exploring other options for an ideal new site.

### If you rebuild on a new site, what will become of Wayfarers current site?

The current site is adjacent to open space preserve land. If the landslide

continues to render this land unsuitable for building, the land could join with outer parks land, for use with nature trails.

### How will you preserve and protect the chapel?

Wayfarers is working with historic preservation experts, led by Architectural Resources Group (ARG), to carefully disassemble the chapel to preserve as many materials as possible for a future rebuilding of the chapel. Deconstruction will start soon — to delay this step longer would cause damage to materials and structural elements that cannot be easily replaced.

**The Portuguese Bend landslide complex is over one square mile in size and is the largest and fastest-moving landslide in the United States**

### What steps are necessary before starting the deconstruction/ disassembly?

To ensure accuracy for the future reconstruction of the building, the team is building a complete 3D digital model of the chapel. A phasing plan will be developed to ensure the most vulnerable parts of the building are removed from the site first and others are protected in the meantime. In addition, every piece of the chapel will be carefully labeled, photographed, and cataloged, to aid the future reassembly process.

### How much will deconstruction cost?

At this time the deconstruction of the chapel building and the safe closing of the campus will cost the chapel between \$300,000 and \$500,000. Since the chapel is closed, the operations cannot fund these costs. To date, a GoFundMe page has raised \$69,097.

The team is asking the community to contribute to the deconstruction project’s goal of preserving and protecting Wayfarers by giving to this project at [Wayfarers](#).

### Will your status as a National Historic Landmark make it harder to deconstruct and rebuild?

National Historic Landmarks are held to the highest standards, requiring careful protection of the integrity of the landmarked building. Wayfarers is working closely with historic preservation experts to establish best practices while relying on National Park Service guidance for our unique situation of an iconic landmark under threat due to extreme environmental conditions.

## Environmental Questions

### Won’t the ground stop moving after the ground dries out from the winter rains?

The current landslide, while affected by the last two winters’ heavy rains, is not due to the rains. The city of Rancho Palos Verdes has a program of regular monitoring of the slide. These comprehensive surveys show that in the last two years the rate of movement has accelerated from three inches per year to 109 inches per year as of January 2024. The Portuguese Bend landslide that started in 1956 has never since stopped and has, in recent years, expanded in size to include the full campus of Wayfarers, including the chapel. The Portuguese Bend landslide complex is over one square mile in size and is the largest and fastest-moving landslide in the United States.

### Can’t the land be stabilized or “cured” by somehow anchoring the chapel to bedrock, or other modern engineering technique?

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## Wayfarers Chapel FAQ

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Consultation with various experts including skilled geotechnical engineers have considered all potential techniques, including “shear pins” (giant concrete columns reaching deep into the earth to bedrock). Unfortunately, it seems none of the available techniques are a viable solution for the chapel’s specific location.

### How extensive is the damage from the landslide?

At this time, all the buildings on the campus (with the exception of the bell tower) are a complete loss — that is, if the earth stopped moving, they could not be repaired, but would have to be rebuilt from the ground up, starting with all-new foundations and in-ground utilities. For example, the newest building on the campus, the Visitor’s Center, built in 2000 to modern earthquake standards, is a total loss and was recently red tagged by the city of Rancho Palos Verdes.

### What about the bell tower?

Currently, the bell tower has no visible “lean” and no serious cracks, so the urgency of relocating it is not as serious as the rest of the chapel. We will prioritize disassembling the chapel building first and then study the relocation of the bell tower.

### How badly damaged is the Chapel at this time?

The chapel’s light and airy construction is one of the reasons this iconic building is so beloved. The walls and roof consist of thin metal “mullions” holding glass panels. The entire structure is held erect by eight giant redwood arches, along with angular arches at the front and back. The slide has been slowly twisting and torquing the chapel super structure such that most of the large glass

# Honoring the Journey of Wayfarers Chapel

We love you dear Wayfarers Chapel, and we will continue to care for you in the best way we can.

We honor what has been. We will capture the unique aspects of your architecture that can be saved and preserved. And all the while, envision how you can be of use in the future.

All are invited to come together at Convention 2024, on Saturday, June 29<sup>th</sup> at 12:00 PM ET to share our feelings of sadness mixed with deep gratitude for this sacred place that has welcomed wayfarers and touched so many hearts for seventy-three years. It is helpful to look to the future with hope and promise while we pause to acknowledge our present loss as a community.

We say thank you to our chapel for standing strong on precarious sacred land for seventy-three years and now let us continue to care for her by disassembling, preserving, and planning the task of rebuilding.

Thanks for the memories, dear



Wayfarers Chapel. You are more than a building. You beckon all of us, spiritual wayfarers, on a journey to accept all people and connect with the Divine through the beauty of holiness. Your spirit lives on in us.

Hybrid event free to all on Saturday, June 29<sup>th</sup> at 12:00 PM ET / 11:00 AM CT / 10:00 AM MT / 9:00 AM PT in Room 134 in the Brody Commons for in-person Convention attendees, on Zoom Events for virtual Convention attendees and on YouTube for everyone else. 📺

panels have broken (despite protective safety film being applied in January). In addition, the chapel’s floor is significantly cracked and heaved. We are racing against time to disassemble and safely remove the steel mullions and redwood arches before they are ruined to the point that they cannot be reused.

### Which exact buildings are being deconstructed?

The chapel and its attached bride’s room, colonnade, and bell tower. These are the historic components of the chapel complex that are listed in the National Historic Landmark designation.

### What about the redwood trees that envelope the chapel?

The chapel is surrounded by a grove of mature redwood trees, most if not all of which were planted in 1974, replacing the original redwood trees. The team is working to preserve these trees as best as possible.

### What are your fundraising plans?

Current estimates put the rebuilding effort at a cost of \$20 million. Wayfarers had assembled \$5 million in saved funds from past wedding services. These “restoration” savings will now be used for the rebuilding, giving us a big head start on raising the required \$20 million. A fundraising effort will begin this year. 📺

# Trusting Our Shepherd: An Inner Sense Meditation on the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm

BY JIM LAWRENCE

Regularly meditating upon a classic text, prayer, or hymn enacts a time-honored practice used in many faiths that I have enjoyed for many years on dog walks. Last year I became curious about the spiritual sense of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm and so ventured to see what Swedenborg wrote about its inner meaning in his study notebook on the psalms that wasn't published for more than a century after his death carrying the English title *Prophets and Psalms: Summaries of the Internal Sense*.

He has almost nothing to say about Psalm 23! Perplexed about that near void, I nevertheless began reciting it on dog walks, and after a few times the stray question came out of somewhere: maybe the 23<sup>rd</sup> psalm was not such an iconic psalm in his own time, which proved to be the case upon research. Devotional popularity of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm is quite recent phenomenon and specifically a primarily American thing—and even more specifically, a Protestant American tradition.

There's a backstory to this, and Swedenborg can be spied on the edges of it in William Holladay's *The Psalms through Three Thousand Years: Prayerbook of a Cloud of Witnesses*, which is a history of how the psalms have been used devotionally and spiritually over three millennia. He dug out the story for how the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm journeyed from obscurity to immense popularity in American spirituality between 1860 and 1880. It all got going with an 1858 book by Henry Ward Beecher, at that time the most famous preacher in the country and Abraham Lincoln's favorite clergyperson to use for special occasions. In spiritual classic *Life Thoughts*, Beecher shouts out this praise:

The 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm is the nightingale of the psalms. It is small, of a homely feather, singing shyly out of obscurity; but, oh! ... It has charmed more griefs to rest than all the philosophy of the world. It has remanded to their dungeon more felon thoughts, more black doubts, more thieving sorrows than there are sands on the seashore. It has comforted the noble host of the poor. It has sung courage to the army of the disappointed. It has poured balm and consolation into the heart of the sick, of captives in dungeons, of widows in their pinching griefs, of orphans in their loneliness. Dying soldiers have died easier as it was read to them; ghastly hospitals have been illuminated; it has visited the prisoner and broken his chains. It has made the dying Christian slave freer than his master. It will go singing to your children and my children, and to their children, through all the generations of time; nor will it fold its wings till the last pilgrim is safe, and time ended; and then it shall fly back to the bosom of God, whence it issued, and sound on, mingled with all those sounds of celestial joy which make heaven musical forever.

**If you know the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm by heart, you know it in King James English.**

After Beecher's book, Holladay details the exploding popularity of this biblical nightingale in numerous denominations, but importantly *always* conveyed in King James English, a translation used only by Protestants. If you know the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm by heart, you know it in King James English.



Bill Holladay shown here in Beirut in 1966 while studying archaeology.

Holladay recounts that during some decades of the twentieth century many American schools required a recitation every day of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm as a ritual like the Pledge of Allegiance and how Catholic students had to be taught it while all the Protestant kids knew it by heart.

Beecher also knew a great many Swedenborgians, and he had a positive take on their approach. During those fractured nineteenth-century decades when Protestant schisms were occurring almost weekly, he once answered a question on his view of the various sectarian movements by saying, "I am an Episcopalian, I am a Presbyterian too; and I am a Methodist, and a Baptist, and a Swedenborgian. I am everything that has any good in it." Beecher was in fact a Congregationalist.

In biblical lore, King David is the author of all the Psalms, but most scholars agree that this is simply not so. Likely, only a small number of the psalms came off the pen of the famous King of ancient Israel. The 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm according to Holladay, however, must be put on that short list because only David's personal story adequately

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## Trusting Our Shepherd

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explains the weird scene shift from verse 4 to verse 5. The first four verses unfold in a pastoral setting with a shepherd herding sheep, but suddenly you're at a banquet feast in verse 5! How does that happen? Perhaps because the author was once a shepherd boy who became a king overseeing palace celebrations.

Bill Holladay taught at Andover Newton Theological School from 1970–1996. The Swedenborg School of Religion and Andover Newton maintained an inter-seminary plan, and numerous Swedenborgian ministers studied with Holladay.

### A Swedenborgian Meditation Reflection on Psalm 23

Given this psalm's deep journey into the psyche of modern Americans, I decided to put the psalm into its inner sense as a basis for my meditation on it while walking the dog. Here is the psalm in the King James version followed first by a thumbnail of key correspondences and then by an application of those correspondences into the unfolding verses of Psalm 23.

#### Psalm 23

##### (King James Version, 1611)

<sup>1</sup> The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

<sup>2</sup> He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

<sup>3</sup> He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

<sup>4</sup> Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

<sup>5</sup> Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

<sup>6</sup> Surely goodness and mercy shall

follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

### 14 Key Swedenborgian Correspondences in 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm:

**Shepherd** → One who leads and teaches separating higher knowledges from distortions

**Pastures** → The knowledges that understand the goodness of truths nourishing spiritual life

**Green** → Living from truths

**Waters** → Knowledges of good and truth

**Stillness** → Tranquility of mind emerging from a time of temptation

**Paths** → Guidelines of truth; living through the guidance of spiritual knowledge leads to heaven

**Valley** → An obscure understanding by which truths do not appear in their own light

**Rod and Staff** → Power of divine truth: staff (walking stick) for upholding, rod for correcting. Shepherds use the same instrument for both purposes—a fitting description of divine truth, as well.

**Table** → Receptacle for celestial things which are of the good of love and of faith with a resulting bliss and happiness

**Enemies** → Falsities and evils (AC 2851, 1737, 9174.4); the tendency of selfhood to take the reins and turn away from the divine (see DP 211).

**Anointing** → Reception of the good of truth

**Head** → Realm of understanding

**Oil** → Holy good or the good of love

**Cup** → Spiritual Truth (one biblical example of cup is communion wine in communion, which means divine truth)

One whom I trust leads me. When I'm sure about that, all seems right and safely under control. This One leads by teaching about higher knowledge and by distinguishing such knowledge from inevitable distortions. This One

helps me to understand how to live in such a Way that my inner spiritual life may be frequently nourished and empowered. The path to such joyful states is quite simple: I must live out the best truth I can discern at every point with all my heart and mind and soul. When I'm truly trusting in this guidance, I often experience tranquility no matter what is going on, and I marvel at the love and wisdom that suffuses me.

Increasingly, however, I have come to realize that the truth I think I have understood needs to be tested to strengthen it and make it more real. This aspect of testing, of continually feeling the edges of my ability, often creates some feeling of separation from the One who leads me. Sometimes I vacillate on whether I actually know anything about the Way! Yet, what is also increasingly clear is that truth tested eventually makes it tougher, better known, and more effective. These strengthening truths uphold me better and better, very often correcting me from veering off the path.

As I've become stronger, my sight has become more perceptive, and I better comprehend the countervailing forces always interacting with me that are different from the essence of the One I trust more and more. These other forces—enemies, I call them—try to pull me toward all kinds of falsifications about what is true and about what to love and “honor.” Nevertheless, the One who leads me unflinchingly offers me the better alternative every single time that these lower forces rear up. When I turn to the One whom I have learned to trust, there is an immediate re-illumination in my perception of the Way. Consequently, an answering surge of love grows in my felt experience of being in the right relation to the force of life. It is like having a banquet feast all laid out for me right in the middle of my toughest torments. What a blessing!

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## Message from the President

Continued from page 43

group and which is featured on our website: <https://swedenborg.org/community/diversity-equity-inclusion/swedenborgians-in-action-against-racism/>

The question “Where is the line between church and politics?” is multifaceted and cannot be answered simply. It might not even be answerable in the usual way but simply provides a space for exploration, conversation, and for some, application. When researching the question of “Where were the Swedenborgian churches *really* on the slavery issue in ante-bellum America?” (published as a chapter in *The Moment is Now: Carl Bernhard Wadström’s Revolutionary Voice on Human Trafficking and the Abolition of the African Slave Trade*), I note how controversial it was to talk about slavery in church during the Civil War. Rev. William Hayden, the very first editor of *The New Jerusalem Messenger*, notes in a public address right after the Civil War’s first shots rang out the rarity of broaching social issues in a Swedenborgian church: “In the extraordinary character of this event [war] will be found my apology, if apology is needed, for departing, for once, from an otherwise uniform course of avoiding the discussion of such topics in the pulpit, and for a single hour regarding the subject from a moral point of view.”

We all have freedom to decide where that line is for ourselves, and it seems that that line will be in very different places for different people. For some, the intensity of social issues clouds spiritual discussions in the wrong way, for others the intensity of social issues cannot be held apart from spiritual discussions. “Where is the line between church and politics?” is a healthy question to ask for which there is no single answer.

—Rev. Dr. Jim Lawrence  
[president@swedenborg.org](mailto:president@swedenborg.org) 

## The Year of Spiritual Uses

# The Good Life

BY GEORGE F. DOLE

Swedenborgians have shied away from labeling Emanuel Swedenborg as a *mystic*, largely, one suspects, because he does not hold out enlightenment or altered states of consciousness as goals and does not advocate for any meditative or *spiritual* discipline.

For him, the life we are designed for is a very down-to-earth life of thoughtful and productive participation in human society. His own spirituality was grounded such a life, as witnessed by his active participation in Sweden’s political life well into his old age. About a year before his death, for example, he substantially enlarged a treatise

on monetary policy that he had published almost fifty years earlier and published the new version in an effort to counter what he saw as short-sighted devices for dealing with unfavorable exchange rates. Heaven, for him, was a realm of active service rather than of passive contemplation; and an adequate foundation for heaven as, therefore, to be found in active service here and now.

Yet he was no advocate of activity for activity’s sake or for some kind of scorecard system that balanced good deeds against bad ones. The quality of motivation is absolutely critical.

Service done for self-serving reasons simply confirms the individual’s egotism and disrespect for others. Service done for truly religious reasons transforms the individual who performs it, constituting the solid foundation of a

heavenly character. To take credit for one’s good deeds is to cross from righteousness into self-righteousness. Instead, we are to use our apparent independence thoughtfully, choosing deeds of compassion; and are, on reflection, to acknowledge that ability to do so is a gift from our Lord and not our possession.

Compassion is to be exercised with discrimina-

tion. In keeping with his principle of the inseparability of love and wisdom, Swedenborg insists that we are to use our intelligence to look as honestly as we can at the actual efforts of our actions. Simply doing what other people want us to do, giving to all who ask, may do more harm than good. He would instantly have recognized and endorsed the idea of “tough love,” the kind of love that is not ruled by a need for approval. The essential rules for such constructive living, rule analogous to the Ten Commandments, are to be found in every religion. When

**True worship consists of fulfilling uses and, therefore, expressing compassion in action. If people believe that serving the Lord consists only of regular church attendance, listening to sermons, and praying, that these are adequate, they are sadly mistaken. Real worship of the Lord consists of fulfilling uses; and uses, while we are living in this world, are for each of us properly to fulfill our function in our various roles and positions.**

**Arcana Coelestia §7038**

Continues on page 51

**The Good Life**

*Continued from page 50*

they are followed (again, “for religious reasons”), they work. In other words, every religion in its own distinctive way teaches the path to heaven. ☩

This discussion is taken from Rev. Dr. George Dole’s book, *A Thoughtful Soul: Reflections from Swedenborg* (West Chester, PA: Chrysalis Books, 1995) in a chapter titled, “The Good Life.” Professor Dole taught theology and sacred languages and mentored two generations of Swedenborgian clergy for thirty-five years at the seminary of the Swedenborgian Church.

**Trusting Our Shepherd**

*Continued from page 49*

I have come to trust that I am on the path. Increasingly I do know now how to stay in the Way, and increasingly I feel assured that I’m approaching a point of *always* abiding in divine life with the One who never stops leading me into the most profound experiences of seeing truth and of loving others. ☩

Rev. Dr. Jim Lawrence served in congregational leadership for suburban, urban, and rural churches and as Dean of the seminary for the Swedenborgian Church of North America before becoming president.

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**What’s Happening**



**SwedenborgianCommunity.org**

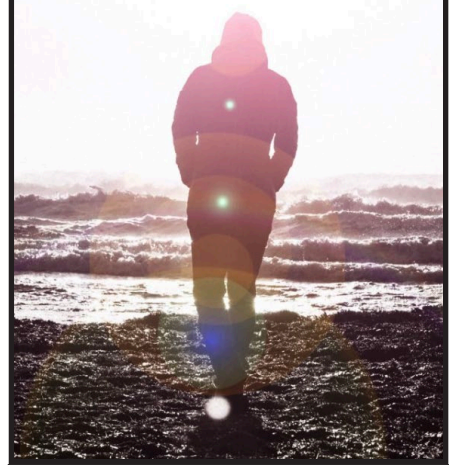
With broadcasts and written messages most weeks, *Spiritual Sunshine: A Swedenborgian Community Online* is your interfaith-Swedenborgian community—with a presence on YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, and your favorite podcasting platform. Join us as we seek to empower awareness of and connection to the spiritual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



**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/](http://swedenborg.org/community/diversity-equity-inclusion/swedenborgians-in-action-against-racism/)



*Our Daily Bread* at [SpiritualQuesters.org](http://SpiritualQuesters.org) is your resource for recent sermons, meditations, reflections, lessons, interviews, and original content from within and beyond the Swedenborgian Church of North America.

**Church Calendar**

- **June 28–July 2, 2024: Annual Convention**, E. Lansing, Michigan
- **July 20–28, 2024: Almont Summer School**, Allenton, Michigan
- **July 25–28, 2024: Paulhaven Camp**, Edmonton, Alberta
- **July 27–August 11, 2024: Fryeburg New Church Assembly**, Fryeburg, Maine



## 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, 2023. 📊

Association (Conference)	Churches		Ordained Ministers		Licensed Pastors	Members Active	Number of Potential Delegates
	Active	Inactive	Active	Retired			
Eastern Canada (ECC)	1	0	1	1	0	64	8
Illinois Association	5	0	2	0	3	58	8
Kansas	2	0	2	0	0	56	8
Maine	3	0	1	4	1	90	11
Massachusetts New Church Union (MNCU)	3	1	5	1	1	53	7
Michigan	1	0	1	2	0	56	8
Middle Atlantic	3	0	5	2	0	88	11
New York	1	1	1	0	0	17	4
Ohio	3	0	1	5	1	38	6
Pacific Coast (PCA)	6		16	5	5	195	22
Western Canada (WCC)*	2	0	1	0	0	59	8
At Large	n/a	n/a	1	0	0	3	2
Unknown Affiliation	n/a	n/a	11	8	n/a	n/a	n/a
<b>Church Membership Sub-Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>777</b>	<b>103</b>
COM	n/a	n/a	48	28	n/a	n/a	76
General Council (lay officers and members)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	9
<b>Total Possible Delegates</b>							<b>188</b>

\*Did not submit information for 2023, using 2022 information