



Virtual Programs for Convention 2025

All times listed are in Pacific Time. Visit swedenborg.org for details.

Livestreamed events will be able to be viewed by anyone, anywhere live on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/swedenborg.org).

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

Friday Evening, June 27

7:00–9:00 Opening Convention, Worship Service, and Keynote Address by Rev. Rich Tafel:

“Spiritual Innovation for a Changing World: The New Church Vision” *Zoom Events & Facebook*

Saturday, June 28

9:00–11:30 Business Session I *Zoom Events*

1:00–2:30 Mini Course Section 1 (two options) *Zoom Events*

“Building a Successful Hybrid Ministry” with Rudy Caseres..... *Zoom Events*

“All is Within: The Internal Sense of the Writings” with Rev. Thom Muller..... *Zoom Events*

2:45–4:45 Business Session II *Zoom Events*

5:00–6:00 Swedenborgian Church Children’s Ministry (SCCM) Annual Meeting *Zoom Events*

7:00–8:30 Convention Worship Service and Communion with Rev. Kevin Baxter *Zoom Events & Facebook*

Sunday, June 29

8:00–8:45 Service of Remembrance

with Rev. Kit Billings and Rev. Renée Machiniak..... *Zoom Events & Facebook*

9:30–11:30 Business Session III *Zoom Events*

1:00–2:30 Mini Course Section 2 (two options)

“Swedenborg, Alchemy, and Activism: Life of an American Philosopher-Soldier”

with Rev. Dr. Jim Lawrence and Michael Goos..... *Zoom Events*

“The Glorification: An Overview” with Rev. Dr. Gard Perry *Zoom Events*

2:45–4:00 Business Session IV and CSS Annual Meeting *Zoom Events*

8:00–10:00 Ordination Service *Zoom Events & Facebook*

Monday, June 30

10:30–12:00 Mini Course Section 3 (two options)

“Honoring Historic Sacred Spaces: Restoration and Evolution”

with Rev. Shada Sullivan *Zoom Events*

“Meditation for Children” with Sarah Wood Valley *Zoom Events*

Programming Available to Anyone

Find these programs (times listed above) on our [Facebook Page](#):

Opening, Worship Service, and Keynote • Convention Worship Service • Service of Remembrance • Ordination Service

Registration for virtual attendees closes on [Sunday, June 15](#)

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

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Do you write poetry?

Send it along to:

messenger@swedenborg.org

Church Calendar

- **June 26–27, 2025:** [Council of Ministers Meeting](#), Portland, Oregon
- **June 27–July 1, 2025:** [Annual Convention](#), Portland, Oregon
- **July 12–20, 2025:** [Almont Summer School](#), Allenton, Michigan
- **July 26–August 2, 2025:** [SCYL International Camp](#), Atherstone, England
- **July 26–August 10, 2025:** [Fryeburg New Church Assembly](#), Fryeburg, Maine
- **September 25–28, 2025:** [Gathering Leaves](#), Temenos, Pennsylvania
- **October 10–13, 2025:** [SCYL Fall Retreat](#), Duxbury, Massachusetts

Editor's Corner

"See" You at Convention!



Up until last October, I was the Operations Manager for the Swedenborgian Church, and it was my responsibility to manage many of the aspects of the

annual Convention. My first Convention was in 2021, when the world was still shuttered from COVID-19, and large gatherings were prohibited.

We had decided that we would create a live, interactive, virtual Convention that was hosted all across the USA. Beki and I managed the video feed from the East Coast, the president at the time, Rev. Jane Siebert, chaired from Kansas, and half of ExCOM hailed from California. Not only did we manage multiple days of content, we also laid the groundwork to vote and conduct business virtually.

The next year, 2022, it was decided that rather than move to just in-person attendance, we would make space for virtual attendees to continue to participate. I'm not sure if we realized it at the time, but what we were creating was essentially two Conventions that would need to be hosted simultaneously, and thus began the in-person/hybrid format we enjoy today. Despite the additional work and planning, this format has allowed twice as many people to participate, including many who were never able to make it to Convention before.

In October of last year, I moved to New Zealand, yet despite this, I had always planned to attend what I could of Convention online this year. When Jim asked me if I would be willing to be guest editor of the June issue, which featured the virtual programming in

the Messenger

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Submissions are accepted at any time.

Submissions must be received by the 10th 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.

the last few years, I said, "Absolutely!" It is an honor to edit this edition for you all, and I am grateful for all the hard work that goes into providing an event that I can attend, all the way in New Zealand. Thank you!

—Brittany Price

P.S. Just in case some of you miss my reminders...

**Don't Forget to Register
by June 15th!**

Message from the President

Let's Catch Up in Portland, Oregon

The Year of the Word: 2024–25

In addition to seeing old friends and meeting new ones, the annual convention gathering of the Swedenborgian Church of North America is also a time to highlight exciting developments in the life of our community. There will be reports on a surprising array of projects and ministry visions. There will be creative Mini Courses available to people in-person and participating virtually. There will be display tables presenting events and faithful work in many programs around our denomina-



tion, such as our camps, the Social Justice Committee, and Swedenborgians in Action Against Racism.

So many of our groups, organizations, and committees have worked steadily this year toward impressive goals and exciting futures. We will learn about the surprising plans for reconstructing Wayfarers Chapel, in possibly an even more stunning setting. We will discover the impressive effort accomplished by the New York New Church group to launch the New York New Church Legacy Fund. And we will encounter new developments evolving with the Helen Keller Spiritual Life Collaborative,

now as a new legal entity, offering impressive programs. We will see our youth enjoying their spiritual life programming and putting on a service for the rest of us. We will worship and sing, we will socialize and play, and we will discuss and explore.

My quick history search indicates our annual convention has never been held in Oregon, the state whose motto is "She Flies with Her Own Wings." That's us too, as Swedenborgians, and we still have many destinations awaiting us.

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



*University Place Hotel and Conference Center in
Portland, Oregon.*

What Are You Rising Into?

An Easter Sermon from April 20, 2025

BY RICH TAFEL

Good morning, and Happy Easter. The Lord is risen. And the good news of Easter is—so are we.

Each Easter has a special and unique message. I'm thinking back today to Easter 2021, just as the world was catching its breath after the pandemic, and in my sermon I asked:

"What will you leave behind?"

At the time, the world had been disrupted. We paused, we reflected, and for a moment I hoped we might begin to release our growing culture of contempt and move toward compassion. And for a little while, it seemed possible.

But as you know, contempt didn't go quietly. And here we are again—in another time of disruption.

This Easter 2025, meets us in the midst of the worst civil crisis in my lifetime. We face national division, global tension, and personal uncertainty.

In the midst of this chaotic world, this Easter brings a new question:

"What are you rising into?"

Because the resurrection of Jesus isn't only about what we leave behind. It's stepping into the new life that's waiting just outside the tomb.

In today's gospel, we return to one of the most intimate, beautiful moments in the resurrection story:

It's early morning in the garden. The tomb is empty. Mary Magdalene, the most faithful follower of Jesus, is there. The other disciples are in hiding, but Mary shows up. Heartbroken. Confused. The body is gone.

Then she sees a man standing nearby she believes is a gardener. She doesn't recognize that it is Jesus, and that's the part that always catches my attention. It doesn't make sense. How could it be that Mary didn't recognize her closest friend, her healer, her teacher?

You must come to know me in a new way—spiritually, inwardly, eternally."

He isn't rejecting her love; He's expanding it.

Throughout His life, Jesus was gradually uniting His human nature with the Divine. That process, what we call glorification, culminated after the resurrection. When Jesus says, "Do not touch me," he's telling Mary and us that the relationship has changed. It's no longer about physical closeness. It's about an eternal spiritual union. She must grow in order to meet Him where He is now. And so must we.

This is the journey of resurrection.

It's not just something that happened to Jesus. It's what happens in us—again and again.

We must grow to meet Him. We die to our old selves. We rise to something new. And yet, like Mary, we often try to cling.

We cling to what was—how God used to show up, how life used to feel, how we used to define ourselves. We want our churches, our politics, even our image of God to remain fixed and familiar.

But that's not the way it works. The spiritual life is about constantly growing.

I remember as a kid, our Sunday school teacher asked us all to draw a picture of God. Everyone produced old men with grey beards, except me. My drawing freaked people out. It was one big, huge eye, and the eye had eyes all over it.



Church of the Holy City, Washington, D.C., celebrated Easter in their new chapel space. The group sold the church last fall and purchased a new building called Swedenborg House, located just steps away from the Dupont Circle Metro.

Swedenborg gives us a beautiful answer:

Because Jesus had changed. He was risen. He had entered a new spiritual state. A transformation had taken place. Then He says her name.

"Mary."

And in that one word, everything shifts. She knows.

"Rabbi!" she cries.

Of course, what does she do next? What would you do next? She reaches out to Him—to touch, to hold, to cling. But then something even stranger happens. Jesus says:

"Do not cling on to me."

What? Why? Why wouldn't He let her embrace Him?

The answer is because their relationship had changed. He's saying, "You can't relate to me as you did before.

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What Are You Rising Into?

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My Sunday school teacher asked, “What’s this?”

I explained that God can see everything at all times, so God must be an eye. Years later, someone explained to me that the eye on the pyramid on the dollar bill represented the all-seeing eye of God. Maybe I was onto something. I was using my childhood understanding to make sense of God, and that was great for a kid, but my relationship had to grow, and I grew—it’s been evolving ever since.

The resurrection demands transformation in our own lives and understanding. This disruption we’re living through right now feels like the end of something. But I also believe it is the beginning of something deeper.

We prefer to cling to what we know, often missing the new possibility ahead of us. We cling to the past in our personal lives, too. Letting go of the familiar, however imperfect, is scary. The past offers certainty; the future requires trust. Clinging becomes a coping mechanism.

In my executive coaching practice I met many clients who stay in a job or relationship that’s comfortable but stagnant, afraid to take a leap into something more aligned with their purpose.

I often shared the lessons from the book, *What Got You Here Won’t Get You There: How Successful People Become Even More Successful*.

In it, Marshall Goldsmith explains that the very habits and skills that help people achieve success early in their careers can become obstacles when trying to reach the next level. Growth requires letting go of old behaviors, even if they once served us well.

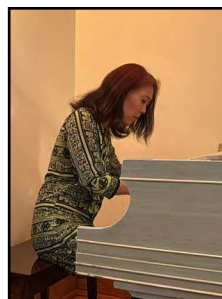
Another great teaching about this is in the book by Gay Hendricks called, *The Big Leap*. In the book he explains how we upper limit ourselves.

The “Upper Limit Problem” is the internal resistance we experience when we begin to exceed the level of happiness, success, or love we’re used to. It’s a subconscious self-imposed limit based on old programming—beliefs from childhood, past trauma, or societal conditioning. Even if the comfort zone is painful or small, it’s familiar.

When we start to experience more joy, creativity, or abundance, our old subconscious beliefs kick in and say: “This is too much. Who do you think you are? You shouldn’t be paid this? You shouldn’t have this easy a life?”

We self-sabotage and cling to the past.

The book teaches that to grow, we must let go. Hendricks invites readers to shift into their Zone of Genius—the space where your deep purpose and joy align. But to do that, you have to release old



World-renowned pianist Dr. Makiko Hirata from Stanford University played a concert.

fears, patterns, and limits. It’s a conscious choice to stop clinging to what got you here and leap into what’s next.

But change is tough.

I remember working with one coaching client that had achieved financial and status success in his career. He knew his purpose was to do something more. After months of painstakingly making plans to start a new life of purpose, he told me he wanted to stop coaching.

When I asked why, he reported that the stress of leaving behind his status and what he knew was too much. The image he shared was driving a bike up a hill each week—it was time to turn around to the safety he felt he had.

Today, ask yourself what you are clinging to? Where do you need to transform to have a new, evolved relationship with God?

All of us have felt that at some time. We’ve all retreated into comfort and clinging. But clinging has a cost. The cost of never living into your greatest purpose. The cost of never trusting God will lead you through the unknown. The cost of never living a full life.

Today, ask yourself what you are clinging to? Where do you need to transform to have a new, evolved relationship with God?

Whatever it is—this Easter is your invitation to let it go. To open yourself. To take the big leap. To stop clinging. Because something new is rising in you. You can feel it. You might be denying it. You might be fighting it. But it’s real. And it’s time.

Jesus came back transformed. And He calls us to do the same. Because the way forward isn’t about clinging. It’s about trusting. Jesus didn’t say goodbye to Mary—He said, Go forward.

Continues on page 43



While there is much to renovate, the group was glad to be together and welcome their online members to the new space.

BE Love, BE Honest, BE Useful Spring Retreat

BY SAGE COLE

The Helen Keller Spiritual Life Collaborative (HKSLC) had a wonderful opportunity to hold its first in-person BE Love, BE Honest, BE Useful retreat this Spring, in collaboration with the Michigan Association of the Swedenborgian Church. Rev. Sage Cole, founder of the HKSLC, co-led the retreat with Rev. Renée Machiniak of the Royal Oak Church of the Holy City, Michigan. Over twenty adults from Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, and flying in from Texas and California gathered at the Almont New Church Assembly (ANCA) March 28–30, 2025.

Over the course of a beautiful (and muddy) spring weekend, sharing and reflection allowed us to open up about love, honesty, and usefulness, and the way these aspects of the Divine invite us towards growth and a more authentic community. The welcoming space of the ANCA, coupled with delicious food lovingly prepared by Lori Patana, Tammara Mounce, and Jan Milan, created a nurturing environment to explore these deep and at times challenging themes as they apply to our personal and collective lives.

Saturday morning, after a yummy breakfast of fresh berries, yogurt, and

fruit, we held our first BE Love session. Rev. Sage shared the foundation of our faith, as one of a loving universe of which we are all a part, and invited participants to share what places, experiences, and people helped elicit this sense of oneness, love, and connection. Much sharing was offered about the Almont New Church Assembly and its way of eliciting this experience of love. This session closed with a communion service led by Rev. Renée, inviting all to the table in this spirit of love.

Saturday afternoon, we moved into a time of reflection on the invitation to BE Honest. Rev. Sage invited attendees to reflect on how we are always being grown by God, regenerated, and that being honest about what we are being called to let go of and move into at any given time can be so helpful to make that growing process less painful. As this self-honesty can take time to enter into, space was opened up through the afternoon for self-reflection. Many attendees enjoyed some creative time making use of beautiful craft materials provided by Tammara. We then gathered back together for a ritual to remember our baptism, the sacrament that corresponds to our regeneration, led by Rev. Renée.

Saturday evening, we held our last BE Useful session and reflected together on this full trinity and how these three ways of being can help us make our way to the Holy City to be together in peace with others as we are, unified in our diversity. We closed this session with an anointing ritual, honoring the way that we are each anointed with a



The group gathers together and breaks bread.

particular and beautiful use to bring into the world.

Some reflections from retreat attendees:

“The BE Love Retreat facilitated by Sage and Renée was one of the most meaningful experiences of community I have experienced! The distillation of Swedenborgian theology into love, honesty, and use is so simple and practical, allowing participants from diverse paths and stages of life to connect in a deep and fundamental way. I left the weekend feeling rested, re-energized, and motivated to maintain the sense of connection to the moments of being love, being honest, and being useful in my daily life through my personal practices as well as the online offerings from Sage and the Helen Keller Center Spiritual Life Collaborative.”
— Alice Henderson

“The retreat was very well done. So nice to be in community with our Almont family, plus I liked the chance to be honest. Love and usefulness come more easily. Thanks for this new way of churching.” — BJ Neuenfeldt



Marjie Leas reflecting on BE honest.

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BE Love, BE Honest, BE Useful

Continued from page 38

"I absolutely love what this ministry is bringing, and it's already helping me in meaningful ways!" — Rhett Billings

"I loved this retreat! It was like no other. I truly came away with a sense of connection with others and to the mission Sage very aptly presented, which resonated both personally and on a more global scale. I look forward to more retreats like this one! I feel changed from the experience and have a real sense that I am embodying the tenets: BE Love, BE Honest, BE Useful." — Heather Oelker

Our retreat came to a close with a beautiful Sunday morning worship service led by Rev. Renée. The spirit of God seemed to be upon her as she spoke very prophetic words about how God is moving in our individual lives and in the life of our church. Renée reflected after the fact, "As the weekend progressed, God was filling me with perceptions and most of what I expressed in leadership was 'from the clouds' of higher knowing in the moment." The spirit seemed to be moving throughout our weekend together.


God also inspired Marjie Leas to write a new Helen Keller themed grace, sung to the tune "Wade in the Water."

Praise for the water!

Truth's in the water, Helen.

When Annie taught her,

Helen Keller learned from the water.



We need the water.

We're fed with food and water.

God's precious daughter,

Helen Keller, bless us with water!

Rev. Sage has already been invited

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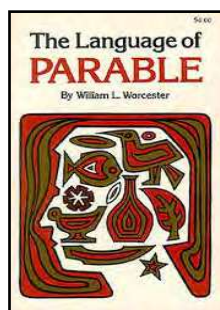
The Year of the Word

Correspondences Provide the Key to the Word

BY WILLIAM LORING WORCESTER

*Professor William Worcester (1859–1939) was the longtime president of the New-Church Theological School and author of many books. This reflection on the key to the Word is excerpted from his *The Language of Parable*, a classic in Swedenborgian literature that was first published in 1892 and reprinted nine times.*

The knowledge of correspondences is the key to the spiritual lessons of the Bible. By its aid, the parables and histories and strange prophecies of the Word are opened to disclose the Divine truths which they contain. Surely nothing can be of greater importance than to gain ourselves, and to impart to our scholars, a clear, reasonable understanding of this science and a practical acquaintance with it which will enable us to see lessons of heavenly wisdom everywhere as we read the Bible.



How easy this study would be, how living and delightful, if we lived in heaven, if the children walked with their teacher in heavenly fields and needed but a word from them to interpret to them the thousand beautiful truths that seem almost to shine forth from the sunlight and flowers and birds and precious gems! They would feel the relation of all things around them to the thoughts and feelings within themselves. Everything would embody and interpret to them the things of inner wisdom.

Fortunately, the perception of a

relation between inward things and outward has not yet been wholly lost in the world, though it is dim and incomplete compared to the perception of the most ancient days and of heaven. The perception still lingering in people's minds of a relation between natural things and the spiritual gives a living basis for the study of correspondences. This almost instinctive perception is what we must awaken and develop and make more definite.

To illustrate the kind of perception needed, take varying expressions of the face and the movements of hands. Do young people need to be told that these are natural things, and that they are manifestations, expressions, correspondences of feelings and thoughts that are spiritual things? A child knows at a glance the feeling of pleasure that causes a smile or the sorrow that causes tears. And the tones of a voice: is an interpreter needed to tell us that one cry expresses pain and another one joy, or that a word spoken in a gentle, soothing tone is inspired by kindness, and a harsh tone by anger? Does a child need to be told that one motion of the hand is an invitation to come, and another is a command to go? Children perceive immediately spiritual correspondences of the expressions of a face and gestures of the hand and tones of voice.



William Worcester

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Spiritually Appointed

BY LYNN CHITTICK THOMPSON

“You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last.” —John 15:16

“Let’s all go over the high mountain together, in the twenty-first century, together, hand in hand,” —Aveline Kushi

In the quiet serenity of Becket, Massachusetts, I stood at the gravesite of Aveline Kushi, a pioneer of the natural food movement. Memories flooded back—decades spent at the Kushi Institute in my thirties to fifties, where I learned, healed, and discovered. A deep sense of love, peace, and gratitude washed over me. Blessed are the peacemakers, I thought. Now, at our farm in Pennsylvania, the Planetary Health Library stands beside the wisdom of Emanuel Swedenborg, a shared treasury of insight and spiritual growth.

Childhood is a time of wonder, passion, and curiosity. We begin our journey lying down, wholly dependent, and within a year, we stand, walk, and explore. This remarkable transition

mirrors the journey of life itself. In youth, we dream of designs, accolades, and achievements, seeking something greater than ourselves. We step beyond the familiar, into the vast unknown, our dreams shifting like the stars.

For me, those dreams were shaped by a fascination with other worlds and a quest for understanding. At twenty-six, diagnosed with a breast tumor and with two young children, I turned to the teachings of Rudolf Steiner and the spiritual insights of Emanuel Swedenborg. His *Heaven and Hell* taught me that even in youth, we experience glimpses of heaven and hell. I embraced organic foods at twenty-three and built a sustainable home by twenty-four. My son Adam’s severe allergies taught me about the hidden dangers in everyday products. What seemed like challenges were lessons that deepened my understanding of life and health.

It was during this time that I met Michio Kushi, the visionary behind America’s natural food movement. At twenty-seven, I wrote to him after reading his book, telling him how his vision for *One Peaceful World* inspired me. To my surprise, he called to thank me. Kushi’s teachings—rooted in well-being, spiritual witness, and service—aligned with the wisdom of Swedenborg, who believed that true happiness comes from serving others.

This philosophy guided my journey. I saw how dreams evolve and expand with each step we take. As a

student of philosophy and religion, I delved into the writings of Plato, Aristotle, and Swedenborg, deepening my understanding of the spiritual and physical worlds. My studies illuminated the connection between ancient wisdom and the spiritual transformation Swedenborg described.

In the sacred texts of the Bible, the prophets offer visions of a peaceful world. They speak of hope, change, and the inner transformation that Swedenborg describes so profoundly. Jesus Christ, through his life and teachings, revealed the path to true inner peace. His glorification is a beacon of divine love and wisdom, a light that calls us toward spiritual renewal.

When Michio Kushi passed away in 2014, I dreamt of TORCH: The Organization for Realizing Change in Humanity. The acronym emerged as wildfires raged in California, where I lived. TORCH became a call to serve, to carry the light of love and wisdom forward. Today, as I look ahead, I see our denomination as a community of dreamers, each carrying a torch of spiritual insight and service.

Aveline Kushi, Michio’s wife, taught me to honor the sacred in everyday life. From cooking to chanting, she showed me that true spirituality is embodied—lived in each moment. Her words still echo in my heart: “Hold each other’s hands over the high mountain.” As I continue this journey, I am reminded that our dreams are not just for ourselves but for those who come after us.

We are appointed by the simple miracle of our first breath. Our dreams may differ, but we are all called to seek goodness and truth, to live with purpose, and to support one another. As I stand here today, I hold the dream of

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Lynn Thompson and Alex Jack, teacher and writer of “Natural Way of Life,” at the gravesite of Aveline Tomoko Kushi, 04/24/25.

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

BY KAREN CONGER

The Board of Trustees for the Center for Swedenborgian Studies met in a hybrid session for their annual Spring meeting at Mercy Center in Burlingame, California, on May 2 and 3, 2025. Ably chaired by Tom Neuenfeldt, the two-day meeting focused on a number of matters. The digitizing of the collections in the library continues, using the scanner provided courtesy of the Boston Church of the New Jerusalem, which delivers excellent quality PDF format documents. Scanning of the Helen Keller collection has been completed, and work has begun on the Henry James, Sr. collection and others.

Excitingly, the Graduate Theological Union is ready to introduce

a Master of Arts Degree with a concentration in Swedenborgian Studies, apparently the first time an accredited graduate school has done so. The degree will require a shorter period of study, a current trend that is very likely

to continue, and CSS has become an accepted and appreciated part of the GTU.

The Board of Trustees was pleased to meet with Chair of the Committee on Admission to the Ministry, Rev.

Junchol Lee, and shared a profitable time discussing ideas around ways in which our ordination track students might be further supported and equipped for the journey that is represented by theological study.

The Annual Corporation Meeting of the New Church Theological School (d.b.a. Center for Swedenborgian Studies) will take place on Sunday, June 29, 2025, at 3:15 PM PT, during the convention meetings at Portland State University, Portland, Oregon. ☒



Starting with the bottom left, going clockwise: Rev. Dr. Gard Perry, Dr. Rebecca Esterson, Rev. Dr. Jim Lawrence, Jennifer Lindsay, Karen Conger, Pastor Tassy Farwell, and Robert Carr.

Spiritually Appointed

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One Peaceful World close to my heart—a dream born in the teachings of Michio Kushi, deepened by the insights of Swedenborg, and carried forward through TORCH. ☒

Lynn Chittick Thompson, RN, is the founder and CEO of TORCH: The Organization for Realizing Change in Humanity. Lynn is finishing her DMin at the Pacific School of Religion.

She is a mother of five and soon-to-be grandmother of fourteen. She lives in Pennsylvania with her husband at the Meeting House Farm.



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 29, 2025 at 3:15 PM PT, in the University Place Hotel Ballroom, Portland State University in Portland, Oregon. ☒

Who is My Neighbor?

BY AMANDA RILEY

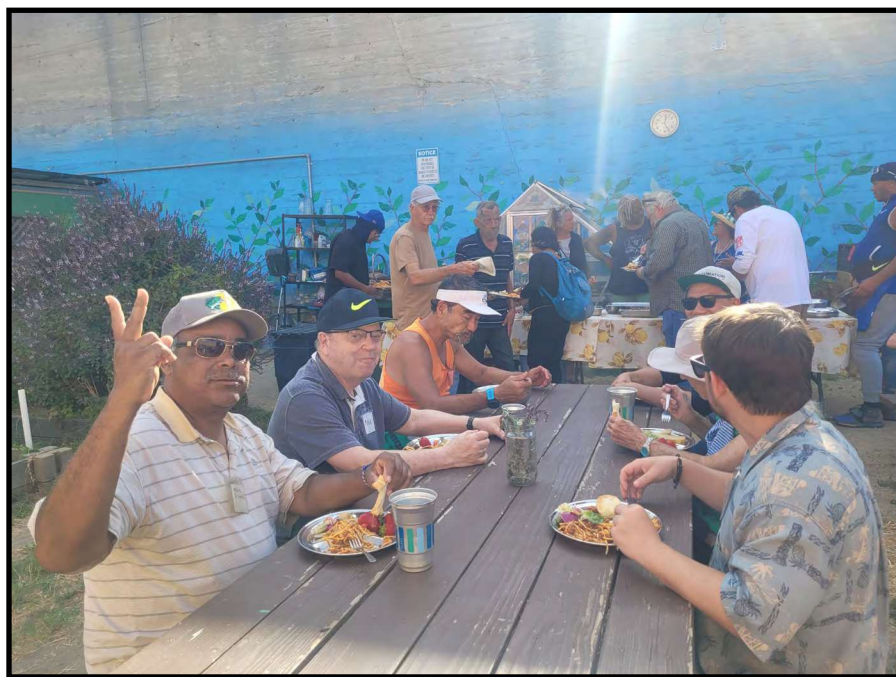
“Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?’ He said, ‘The one who showed him mercy.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Go and do likewise.’” Luke 10:36–37

It was a particularly warm day in August, bright and sunny, when church member Naomi arrived at the Garden. I met her at the gate, and she was visibly upset.

“Rev. Amanda,” she said out of breath, “There is a man who needs our help. He’s about a block and a half away, and he’s sitting in the sun, and it’s too hot for him to be there, and he’s hurt and bleeding from his head. He doesn’t have any shoes on. I asked him if he could move to a shady spot because it’s too hot to be in the sun. He seems confused. He needs help, and I can’t help him alone.”

I began to look around at those present in the garden, as the setup for church was yet to be done. I was able to identify two members, Peter and Manuel, and explained to them the need. Energized by the opportunity to help, they headed down the block. After a while, I grabbed a cup of water, checked in with Connie, and headed down the block to check in.

As I drew close, I could see Peter helping a man stand up and Manuel tying shoes on his feet. It was a beautiful moment of service and love. After a brief conversation with them,



Fellowship at The Garden Church on a hot August day.

they loaded him into Peter’s car and brought him to the garden with his cup of water.

When Naomi found this man, we’ll call him Bob (his name has been changed for this article), he had nothing save for the clothes on his back and the shoes Manuel gave him. He was confused and showed signs of a head injury. After the worship, we decided to contact a new group in our community, called the CIRCLE team, for support. The CIRCLE team is part of a non-profit that works specifically with people who are unhoused and/or addicted. That evening, after a medical examination and intake with the CIRCLE team, generous members of the church paid for him to stay in a hotel and took him to get clothing, identification, and meals the next day. Over the course of the next week, three volunteers from the Garden Church and Harbor Connects (a local non-profit, which The Garden Church helped found) worked alongside each other to

ensure that Bob was connected to the right resources and had a safe place to sleep.

It was just three members from the Garden Church who were able to provide meals, transportation to and from service provider organizations, and function as a lifeline for Bob. We were able to help get Bob signed up for emergency food assistance benefits, complete an intake appointment with the area coordinator of Harbor

Continues on page 43

The Swedenborgian Church of North America provides a variety of grants and loans from the Augmentation, Jungerich, Mission, and Building Funds to our ministries. This article highlights one ministry that is benefiting from such grants in 2025.



The CIRCLE team provides support for people who are unhoused.

Who is My Neighbor?

Continued from page 42

Interfaith Services, get a new ID, start the social security benefits process, get connected to Veterans Assistance, and purchase a prepaid phone. This would not have been possible without our deep connections to resources within the community.

As a veteran, having served in the US Air Force, Bob qualified for veteran services. Thankfully, there is great support for veterans, and Bob quickly got a spot in a veteran shelter.

From being injured on the side of the road to shelter with lots of love along the way, we were all honored to be part of Bob's story, acting as a team of Good Samaritans. 🙏



Rev. Dr. Amanda Riley has served numerous Presbyterian churches, and is pastor at The Garden Church. She fell in love with the vision, work, and mission of the church, and became involved in 2016.

BE Love, BE Honest, BE Useful

Continued from page 39

to lead next year's March retreat at the ANCA and plans to offer a program with a deeper emphasis on the life of Helen Keller. Do plan to join!

Rev. Sage will also be offering BE Love, BE Honest, BE Useful during the Opening Weekend Program of the Fryeburg New Church Assembly and hopes to bring this offering to many other new church spaces. If you would be interested in collaborating with the Helen Keller Spiritual Life Collaborative to hold a Be Love, Be Honest, Be Useful retreat in your community, do reach out! 🙏

Rev. Sage Cole is the visionary leader of the HKSLC.



What Are You Rising Into?

Continued from page 37



Rev. Rich Tafel preaching to people both near and far.

He moved the relationship from physical time and space to a spiritual, eternal communion.

And that's how Christ consciousness is working within you now—moment by moment, action by action. That's the gift of the resurrection.

So this Easter stop clinging to who you think you're supposed to be—and become who you really are. This Easter stop clinging to the wound—and rise into healing. This Easter will we, as a church, stop clinging to what was—and rise into what's next?

We don't need to be afraid. Even when it's unclear. In fact, it will be unclear. Remember, Mary's confusion. Mary didn't recognize Jesus at first. Sometimes we won't either.

This Easter Jesus is calling your name. And when you hear it, you will know. So let me ask you one last time:

This Easter, what are you rising into?

— Amen. 🙏

Rev. Rich 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.



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.

Registration for in-person convention closed in May. Virtual attendee registration is open until June 15. Please visit swedenborg.org for updates as they become available.

Year of the Word

Continued from page 39

The study of correspondences is of supreme importance, for as fast as we can learn to see in natural phenomena their spiritual cause and meaning, we shall delight to turn to the parables of the Bible and discover the language of heaven. 🙏

With Professor Worcester's masterful language on correspondences, we conclude The Year of the Word, and following our annual summer convention in Portland, Oregon, we shall embark upon The Year of the New Jerusalem.

—Rev. Dr. Jim Lawrence

Annual Hybrid Convention

Virtual Convention 2025 – Explained!

BY RUDY CASERES, DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

This year will be the fourth hybrid Annual Convention. As Digital Communications Manager, I have made it my mission to create an event where everyone gets a first-rate experience, regardless of how they are attending. Here are some tips on how to make the most of this experience!

We are using a platform called [Zoom Events](#) to bring everything together—whether you're joining us in-person or from the comfort of home. The more you use it, the easier it will become, and we are here to guide you every step of the way. Once registered, you'll be given a join link that you'll use for everything Zoom-related. There are no other meeting links or passcodes to enter. You can join via smartphone, tablet, or your computer. In-person attendees can also create profiles, network, and have access to recordings once Convention has ended.

When you first visit our Zoom Events page, you will see a list of featured events. These are highlighted sessions we think you will enjoy. There

is also a full schedule with every session available. You can browse the full agenda and create your own personal-




ized schedule. Just click the sessions you are interested in, and they will be added to your personal itinerary. This helps you stay organized and makes it easy to jump into the right sessions at the right time.

Inside Zoom Events, you'll find a

virtual lobby, which is like the main hallway of a hotel convention, just online. In the lobby, you can see what is currently live, check the full schedule, and even chat with other attendees. Say hello, share thoughts, or ask questions in the group chat—it's a great way to stay connected.

During any live session, we encourage you to participate. If you have a question or want to speak, please use the "Raise Hand" button. This helps keep things running smoothly for everyone. If the host calls on you, you'll be invited to unmute and share. You can also react using emojis, like clapping hands or a thumbs-up. These little icons appear on your video and are a fun, easy way to stay engaged without interrupting.

Need help? Click the "Contact Us" link, which is available throughout the event. Our support team is ready to assist you with any technical issues. We want you all to feel equally part of Convention. I truly believe that this is the way forward. I'm glad you will be joining us – wherever that may be. 

The spiritual meaning is the primary thing that makes the Word spiritual, not only for people but also for angels. The Word communicates with the heavens through that meaning. Because the Word is inwardly spiritual, it was written entirely in correspondences.

Anything that is written in correspondences has an outermost meaning that is written in a style like the one used by the prophets, by the Gospel writers, and in the Book of Revelation. Although that style appears poor, nevertheless it conceals within itself divine wisdom and all angelic wisdom. —Emanuel Swedenborg, *True Christianity*, §194

**WORSHIP IS LIFE:
BE LOVE, BE HONEST,
BE USEFUL**

Annual Hybrid Convention

Hybrid Mini Course Line-Up for Convention 2025

Hybrid Mini Courses will be held in three time slots that have two courses running concurrently in each slot.

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. Starting in 2020, we offered options for people to attend them virtually. The following Mini Courses will be available to both those who attend in-person or online.

Virtual attendees will be able to choose between one of the two hybrid sessions being offered in each time slot. After you register, you will receive information on how to join them.

The following Hybrid Mini Courses include a more in-depth description than previously published, to help you choose which one to attend. In addition to these courses, we also have several in-person only Mini Courses being offered. Please see the [April/May Messenger](#) for information on those sessions as well.

Saturday, June 28 at 1:00 PM PT

All is Within: The Internal Sense of the Writings

Rev. Thom Muller

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

“Do the Writings have an inner meaning?”

Since the beginning of our movement, there have been countless approaches to reading the theological works of Swedenborg, from literal, to esoteric, to critical, to literary and psychological interpretations.

While Swedenborg is commonly understood to be quite clear about the existence and supremacy of the

internal sense of the “Word,” and the correspondential nature of the spiritual world (and reality as a whole), many of us, including within the tradition’s liberal theological factions, have historically had a tendency to primarily focus on a literal, metaphysical reading of the Writings themselves.

This Mini Course will explore the perspective that the theological works of Emanuel Swedenborg contain a continuous inner, spiritual, or correspondential meaning, which both supports and supersedes the literal, and provides us with unprecedented insight into the nature of God, our own psyche, and our regenerative journey.

We will also bring this approach into dialogue with the current times and explore how an esoteric reading of Swedenborg’s theological works can help us engage some commonly challenged aspects of his teachings in light of contemporary insights into science, theology, philosophy and history.



Rev. Thom Muller is pastor at the Swedenborgian Society of the East Bay at Hillside, an Urban Sanctuary, in El Cerrito, California, as well as senior editor of *Our Daily Bread*. His passions include

the intersection of spirituality and psychology, interfaith theology, and the Western esoteric tradition. Native of Germany, he was ordained into the ministry of the Swedenborgian Church of North America in 2016, upon receiving his theological education at Bryn Athyn College and the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, California.

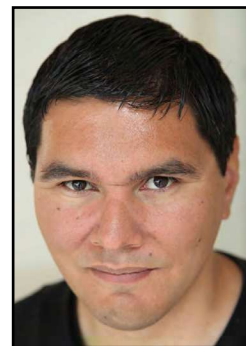
Building a Successful Hybrid Ministry

Rudy Caseres

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

Hybrid church services are incredibly difficult to implement. Often technology goes wrong and online participants feel like they are getting a backseat experience. Learn how to get over these hurdles and what audio/visual tech your church should implement to achieve a successful hybrid or fully digital ministry.

Rudy Caseres is the Digital Communications Manager for the Swedenborgian Church of North America. This will be his third Annual Convention serving as audio/visual technical director. He has



recently worked in-person with Wayfarers Chapel’s Exploring New Earth digital ministry and upgraded Fryeburg New Church’s hybrid services. His goal is to teach member churches what he has learned from these experiences.

Glorification: An Overview

Rev. Dr. Gard Perry

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

The aim of this Mini Course is to bring Swedenborg’s treatment of the glorification within reach of our understanding. There are four (4) topics: 1) Swedenborg’s summary of the process; 2) problem statement and solution; 3) a brief biography of the

Continues on page 46

Annual Hybrid Convention

Hybrid Mini Course Line-up

Continued from page 45

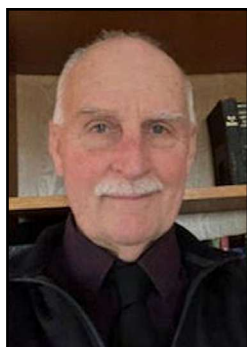
historical Jesus; and 4) Swedenborg's spiritual psychology.

Swedenborg's summary is from True Christianity; George Dole identified a problem of interpretation and a solution with his meta translation method; the biography of the historical Jesus builds on current scholarly consensus; and spiritual psychology is framed as "a search for truth with an aim to deepen our love for the Lord and for the neighbor."

Swedenborg's glorification summary will sound familiar, though things get difficult when we turn to his step-by-step process in the Arcana (aka, Secrets of Heaven). Large words like celestial, spiritual, and natural have multiple levels of meaning in various contexts. That prompted George Dole to apply a meta translation method of interpretation – employed here to discover what the glorification sounds like to our 21st Century lived experience. A key finding is that Swedenborg's treatment of the glorification can reach our understanding as the capacity for a deeper kind of empathy.

Welcome!

Rev. Dr. Gard Perry has engaged the sections of Swedenborg's Latin text that treat the Lord's glorification for more than two decades and offers a summary of his findings in this Mini Course. Gard began his Swedenborgian



life as a child at the Fryeburg New Church Assembly (FNCA) and has come full circle to be an FNCA senior lecturer. Gard has served on numerous boards and committees, currently serving on the Board of Trustees

of the Center for Swedenborgian Studies, the Tafel Fund, and Council of Ministers. Gard's aim is to cultivate a practice of research and development for a 21st Century understanding and application of Swedenborgian ideas.

Swedenborg, Alchemy, and Activism: Life of an American Philosopher-Soldier

Rev. Dr. Jim Lawrence and Michael Goos

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

Ethan Allen Hitchcock was a mid-19th century US Army General, an activist for Native American rights, and a self-taught philosopher who developed an original interpretation of Swedenborg and Alchemy. He lived through some of the most challenging moments of United States history, carefully documenting his own thoughts and emotions through his practice of journaling, as he deconstructed America's imperialism from within that imperialism's most instrumental institution.

His unwavering allegiance to justice earned him great respect among the Native American communities where he sought to eliminate fraud committed by exploitative Euro-Americans. Later in life, he was present during one of the country's darkest moments, coming out of retirement at Abraham Lincoln's request during the Civil War, and, when Lincoln was assassinated, staying by the body for several days.

Reading Hitchcock's work not only opens one up to a uniquely positioned perspective on historical events, but also, through his theoretical writings, introduces valuable comparative studies of Swedenborg and other neglected spiritual thinkers, culminating in a vision of reality that is both rational and transcendental, reflecting Hitchcock's personal context as a descendant of

revolutionary war hero and deist philosopher Ethan Allen, and as a participant in a much older dialogue discussing the relation between truth, symbolism, and esotericism.

We invite everyone who is interested to join the mini-course and learn more about this fascinating historical figure!

Michael Goos is a student at the Center for Swedenborgian Studies, an ordinand with General Convention, and a recipient of the Nunc Licet scholarship who is deeply grateful to be a member of the Swedenborgian community. In addition to pursuing the ministry, Michael aspires to lift-up neglected



Swedenborgian figures from history.

Rev. Dr. Jim Lawrence is President of the Swedenborgian Church of North America and scholar of Swedenborgian history and spirituality.



Monday, June 30 at 10:30 AM PT

Honoring Historic Sacred Spaces: Restoration and Evolution

Rev. Shada Sullivan

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

The Church of the Holy City in Wilmington, Delaware, is one of the oldest Swedenborgian churches in the United States. It has a fascinating history, and it continues to hold space for a vibrant congregation and evolving uses. Historic buildings need intentional and ongoing care, which takes time and resources. This mini-course will discuss the history of The Church of the Holy City, its current uses, and

Continues on page 47

Annual Hybrid Convention

Hybrid Mini Course Line-up

Continued from page 46

knowledge gained from its restoration journey, which includes being a recipient of a prestigious National Fund for Sacred Places challenge grant.

A personal reflection on the stewardship of sacred spaces from Rev. Shada Sullivan:

While it is truly an honor to steward such an important building in American Swedenborgianism, I must say that I never imagined doing this kind of work. We don't receive any training in seminary on how to take care of historic buildings! But I have found that the process of embarking on restoring our incredibly beautiful church has parallels to the process of the spiritual life.

The first thing we had to do was admit how much we didn't actually know! We needed to look to people who did know how to approach large-scale restoration projects. We brought in an architectural conservator to evaluate the scope of work needed, and we brought in a consultant to advise on strategic planning and fundraising. We learned from them, and they put a shape to the work before us.

But then we had to get to work! Nothing can replace old-fashioned elbow grease. Grant proposals written and rewritten, submitted, declined, re-submitted, and then sometimes, blessedly, accepted. New opportunities explored, new connections made, new partnerships formed. Plans made and unmade, revised and amended, lists evaluated again and again. Diligence and determination yielding real results, with wisdom gained at each step, even in the failures.

As we strove to find the resources to take care of a building that holds so much meaning, that holds so much joy, devotion, and

connection, we encountered an invitation to evaluate what we were doing it for. A valued partner gave us our credo: We repair the space to share the space. We found ourselves looking around us, and wondering how we could bless our neighbors even more fruitfully through our efforts. Seeking truth, walking the walk, expanding in love. Parallels everywhere.

All the while, God was (and is!) working with us. Not by giving us exactly what we wanted by wind-fall, but by encouraging us to be open and curious, to be diligent and steadfast, and to welcome evolution and transformation within our spaces. We might have found our way to such transformation anyway, but it is just like God to bring it about in ways we didn't necessarily see coming. The work has been challenging (It is not over! And you can help!), but in retrospect, we can see Divine Providence working powerfully, and we are grateful.



Rev. Shada Sullivan has been the Pastor at The Church of the Holy City in Wilmington Delaware since 2017. She is a founding member of the leadership team of Swedenborgians

in Action Against Racism, and is co-chair of the SCNA Social Justice Committee. Rev. Shada grew up in The New Church in Australia, and has been living in the United States since 1994. She has two daughters, one of whom recently graduated from college.

Meditation for Children

Sarah Wood Vallely

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

Sarah is offering a special Mini Course designed for adults who want

to teach meditation to children. In this course, you'll explore the brain science behind mindfulness and its many benefits, gain a deeper understanding of how meditation supports children's emotional and social development, and learn how to strengthen your own mindfulness practice. Plus, you'll discover what kids love about meditation—and what challenges they may face—so you can better support them on their journey.

For over twenty years, Sarah Vallely has been teaching meditation to children and training teachers, parents, and therapists to do the same. Her training programs have reached people all over the world, and she has written two books: *Sensational Meditation for Children* and *The Magic Gum Tree*.



1938 Swedish stamp commemorating E. Swedenborg's 250th birthday. The photo was discovered in a stamp collection album by Lon Elmer.



facebook

Annual Convention

2025 Display Tables

Showcasing Our Greater Community

Every year at Convention, we are treated to some delightful displays from our church membership from across the continent, usually with a regional focus to wherever Convention is being held each year. These displays showcase the various communities, endeavors, and organizations within the denomination's membership.

This year, the displays will be located in the Columbia Falls ballroom and will be available to visit in the evenings. Here is a sample of some of the tables you will see this year.

***Charity, Change, and Community: Frankford's Swedenborgians and Their Circle, 1817–1971* by Gail McCormick**

Spurred by a family discovery, Gail McCormick embarked on a decades-long historical journey to uncover the story of the New Jerusalem Society of Frankford, the home church of four generations of her maternal grandmother's family.

In her new two-volume history *Charity, Change, and Community: Frankford's Swedenborgians and Their Circle, 1817–1971*, McCormick describes the society's experiences and impact not only within its historic Northeast Philadelphia neighborhood but also on city and national affairs.

An active member of the General Convention for nearly all its history, the Frankford society also influenced local business and industry; art,

literature, and music; science and medicine; social and political reform; and even communication technology.

McCormick has used a wide variety of sources to highlight this special community of faith, whose historic trajectory reflects that of the neighborhood it sought to influence and inspire.

The book is more than just the complicated and fascinating history of the Frankford Swedenborgians. The author ties the history of Philadelphia and the nation. She brings to life many personalities who built the Frankford community over generations. This truly is a labor of love. I don't know how she tied together all of the various pieces. Now, I can't wait to read Volume two.

— Rev. Rich Tafel

Signed copies of both volumes will be available for sale at the Annual Convention in Portland at a special convention price of \$20 per volume or \$35 for both. Gail and Mike McCormick look forward to meeting Convention attendees at their table, which will include a display of materials from the recent exhibit on the New Jerusalem society at the Historical Society of Frankford (HSF). Book sale proceeds will be donated to HSF.

Swedenborgians in Action Against Racism

Swedenborgians in Action Against Racism (SAAR) was formed in response to the increase in awareness and action around racial justice during the summer of 2020, and out of a desire to be able to learn and act together in community within the Swedenborgian tradition. An

ecumenical leadership team of clergy and lay people from around the country formed in order to create educational and formational programming to offer to the denomination (and beyond).

Would you like to join us in this work? There are multiple ways!

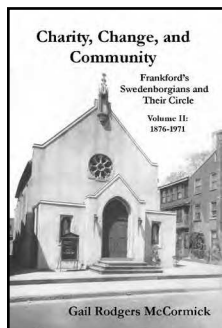
1. The SAAR newsletter continues to be published on an approximately tri-weekly schedule, offering useful content for walking the path of learning how to be anti-racist. Sign up for the newsletter (<https://mailchi.mp/6df1018da19a/sign-up-for-the-newsletter>) and if you would like to catch up on recent issues you can do so [here](#).

2. Point us in the direction of useful content for the newsletter, like books, articles, workshops, prayers/reflections, and groups that are helping you on your own journey. Email Co-editor Rev. Shada Sullivan (revshada@gmail.com) with your suggestions.

3. Join our monthly meetings on Zoom, on the third Monday of the month, 6:30 PM ET/3:30 PM PT. Email our chair, Rev. Dr. Jim Lawrence at (president@swedenborg.org) for the invite.

Come visit us at Convention! We will be sharing a table with...

Continues on page 49



Annual Convention

2025 Display Tables

Continued from page 48

The Social Justice Committee

The Social Justice Committee table will highlight the work of the committee this year, as well as offer resources for getting involved.



Wilmington's Church of the Holy City



Wilmington's Church of the Holy City is undertaking a major restoration of our historic building and we've recently been recognized by the National Fund for Sacred Places with a \$100,000 grant. Stop by our table to learn how you can become part of this exciting effort!

The Helen Keller Spiritual Life Collaborative

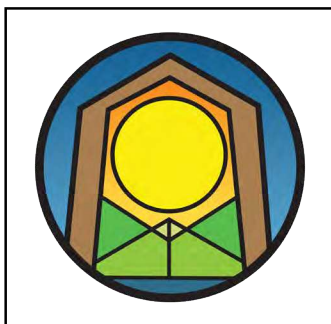
The Helen Keller Spiritual Life Collaborative (HKS LC) will have a display table sharing info on what is emerging in our work since becoming incorporated as a unique body of Convention as of January 2025. Information on our upcoming collaborative series on Regeneration, plans for our March 2026 BE Honest Celebration of Helen Keller's Spiritual Birthday, as well as plans for an HKS LC Pilgrimage to the National Cathedral 2028 will be available. Details on the variety of ways for individuals and congregations to be involved, including in-person retreats and a new virtual community platform. We'll



have some BE Love, BE Honest, BE Useful stickers we hope you'll come by, take, and display through convention to show your support!

Wayfarers Chapel

Find out what has been happening at Wayfarers Chapel! We have a new proposed site to build on, with renderings to see on display. A new website, logo, and fundraising platform have taken shape this year which we are sharing with you at Convention. Wayfarers Chapel has also launched an exciting new digital ministry offering called "Exploring New Earth." Come by and check them out!



That's not all! You will have to come see for yourself all of the people and organizations represented there this year. We look forward to creating community with you all at Convention! ☸



Follow the SCNA on Instagram

Convention Worship Services

The following Worship Services are planned to be livestreamed for all to enjoy along with our in-person attendees.

Opening Worship Service Friday, June 27 at 7:00 PM PT

with Rev. Junchol Lee followed by the Keynote Address with Rev. Rich Tafel

Convention Worship Service

Saturday, June 28 at 7:00 PM PT

with Rev. Kevin Baxter the 2025 Convention Preacher

Memorial Worship Service

Sunday, June 29 at 8:00 AM PT

with Rev. Renée Machiniak and Rev. Kit Billings

Ordination Worship Service

Sunday, June 29 at 8:00 PM PT

with Rev. Dr. Jim Lawrence, Chelsea Odhner, and our Ordinand

Children's Program Presentation

Monday, June 30 at 9:00 AM PT

In-person only.

Swedenborgian Church Youth League Service

Monday, June 30 at 9:30 AM PT

In-person only.



Upcoming Retreats

Gathering Leaves 2025*September 25–28, 2025**"Remaining Rooted Through Adversity"***Registration Begins:**May 1, 2025: GatheringLeaves.net

Theme: "Remaining Rooted Through Adversity"

Retreat for Swedenborgian Women, Worldwide!**Retreat Location:**Temenos Retreat Center and Nature Preserve
1564 Telegraph Road, West Chester, PA, USA**In-Person/Online Event Reservations at GatheringLeaves.net****Gathering Leaves Mission Statement:**

We gather to promote harmony among women who are associated with the various Swedenborgian organizations around the world. We acknowledge our common beliefs, explore our differences, develop respect for one another's contributions, create a healing atmosphere, and celebrate our spiritual sisterhood.



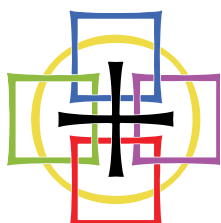
What's Happening

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



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.

Submission Deadline Reminder

Time-sensitive articles
submitted to *the Messenger*
must be received by the **10th** of
each month to be considered
for print in the following issue.

SWEDENBORGIANS IN ACTION



AGAINST RACISM

Swedenborgians in Action Against Racism

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

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

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Instagram

Church Membership and Delegate Statistics

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

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

The table below displays statistics as of December 31, 2024. 📄

Association (Conference)	Churches		Ordained Ministers	Members	Number of Potential Delegates
	Active	Inactive			
Eastern Canada (ECC)	1	0	2	60	8
Illinois Association	5	0	2	59	8
Kansas	2	0	1	54	7
Maine	4	0	5	90	11
Massachusetts New Church Union (MNCU)	4	1	5	94	11
Michigan	1	0	3	53	7
Middle Atlantic	3	0	7	102	12
New York	2	0	1	18	4
Ohio	3	0	6	38	6
Pacific Coast (PCA)*	6	0	21	195	22
Western Canada (WCC)	2	0	1	62	8
At Large	n/a	n/a	n/a	0	2
Unknown Affiliation	n/a	n/a	19	2	n/a
Church Membership Sub-Total	33	1	n/a	827	106
COM	n/a	n/a	73	n/a	73
General Council (lay officers and members)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	9
Total Possible Delegates					188

*Did not submit information for 2024, using 2023 information