



Building Community at the Fryeburg Fair

BY LEONE DYER

All fundraisers start with a vision of soliciting income through selling a craft. Whether it is selling tickets to a concert, lecture, or raffle, asking people to run three miles, or trading food for cash, it all starts with a vision of what can be created to sell. Each year, the Fryeburg New Church (FNC) engages in the mega of all fundraisers—the Fryeburg Fair. The Fryeburg Fair is an agricultural fair that attracts more than 225,000 people over eight days.

In the fall of 1953, the Fryeburg New Church Women's Alliance, led by President Ola-Mae Wheaton, supplied and managed a food booth at the Fryeburg Fair. The Alliance made a profit of \$324 in one week of their first Fair. Since then, all people within our church, young and old, along with relatives and community friends, have donated their cooking abilities and time so unselfishly that, today, the New Church Booth at "The Fair" is our most significant source of income. Our reputation as "the place to go to get good, home-cooked food," prepared under clean conditions, necessitates the need for 1,000 plus volunteer hours for the nine-day period the Booth is in operation. Those hours

are over and above the time spent in the church kitchen preparing baked beans, chili, and pies.

However, the Booth has spread its wings to incorporate our church's mission: "The purpose of this church shall be to devote ourselves and our resources to nurtur-



Above: Half the team outside the booth—Rev. Catherine Lauber, Dawn Crowe, Jamie Coppola, Dave Miller.

Left: Half the team in the booth—Jamie Coppola, Dave Miller, Dottie Eastman, Sally Gibson (foreground) and Leone Dyer.



Above: Rev. Dr. Gard Perry tells Kurt Fekete a story while cooking burgers.

not cover the immense community building and nurturing we all experienced in the Booth, the Church Kitchen, and our community. This year, we opened our doors to other community-based non-profit groups. This served in two facets: one, it gave our FNC community a bit of help filling the work schedule, and two, it allowed non-profit groups to share their mission.

When we gauge the Booth's success of the current year, it is always viewed through a financial lens. And yes, this makes sense since it is the purpose of gaining funds and is why we endure the many hours of The Fair, before, during, and after. While we are on a financial par with the past three years this year, our meter of success created another bullet point: how we serve our community. We provided a space for other non-profit groups and donated our leftover food to a local food pantry. Not only does our Fair Booth continue to be a major

Continues on page 106

ing the soul, growing in community, and fostering heaven on earth...." We have created a fundraiser that sells the vision of community, unity, and love, along with some burgers, beans, and pies. Now, I will admit that there were a few moments and possibly one full day that several of us felt the furthest removed from Heaven. This low did

Annual Appeal of the Swedenborgian Church

Dear Friends and Members of the Swedenborgian Church of North America,

Few know Swedenborg received a secret pension from Louis XV for twenty-five years up to the conclusion of his publications—paid directly from the French king’s personal diplomatic fund. The Swedish scholar and diplomat, Lars Bergquist who served as Swedish ambassador to the People’s Republic of China and to the Holy See (the Vatican), penned a major work, *Swedenborg’s Secret: A Biography*, in which he digs out the evidence discovered by his Swedish countryman, Franz Lindh, a member of the New Church in Sweden. Lindh in the 1910s and 1920s scrutinized Swedenborg’s financial records still retrievable in Stockholm.

He published evidence of an enormous sum of money from France providing primary means for Swedenborg to afford expenses required for high quality volume after volume after volume in his unfolding theological revelations for a New Church. The costs far exceeded Swedenborg’s earnings or modest inheritance. The deposits over time represent fifty times greater amount than his half-pension




produced. Why was the revelator receiving so much money from the French king? That’s another story worth exploring, but we can say with merit the King of France made the writings of our church possible.

Let us appreciate today all our stories of funders and givers. We are all need-

ed to make the Swedenborgian movement possible and powerful. A quarter millennium after those original books, we are still making Swedenborgian spiritual concepts come alive and real through ministries. Some exciting new outreach projects are in the making right now, and

they need our emotional, spiritual, and tangible support. Even small gifts register largely in the wholistic life of our movement, so please consider joining with the King of France in generating new outreach endeavors of our spiritual heritage. Let’s keep enlightening minds, touching hearts, and inspiring souls together.

<https://swedenborg.org/donate/>

Thank you,
—Rev. Dr. Jim Lawrence,
President of the Swedenborgian Church of North America 

Donate Now

Contents	
The Fryeburg Fair.....	97
Annual Appeal.....	98
Message from the President.....	99
Spirituality of Place	100
SoCal Kind of PCA Meeting.....	102
Wilmington and the Sacred Places Program.....	104
Helen Keller Spiritual Life Collaborative	105
Passages.....	106
What’s Happening	107
Save the Date: Convention 2025.....	108

the Messenger

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Message from the President

Celebrating "Spiritual Sunshine" and Our Twenty-Year History of Online Ministry

The Year of the Word: 2024–25

The Swedenborgian Church of North America has supported a denomination project for an online community that collapses geographic separations. For two decades, with the work and support of many laypersons and under the leadership of three ministers, the denomination's project has steadily grown and evolved in its skills and practices of reaching out and connecting with people no matter where they live.

In 2004, under the leadership of the new president Christine Laitner, the General Council launched a research project to explore the vision of an online ministry connecting people living far from existing churches and also to serve as an outreach ministry to the world. A research committee was appointed for this project, and in the summer of 2005 the General Council accepted a proposal to establish an "online-only outreach and connectional ministry." The new ordinand Rev. Sage Cole was recruited and served as minister in the initial startup phase through 2007 when she decided to give a more full-time effort to her new work at the Wilmington church on a team ministry with Rev. Randy Laakko. That shift led in 2008 for a Steering Committee of Susan Wood-Ashton, Sue Ditmire, and Barbara Cullen for what was being called "The Cyber Ministry Project" arranged to hire Rev. Dr. Wilma Wake, who would then take the ministry into a decade-long development that became known as and officially called the Swedenborgian Community Online (SCO).

During the decade from 2008–2018 the SCO was especially Facebook-based and featured real-time weekly worship services by Rev. Dr. Wake but also often including guest ministers and speakers, and there were many programs of spiritual growth group discussions. In all events there was a lively chat section that built relationships and community. Content for the website grew with hot links and an archive of reading materials. Website usage data showed steady growth in regular participants and new visitors with an overall growth of 150% for one four-year period as probably 300% overall.

After a decade of robust development, Rev. Dr. Wake felt ready to retire from the project, and the ministry's Central Committee hired Rev. Cory Coberforward the summer of 2018 following his ordination. Cory possesses a high level of tech skill that includes a year of graduate school in computer science, and he had also been active on the Swedenborg Foundation board learning from the OffTheLeftEye video project that had reached an enormous audience. He facilitated a name change to Spiritual Sunshine for a stronger public attraction and began working heavily with videos. Spiritual Sunshine under Cory's leadership has focused its mission of connecting people across the world to our denominationally shared spirituality by connecting on many fronts, from YouTube to TikTok to email conversations on the [SwedenborgianCommunity.org](https://www.SwedenborgianCommunity.org) website.

YouTube has become the most effective growth

Continues on page 106

The Spirituality of Place

Sermon from October 15, 2024

BY RICH TAFEL

Over the last few weeks, I've been filling up bags and boxes as I'm leaving old spaces behind. As I helped clean out my father's apartment, I returned to D.C. only to have to clean out my office here. God is not being subtle with me about experiencing a time of beginnings and endings and the spiritually of place.

Saying goodbye to old places is like saying goodbye to old dear friends. Each paper you pick up reminds you of a lovely story as you painstakingly decide, what do I keep and what can I throw away. Does throwing it away disrespect the love it is tied to?

Today is the last day for our Swedenborgian community praying, preaching, and sharing in this space of 1611 16th Street, we say goodbye and thank you to an old friend as we seek God's guidance imaging what's next.

Jesus teaches us a profound lesson about beginnings and endings. Though we seek to cling to the past, there come times to say goodbye to old wineskins to hold new wine. The challenge of our time is knowing what new wineskins looks like.

What does it mean to create a spirituality of place for the next generation? A generation that lives in a radically secular time—a generation that faces an epidemic of loneliness.

Our U.S. surgeon general has issued an advisory outlining the devastating health effects of loneliness and isolation that is literally killing us. Our current political crisis is downstream from our loneliness crisis. Whatever the results of the election may be, there are storm clouds ahead.

We are losing places we all once gathered for human nourishment and

community. Your presence in this church service today puts you outside the norm. Church services like this remain one of the last places where you gather with others outside your family across different generations or world views.

What does it mean to create a spirituality of place for the next generation? A generation that lives in a radically secular time—a generation that faces an epidemic of loneliness.

Spiritual spaces have always been created to match the needs of a particular time. The Bible teaches us about the evolution of holy spaces. In the Old Testament, God gives Abraham land and a temple and ultimately a kingdom, but this all falls into ruin as Israel is conquered. You cannot begin to understand current events today in the Middle East until you understand the power of physical spiritual spaces of the Jewish and Muslim people.

In Jesus's time, the spiritual space is back in the temple in Jerusalem now under Roman occupation. The Jewish people want their spiritual space back, and long for a messiah leader who will defeat Rome and restore their land.

Jesus honors holy spaces and preaches in the temple yet offers an evolved view of spiritual space telling his disciples, "Birds have nests, foxes have holes, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head." He is teaching us that there will always be something new. Change is constant. We need to adjust our institutions, our sacred spaces, and meet the need of the new wine shifting to our developing inner space.

Over the coming centuries, Christian spiritual places evolve to meet the needs of the age. Beautiful cathedrals were created where the attendees could stand and listen to the priest speak in Latin a language they did not understand. When the communion was performed a bell needed to be rung to get the attention of the congregants chatting with one another during the service.

Teaching to an illiterate congregation came through images in stained glass a new technology to provide the new wine with new wineskins.

After the reformation, congregants came to read the Bible themselves, and the stained glass moved from practical to beautiful. Holy spaces focused on the pulpit where the wise pastor could pontificate. The new technology of the printing press emerged, printing Bibles and scholarly preachers adapted as their spaces developed reading rooms and libraries to meet the needs of the time.

By 1894, the Church of the Holy City imagined meeting the needs of their current time. The stained glass and architecture represented beauty. People no longer relied on the stained glass alone to tell a story. They had the library which had open visiting hours during the day when local people could come to borrow hard-to-find expensive books.

The large pulpit represented a congregation who looked at the scholar pastor to teach them. The parish house offered classrooms and places to gather socially. For the people of the early 1900s, this combination was their new wineskins for new wine.

At each evolution, faith communities

Continues on page 101

Spirituality of Place

Continued from page 100

tend to try to hold onto the old wineskins. Like our favorite shoe or sweater, we have a nostalgic feel to the comfort we experience in it. We resist letting it go. So, we keep trying patch the old wineskins for the new wine—though the wine leaks—we hang on.

I shared in my sermon a few weeks back that at one point I sat alone in the sanctuary asking for guidance what to do about this building. I walked around to each window and read the names of long dead members aloud. When I returned to my seat they spoke to me.

“We built this for our time. What are you building for your time?”

That’s the challenge for this community and all of Christianity. The old is passing away. Old wineskins are leaking. Nostalgia and comfort will keep from resisting this reality as many seek to hold onto the past.

The challenge of our moment is a challenge of spiritual imagination. What do we need to build?

Our ancestors in the Washington Society of the New Jerusalem imagined they would be the torch bearers of a new church in the world. They gathered first in people’s homes, renting church halls, libraries, and other public venues finally first building on a property owned by the former president George Washington where today the Senate Office building sits.

With funding from prominent families like the Fairfax of VA and Duponts of Dupont Circle fame, they funded their New Church Temple, that ultimately burned down. Again, the group moved from location to location when they got the idea of building a national cathedral for Swedenborgians on the outskirts of town on 16th Street at the 1611 street location. Over a decade later, they built the parish house next door.

This space combined beauty, scholarship and a place for people to gather. This holy space offered new wineskins for new wine of their time. Their mission was successful.

We built this for our time. What are you building for your time?

Recently, I attended a wedding here at the church. It was as lovely and beautiful as the couple. Jimmy Cox, who has managed weddings here for over thirty years, was here to providing his magic and love for this holy space. As I sat watching, I could only imagine how many people celebrated the most important day of their life here in this space. How many weddings? How many memorial services? How many were baptized? How many found guidance in a sermon, or found inspiration from a concert, or a hug during the coffee hour, or a new friend? In my nine years pastoring here, I’ve experienced so many of these events myself that is beyond my imagination the tens of thousands of souls who tasted new wine in this wonderful wineskin.

By the time I took over, almost nine years ago as pastor, the congregation was down to a handful of stalwart leaders: Elfa Hallway, Malcolm Peck, Adrian Black, and Helen Sioris. Each worked to save it for another day. The building had fallen on hard times after years of winds, rains, and even earthquakes.

Elfa shared this message from Germany: “I’m sad for being unable to be present on this important day. This church has been my home for many years. It is also where my husband, Rashid Hallway, received his resurrection service and where my son, Hillel, went to Sunday School. It is with gratitude in my heart to all who sustain the church community and church work and I look forward to a new era

for Church of the Holy City in Washington D.C.”

How could we meet the needs in a new era? When I first began leading worship, we had formal old English liturgy, and I preached in a white robe from the large pulpit often to only three people and pianist. We asked attendees and those we met, what can we do to meet you on your spiritual path wherever that may be? They asked us, this: Can you make the language more relevant? Can you make the service more understandable? Is there a way we can ask questions in the service time? Can it be less formal?

When I asked young people what the biggest barrier to them was coming to church, they often responded, “church.” The building that so many found magnetic, now frightened some and they asked, “Could you hold events outside of church time?”

As the Church of the Holy City and the Washington Society of the New Jerusalem makes its third major journey, we leave behind this lovely space that served so many for so long. We leave in gratitude thanking it for being there for us. We ask God’s blessing on future congregations.

We now face the exciting challenge of creating new spiritual space in our tumultuous times. Where can we serve the needs of the rising generation that is more isolated and lonely? What can we do to providing healing to a country where half the people in each political party wish those in the opposing party were dead?

Secular materialism with its focus on personal success, wealth, and status has had over a century of dominance and it has left people craving something more. They seek to feed their soul, and they don’t know where they can find it. They are not interested in church from the past. They don’t want to go back.

Young people rarely ask me about

Continues on page 103

A SoCal Kind of Pacific Coast Association Meeting

BY REV. DR. AMANDA ADAMS RILEY, REV. DR. DAVID C. BROWN,
PASTOR CONNIE MCOSKER AND THE 2024 PCA PLANNING COMMITTEE

It was October 2018, in the toasty warm fireside room of the Swedenborgian Church of San Francisco, Nancy Richardson stood up and invited everyone to cruise on a tall ship. The decision was being made as to where to hold the following year's Pacific Coast Association (PCA) meeting. The New Church of the Southwest Desert was selected to host in 2019. Now, after a pandemic, several hybrid meetings, and one in-person meeting back in San Francisco, The Garden Church was honored to host the 2024 Annual Meeting of the Pacific Coast Association in San Pedro.

The weekend meeting kicked off with a welcome dinner in the Garden. The meal was served by a local chef and friend of The Garden Church and Feed and be Fed. The three-course meal included a Garden Church Salad, Crispy Skin-On Salmon, paired with baby Bok choy and red sauce, finished with caviar. The vegetarian entrée was a beautifully cooked cauliflower steak. Dessert was a bread pudding with crème anglaise, and for those who are vegan or gluten free there was a vegan chocolate mousse with berries. If the outstanding food was not enough, members of PCA were treated to live music from the Harbor Jazz Ensemble, a local favorite. Liz, who organizes the Harbor Jazz Ensemble, is one of our Garden volunteers and has been helping the garden grow and making compost into soil for nearly all nine years we've been open on 6th Street.

The following morning, members of the Pacific Coast Association were invited to meditation in the Garden lead by Pastor Connie McOsker and Dr. Linda O'Brien Rothe. It was

a gentle way to start the day for those who took part. Breakfast was served at The Grand Annex Music Hall, a black box theater space located across from



A welcome dinner with live music from the Harbor Jazz Ensemble.

the Garden, where the morning session and afternoon business meeting were also held. The Annex is owned and operated by a neighboring non-profit, and a good friend to The Garden Church. Breakfast and lunch were provided by our neighbors on the block at Blend and Befriend, a juice and smoothie shop which is branching out into catering. All were nourished by their overnight oatmeal-chia seed bowls, with pick your own toppings including nuts, berries, coconut, and vegan chocolate chips!

Our morning session was led by Rev. Dr. David C. Brown titled "Antiquissima Ecclesia" (The Most Ancient Church). Rev. Brown spoke about Swedenborg's understanding of the most ancient church connecting it to us today in our modern churches and ministries.

The Word in the Most Ancient Church, which was before the flood, was not a written Word, but was revealed to everyone who was of the church; for they were celestial men, and so were in the perception of good and truth, like the angels, with whom also they had fellowship. They thus had the Word inscribed on their hearts. Arcana Coelestia §2896

His talk was followed by a robust discussion centered on where we see the New Jerusalem coming into the here and now.

The discussion time concluded with some Taiko drumming of chant and rhythm lead by Pastor Connie. Then the group headed to lunch across the street in the Garden. By lunchtime the morning marine layer had burned off and the garden was replete with sunshine. All enjoyed the warm sun and fellowship together in our beautiful communal garden and outdoor sanctuary.

Following Lunch, the official business of the Pacific Coast Association took place. Rev. Junchol Lee, President of PCA moved us through the agenda and delegates from San Francisco and Pastor Helen Barler joined remotely.

After some time for a quick rest and change of clothes members of the

group joined by members of the Wayfarers Chapel Board gathered at [Berth 84](#) for a sunset sail on the [Exy Johnson](#) through the organization [Los Angeles Maritime Institute](#) (LAMI). Nancy's

Continues on page 103



Rev. Dr. David C. Brown presenting "The Most Ancient Church" for an educational session.

Spirituality of Place

Continued from page 101

questions of doctrine, but they do ask why so many churches exclude LGBTQ, women, and condemn people of other religions to hell. They want more inclusion. They find the message of Jesus profound and refreshing but are repelled by those who claim to speak in his name.

Today, a generation that wasn't raised in much of any spirituality is asking profound questions. What is the purpose of life? What happens when we die? How do we pray? How do we grow our inner life? What is a good life? Am I included? Do my thoughts matter? Is it safe to ask questions here?

This new wine is demanding new wineskins.

We can build on what we've learned in this space.

Earlier churches used the technologies of their time, such as, stained glass to teach visually, libraries to engage the mind, preaching to explain, and social events to build community. All of these are still valuable to the next evolution of spiritual spaces. We can harness today's new technologies in helping create our new space.

Swedenborg teaches us that *church* is not a building but a state of being. It's tempting to fall in love with spaces, but that misses the point. Even the holy space of our bodies will fail us one day and only our spirits continue on.

On his visits to heaven and hell, he reports on time and space in heaven. There, your feelings and thoughts of someone immediately allowed them to be right there with you. Time and space are transcended by feelings. We experience virtual space.

When I was young, this concept was hard for me in this materialistic plane to comprehend, but as our world evolves, I'm beginning to experience it.

During the pandemic, this

congregation was forced in one week to shift from physical space and into a virtual one. We broadcast online. Since we've done that, we have had attendees from over forty states and people around the world who join our worship or listen to the sermon. There are many people in this congregation who I have never physically met nor had the chance to give a hug, yet I feel I know them deeply, more deeply than most people I meet on a regular day.

At my dad's funeral, I shared that one of the great blessings of the pandemic was going online and having him be part of our church community for the last four years. Some of you were able to experience his service online. When I posted on Facebook the news of my father's death, hundreds of old friends sent me messages. Though virtual, I could feel the love and concern in each message. I was transcending time and space and feeling love and support.

Our new online technologies bring us closer to Swedenborg's view of the spiritual space. This is something we must incorporate in our new space. So, what must we build?

We need to create a home an urban sanctuary where big questions can be asked and discussed. Where no one is shamed. A spiritual space where everyone is welcome across generations. A place to help us improve our skills engaging those from other perspectives. A place that teaches how we develop compassion over contempt. A place that meets you wherever you are on your spiritual pilgrimage to experience God's love.

We must use the cutting technologies of Zoom, podcasts, and YouTube to provide a broadcasting space, while creating a warm loving physical space where humans can discuss important topics over meals, receive hugs, and find encouragement. We need a space where members can escape the chaos that is Washington D.C. and their

busy lives. This is the great challenge of our times.

How can each of us play our role in providing new wineskins for this new wine? It will require courage and imagination to grow beyond our comfort zones. But we must work together to answer the question of our elders posed to me when they said, "We built this for our time. What are you going to build for yours?" Our answer to this question offers all of us the chance to co-create with the divine to create a new spiritual space in service to humanity. 📱

Rev. Tafel is the pastor of the Church of the Holy City in Washington, D.C. He is a strategist who works at the intersection of faith, business, and politics to build bridges bringing together unlikely coalitions to solve some of the world's greatest challenges.



SoCal PCA Meeting

Continued from page 102

promise of a tall ship sail from six years earlier came to fruition. Nancy is deeply involved with LAMI and told us about the two ships they have—both built at three-quarters size with the intention of bringing middle school students aboard for a time of teamwork, friendship, and fellowship on the tall ships. We too felt that camaraderie as members of PCA jumped in to raise and lower sails on the cruise. You can't sail a ship that size on your own and it was a gift to be on it together.

Sunday morning the group gathered at St. Francis Episcopal in Palos Verdes for morning worship with the Wayfarers worshiping community. Over the course of the weekend, we had representatives from five of the congregations and ministries in the Pacific Coast Association. We are thankful for the time together and the connections made and nurtured. 📱

Wilmington Granted Admission into the National Fund for Sacred Places Program

BY REV. SHADA SULLIVAN

We are thrilled to announce that The Church of the Holy City, Wilmington has been granted admission to The National Fund for Sacred Places program, which provides capital grants and hands-on technical assistance to congregations undertaking substantial preservation projects. This one-of-a-kind program will assist us with our Phase Two restorations, mitigating water infiltration into our historic building via degrading masonry. If you would like to help us with the matching portion of this grant, please visit www.churchoftheholycity.org/donate.

The National Fund for Sacred Places, a program of Partners for Sacred Places in collaboration with the National Trust for Historic Preservation, is pleased to announce its 2024 grantees. Twenty-four historically significant faith communities have been admitted into the program, which provides capital grants of up to \$500,000 and hands-on technical assistance to congregations undertaking substantial preservation projects.

About the National Fund for Sacred Places

The National Fund for Sacred Places is a one-of-a-kind program that offers support to congregations preserving historic and architecturally significant houses of worship. Since its inception, the National Fund has awarded or pledged over twenty-six million dollars to 138 community-serving congregations representing twenty-six faith traditions across forty-two states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. A recent gift of an additional twenty-four million dollars in funding from Lilly Endowment, Inc. will allow the

National Fund to more than double its impact over the next five years.



“We are proud to welcome twenty-four faith communities into the National Fund this year, representing diverse regions, traditions, and heritages,” said Bob Jaeger, President of Partners for Sacred Places. “Their buildings will continue to serve as community centers, art spaces, and safe havens. We’re honored to help them continue this critical work.”

“Sacred places hold power to inspire awe, joy and a sense of connection, belonging, and purpose,” said Carol Quillen, President and CEO of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. “The grants and technical support provided by the National Fund will ensure that these spaces serve as meaningful centers within their communities for generations.”

“This year we received nearly five hundred applications, up thirty-one

percent from last year,” said Rachel Hildebrandt, Director of the National Fund for Sacred Places. “The growth we’re seeing mostly is the result of word of mouth and underscores the reality that historic sacred places need external support to balance caring for their buildings and serving their communities.”

About Partners for Sacred Places

Partners for Sacred Places is the only nonsectarian, nonprofit organization dedicated to the sound stewardship and active community use of older sacred places across America. Partners provides a variety of fundraising, building stewardship, space-sharing, and community engagement services through grant-funded programs and consulting so that sacred places can live into the vital roles they play as community assets in their neighborhoods and our wider society. (www.sacredplaces.org)

About Lilly Endowment, Inc.

Lilly Endowment, Inc. is a private foundation created in 1937 by J.K. Lilly Sr. and his sons Eli and J.K. Jr. through gifts of stock in their pharmaceutical business, Eli Lilly and Company. While those gifts remain the financial bedrock of the Endowment, it is a separate entity from the company, with a distinct governing board, staff and location. In keeping with the founders’ wishes, the Endowment supports the causes of community development, education and religion and maintains a special commitment to its hometown, Indianapolis, and home state, Indiana. A principal aim of the Endowment’s religion grantmaking is to deepen and

Continues on page 106

Helen Keller Spiritual Life Collaborative

BY REV. SAGE COLE

The Helen Keller Spiritual Life Collaborative (HKSLC) is getting ready to incorporate as a unique constituent body of the Swedenborgian Church of North America. The seed planted in 2018 at the Cambridge Swedenborg Chapel has sprouted!

What a journey to get to this moment, and what a journey ahead.

Originally conceived as a physical center, the vision has shifted to a virtual Collaborative. We have not relinquished the intention to one day rehabilitate a sacred space (or several) to house this initiative, but for now we are excited to grow in the fertile soil of the internet where roofs do not leak, and anyone can join in from anywhere!

We remain deeply committed

to carrying forward the spiritual legacy of Helen Keller, which we understand as fostering connections of love, understanding, and usefulness within our human family. While traditional congregational structures and Sunday worship forms are one way to foster these connections, the Helen Keller Spiritual Life Collaborative is committed to considering that of course there are *many ways* to live a life of worship. We are committed to fostering loving, honest, and useful conversations that

will bring these many ways to light and birth new collaborations.

We invite congregations and individuals to take part in this initiative. The only way to become a Collaborative is to collaborate! Consider taking part in some of our upcoming events and gatherings or inviting Rev. Sage to come speak to and with your community to consider how we may be mutually supportive of one another and what God is doing! Rev. Sage has already been on Facebook Live with [the Rainbow Church Sunday, October 27](#), November 2 on Zoom for the

Founding Minister:
Rev. Sage Cole
Executive Assistant:
Alex Gayheart
Founding Board Members:
Betsy Aldrich
Melissa Donaldson
Beki Greenwood
Rev. Catherine Lauber
Chelsea Odhner
Rev. Shada Sullivan



moon respectively (see www.helenkellercollaborative.org or our *Be Love, Be Honest, Be Useful* Facebook Group for dates and times).

On March 3, 2025, in collabora-

tion with one of our major HKSLC supporters Dr. Rosemarie Garland-Thompson and the Harvard Chaplains, we are planning our first major HKSLC event in honor of the day Helen celebrated as her Spiritual Birthday (when she met her teacher Annie Sullivan). This event will be fully accessible virtually so we hope many of you will wish to organize satellite watch parties and celebrations.

Our weekly drop in *Be Love, Be Honest, Be Useful* Zoom Gatherings are Thursdays at 7:00 PM Eastern.

Be Love Holy Supper and *Be Honest* Remembering your Baptism Zoom Gatherings occur on the new and full

rational with one of our major HKSLC supporters Dr. Rosemarie Garland-Thompson and the Harvard Chaplains, we are planning our first major HKSLC event in honor of the day Helen celebrated as her Spiritual Birthday (when she met her teacher Annie Sullivan). This event will be fully accessible virtually so we hope many of you will wish to organize satellite watch parties and celebrations.

I'm so pleased to be bringing *Be Love, Be Honest, Be Useful* to the Michigan Association's All Adult Retreat at Almont New Church Assembly March 28–30, 2025.

There are a lot of moving parts as we formalize this endeavor. Pray for us! Be patient with us! Get curious about us! And better yet—collaborate with us! 🤝



Passages

Deaths

Louis Leonard Tafel, 97, of Churchville, Pennsylvania, transitioned peacefully to heaven on Friday, October 4, 2024, at Ann's Choice Nursing Home. Lou now joins his late wife,

Mary Agnes Robb Tafel, who passed on December 12, 2018. The couple was happily married for sixty-seven years. Louis was the son of Rev. Dr. Leonard I. Tafel who served as president of the denomination. He was the grandson of Rev. Louis Tafel and great-grandson of Rev. Leonard Tafel. Louis was the father or Rev. Richard Leonard Tafel who pastors Church of the Holy City where Louis was a member.

Born May 2, 1927, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, he was the son of the late Dr. Rev. Leonard and Gertrude Hommen Tafel. He was also the brother of the late Anna Louise, John, Rudolph, and Walter.

Louis and Mary found great pride in their loving family with his six children, fifteen grandchildren, and ten great-grandchildren.

Lou graduated from Frankford High School. He attended both Temple University and Susquehanna University. Drafted during his senior year of high school into World War II, he served in Panama. Louis spent his career in business, primarily in sales, for many companies, including AB Dick, Merck, and National Cash Register. He created his sales niche in the healthcare field and rose to become a healthcare corporate executive for various companies, including Hill Rom, Joerns, Sciotech, and Shelby Williams.

Lou enjoyed spending time with his family, attending his children's,



The Fryeburg Fair Booth

Continued from the cover

source of funding for us, but it also serves as the heart of our church every year for a week in October, when we welcome friends—old and new—to enjoy our hospitality, our famous “Fayah Burgahs,” (fair burgers) and our commitment to the hard work on which our future and community depends. ☩



Leone Dyer wears many hats at the Fryeburg New Church. She is the chair of the Board of Trustees, Fryeburg Fair Booth coordinator, and A/V chair. Lee, and her husband Dan, enjoy hiking in the White Mountains of Maine and New Hampshire.

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Wilmington Sacred Space

Continued from page 104

enrich the lives of Christians in the United States, primarily by seeking out and supporting efforts that enhance the vitality of congregations and strengthen the pastoral and lay leadership of Christian communities. The Lilly Endowment also seeks to improve public understanding of diverse religious traditions by supporting fair and accurate portrayals of the role religion plays in the United States and across the globe. www.lillyendowment.org ☩

grandchildren's and great-grandchildren's events, and celebrating holidays together. A particular joy was hosting the family beach week at Stone Harbor, New Jersey, for over thirty years. Lou had a wonderful sense of humor that always brought smiles to friends and family. A deeply spiritual seeker, Lou was an active member Church of the Holy City in Washington, D.C. ☩

Message from the President

Continued from page 99

driver and point of connection, and Cory can more readily stay on subscriber growth with YouTube which is particularly important. For example, he notes for this edition of my president's message that in the last twenty-eight days subscriber growth numbered 258, which was “108 more than the usual 90–150” according to YouTube. In the last ninety days, the subscriber growth shows 765 new regular viewers and for the past year subscriber growth numbers 1,830, which is 71% more than the previous 365 days. It is working.

Cory adds, “One initiative that may drive future growth is our recent efforts to create shorts from our longer-form videos, which have seen good engagement. We also are starting to do various things to make our content more digestible, such as adding chapters to our recent videos and built-in closed captions on our shorts. Although my half-time position somewhat limits our ability to continue to expand our offerings, as I am the sole editor, minister, and techie, etc., we hope to still be able to deepen our ability to connect and introduce people to their inner light and the wider Swedenborgian world by working smartly.”

In featuring our history of “cyber ministry,” I rejoice at the vision and hard work of so many laypersons and clergy in helping to take our special brand of Swedenborgian spirituality to people without geographic boundaries and to provide untold meaningful experiences for so many. May our vision continue and our yield increase.

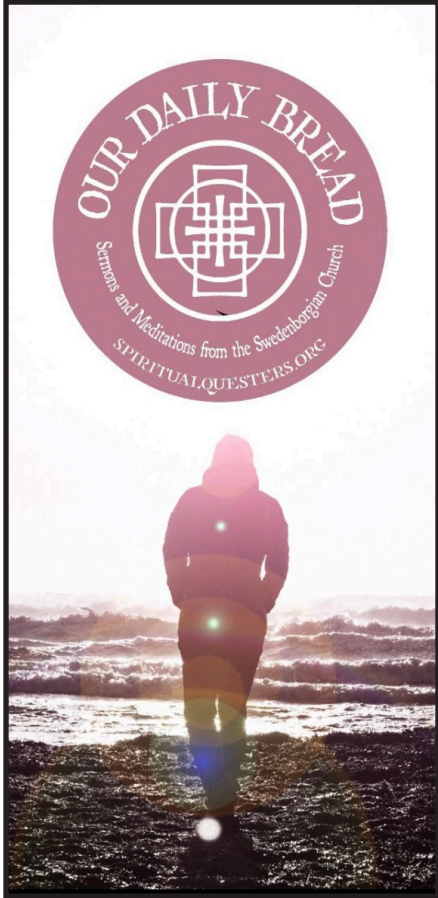
—Rev. Dr. Jim Lawrence
president@swedenborg.org

 **Spiritual
Sunshine**
A Swedenborgian Community Online

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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.



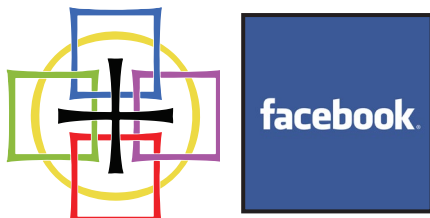
SwedenborgianCommunity.org

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.



Follow the SCNA on Instagram

The Swedenborgian Church of North America



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/



Convention videos, the Swedenborgians in Action Against Racism program, and virtual content that has been created, can be found here for viewing at anytime!

Click the YouTube logo above to subscribe!

Do you write poetry?
Send it along to:
Messenger@Swedenborg.org.

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

The 2025 Convention of the Swedenborgian Church will be in Portland, Oregon! June 27 – July 1

We hope you can join us for the 2025 Swedenborgian Church Annual Convention in Oregon this year!

- Convention will be June 27 –July 1 (this includes travel dates)
- Located at the University Place Hotel and Conference Center at Portland State University, Portland, Oregon
- Event will utilize a mix of Hotel and University facilities
- Stay tuned for more details coming this winter!

More information will be shared on swedenborg.org!

