



Keynote Address with Dylan Hendricks

“Planting Seeds for the Future of Swedenborg”

Friday, June 28th at 7:00 PM ET

A graduate of Bryn Athyn College and member of the Swedenborg Foundation board of directors, Dylan Hendricks is director of the Ten-Year Forecast at the Institute for the Future (IFTF), a Palo Alto-based non-profit think tank. In this keynote address he will frame the key trends in how North Americans find meaning and identify particular features of Swedenborgian spirituality that hold promise for the future.

The Institute for the Future [Director Dylan Hendricks](#) produces IFTF’s Ten-Year Forecast, the public expression of IFTF’s foundational research. He brings strategic imagination and a whole-systems perspective to his work across the Institute, facilitating and



synthesizing diverse perspectives and disciplines to better understand and communicate the macro forces that are transforming our lives, our organizations, and our communities. Before joining the Institute for the Future

full-time in 2012, Dylan had a previous career in media production, working closely with innovative tech companies and non-profits to better tell their stories. He has a bachelor’s degree in Psychology and Comparative Religion from Bryn Athyn College, and has helped dozens of world-class universities, corporations, and civic organizations to strategically explore the future landscape in his decade of experience at the Institute for the Future. Dylan’s original design framework, *Systems Mythology*, has been taught to thousands of students, executives, and foresight practitioners around the world, and formally recognized by the Association of Professional Futurists.



Teens Attend Convention for Free!

We are thrilled to announce that we have two great youth programs lined-up for this summer’s convention at Michigan State University. All youth are encouraged to attend and both our children’s program and our teen program have great subsidies available to help families manage the cost. We realize that Convention is a very expensive trip for most families and we’re working hard to find ways to help as many children attend as possible. Thanks to generous donations to the youth program, all teens (ages 13–18) in the SCYL program that are

staying in the teen dorm attend Convention for free! All youth staying in the hotel (ages 0–18) with their guardians get their meals paid for. Also, travel assistance is available as needed up to 50% reimbursement. The children’s program, for youth aged 6–12, will follow the Convention theme of “Swedenborg: Envisioning the Future.” The youth will experience lessons and crafting workshops exploring this topic with Heidi Barnaby who comes with experience teaching, working with children, and ran our program last year. Our teens will again be

led by youth director, Kurt Fekete. The teens will work hard on a theatrical worship service to be presented to the congregation. Of course, teens will also have lots of time to gather for recreation, play, and outings. We’re so excited to have youth attend Convention as our spiritual community is not complete without them! Contact Kurt Fekete, kfekete@hotmail.com or 802-345-0169 if you would like more information. We would love to have you include Convention in your summer plans, register now at swedenborg.org!



Contents

Keynote Speaker.....	29
Teens Attend for Free.....	29
Editor's Corner.....	30
Message from the President.....	31
Mini Course Line-up.....	32
Book Release.....	36
Van Dusen's <i>Uses</i>	37
Passages.....	38
FNCA Seeks Assistant Cook.....	38
What's Happening.....	39
IM Facilities at Convention.....	40
CSS Annual Meeting.....	40

Editor's Corner



Dealing with Grief

In the year of forty-four—mid-life (am I really mid-life?) and it is bringing up emotions. My whole childhood, and early adult life, I was convinced that I would be the one going early... and I could avoid dealing with all the grief. Here I am, mid-forties. Still here. Now dealing with griefs that didn't occur to me. Burying friend's children, burying my favorite cousin's husband, attending funerals for my daughter's friends' grandparents—trigger warning, this is a stream of consciousness brought on by sudden, unexpected grief.

I have a friend I physically see once a year. We've been friends since preschool. I love her, our kids see each other for an hour or two a year, and they look forward to it! She has been my friend for forty years and she is genuine—she talks and everything that comes out is straight up truth with no filter. This past visit, she said something I never knew, and it took me aback. She told me when we were

little, her mom told her that due to my medical condition I may only live until twelve, maybe sixteen. So, in going into being my friend—I likely could be a limited friend coming with a potential pile of grief. We met when we were three years old. And she was given the option to be my friend, or I might die, so she didn't have to be my friend if she didn't want to. I have mixed feelings about this, and, as a parent can see both sides. You want to protect your kids from the pain of grief—especially as children. But is it worth the loss of the memories of friendship? I put myself in the other's shoes, would I tell my first grader that their friend was on a limited time span? Honestly, I don't know that I would. Anyone's time could be, well, any time. I'm still here, she's definitely here. Yet so many others sure are not.

I got a call recently, the type of call that no one wants to get, that a close friend from my youth, a closer-than-close friend's sibling, lost his life to an overdose. I knew this friend had problems, he had for years. But when we spoke on the phone with him last summer, he was clean, pulling it together, and sounding so clear. He was back on track, and our minds were at ease. It's what we all thought.

The last time I saw him, seventeen years ago, we were walking down the streets of Northampton going in opposite directions. I was on the way to meet up with my boyfriend (now husband). He stopped in front of me, I looked up and realized who it was (I always walk looking down—I don't want to step in anything), and it was the happiest I had ever seen anyone to randomly find me. Hugs on the sidewalk, I am so happy to see you.... I'm sure I'll see you soon. I could not know then that his funeral would be less than a mile from that location and I wouldn't see him again.

We were so close at Fryeburg New Church Assembly when we were

the Messenger

© The Swedenborgian Church of North America
Published monthly except two combined issues by the Standing Committee for Communication and Information of the Swedenborgian Church of North America (founded 1817, incorporated 1861 as the General Convention of the New Jerusalem in the United States of America), Rev. Dr. James Lawrence, president.

May 2024

Volume 248, No. 3 Whole Number 5488

Editor, design, and production: Rebekah Greenwood

Copy editing and proofing: Rudy Caseres, Robert Leith, Brittany Price, & Trevor

Standing Committee for Communication and Information: Rev. Kevin Baxter, Rev. Dr. David Brown, & Tara Conkling

Editorial Advisory Committee: Dr. Rebecca Esterson, Rev. Dr. Jim Lawrence, & Herb Ziegler

Printing: FenwayGroup, Boston, MA

Editorial Email: messenger@swedenborg.org

Editorial, Business, and Subscription Address:
The Messenger, Central Office
PO Box 380270
50 Quincy Street
Cambridge, MA 02138

Tel: 617-969-4240

Central Office Email: manager@swedenborg.org

Subscriptions: free online subscription at <https://swedenborg.org/subscribe/>. Printed and mailed to US address, \$25/year; to Canada address, \$30/year; to all other addresses, \$40/year; single copies, \$3.00, libraries & prisoners, free. Send check made out to "Swedenborgian Church" with "Messenger" on the memo line. Other requests, write or call Central Office.

Submissions are accepted at any time.

Submissions must be received by the 15th of the month to be considered for the next issue.

The opinions and views expressed are those of the authors, not of *the Messenger*, the Standing Committee for Communication and Information, or the Swedenborgian Church.

awkward twelve, thirteen, fourteen-year-old weirdos, the real tough years. Kids were mean to him for being different. We were friends. I didn't care. He didn't come back to camp after fifteen. But that is one of the true specialties of our camps and spiritual gatherings. It doesn't matter if we saw each other yesterday or twenty years ago. Once you are in my spiritual family, you are part of it, for life and hereafter.

But here's what I struggle with. I'm the one with the incurable "childhood" medical condition. I'm the one who was supposed to go first. Yet here we are—burying babies from SIDS,

Continues on page 38

Message from the President

Summer is a State of Spirit

The Year of Spiritual Uses: 2023–24



Swedenborg says the correspondence of summer signifies the height of formation. It is when nature is in full bloom and maturity, and so spiritually speaking summer means the height of charity and happiness, and it even means the fullness of the Church (see *Secrets of Heaven* §935 and *Divine Love and Wisdom* §73). In our denomination, summer also means the time when we have our largest gatherings. Ever since our first movement-wide convention in 1817, we have gathered with church-wide delegates somewhere around the continent for our annual legal but also spiritual business.



In addition to the summer convention, though, we have a distinctive history of multi-generational summer camps. Though most religious organizations now have summer camps and retreat programs, they are usually for youth *or* for adults. I've been fascinated by the Swedenborgian family camps for the role

they play in our denominational life, and I have researched the question in terms of how common in American religion is this concept. Probably no more than five percent of established denominational camp summer programs are for all generations. These summer getaway spiritual formation adventures cannot be overestimated for their contribution to who we are as a church.

In late nineteenth century, there arose multi-generational summer camps that by the 1930s had blossomed into three enormously popular summer gatherings: the [Almont New Church Assembly](#) (image above) in Michigan, the [Fryeburg New Church Assembly](#) (image left) in Maine, and Split Mountain Camp in California (no longer active). Later, Paulhaven in Western Canada developed and flourished, and along the way, Beside the Point a youth and family camp in the Ohio Association existed for a time. Our youth director, Kurt Fekete, took our young people to a [Swedenborgian International Summer Camp](#) in England in 2019, where tremendous adventures of spirit delighted the youth.

Continues on page 38



Mini Course Line-Up for Convention 2024

Mini Courses will be held in three time slots that have four courses running concurrently—two in-person only and two hybrid for both in-person and virtual attendees.

Mini Courses are small group offerings for attendees to learn about a topic that is presented by someone from the Swedenborgian Church of North America or an invited guest. We are excited to be able to continue to offer a variety of formats this year for our hybrid convention. After you register, you will receive information on how to join them, both in-person and virtually.

There are two formats for Mini Courses

- In-person for on campus attendees only
- Hybrid style meetings that are also hosted on Zoom so that people can attend and participate both in-person and virtually

These three time slots have four courses running concurrently—two in-person and two hybrid for both in-person attendees and those online. Virtual attendees will be able to choose between the hybrid sessions, while the in-person attendees will be able to attend any of the courses being offered.

Saturday, June 29 at 1:00 PM ET

Bound Together on Indigenous Land: Steps to Liberation and Regeneration

Andrew Dodd

This course will be hybrid for both in-person and remote attendees.

Presenting considerations and a starting outline for any organization or community to begin to pursue a course toward indigenous land acknowledgement. He will be covering purposes, intentions, commitment, engagement with local indigenous communities, statement drafting, public

announcement and visibility, alliance, support, and activism.



Andrew grew up at the rural edges of suburbia with frequent forays into the California wilderness, and early on was taught respect for native ways of living in the natural world.

He found himself

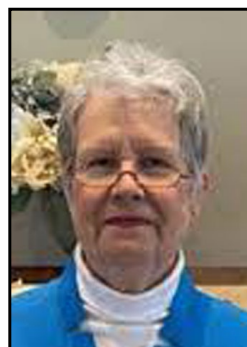
at odds with his Catholic schooling, which led him to explore Eastern philosophies and mysticism, and only late in life did he discover by providence Swedenborgianism. Happily he now enjoys a love of nature, the arts, and an appreciation of all spiritual pursuits like never before.

The Pastor's Corner

Rev. Dr. Donna Keane and Pastor Kelly Milne

This course will be hybrid for both in-person and remote attendees.

Rev. Dr. Donna Keane and Pastor Kelly Milne are co-hosts of a local cable television show that discusses topics for people searching for answers to life's questions. Topics covered have included grief, anxiety, prayer, loneliness, and spirituality. We invite anyone who would like to participate in watching the half hour show and taking part in a Q&A following the presentations.



Rev. Dr. Donna Keane was ordained as a Swedenborgian minister in 1986 and served as minister of the Elmwood New Church, in East Bridgewater, Massachusetts from 1990

to 1997. After a six-year hiatus, Donna was rehired at the Elmwood New Church and has been their permanent part-time minister since then. She serves on the Swedenborgian Massachusetts New Church Union as Vice President. She has previously served as Chair of the Swedenborgian Council of Ministers, on her denomination's General Council, the Finance Committee for two terms and on the Committee on Admission to the Ministry. She has helped to structure the ethics guidelines for ministers, and drafted the job description for part-time ministry which can be used as a guide in all the denomination's societies.

In addition to her ministerial duties, Dr. Donna Keane is the director of *LifeStrategies!* a private pastoral counseling and psychotherapy practice also in East Bridgewater. She provides psychotherapy and pastoral counseling for people who want to "discover the courage to change." Dr. Keane specializes in grief and loss issues, addictions, anxiety and depression, and how spirituality can help the healing process. She has been practicing for forty-seven years and works with both individuals and couples. Dr. Keane is a Licensed Mental Health Counselor in Massachusetts and served on the Massachusetts Mental Health Counselors Board of Directors for thirty years.



Pastor Kelly Milne has served the Bridgewater New Jerusalem Church as Church Moderator, Sunday School Superintendent, and Lay Leader. She is a lifelong member and is proud of her

church background. Pastor Kelly is currently taking seminary courses online at Wesley Seminary to complete her Master of Ministry, specializing in Pastoral Care. She has served as secretary for the Massachusetts New Church Union (MNCU) and is currently president.

Pastor Kelly has been married to her high school sweetheart, Mike, for twenty-six years, and they have two children, Emily, a junior at Simmons University, and Matthew, a senior at

Continues on page 33

Mini Course Line-Up

Continued from page 32

Southeastern Regional Technical High School who will be attending Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) in September.

A Listening Practice of Care for Self and Others

Rev. Dr. Gardner Perry and Rev. James Barry

This course will be in-person on campus.

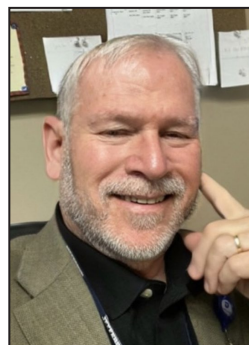
The Rev. Dr. F. Gardiner (Gard) Perry and the Rev. James (Jay) Barry will present a listening practice for clergy, licensed pastors, and interested lay persons who wish to become more skillful listeners. Using the anatomy of a flower as a spiritual organizing concept, Jay will bring attention to six characteristic needs of the one to whom we listen, each of which figures large in Swedenborgian theology. Gard will present interior characteristics of the one who listens. He will provide key concepts in Swedenborg's spiritual psychology, an Exquisite Empathy Protocol, and a method to practice ever more skillful listening. Please join us!

The Rev. Dr. F. Gardiner Perry was ordained into the ministry of the Swedenborgian Church in 1979. He served the Church of the Holy City (Royal Oak, Michigan) in the 1980s, and the



Fryeburg New Church (Fryeburg, Maine) in the 1990s. He earned his Doctor of Ministry degree (1990) at the Ecumenical Theological Seminary (Detroit, Michigan) in Spiritual Care and Counseling. Beginning in the early 2000's Gard served as Spiritual Care Counselor for the Carroll County (New Hampshire) Hospice Care Program serving in End-of-Life Care. He has served on a variety of denominational committees and is currently on the Center for Swedenborgian Studies (CSS) Board of Directors. Gard maintains a longstanding interest in Swedenborg's spiritual psychology -

applied to the practice of caring for and about others.



Rev. James Barry was ordained into ministry by the General Church of the New Jerusalem in 2009 after decades as a business owner in Manhattan. His path in ministry has led him to the

doorstep of the Swedenborgian Church of North America, where he will be inducted into ministry in 2024. He is married to Barbara Barry, and together they have raised five children into adulthood. They continue a life together devoted to learning and dialogue with others. Rev. Barry migrated into chaplaincy in 2016 and is currently a board-certified staff chaplain at Thomas Jefferson University Hospitals, a Level I Trauma Center in Philadelphia. He is currently developing a Swedenborgian-informed approach to the praxis of spirituality and healthcare.

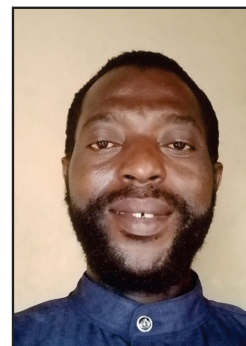
The New Church in Ghana Pastor Bob Hagan

This course will be in-person on campus.

The New Church Convention (GH) that is being established here in Ghana is based on the affirmative faith in the Lord God Jesus Christ. As the only redeemer and savior of the world and ruler of the heavens. Also with a keen internal observation of the writings revealed through the Lord's servant, Hon. Emanuel Swedenborg. Our interpretation of the Word is derived from the writings. For us to have clarity of understanding of the mysterious codes beneath the literal sense of the Word. The Church values the internal sense of the Word as heavenly treasures bestowed on its members and beyond. And it's a new hope to restore our Christian faith and elevate our will and understanding into angelic light. The Church here is relatively young, and yet we have great hope for the future. And we have been inspired by the prophecy in Revelation 12, the woman

clothed with the sun. The male child has to force a lot of tribulation from the red dragon. In its internal significance, the writings or the establishment of the Church will encounter a lot of opposition from the Old Church and its doctrines of faith alone. But believing in the doctrine of charity and good works, we shall surely be triumphant in our endeavors. With the expansion of our outreach programs, through the radio and television programs with social media, handlers will be a means for us to propagate the Word with a new perspective of understanding. Our ultimate goal is to spread the Writings to enable us to create more awareness of the Second Coming of the Lord. And to win more souls for the replenishment of the Lord's kingdom. It will be a wonderful experience for me to share with you the vision and aspirations of the New Church Convention here in Ghana, as we are striving with all our heavenly abilities to establish a healthy church with active membership. The Lord's Divine Providence will guide us into all truth and express His divine love in all things good and honorable.

My name is Bob Kwesi Hagan, and I am the residential Pastor for the New Church Convention here in Accra--Ghana, west of Africa. I attended Oda Senior High and studied at Manifold Collage. I



am now a student of the Center for Swedenborgian Studies. Under able tutors who are maturing me into the deeper understanding of the Writings. I am married to Gifty Arde. My first encounter with Hon. Emanuel Swedenborg doctrines was through his all breaking revelations about the wonders of heaven and the diabolic states of hell and the world of spirits. And it's *Heaven and Hell*, the first book of the

Continues on page 34

Mini Course Line-Up

Continued from page 33

writings that awakened my spiritual appetite to understand the realism of the inner world as connected to my life. And this had been my heavenly passion to make Swedenborg's name a household name here in Ghana and beyond. To my understanding, these are the heavenly doctrines of the New Jerusalem that will reform the Christian Church and restore heavenly dignity within the Church and create one spiritual language of love for the Lord and thoughtfulness towards the neighbor. Obediently following my calling to propagate the gospel of Christ. And I am ever ready to be of use to my neighbor. To the Lord be ultimate glory, through His Divine providence I am ministering His Word. And shepherding the children of light into a higher perception of Himself. I soberly surrender myself before the Lord. In Him I have my being.

Sunday, June 30 at 1:00 PM ET

The Satanic Tyranny of Money: August Nordenskiöld, Alchemy, Slavery, and the Tradition(s) of Political Swedenborgianism

Dell J. Rose

This course will be hybrid for both in-person and remote attendees.

This presentation is an overview of the 'anti-economic' vision of the Swedish radical utopian August Nordenskiöld (1754-1792). For Nordenskiöld the world was in fetters to a false idol, a spirit of Moloch which required human lives for gold, and he promoted a radical agenda of alchemical liberation. Nordenskiöld was also a perfect representative of an important yet neglected political tradition which has been defined for the first time in my scholarship as 'political Swedenborgianism.' This tradition was advocated by an international community of activists engaged in an array of different social causes but were united by the conviction that in the writings of the Swedish prophet Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772) lay the key to a more just society. Swedenborg's descriptions of heaven became the foundation for a new

terrestrial vision, one that would overcome the challenges of the time with insight drawn from Swedenborg's revelations. The promoters of this tradition were on both sides of the political spectrum, with Nordenskiöld being on the radical fringe of the libertarian wing of this tradition, advocating the abolition of money, of legal marriage, and of racial oppression. In recognizing political Swedenborgianism as a distinct tradition, we honor one of the most important intellectual currents of eighteenth and nineteenth-century social reform, and gain a more complete vision of the intellectual heritage of modern political activism.



Dell holds a bachelor's degree, with majors in English, History, and Religion, and a master's degree in Folk Studies. His current project deals with Charles Augustus Tulk

and the reception of Swedenborg's ideas amongst 19th century reforming societies, as well as the role that Swedenborgian ideas played in 19th century political discourse. Further academic interests include Christian theosophy, especially that of Caspar Schwenckfeld von Ossig and Jakob Böhme, Willem Bilderdijk studies, Sabbateanism, and the work of Franz von Baader.

Institutional Repentance

Rev. Shada Sullivan

This course will be hybrid for both in-person and remote attendees.

In this Mini Course, we will explore the process of repentance outlined by the twelfth-century Jewish philosopher Maimonides and compare it to a similar process outlined by Emanuel Swedenborg. Then, we will consider what a process of repentance looks like in an institutional context, and how actions toward repair can be taken.

Rev. Shada Sullivan is the Pastor at The Church of the Holy City in Wilmington Delaware. She is co-chair of the Social Justice Committee, and a member of the Swedenborgians in Action Against Racism leadership team.



The existential problem and necessity of Proprium in three realms: heaven, hell, and world of spirits

Rev. Junchol Lee

This course will be in-person on campus.

In this mini-course, I would like to reflect and explore Swedenborg's concept of Proprium and its relationship to the process of how a human being becomes a member of either heaven or hell. There will be a brief explanation on the conceptual meaning of Proprium and its implications on human spirituality based on the story of creation of Eve in Genesis.

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



Continues on page 35

Mini Course Line-Up

Continued from page 34

The Use of Christian Music

Rev. Julie Conaron

This course will be in-person on campus.

I'm in the process of introducing the Lord's new church to Christian artists who have created new music, which I believe brings in the heart of Christianity rather than just the head stuff.



Rev. Julie Conaron, born and raised in the UK, spent twenty years as a microbiologist in the UK and US, including starting three laboratories from scratch. Feeling called to ministry after

retiring from the former, she trained as an interfaith minister (2012) and was inducted as a Convention minister (2015). After ten years as a hospice chaplain, she retired and soon after was asked to provide services at a local facility housing people with brain damage, mostly due to car accidents. Initially, the services were bi-weekly, but are now weekly at the people's request, who love the services. The services involve Biblical text, discussion of it, encouraging much discussion from the attendees and many Christian songs, often from the folks there. This method appears to feed the people spiritually.

Monday, July 1 at 10:30 AM ET

Have You Visited Swedenborg, Michigan?

Rev. Renée Machiniak and Pastor Robbin Ferriman

This course will be hybrid for both in-person and remote attendees.

Did you know that in the mid 1850's, Swedenborgianism enjoyed something of a vogue in Michigan and there was a serious suggestion that the state Capitol be named Swedenborg instead of Lansing! The Swedenborgian Church has a fascinating history in Michigan. Join us as we learn about our first

clergy proselytizing in lectures and services, the early churches and ministries in such places as Battle Creek, Detroit and Almont, as well as Swedenborgian influence on New Thought and the abolitionist movement. As we search today for creative and relevant ways to be the New Church in the world, it is meaningful to take a look back at our influential history and connections. Our exploration back in time will be co-led by Rev. Renée Machiniak and Pastor Robbin Ferriman and offered in a hybrid format.

Rev. Renée Machiniak has been serving the Church of the Holy City in Royal Oak, Michigan, since 1995, she serves as our denomination's Youth Chaplain, serves on General Council and volunteers as a Royal Oak Lion's Club board member, Police Chaplain and Oncology Chaplain for Beaumont/Corewell Hospital.



Pastor Robbin Ferriman is the Licensed Pastor at the Church of the New Jerusalem in Urbana, Ohio. She became interested in genealogy when she was younger, after the movie

Roots came out. Robbin and her sister began working on their genealogy together and many years later became hooked! When Robbin moved to Urbana and joined the Swedenborgian church, she became fascinated with the connection the church had to Urbana University and she started researching and exploring that rich history. She has since formed a "Research & Archive" committee for our church, as well as for the Ohio Association. Robbin is currently the archivist for the Johnny Appleseed Education Center and Museum, and she serves on Convention's Library & Documents

Committee. She loves history and learning about our Swedenborgian forebearers.

Worship is Life: Be Love, Be Honest, Be Useful

Rev. Sage Cole

This course will be hybrid for both in-person and remote attendees.

While the institutional church declines, the invitation of the new church presses on, inviting us to treat every moment as an act of worship. In this experiential Mini Course we will explore our Swedenborgian trinity of love, wisdom and use as an integrative model for being the new church, now and into the future.

Rev. Sage Cole is the Pastor & Director of Swedenborg Chapel in Cambridge, and working to bring forth the vision of building the Helen Keller Center for Spiritual Life as an extension of



the Chapel's ministry. In the Fall of 2023 Rev. Sage began exploring new ways of being church with a weekly Zoom offering called *Be Love, Be Honest, Be Useful*. She is committed to engaging in conversation and inquiry about what it means to be the new church in diverse forms.

Healing the Spirit with Song

Rev. Kathy Speas

This course will be in-person on campus.

Let singing calm your soul and lift your spirit in these troubled times! Kathy will share simple, easy-to-learn sung blessings that you can share with your congregation or sing to yourself when you need to feel grounded and comforted. If you don't sing, you are welcome to come and receive the songs.

Rev. Kathy Speas served as a hospice chaplain for over ten years and as a chaplain in a state facility for profoundly disabled adults. She currently lives in Northwest Washington, sings

Continues on page 36

Mini Course Line-Up

Continued from page 35



with the Skagit Valley Chorale and a local women's barbershop quartet group, and enjoys the forests and seas with her husband Todd. Many of the songs she will share come from the Repertoire

of the Threshold Choir, a now international movement that offers songs of healing and comfort at end of life and other tender times.

Following Your North Star

Lynn Chittick Thompson

This course will be in-person on campus.

How to follow a solid inner light within and outer expressions of how we each support one another to shine. Intentions: From each of us that all have a varied background, we will explore some profound witnesses of how we follow our personal star, the deeper witness of inner awareness to open ourselves to the voices around us and follow our North Star. We will be looking at the historical lens of many traditions spiritual practices, days of creation used in Swedenborg, and the ancient understanding of seeing. In this course work, we will explore some actual passions, wonders, and curiosities of where your light shines, how you may see others' light and support them, and the true nature of your practices that can direct us toward the light within.



Lynn Chittick Thompson holds an RN, MA, and MDiv. She has been working on a local to global vision for World Peace since 1990. Currently Lynn is on the ordination path with the

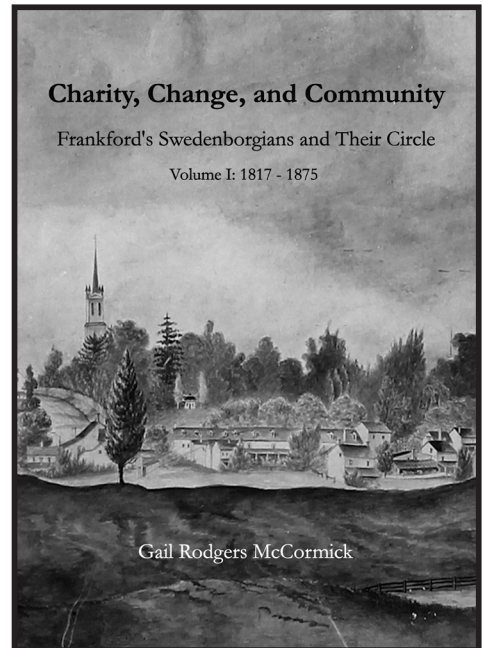
Charity, Change, and Community: Frankford's Swedenborgians and Their Circle, 1817–1971

New book by Gail Rodgers McCormick

Spurred by a family discovery, Gail McCormick embarked on a historical journey to uncover the story of a unique society of Swedenborgians in the Northeast Philadelphia neighborhood of Frankford. The New Jerusalem Society of Frankford was founded in 1817 as a "Free-Will Baptist" congregation by former Quakers, German Pietists, and English immigrants who had embraced religious Nonconformity in their homeland. They maintained strong family and faith connections to their "Bible Christian" neighbors, the English vegetarian and teetotaling Swedenborgians who arrived in Philadelphia about the same time. The congregation developed deep roots in its neighborhood, but also was engaged—and often influential—in many city-wide and national issues. It made its mark not only on religious affairs but also on local business and industry; art, literature, and music; science and medicine; social and political reform; and even communication technology. McCormick uses a wide variety of primary and secondary resources to highlight this special community of faith, whose historic trajectory reflects that of the neighborhood it sought to

Swedenborgian Church of North America and a doctorate student at Pacific School of Religion. She has been guiding students for taking "Simple Actions for Global Change" and transforming community as an entrepreneur for over 35 years and supporting sustainable practices using theological principles.

Lynn is the CEO/Founder of TORCH: The Organization for Realizing Change in Humanity. ☪



Charity, Change, and Community

Frankford's Swedenborgians and Their Circle

Volume I: 1817 - 1875

Gail Rodgers McCormick

influence and inspire for more than one hundred fifty years.

Gail Rodgers McCormick, *Charity, Change, and Community: Frankford's Swedenborgians and Their Circle, 1817–1971* (Burbank, CA: AMZ Publishing, 2024); 2 Volumes. Volume 1 is now available on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) and will be available at Convention. Volume 2 is forthcoming in 2024. Proceeds of book sales will support the work of the Historical Society of Frankford. ☪

Gail McCormick is a retired history librarian, archivist, and historical/genealogical research consultant. She holds master's degrees in public history and library science from Kent State University.

She is a member of the Protestant Community Church of Medford Lakes, New Jersey, the historic log cabin "Cathedral of the Woods."



The Year of Spiritual Uses

Wilson Van Dusen: Usefulness as a Practice for Spiritual Growth

BY JIM LAWRENCE

When Wilson Van Dusen's *Uses: A Way of Personal and Spiritual Growth* was released in 1981, it rapidly soared as a runaway favorite in all quarters of Swedenborgiana. Without doubt, *Uses* is the most beloved short work in Swedenborgian spirituality of the last half-century. The explanation of how Van Dusen's essay lifted "the doctrine of use" from a moderately deployed philosophical concept in Swedenborg to become a frontline spirituality concept lies in his success framing the topic as a spiritual practice for vibrant everyday living.

Intriguingly, he applies half the essay to explaining the metaphysical foundations of the concept. As a phenomenological psychologist, he cared about facts and about the foundations of human experience, and he goes to some length to identify "use" as a central force in creation and as a foundation for any human life. Citing Swedenborg's own analysis, he patiently explains that usefulness is the very force for all existence.

Swedenborg put more time and effort into anatomical studies than any other science field (except for metallurgy since that was his day job for twenty-two years), his usefulness booklet focuses on the human body as an illustration of how "uses" holds everything together. The power of the whole can only operate through a myriad of efficient interactive uses, which explains why Swedenborg likens the human form as the most elemental structure of the cosmos and should be viewed as the Divine

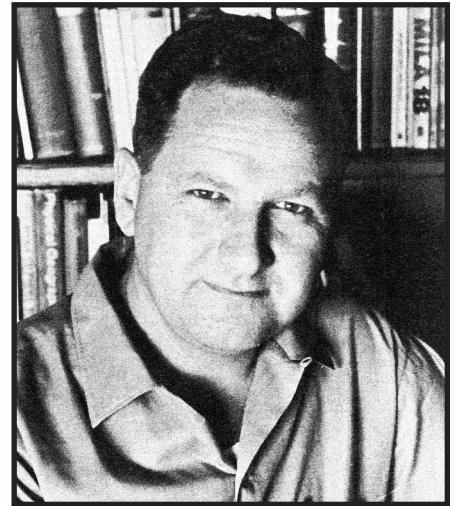
Human (see *DLW* §20). Heaven itself functions with dynamic "correctness" through myriad contributors who know how to be useful, and the result is a whole community that has the same force of being as a unified body.

As far as usefulness is concerned, the case is this: People who have charity inside, that is, love for their neighbor (which is the source of any living kind of appeal in the lower pleasures) look at the enjoyment of pleasure solely in terms of its usefulness. *Secrets of Heaven* §997

The Practice of Being Useful

Seeing that the effects of usefulness are joy and bliss in both social and personal ways, Van Dusen had an "ah ha!" insight for a way to ground everyday spiritual growth: simply focus on what is useful in small and large ways. This plain framing became the doorway for an accessible and immensely popular "way" of doing spiritual formation. The essay offers several, well, useful angles on the practice of it. One starts with a current love and paying attention to how it can be of use to others. When successful, one increases joy and delight for others and for oneself simultaneously.

Another angle analyzes the motivation behind a use you're already providing. If we find that we are more focused on what we get out of it, we can begin training ourselves to focus



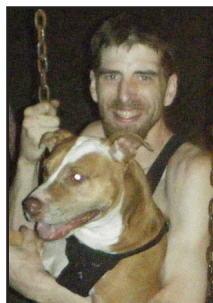
on those who are supposed to receive benefits from the use. Van Dusen (image above) contrasts the inner life of a "sales only" representative in comparison to a "customer oriented" representative and concludes the two are as different as hell and heaven. Another third angle, not surprising for a psychologist, is Van Dusen's emphasis on self-care, because effective usefulness can endure only through a healthy self. He therefore prioritizes being of use to oneself and of enjoying pleasurable things to rejuvenate. In his conclusion, he concludes that being useful is the truest form of worship.

Nearly half a century ago, Van Dusen delivered a breakthrough for seeing how usefulness infuses both Swedenborgian spirituality and Swedenborgian metaphysics. In his landmark booklet, he identifies a potent spiritual growth method from scattered mentions throughout Swedenborg's writings, and he shaped a skillful and even profound way to live the good life. 📖

Passages

Deaths

Derek Robert Rheume Woofenden,



43, passed into the spiritual world suddenly in Hadley, Massachusetts, on March 19, 2024. He is predeceased by his maternal grandparents Robert and Anita Rheume; paternal adoptive grandparents Bill and Louise Woofenden; and his beloved dog Jayda. He is survived by his mother, Denise Rheume; adoptive father, Ross Woofenden; brothers Kenneth Woofenden and wife Alia, Michael Woofenden and wife Beth; sister Emily Tergliafera and husband Christopher; and his beloved dog Buki. He also leaves behind many loving aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, cousins, and friends. A service of remembrance was held on April 14, given by Rev. Anna Woofenden and Rev. Sarah Buteux.

Born in Northampton on May 9, 1980, Derek spent his first six years in Easthampton, Massachusetts and then moved to Haydenville, Massachusetts where he grew up attending Williamsburg schools. He attended Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School in Northampton, Massachusetts, and attended Greenfield Community College. He collected stamps, coins, and baseball cards. He loved animals and took great joy in his dogs. Derek was a gifted artist. He taught himself glass blowing and created beautiful pieces of unique glassware.

Derek was a fierce friend with a heart of gold, who thought of himself as “A man who helps others whenever possible with absolute love and care, regardless.” Heaven has gained a bright light at our loss. 🕊️

Derek was a fierce friend with a heart of gold, who thought of himself as “A man who helps others whenever possible with absolute love and care, regardless.” Heaven has gained a bright light at our loss. 🕊️

Editor’s Corner

Continued from page 30

children from cancer, teens from suicide, adults from ALS, and now my friends, in my generation, from overdose. It takes a bit of a toll on your

Message from the President

Continued from page 31

Explicitly designed as spiritual formation and education with time for fun and community from the beginning, these gatherings have inspired commitment and belonging. The day has always been structured around worship, education, and play. The schedule for each day always includes time for each of these categories. Certainly, a highlight are the themes for the week and the preparation that is done for enriched spiritual contemplation. A roster of lecturers is common, and these are followed by group discussions. Nowadays anyone can drop in virtually for a Fryeburg lecture. There are education programs for each age group every day.

In some ways, though, play might be the special glue. Games and fun punctuate every day, with some activities as multigenerational and some age specific. Craft and creative activities are always in play. These summer spaces of spirit have proven their effectiveness for creating community, spiritual formation, and absolute devotion over the decades. As someone who grew up actively in a mainline denomination where regional summer camps for youth was common and in which I participated a number of times, as an adult Swedenborgian convert, I’ve marveled at the richness of multigenerational gatherings of summer in our church. If you’ve never been, you might consider a new adventure.

—Jim Lawrence

President@swedenborg.org

mind. It really makes you think. I am so thankful for the scientific advances that have been made so that I can live a more normal life than could have even been expected for me. I am thankful for us, our church, to know that there is more, and life on earth isn’t the end. But it is really tough sometimes. Derek, you are missed, we love you—I will someday see you in the canoe on the river in heaven.

—Beki Greenwood

Messenger@swedenborg.org

FNCA Seeks Assistant Cook

The Fryeburg New Church Assembly is looking for a resident Assistant Cook for July 26–August 3. (Local applicants need not live on site.) Duties include but are not limited to:

- Assist the Head Cook in preparing three meals a day for 40–80 people
- Assist Head Cook with bringing in and putting away orders
- Be able to lift 35 lbs.
- Work in an organized and safe manner
- Be able to take direction from the Head Cook
- Work well independently in the following tasks:
 - Stock and maintain salad bar
 - Stock and maintain water/coffee/tea area
 - Other normal kitchen prep as assigned by the Head Cook

Experience necessary with small scale commercial cooking or similar meal prep for groups. ServSafe or similar certification a plus. Room and board provided. Salary commensurate with experience.

The Fryeburg New Church Assembly is a religious, overnight, family camp located on over twenty acres of pine forest on the Saco River in Fryeburg, Maine. Full info is here: <https://fryeburg.org>. If interested, contact headcook@fryeburg.org by 5/24/24. 🕊️

What's Happening

**SWEDENBORGLANS
IN ACTION**



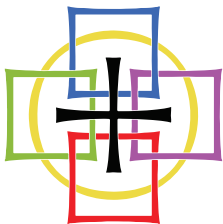
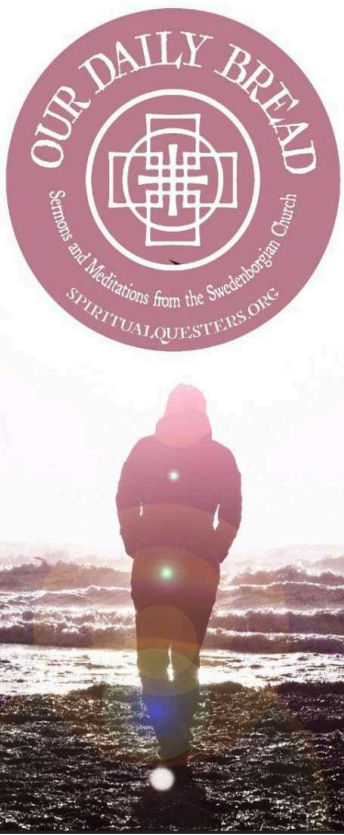
AGAINST RACISM

**Swedenborgians in Action
Against Racism**

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

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

*The Swedenborgian Church of
North America*

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



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

Church Calendar

- **May 7, 14, 21 & 28, 2024:** [Creation Care, CSS Webinar](#) with Rev. Dr. Zuber
- **May 24–27, 2024:** [SCYL Retreat](#), Allenton, Michigan
- **June 28–July 2, 2024:** [Annual Convention](#), E. Lansing, Michigan
- **July 20–28, 2024:** [Almont Summer School](#), Allenton, Michigan
- **July 27–August 11, 2024:** [Fryeburg New Church Assembly](#), Fryeburg, Maine




**Spiritual
Sunshine**
A Swedenborgian Community Online

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.

About the Swedenborgian Church

Emanuel Swedenborg was born on 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.

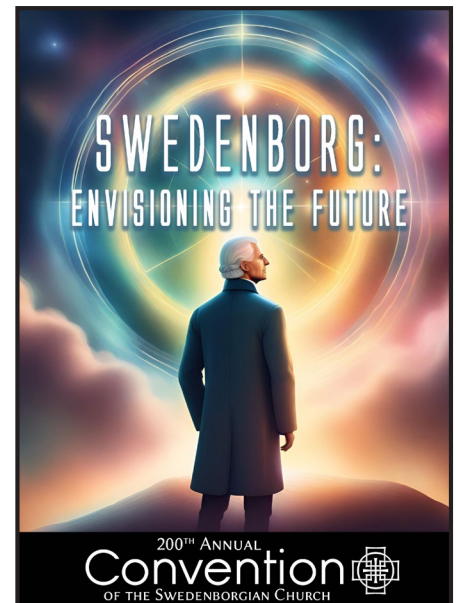
In his theological writings, Swedenborg shared a view of God as infinitely loving and at the very center of our beings, a view of life as a spiritual birthing as we participate in our own creation, and a view of scripture as a story of inner life stages as we learn and grow. Swedenborg said, "All religion 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.

Annual Convention

IM Facilities at MSU

This year at Convention you have the option to enjoy the IM recreational facilities at MSU! The closest option to our conference is the IM West facilities (highlighted on the map located <https://swedenborg.org/events-activities/annual-convention/>). The facilities at MSU West include basketball, volleyball, and badminton courts (among other sports) as well as a fitness center and an indoor pool! <https://recreationsports.msu.edu/facilities/imwest.html>

Access to these facilities is included in the price of staying at the dormitory, while a pass is available to hotel guests for \$10/day (see the front desk).



Registration for in-person attendees closes on May 15
Registration for virtual attendees closes on June 15
Register here: swedenborg.org

Annual Meeting of the Corporation of the New Church Theological School

The Annual Meeting of the Corporation of the New Church Theological School (d.b.a. the Center for Swedenborgian Studies of the Graduate Theological Union) will be held during the annual convention of the Swedenborgian Church of North America, Sunday, June 30, 2024 at 3:15 PM ET, in the Kellogg Center Auditorium, Michigan State University in East Lansing, Michigan.