



Repairers of the Breach

BY REV. DR. AMANDA RILEY

On the last Wednesday in October, a flurry of emails and text messages began. Everyone was trying to figure out what to do if the Nationwide SNAP program with distribution set for Saturday, November 1, was paused. This has never happened before in the eighty-six-year history of food aid in our nation. This had, however, certainly been a fear in previous government shutdowns. By Friday, we were hearing directly from CalFresh (the California name for federal SNAP dollars) recipients that the portal where their benefits are tracked stated that benefits would be delayed, and the same was said when people called the program directly. On Sunday, at The Garden Church's weekly worship, we heard again and again about the anxiety of not having the EBT cards (the debit card for SNAP funds) replenished on November 1, and with no end in sight, those at our Sunday meal asked for to-go bags of snack-style foods. We encouraged people to take two.

In moments like this, moments of uncertainty and asking, "What can be done?" and "What can I do?" Passages of scripture come to mind. From Isaiah, we read:

If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil, **if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday.** The Lord will guide you continually and satisfy your needs in parched places and make your bones strong, and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water

Continues on page 201

Sharing food with the community is a cornerstone of The Garden Church's philosophy in San Pedro, California. Now they are sharing how you can make a difference in your community.



New Directions at Wayfarers Chapel

Wayfarers Chapel's growing online ministry, new youth outreach, and upcoming guests on their ENE+ series.

Page 194



Adventures in New England

Rev. Kevin Baxter and Kurt Fekete spend their autumn in New England, first at the Fryeburg Fair and then at the Swedenborgian Church Youth League fall retreat.

Page 190

Online Advent Services

Join us online to celebrate the Advent Season!

Page 204



Convention 2026 Save the Date!

June 26—June 30, 2026

Join us this year in the greater Boston area!

Page 202



Contents

Repairer's of the Breach	187
Editor's Corner	188
Message from the President.....	189
A Day at the Fryeburg Fair	
New Church Booth	190
SCYL Fall Retreat	191
Wayfarers Chapel: New Directions in	
Ministry.....	194
The Portland New Church:	
Becoming a Center for the Sacred	
Arts.....	196
Social Justice Committee Online	
Workshop.....	198
Helen Keller Spiritual Life Collaborative	
Invitation to Co-Create	198
Passages.....	200
2026 Convention Save the Date.....	202
Church Calendar	202
Logopraxis	203
Online Advent Services	204
2025 Annual Appeal.....	206

Editor's Corner

The Rhythm of the Year



I live in New Zealand, and this December will be the third time I will be celebrating Christmas in the summertime. Celebrating Christmas in the summertime feels strange to me. The thing that I find strange isn't the heat (after all, I spent many Christmases in New Orleans where temperatures can be anywhere from hot to cold that time of year). It isn't even the juxtaposition of singing about snowfall when the sun is beating down or decorating with stockings and Christmas sweaters, when everyone is in shorts. What feels strange is the light. Summertime daylight feels fundamentally different than winter daylight.

It turns out that Christmas was an important part of the overall rhythm

to my year. Christmas meant we were halfway through the school year, that the natural world around me was going dormant, and that activities that were in daylight are now in the dark, despite being the same time of day. The world is entering its quiet and dark phase and Christmas used to mark the beginning of that quiet time of year for me.

Now it marks a completely different phase of the year. Flowers are giving way to fruits, school is ending for the year, families are planning vacations, and it stays light out until after 9:00 PM.

The change in rhythm has meant for me that Christmas doesn't *feel* like Christmas anymore. All of my rituals need to be adjusted, because the year is in a different phase. The focus is more about friendship than family, appreciating the outdoors rather than cozying up indoors, less presents and more cake. It isn't better or worse, but it is fundamentally different.

Putting together this issue reminded me of some of the fundamentals of Christmas that don't change. Like making space to consider how we can help our neighbors, like the Garden Church has shown us. Focusing our religious services on the Christmas Story itself, taking the opportunity to join new communities online. Remembering and celebrating our most recent adventures while also looking to where the future is taking us.

Regardless of where you are or which rhythm you are following, Christmas encourages community, connection, and reflection, and as I adjust our family rituals to be more in-tuned to where we are in time and space, I need to focus on those fundamentals.

Finally, I would like to close with a word of Thanksgiving. I want to thank the Swedenborgian Church of North America for giving me the opportunity to be *the Messenger* editor. I look forward to connecting and growing with this community and publication into

the Messenger

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

November/December 2025

Volume 249, No. 7 Whole Number 5499

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

Submissions are accepted at any time.

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

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

the future. As is tradition, the next issue will be a Jan/Feb combined issue coming out by February 1, 2026.

Until then, I wish you all Happy Holidays and Merry New Year!

—Brittany Price
messenger@swedenborg.org

Submission Deadline Reminder

Time-sensitive articles submitted to *the Messenger* must be received by the **14th of each month** to be considered for print in the following issue.

Message from the President

Celebrating Our Work with the National Council of Churches

The Year of the New Jerusalem: 2025–26



The Swedenborgian Church of North America is the only one of the five Swedenborgian denominations worldwide to be officially involved in ecumenical work in their country. The National Council of Churches in Christ (NCC) in the U.S. arose as a place for Christian denominations to have a structure for common work and vision in culture. Only a small percentage of Christian denominations belong to the NCC: currently, thirty-eight of the approximately 1,200 Christian denominations in the United States. The NCC represents a significant history of ecumenical faith witness to the larger culture around important questions of the social good.

Swedenborgians had, a half-century earlier, been the beacon tradition for the World Parliament of Religions, the first multifaith gathering in the world that met in Chicago in 1893 as the brainchild of Charles Carroll Bonney, who sat on the Illinois Supreme Court and was an ardent Swedenborgian. After the two World Wars, an effort arose in response to the socio-political challenges of the time to create a national federation of Christian denominations to promote unity amidst diversity and to address social justice together.

We were there right from the beginning due to the vision and passion of such leaders as Rev. William Wunsch and Rev. Edwin Capon. Despite falling far

below the then minimum threshold of members, the early NCC made an exception following a seven-year exploration period as a prospective member denomination with a delegation that also included Dr. Dorothea Harvey, Margaret Briggs, and Rev. David Johnson as our Canadian liaison. Admitted in 1966, we are now approaching our seventieth anniversary.

In addition to the General Governing board, there are also four “Convening Tables” that are the topical work groups who pursue various projects together under the rubrics Faith & Order, Interreligious Relations, Justice and Advocacy, and Christian Education. Along the way, we have been faithful and active contributors, with many being somewhat passionately involved. In recent years, we’ve been very ably represented by Rev. Rich Tafel, Rev. Robert McCluskey, and Rev. Dr. David Fekete.

I’m now delighted to be naming Rev. Jay Barry as my proxy at the Governing Board and appointing Licensed Pastor Tassy Farwell to the Interreligious Relations Convening Table, while also reappointing Alex Gayheart, who has already been serving ably on the Justice and Advocacy Convening Table and who confers regularly with our Social Justice Committee for our voice in those efforts and conversations. As one well-nurtured in the mainline tradition of my upbringing, I have always valued our history of acting way above our numbers in supporting multifaith and ecumenical relationships, and I thank deeply these current colleagues for giving of their time and energy to our witness and presence at the NCC.

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



Rev. Jay Barry



Licensed Pastor Tassy Farwell



Alex Gayheart

Adventures in New England

A Day at the Fryeburg Fair New Church Booth

BY REV. KEVIN BAXTER

I can't quite remember when the idea first took root—maybe at the Fryeburg Assembly—but at some point, I decided I wanted to volunteer at the Fryeburg Fair New Church Food Booth. I started asking around, just enough to learn what was involved without actually committing. But by September, I'd spoken with Kurt Fekete, who warmly invited me to stay with him and work a shift together. After some childcare arrangements, I signed up for the adventure.

A few weeks later, it was time to make it happen. After Sunday church, an MNCU meeting, and making sure the kids were settled with their mother, I packed light: a BSNJ (Boston Society of the New Jerusalem) New Church hat and shirt, stuffed into a small travel bag that fit neatly into my motorcycle's saddlebags. The weather couldn't have been better—bright, clear skies, and that golden warmth that lingers in early fall.

Boots zipped, bike fired up, I hit the road. Fryeburg is about a two-and-a-half-hour ride from Boston, though Kurt's home is a little closer. I rode north with the evening traffic—cars and trucks full of Mainers returning from a victorious Patriots game. By the time dusk melted into night, I pulled up to Shelley and Kurt's home in time for a late dinner and good conversation.

Morning, we knew, would come early.

We headed to the fairgrounds at first light, parking in the volunteer area reserved for church and civic groups. Before clocking in at the booth, we stopped by to see some of Kurt's extended family's goats and cows showing that day—a reminder that, despite the fair's regional fame, it remains a deeply local, family-centered event.



Rev. Kevin Baxter (left) and Kurt Fekete (right) staff the New Church booth at the Fryeburg Fair. Serving burgers, hot dogs, pies, and more is an important fundraiser for the Fryeburg New Church in Fryeburg, Maine.

At the New Church booth, we joined a small crew: a few of the dedicated “die-hards,” plus some guest workers from a local shelter and food pantry. We got a quick five-minute crash course between breakfast and lunch, and then we were off.

The booth itself was no small “fair shack” as I’d imagined—it was an impressive, well-equipped kitchen. About twenty feet wide and deep, it housed multiple soda fridges, a hamburger grill, hot dog warmers, crockpots,

a stove, sinks, and even microwaves. Years ago, I learned, a former McDonald’s team helped reorganize the space, adding proper prep zones and streamlining operations. To the side, a covered eating area welcomed diners, with the wall lined with displays about New Church beliefs.

I worked in the serving area while Kurt manned the grill. Orders rang out from the ordering area—“Fair Burger! Red snapper! Natural dog! Dinner plate!”—and the rhythm of the day began. Between flips, Kurt kept things light with his running commentary and creative burger nicknames, like we were at some old roadside diner. The irony wasn’t lost on anyone that the only vegetarian in the group was manning the burger grill. From the wall, a photo of Rev. James F. Lawrence looked on approvingly—legend has it he loves the Fair Burgers.

Business was steady but never overwhelming—a perfect pace for a first timer like me. The day passed in laughter, teamwork, and that satisfying hum of service that makes time disappear.

When our shift ended, Kurt and I wandered through the fairgrounds in search of dessert. He munched on a slice of the booth’s homemade pie, drawing curious looks and giving him a chance to point folks back toward the

Continues on page 201

Adventures in New England

Teens Learn How to Escape the Beautifully Wicked Trap at the SCYL Fall Retreat

BY KURT FEKETE



Teens (left to right) Maudie, Athena, Adela, Leah, Greyson, Charlie, Caroline, Abby, Lily, Serena, and Nate enjoy an evening of bowling during the SCYL Fall retreat in Duxbury, Massachusetts.

At this year's Swedenborgian Church Youth League (SCYL) Fall Teen Retreat at Cedar Hill Retreat Center in South Duxbury, Massachusetts, we dove fearlessly into the theme *The Beautifully Wicked Trap: How Hell Captures Your Soul*. Eleven teens explored the subtle ways the Hells try to lure us in, and how we can recognize these negative influences and rise above it. Together, we unpacked Hell's "playbook"—from twisted truths to empty pleasures—and uncovered powerful defenses rooted in love, joy, and service.

Seminary student Ben Gunter kicked things off Saturday morning. Ben's session was about recognizing the ways the Hells twist the truth. He began with a scripture reading from John 8:31–38 where we find the passage, "You will know the truth and the truth will set you free." Ben broke the teens into small groups where they were asked to ponder and reflect upon the following: "Think about a time

when truth was used in a loving way or an unkind way." The teens came back together and shared some highlights of their conversations. There was great discussion around how much the teens are okay with sharing the truth with their parents. In response to the question, "Can you think of a time about a difficult truth that led you or someone else to love?" One teen remarked, "I gave constructive criticism of an art piece that helped the artist." Ben closed with, "Go forth and live lives of truth and love."

Rev. Kevin Baxter led the Saturday afternoon session, *Bait them with Fun*. Kevin asked the teens to consider,

"What was something you really wanted, got, and found out it wasn't as good as you thought it would be?" The group went on to talk about instances when people do things that appear good but are done for selfish reasons. Kevin invited the teens to find the bait and hook in some different scenarios. For example, "Riley loves helping fellow students with their math homework, but when he doesn't get recognition for his efforts, he becomes bitter and resentful." In this case, the bait is acknowledgement, and the hook is being overly self-centered. Then Kevin led the teens in a paper collage activity where they created two sides of a poster with one side representing healthy love and the other side the twisted hook. Kevin finished his session explaining that we need balance. He emphasized the importance of people in our lives to help us keep our love on track.

Continues on page 192



Ben Gunter giving a talk on how the Hells twist the truth.

Adventures in New England

SCYL Fall Retreat

Continued from page 191

Rev. Sage Cole arrived Saturday afternoon to prepare for her two-part session on ego. For Sage's evening session, we walked down to the beach at dusk and watched the diminishing sunset fade away as darkness descended over the waters of Kingston Bay. We stood in the dark as Sage related the earliest story of creation, "Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep." She told us how the first forms of life came to earth and how, slowly over millennia, more complicated creatures evolved and dry land appeared. Then, in only the most recent age, humans were birthed onto the earth. Here, the first notions of Hell were conceptualized, and the ego (or, in Swedenborgian terms, proprium) came into being.

Under the stars in the growing darkness, we contemplated the positives and negatives of being separate beings. We discovered that, existing as separate individuals with independent egos, we can learn and grow from a myriad of different perspectives. We can expand God's activity in the world. But we also discussed how it can be hard to connect. You can feel isolated, lonely, and frustrated. It can be hard to understand purpose. Standing in our little

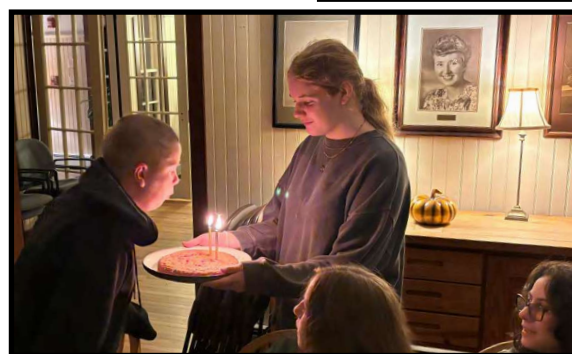
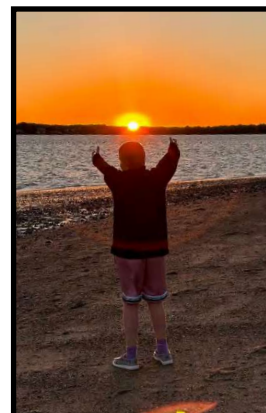
circle on the beach in the dark made it easy to feel small and insignificant while at the same time making us realize how important and connected we all are to each other.

Sunday morning, Sage led the teens in a journaling activity. They were prompted to write in a stream of consciousness. Sage explained that as you think and write, this journaling can be thought of as a conversation or battle between your soul and yourself. She asked the teens to write down things they enjoy and consider what the world would look like if they could have all these things. After journaling, the group shared their wonderful worlds. What were some of the things in their worlds?

Dance, Almont, pasta, Sage Cole, guitar, art, fall, trees, music, friends, my hair, Taylor Swift, my cat, reading, Christmas, pickles, drawing, swimming, stargazing, family, writing, worshipping, meditation, doing good, listening to the earth, viola, retreats, science, my sister, baking, sleeping, and walking. Sage finished her session by reading the beautiful vision of a new heaven and a new earth from Revelation 21:1–4.

I led the Sunday afternoon session titled, *Hook the Love*. I summarized Swedenborg's Hell in *Heaven and Hell* \$536–603. Then the teens had the opportunity to practice being demons! The teens paired up with one

On the first evening of the retreat Nate turned 13 and officially joined SCYL. Embracing his future (right) and celebrating with his church family (below).



Leah, Caroline, and Abby make collages of things that they enjoy.

person acting as if they were from the Hells, trying to twist the love of their teen partner into a hellish desire. It was a bit frightening to watch how easily Athena twisted Maudie's love of helping others into an all-consuming compulsion and Greyson distorted Leah's love of painting into a self-serving obsession. From observing these acting devils in action, we learned how sinister black the Hells are and how vital it is for us to spot the red flags and ask, "Where will this lead?" whenever our loves are in danger of being manipulated towards a hellish direction.

At our closing worship on Sunday evening, we moved from Hell to Heaven. We started in the dark, listening to *Sympathy for the Devil* by the Rolling Stones, while gradually moving into the light. We heard a reading from Matthew 5:14–16 that teaches us that we are the light of the world. We should not put our light under a

Continues on page 193

Adventures in New England

SCYL Fall Retreat

Continued from page 192



Autumn evening at the retreat center in Duxbury, Massachusetts.

basket but on the lamp-stand so that our light can shine before people in such a way that they may see our good works. Then, from Romans 12:9–10, “Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves.” We ended with a prayer to help us to choose to turn towards goodness and truth as we feel the pull of both heavenly and hellish influences.

For fun, we all enjoyed beachcombing and bowling: apple crisp and ice cream brownies. Catchphrase and

Quiplash. Frisbee and volleyball. Beki’s homemade bread and Nate’s birthday cookie. Thank you to our extraordinary Midwest drivers Jeff and Heather Oelker, engaging session presenters, Ben, Kevin, and Sage, and special support from Jill Koundry Baxter and Beki Greenwood. Although parts of this retreat were unsettling and dark (quite literally when we visited the beach at night), fear was never the focus. Instead, it was about freedom: the freedom to live with clarity, strength, and purpose, and create lives that truly connect and give back. We left Cedar Hill feeling better equipped to reject hellish persuasions and instead listen intently to angelic whisperings that seek to guide us down a positive path.



Kurt Fekete has been the Youth Director for the Swedenborgian Church of North America for over twenty years. He also currently serves as Vice President of the denomination.



Teens (left to right) Nate, Leah, Maudie, Greyson, Serena, Charlie, Lily, Abby, Caroline, and Zsa Zsa (joining virtually) spend an evening at the beach in Duxbury, Massachusetts.



SCYL Annual Winter Break Retreat Registration Open!

The Seven Deadly Sins

December 27 – December 30

All teens age 13–18 are welcome to join us at the Almont Retreat Center in Berlin, Michigan.

While Emanuel Swedenborg’s portrayal of damnation is quite different from most other Christian religions, he would certainly agree that an affection for one or more of the seven deadly sins will steer you down a slippery slope towards hell. At this retreat we will learn about both the sins that lead you into the hells as well as the virtues that take you up to the heavens. I’m sure we’ll all benefit from the lively discussions and activities.

Cost is \$75 a person with a \$150 household maximum

For more information and to register online please visit swedenborg.org/events-activities/youthretreats/winter/

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instagram.com/scylclearbluesky/



Instagram

Community News

Wayfarers Chapel: New Directions in Ministry

BY REV. DR. DAVID BROWN

I am happy to share that our new directions in ministry at Wayfarers Chapel are bearing fruit. It was a significant leap for our Board of Directors to retain me in ministry after the devastating landslide that destroyed our beloved sacred space, known around the world as Wayfarers Chapel. Yet this moment has also reminded us of a profound truth: the essence of church is not a building, but the spiritual life within each person.

Certainly, Wayfarers Chapel—perhaps more than many sacred spaces—made it easier to experience the Divine. Gathering there on Sundays, the sense of worship and connection was extraordinary. But even without the building, our spiritual community has endured.

I remain deeply grateful to Reverend Jason Shelby of St. Francis Episcopal Church and his congregation. As news helicopters broadcasted live images of the destruction of the landslide, and as our doors closed to the public, I received an email from Reverend Shelby. It was simple, heartfelt, and offered immediate sanctuary: our congregation was welcome at St. Francis. He shared that he could not imagine being without a “thin space” on Sunday with his people—and that if such a tragedy ever befell his congregation, he hoped we would offer the same generosity.



Artistic rendering of the Wayfarers Chapel at its new proposed location at Battery Barnes in Rancho Palos Verdes, California, 1.5 miles north of the original site.

The New Jerusalem and Its Heavenly Doctrine

The church, like heaven, is within us as individuals, so the church in general is made up of people who have the church within themselves.... There is no church within us unless the truths we have been taught are grounded in good actions from a caring heart and therefore grounded in the way we live.

—*New Jerusalem* §246:4

Walking the talk matters. In a time when “thoughts and prayers” can be offered instead of concrete help, Reverend Shelby embodied courage, Christian love, and decisive action. Not only did I accept his offer, but our relationship has grown so deeply that as we now contemplate a prospective new site for Wayfarers Chapel 2.0, there is already a sense of anticipatory grief about eventually leaving St. Francis. Their hospitality has been so gracious, so genuine, that we are already exploring ways to continue our partnership long after we have a permanent home again.

By February 2026, it will have been two full years of worshipping at St. Francis. We have been embraced in every feast, celebration, and gathering. Personally, this experience has bolstered my faith in the kindness and generosity of fellow Christians. Without our nimble, adaptive Board—and without the open-hearted welcome from Reverend Shelby and the St. Francis com-

munity—this ministry, and thus, this article, would not exist.

A Growing Online Ministry

Early this year, we launched a new ministry for people connected to Wayfarers Chapel and for those around the world who read the works of Emanuel Swedenborg but live far from a Swedenborgian church. Every Sunday from 12:00–1:00 PM PST on Zoom, this community continues to deepen and grow. I have been moved by the dedication of this group. Like a traditional congregation, we open with spiritual check-ins, and I offer real-time prayer for anyone in need.

We now have a core community who attend faithfully each week, alongside others who join for topics of interest. The beauty of this online ministry is the breadth of connection—our featured guests join us from across the world, from Ted Bosley in England discussing architecture to Unni Garcia

Continues on page 195

Community News

Wayfarers Chapel*Continued from page 194*

de Presno joining from Norway.

Beginning in 2026

We will be expanding this ministry with a new monthly series held on Tuesday evenings from 6:00–7:30 PM PST. Our own Reverend Dr. Jim Lawrence, President of the SCNA, will launch this new series on Tuesday, January 27. We are calling it ENE+ (Exploring New Earth) because it builds upon our regular Sunday offering with special guests and deeper exploration. To sign up, please visit: <https://www.wayfarerschapel.org/services/worship/exploring-new-earth/>

A New Youth Ministry Collaboration

I also see divine providence in the timing of welcoming our SCNA Vice President, Kurt Fekete, on November 9, to share wisdom from his work with young people. The following Tuesday at 4:00 PM PST, we will launch a new Youth Ministry Program, a collaboration between Wayfarers Chapel and St. Francis Episcopal Church. This weekly gathering offers a safe, welcoming space for teens of all traditions, an opportunity to enjoy pizza, do homework, socialize, and occasionally ask deep theological questions. It is one of

the most exciting new developments in our ministry, and a reflection of our commitment to serving the broader community.

Exciting new directions are indeed unfolding in the life and ministry of Wayfarers Chapel.

Why Your Support Matters: Rebuilding a National Historic Landmark

As we move joyfully into these new phases of ministry, we are also engaged in one of the most important endeavors in Wayfarers Chapel's history, the rebuilding of the Chapel at a new, safe, and enduring campus. Designed by Lloyd Wright and revered internationally, Wayfarers Chapel is one of only 2,600 National Historic Landmarks, a place where architecture, nature, and spirituality meet in profound harmony.

The landslide may have taken the building, but it did not extinguish its mission, its legacy, or its spiritual light. Rebuilding the Chapel is not merely a construction project; it is an act of preservation, continuity, and hope. It is a commitment to:

- **Honoring Lloyd Wright's architectural masterpiece** and ensuring its legacy is safeguarded for generations.
- **Creating an expanded Chapel campus** that includes sacred worship space, community gathering areas, gardens, museum, and educational programs.
- **Supporting ministries that now reach far beyond our local region**, touching people across the country and around the world.
- **Restoring a place of reflection, beauty, and spiritual renewal** that has served millions of visitors for over seventy years.

Past, Present, and Future of Wayfarers Chapel
Tuesday, January 27
6:00PM PT/9:00PM ET

On Zoom

Our own Rev. Dr. Jim Lawrence, President of the denomination, will be kicking off the new ENE+ series in January. All welcome!

Please sign up at www.wayfarerschapel.org/services/worship/exploring-new-earth/

This new chapter requires vision—and it requires the generosity of those who believe in the Chapel's unique spiritual and cultural significance.

If Wayfarers Chapel has touched your life, inspired your faith, offered you peace, or simply stood as a symbol of harmony between humanity and creation, we invite you to consider making a donation of any size.

Your support will help us rise again. Your generosity will help rebuild a sanctuary the world dearly loves. And your gift will ensure that Wayfarers Chapel continues its sacred work for generations to come.

For more information, please visit our website [wayfarerschapel.org](https://www.wayfarerschapel.org) and join us in rebuilding this extraordinary landmark. Once you do, we will add your contact information to our community and send you an acknowledgment. 📧

Rev. Dr. David Brown has been serving the spiritual wayfarer since joining the staff at Wayfarers Chapel in August of 2006. He also serves part time at our sister ministry of the Garden Church in San Pedro, California.



Another artistic rendering of the Wayfarers Chapel at it's new proposed location.

Community News

The Portland New Church: Becoming a Center for the Sacred Arts

BY REV. Nanci ADAIR

The Portland New Church, long known for its Swedenborgian heritage, is experiencing a remarkable renewal. What was once a small, fledgling congregation, is blossoming into a vibrant center for Sacred Arts, a living ecosystem of spiritual seekers, healers, and artists who are co-creating a new vision for what church can be in this era.

At the heart of this transformation are our newly appointed Spiritual Director, Eco Chaplain Circe Moss MacDonald, and Rev. Magnus de Rhuddlan, also known as Rev. Paul S. Ridlon, who is stepping into the role of Church Council President. Together, they embody a partnership that bridges ancient wisdom and modern spirituality, uniting heart-led ritual with reason, art, and ecology.



Three Decades of Love for the Portland New Church

I have been a member of the Portland New Church for twenty-nine years, and I have never been this excited by the direction and growth of this community. Perhaps that reflects my own leanings in metaphysics, with years of study in shamanism and the arts. It is also because there is so much new energy from a community of like-minded and spiritually grounded people that it is bringing our mission to life.

The mission of the Swedenborgian Church of Portland is to sustain a community of individuals on a journey of spiritual growth.

A New Spiritual Director Rooted in Creation and Ceremony

Circe Moss MacDonald brings to the Portland New Church a life devoted to what she calls the Ceremonial Arts, the practice of reconnecting people to the sacredness of Earth and Spirit through embodied, creative experience. An Eco Chaplain, Water Priestess, and Ceremonialist, Circe holds ordinations as both a Trans-denominational Minister from The Star House in Boulder, Colorado, and as an Inter-faith Chaplain from The Chaplaincy Institute of Maine.

Through her work with Ritual Lab: Ceremonies for People and Planet, Circe designs experiential ceremonies,

(Left to Right) Rev. Magnus de Rhuddlan, Circe Moss MacDonald, Rev. Nanci Adair, and Todd Glacey attend Cosmic Mass, with ritual theater and live music on the first Sunday each month.



Circe Moss MacDonald

weddings, memorials, and Cosmic Masses that celebrate connection, awe, and renewal. She has inspired the spiritual but not religious to rediscover belonging in community and reverence for creation. Her teaching background, from Grinnell College to the University of Southern Maine, reflects her passion for integrating Creation Spirituality with the arts, ritual theater, storytelling, and seasonal rites.

A New President Guided by Ancestral Wisdom and the Land

Rev. Magnus de Rhuddlan's journey weaves together scholarship, shamanism, and service. A founding member of both the Evergreen Druid Fellowship and the Order of Maine Druidry, Magnus has long championed the sacred relationship between humanity and the land. With backgrounds in anthropology, archaeology, and social service systems, he brings a profound ethical awareness to issues of ancestry, decolonization, and community healing.

His life purpose, to inspire, especially the young, and to recover that which was lost, guides his ministry and teaching. Living simply in a Mongolian ger, surrounded by Maine's natural beauty, Magnus teaches through presence,

Continues on page 197

Community News

Portland New Church

Continued from page 196



Rev. Magnus de
Rhuddlan

grounded wisdom, and an unwavering belief that spirituality must live in service to community and to the Earth.

A Growing Circle of Members and Friends

Under the dedicated leadership of outgoing Council President Anne Gresinger, the Portland New Church community has flourished. Anne's dual role as Building Use Manager and President has been instrumental in transforming the church into a hub for creative, healing, and spiritual practices, a true home for the Sacred Arts.

Today, the sanctuary and meeting rooms hum with life. Dance teachers enliven the space with rhythm and movement. Shamanic healers, sound practitioners, and meditation groups share their gifts. Yoga teachers and Buddhist sanghas cultivate mindfulness and peace. A children's art camp director and fine artists nurture imagination and creative spirit.

These gatherings are not merely building use; they are relationships.



Rev. Nanci Adair celebrates Mother's Day with her son, Lucas, at the Portland New Church, Portland, Maine.

Each partnership reflects the church's vision to be a living sanctuary where all paths that honor the sacred are welcome.

Anne's ongoing efforts to connect with the building use community have drawn new friends and members into the circle, people who come to utilize the space, connect to like-minded spiritual groups, and build community. Through shared stewardship and creative collaboration, the Portland New Church has become a gathering place for those who seek meaning, artistry, and spirit under one roof.

Beautifying the Sacred Grounds

As this inner renewal unfolds, a visible transformation is taking place outside as well. The Church Council recently partnered with Kendrick and Bloom Landscapers to re-envision the front entryway and church yard, an investment in beauty, ecology, and welcome. The new design introduces color, planting of new trees, and natural stones that invite reflection and reverence.

This project began with the front of the church and reflects the community's commitment to creating a living threshold, a welcome that mirrors the church's mission within, to honor the sacredness of creation and offer spiritual hospitality to all who pass through its doors.

Honoring the Past, Welcoming the Future

The Portland New Church's renewal is about honoring its Swedenborgian roots and expanding them. The mystical vision of Emanuel Swedenborg, which honors the living connection between spirit and matter, heaven and Earth, finds new expression in this community's creative work and ecological consciousness.



Portland New Church in Portland, Maine

As Circe, Magnus, and Anne lead this next chapter, the Portland New Church stands as a beacon of inclusion, artistry, and spiritual aliveness, a model for how sacred tradition and contemporary spirituality can not only coexist but thrive together.

"We are creating a space where the sacred is not confined to Sunday," says Circe. "It lives in art, in movement, in ceremony, and in our relationships with one another and the world."

In a time when many churches and community spaces are shrinking, the Portland New Church is growing, rooted in the past, blooming in winter, and radiating light toward a spiritually creative future.

Rev. Nanci Adair is a celebrated and gifted artist and healer. She currently has an exhibit at the Brick Store Museum in Kennebunk, Maine of her ComfortHER Art Quilt Project. Nanci has called the Portland New Church her spiritual home for the past twenty-nine years and was ordained as an interfaith minister by CHIME in 2012.



**Do you write poetry?
Send it along to:**

messenger@swedenborg.org

Community News

Social Justice Committee

Online Workshop on
February 4, 2026 7:00PM EST

The Social Justice Committee presents: A workshop on **Service, Justice, and Community Organizing** from The Friends Committee on National Legislation.

Wednesday February 4, 2026, 7:00PM EST on Zoom.

Participants will analyze the differences between responding to social problems with a focus on service projects and advocacy efforts. Then, we will spend time planning community organizing campaigns that focus on either direct service efforts or grassroots advocacy.

This workshop will be led by Jackson Malkus, Lead Program Coordinator with The Friends Committee on National Legislation, a national, non-partisan Quaker organization that lobbies Congress and the administration to advance peace, justice, and environmental stewardship.

Register here: <https://tinyurl.com/jjht8yfx>

Helen Keller Spiritual Life Collaborative:
Invitation to Co-Create

BY REV. SAGE COLE

Greetings members and friends of the Swedenborgian Church!

Are you feeling a longing, a shift, a sense that something more might be possible for yourself, your community, and our shared world? This longing is at the heart of the creation of the Helen Keller Spiritual Life Collaborative (HKSLLC). We believe that the New Church's descent is picking up speed and calling us to make more space for it, to receive it in new ways, and to become vessels for creating new forms of its life in the world.

Will you join us?

Beginning on Sunday, December 21, 2025, we are launching a seven-month Creation Series, bringing people together from around the globe to reflect and share about the stages of spiritual regeneration that form the path to the New Church.

Each month of the series, we will reflect on a different Day of Creation with a virtual live-streamed liturgy on YouTube, Zoom workshops using different creative modalities for reflection and creation, and Be Love, Be Honest, Be Useful Zoom circles where we can share questions and emerging answers. Participants in the series will also be invited into our newly launched virtual community platform, the HKSLLC Virtual Village, where you'll have access to all offerings live or recorded, and space to share, learn, and co-create with other collaborators.

We hope so much that you will join us, and better yet, join with friends or with your congregation. Please visit helenkellercollaborative.org for more information. We are currently in the process of forming cohorts gathered around local settings, affinity groups, or shared projects. Let us know if you'd like to form a cohort, and we will support you!

Let's create together, friends. A new heaven and a new earth are on their way! 

Rev. Sage Cole is the visionary leader of the Helen Keller Spiritual Life Collaborative.

Swedenborgians in Action
Against Racism

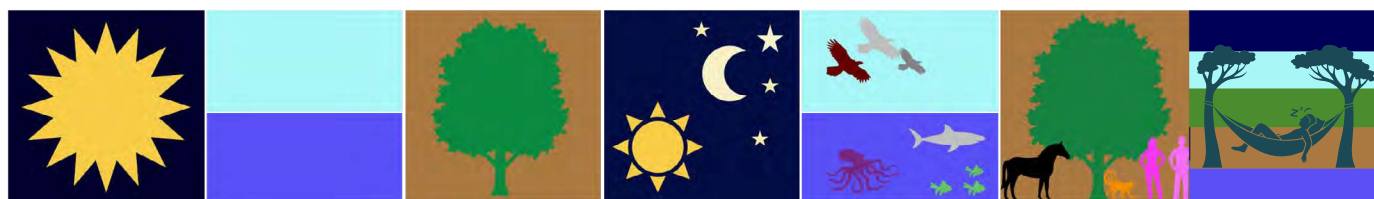
SAAR has a biweekly email newsletter that provides education around issues central to antiracism, ideas for actions to take, and inspiration to keep at it long-term. Email Rev. Shada Sullivan, revshada@gmail.com to join the email list.

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

Begins December 21, 2025 - Ends July 12, 2026

Seven Days of Creation Regeneration Series

A program of the Helen Keller Spiritual Life Collaborative



What will this series include?

Virtual Liturgies on each Day of Creation, Live-streamed on YouTube, Sundays at 7 pm Eastern

December 21, 2025	DAY ONE	<i>"Let there be light!"</i>
January 18, 2026	DAY TWO	<i>"We are spiritual beings having a human experience."</i>
February 15, 2026	DAY THREE	<i>"What is the ground upon which we stand?"</i>
March 22, 2026	DAY FOUR	<i>"What lights guide our way?"</i>
April 19, 2026	DAY FIVE	<i>"What is starting to come alive in our spiritual & natural bodies?"</i>
May 17, 2026	DAY SIX	<i>"Embodying our light."</i>
June 21, 2026	DAY SEVEN	<i>"Flow, surrender and resting in light."</i>



REGISTER HERE

Monthly ZOOM Workshops/Gatherings

"Expressing Your Relationship to the Creation Story Through Art" with Rev. Sue Turley
Bring your preferred medium and let's create! Thursdays, 2 pm Eastern, dates TBA

"Creation as a Perpetual Process of Awakening from Death" with Rev. Sarah Walker
Exploring Swedenborg's descriptions of newly arriving spirits awakening in the spiritual world and how these can be integrated with the Genesis Creation story. Tuesdays, 7 pm Eastern, dates TBA

"Be Love, Be Honest, Be Useful: How are we being re-created?" with Rev. Sage Cole
This sharing circle will invite space for reflection and sharing about our experiences of the days of creation in relation to our spiritual lives. Second Thursdays of the month, 7 pm Eastern

HKSLC VIRTUAL VILLAGE, a Sutra community

This virtual space will include a self paced course on the Seven Days of Creation and the process of Regeneration co-led by Rev. Sue Turley, Rev. Sage Cole, Rev. Catherine Lauber, Rev. Lee Woofenden, Rev. Kent Rogers and more. Interactive spaces for sharing resources, inspirations and questions. Direct access to all virtual liturgies, workshops and recordings.



THE HELEN KELLER
SPIRITUAL LIFE
COLLABORATIVE

To register visit
www.helenkellercollaborative.org/creation-series

Passages

Deaths

Alan Goldstein, 84, of Rochester, Michigan, passed away on April 1, 2025. Alan was a beloved member of the Church of the Holy City in Royal Oak, Michigan for almost thirty years. As a retired college professor in the social and political sciences, he was an avid reader of Swedenborg and many great philosophers and theologians. Alan was a dear friend to many in our congregation, a member of our church choir and a faithful participant in the life of the church.



Beth Sowles, 65, of Climax, Michigan, passed away on July 29, 2025. Beth found the Church of the Holy City in Royal Oak, Michigan through the Almont Womens Retreat



ministry. She participated weekly in our online Sunday Worship services and joined the church in 2023. Beth was raised in the United Methodist Church and enjoyed her lifelong, active membership in that church. She valued being a part of both the Methodist and the Swedenborgian churches, as Beth often shared a very open-minded, inclusive faith. She was beloved by many and gave of herself generously through her crafting and artwork.

Marty Mason, 91, was welcomed into the spiritual world on Monday, August 18, 2025. Her celebration of life was held at the Garden Chapel Sanctuary in the Church of the Open Word in St. Louis, Missouri on August 31, 2025, and included the following tribute from Carolyn Bower.



Thank you, Marty Mason.

For decades, when people got married or baptized or had funerals or services at the Garden Chapel, one person made sure the church was open, questions answered, and food served. That person was Marty Mason.

If there was a special food, like a decorated cake, and someone did not bring it, Marty Mason brought it herself. In July 2008, she helped organize a goodbye celebration for a young organist headed off to college. The cake was decorated with musical notes and red flowers.

Marty let young people know she loved them and believed in them. With calm grace, she honored the dignity of people with special needs, people who struggled with mental illness, people who looked or spoke differently; they trusted her.

Her example of integrity, kindness, and the Swedenborgian idea of useful service inspired many people. From time to time, I would find Marty raking leaves just to make the church grounds look better.

Marty often spoke of the hymn "His Eye Is On the Sparrow." Know you are treasured and loved, even in difficult times, she would remind people. Marty loved music and her musical friends.

We will miss you, Marty, but we give thanks for your life and service. We know you are with the spirits of your sister, Jean, whom you called Gladys, your mother, Alice, and father, Eldon, and so many others.

We will remember you when we take time to be there for each other, when we laugh, when we sing, when we pray, when we try to make the world better, when we trust in God, and when we remain humble.

Marty, you had the key to the church. But you will always hold the key to our hearts.

Barbara "Barb" Tourangeau, 88, of Fraser, Michigan, passed away peacefully on August 25, 2025. She was the beloved wife of the late James Tourangeau and the late Hoyt Penabaker II.



Barb was a devoted mother to Gregory (Karen Osenkowski), Scott (Cindy) Penabaker, and the late Hoyt "Alan" Penabaker III; and a dear stepmother to John, James, and Ellen Tourangeau. She was cherished as "GMA Barb" by her grandchildren Erika (Matthew), Niklas, and Maija, and was a beloved step-grandma to McKenna, Lauran, and Derek. She was especially proud to be great-grandma to Leah, Matthew, Ryan, Rachel, and Kate.

Barb was the loving sister of Frederick, Mary Lou, and the late Janet. She leaves behind many loving nieces, nephews, extended family members, and dear friends.

Born in Detroit, Michigan on March 7, 1937, to her late parents John and Margarie Locke, Barb lived

Continues on page 201

Please email your announcements to:
messenger@swedenborg.org

Passages

Continued from page 200

a life full of care, dedication, and service within the church, the denomination, and her local community. She was an active member of the Church of the Holy City in Royal Oak, Michigan, and found great joy in her many roles at the church camp in Almont, one of her life's greatest passions. Being at Almont was heaven on earth to her.

A memorial service will be held on the first Saturday of Almont Summer Camp in 2026. ☪

Repairers of the Breach

Continued from page 187

whose waters never fail. Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; **you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in.**

—Isaiah 58:9–12

And from the Gospel of Matthew:

For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.

—Matthew 25:35–3

At the Garden Church, we seek to be repairers of the breach and to give food to anyone who is hungry. To this end, the Garden Church board decided to make \$3,000 of our church reserves available at this moment to meet the needs we see each Sunday. These funds went to purchase forty grocery gift cards to local stores, costing \$75 each. This is about the amount of food assistance an individual adult would receive on CalFresh/SNAP in our area for one week. The gift cards were distributed to grateful families and individuals.

If you or your community is feeling called to step in and repair the breach, here are some simple suggestions.

1. Prayerfully discern and identify what you feel called to address.
2. Learn what organizations in your area already do this work or something similar.
3. Contact them and ask what would help them further their mission or meet the needs they seek to address.
4. Discern how you or your community can meet that need.

Example:

1. Food insecurity
2. Contact food pantries, food banks, and meal programs.
3. Learn that there is a need for non-perishable food items and volunteers to pick up produce from local grocery stores and transport it to the food pantry. Also learn that while donated canned goods from individuals are appreciated, the food pantry has the ability to buy in bulk and get items at lower prices than an individual would pay for retail.
4. Decide that the community will first, collect funds to support the pantry, and second, recruit volunteers to pick up produce at the local grocery store and bring it to the pantry twice a week.

When seeking to help, the most important thing we can do is ask what would be helpful. The Lord shows up, meeting us in our humility and guiding us towards a life of useful service. ☪

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.



Fryeburg Fair

Continued from page 190



Kurt Fekete (left) and Rev. Kevin Baxter (right) volunteering at the Fryeburg Fair in Fryeburg, Maine.

New Church booth. I went for the classic fried dough—what some call an “elephant ear”—and we strolled past antique tractors, single-cylinder engines, and an old gas-powered ice cream maker before going back to Kurt’s.

Crossing back into New Hampshire as I rode home, the sunset painted the sky in streaks of red and gold, as if the heavens themselves were aflame. By the time I reached Boston, the night was cool and quiet. I parked my bike, peeled off my riding gear, and felt the deep contentment of a day well spent—of good food, good company, and the simple joy of serving in fellowship. ☪

Rev. Kevin Baxter is the senior pastor at the Church on the Hill in Boston, Massachusetts. He also serves as the secretary for the Council of Ministers for the Swedenborgian Church of North America.



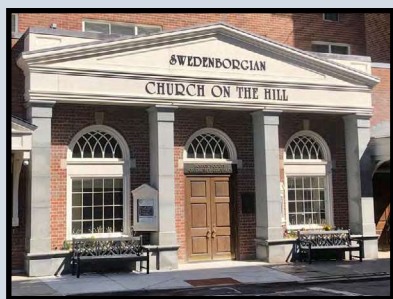
What's Happening

Save the Date!

June 26 – June 30, 2026

Please plan to join us for the 202nd Annual Convention of the Swedenborgian Church where we will return to the east coast with our gracious hosts from the Boston Church on the Hill. Convention will be from June 26 – June 30 (includes travel dates).

Meetings and lodging will be at the Babson Executive Conference Center located within the greater Boston area in conjunction with events at the Boston Church on the Hill.



Boston Church on the Hill



Babson Executive Conference Center

More information will be shared on swedenborg.org!

**Church Calendar**

- **December 24–25, 2025:** Central Office of the Swedenborgian Church is closed for Christmas.
- **December 31, 2025:** Last day that church membership numbers are included for the annual membership count.
- **January 1, 2026:** Central Office of the Swedenborgian Church is closed for the New Year holiday.
- **January 19, 2026:** Central Office of the Swedenborgian Church is closed for MLK Day.

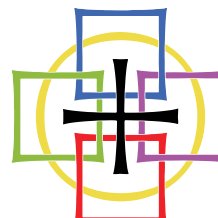


Convention videos, the Swedenborgians in Action Against Racism program, and virtual content that has been created, can be found here for viewing at anytime!



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.

The Swedenborgian Church of North America



facebook

What's Happening

An Introduction To Logopraxis

Living the Word in Everyday Life



If you've ever wondered what it really means to *live* the Word, this small group journey might be for you. Logopraxis—literally “the practice of the Word”—is about bringing spiritual ideas from Scripture and Swedenborg’s Writings into everyday life, where they can actually start to change how we see ourselves and the world around us.

Over **eight sessions (every two weeks)**, you'll explore together how the Word can come alive within you. Along the way, you'll be guided through:

-  **The Logopraxis Cycle** – a six-step approach that helps you read, reflect, and take a spiritual idea into daily life as a personal task.
-  **Spiritual Awareness** – learning to notice what's going on inside - your thoughts, moods, and reactions—and to see them through the lens of Divine truth.
-  **Seeing the Self** – discovering how our familiar sense of “me” (what Swedenborg calls the *proprium*) tends to take centre stage—and how becoming aware of it opens space for something higher and freer to move through us.
-  **Journeying Together** – being part of a small, supportive group where everyone's reflections contribute to a shared sense of being in contact with something larger — the Divine Human.
-  **Transformation in Everyday Life** – realising that even our struggles and failures can be moments of awakening, showing us where real change wants to happen.

Each session weaves together readings from Swedenborg's book *Heaven and Hell* with personal task reflections and group sharing, helping you see how the Word can be *lived*, not just read. Whether you're new to spiritual practice or seeking a fresh way to live your faith more deeply, this course offers an opportunity to bring light, healing, and a deeper sense of Divine connection into everyday life.

Readings will begin during the week commencing **9th February 2026**.

The first Life Group meetings will be 2 weeks after the first reading post. As a global community, we offer various days and times to suit different schedules.

To register your interest Email:
logopraxis.institute@gmail.com

To find out more about Logopraxis Visit:
<https://logopraxis-institute.online/>



Advent Services

Advent Services Available Online

Many of the churches in the denomination have hybrid services on a regular basis. All are welcome to join in-person or online. Here is a sample of the services you can join for the Advent Season. If you'd like to welcome people to your Swedenborgian congregation's online Advent services, please email messenger@swedenborg.org and we will link to your service on our Facebook Page, <https://www.facebook.com/SwedenborgConvention>.

Sunday, December 7

7:30AM PST/10:30AM EST — Church of the Good Shepherd, Kitchener, Ontario

Theme: *Joy! A guitar service filled with music and worship*

Streamed on their [Facebook Page](#) and [Subtack](http://tiny.cc/atwu001) (<http://tiny.cc/atwu001>)

11:00AM PST/2:00PM EST — Swedenborgian Church of San Francisco, San Francisco, California

Theme: *Peace*

Streamed on their [YouTube Channel](#) ([@sfswedenborgianchurch](https://www.youtube.com/@sfswedenborgianchurch))

Sunday, December 14

7:30AM PST/10:30AM EST — Church of the Good Shepherd, Kitchener, Ontario

Theme: *Peace Pageant*

Streamed on their [Facebook Page](#) and [Subtack](http://tiny.cc/atwu001) (<http://tiny.cc/atwu001>)

11:00AM PST/2:00PM EST — Swedenborgian Church of San Francisco, San Francisco, California

Theme: *Joy*

Streamed on their [YouTube Channel](#) ([@sfswedenborgianchurch](https://www.youtube.com/@sfswedenborgianchurch))

12:00PM PST/3:00PM EST — Boston Society of the New Jerusalem, Boston, Massachusetts

Theme: *A Messiah Sing service*

Streamed on their [YouTube Channel](#) ([@churchonthehillboston](https://www.youtube.com/@churchonthehillboston))

Thursday, December 18

4:00PM PST/7:00PM EST — Church of the Holy City, Wilmington, Delaware

Theme: *Blue Christmas Service: Join us for a service for difficult times.*

Designed to hold space for lament and all of our complicated and bittersweet emotions, while still celebrating the way God reaches out to us in Advent.

Streamed on their [YouTube Channel](#) ([@thechurchoftheholycitywilm3941](https://www.youtube.com/@thechurchoftheholycitywilm3941))

Sunday, December 21

7:30AM PST/10:30AM EST — Church of the Good Shepherd, Kitchener, Ontario

Theme: *Love*

Streamed on their [Facebook Page](#) and [Subtack](http://tiny.cc/atwu001) (<http://tiny.cc/atwu001>)

11:00AM PST/2:00PM EST — Swedenborgian Church of San Francisco, San Francisco California

Theme: *Love*

Streamed on their [YouTube Channel](#) ([@sfswedenborgianchurch](https://www.youtube.com/@sfswedenborgianchurch))

11:00AM PST/2:00PM EST — Boston Society of the New Jerusalem, Boston Massachusetts

Theme: *Lessons and Carols: A collection of readings and carols*

Streamed on their [YouTube Channel](#) ([@churchonthehillboston](https://www.youtube.com/@churchonthehillboston))

Continued from page 204

Advent Services

Wednesday, December 24 — Christmas Eve

2:00PM PST/5:00PM EST — Church of the Holy City, Wilmington, Delaware

A Christmas Eve service

Streamed on their [YouTube Channel](#) (@thechurchoftheholycitywilm3941)

2:00PM PST/5:00PM EST — Church of the Holy City, Washington, DC

Lessons and Carols: Celebrating the Christmas Story through scripture and song. If anyone would like to participate more actively, you can volunteer now to be one of the readers ahead of the service by emailing Rev. Rich Tafel at revtafel@holycitydc.org.

Join live, with [Zoom](#) (<http://tiny.cc/mvwu001>)

4:00PM PST/7:00PM EST — Church of the Good Shepherd, Kitchener, Ontario

Christmas Story by Candlelight: A retelling of the Christmas story with choir and carols.

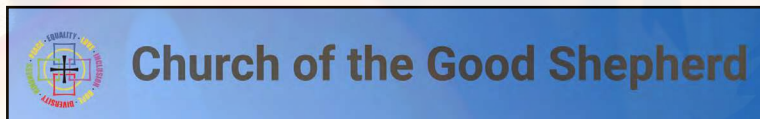
Streamed on their [Facebook Page](#) and [Substack](#) (<http://tiny.cc/atwu001>)

7:00PM PST/10:00PM EST — Swedenborgian Church of San Francisco, San Francisco, California

A Christmas Eve service

Streamed on their [YouTube Channel](#) (@sfswedenborgianchurch)

A warm **Thank You!** to the following Swedenborgian communities for sharing their online Advent services:



<https://www.shepherdsway.ca/>



**church of the
holy city**

<https://holycitydc.org/>



<https://www.churchonthehillboston.org/>



**SWEDENBORGIAN CHURCH
of SAN FRANCISCO**

<https://sfswedenborgian.org/>



The Church of the Holy City

SWEDENBORGIAN — EST. 1858

<https://www.churchoftheholycity.org/>

If you'd like to invite people to your Swedenborgian congregation's online or hybrid Advent services, please email the link to your service 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 Appeal



A Little Church with A Big Voice

**Support Our Little Church
with Its Special Purpose**

Most of the time we understand church as an organization on earth. Swedenborg recognizes this and calls this form "the church specific." But he also shaped a powerful perspective on the way church exists as a form of spiritual force. We individually can be understood as a church in action. When we live with love and charity from our commitment to our understanding of God, we are literally a church in action. And when you put all people everywhere on earth who love God and do good in the world, he calls this vast network the universal church.

The Swedenborgian Church of North America, in this schema, is one of scads of "church specifics" in the universal church of God—one I feel is tremendously important. I left ministry training in a large mainline denomination to be a part of this tiny "church specific" because I fell in love with its wisdom. It is little but also widely known. Long ago, I worked with Rev. Edwin Capon on a team ministry, and a certain conversation still stays with me. In response to my frustration with our smallness, he inspired me to value our special purpose of keeping its big spiritual vision speaking in the world. Though the external numbers may be small, its usefulness is beyond measure.

We today have many creative ministries heralding Swedenborg's message of love, wisdom, and eternal life, and I encourage us all to give to our little "church specific" in meeting its special purpose.



Rev. Edwin Capon

Thank You,

—Rev. Dr. Jim Lawrence

President of the Swedenborgian Church of North America 

To donate please visit <https://swedenborg.org/donate/>