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Swedenborgian  
Church

No. 203



**THE SWEDENBORGIAN CHURCH  
UNITED STATES AND CANADA**

INCORPORATED 1861

THE GENERAL CONVENTION OF THE NEW  
JERUSALEM IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

**ANNUAL SESSION**

**“SPIRITUAL INNOVATION  
FOR A CHANGING WORLD”**

JUNE 27 – JUNE 30, 2025

UNIVERSITY PLACE HOTEL AND CONFERENCE CENTER  
PORTLAND, OREGON

**ANNUAL THEME**

**THE YEAR OF THE WORD**  
SEPTEMBER 1, 2024 – SEPTEMBER 1, 2025

**RECORDING SECRETARY**

Rebekah Greenwood\*

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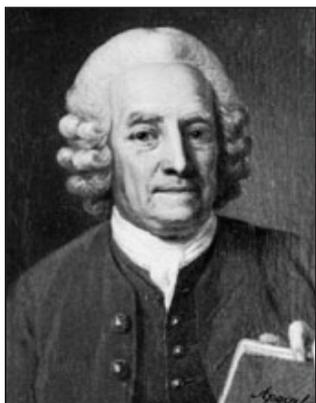
[www.swedenborg.org](http://www.swedenborg.org)

\* Upon a resignation in November 2025, the General Council appointed Beki Greenwood to fill the unexpired term.

## THE FAITH AND AIMS OF OUR CHURCH

The Swedenborgian Church believes that a new epoch is opening in the spiritual life of mankind. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, as he promised to do, has come again, not indeed in a physical reappearance, but in spirit and truth; not in a single event only, but in a progressive manifestation of his presence among people.

Our Church regards as tokens of his coming the burst of scientific de-



velopment, the rise of the spirit of inquiry, the progress toward political and intellectual freedoms, and the deepening sense of a national and international responsibility which have characterized the last few centuries. These are more remote signs, however, of epochal religious change. More directly denoting a movement of the spirit of God on the human spirit are the stirrings in world faiths, the revisions of thought and outlook in them, the searching after standards and spiritual power adequate to the needs and problems of the times, and

this notably in the Christian faith. The Lord is everywhere at work, moving to the reestablishment of his kingdom, and specifically to the renewing of Christianity with the power and understanding to serve and speed his kingdom.

In any coming of the Lord, he brings about many things which people are slow to see. Our unseen, spiritual environment is made over as well as our visible world. A greater awareness of the good that there has been, a fuller justice and truer peace offer themselves for us to realize. Today, in a world that has contracted into a neighborhood, the responsibility to the neighbor makes its demands on all people of good will. Evils that have been long established begin to look as though they could be conquered. We believe that the Lord in his second coming has “reordered the heavens and subjugated the hells” as he did at his first coming.

This coming of the Son of man, “as the lightning comes out of the east, and shines even unto the west,” making the salvation of all people possible, is the direct and sole work of the Lord—a redemption of the world by the Redeemer of persons.

Our Church is also convinced that the Lord has given his followers word of all this, and done so by means of a servant from among them. We

believe that Emanuel Swedenborg thus served the Lord. A person's destiny beyond the earthly life needed to be placed in fuller light; the Scriptures needed to be reestablished as the Word of God; and the Christian message was in need of renewed and contemporary expression. To supply these needs Swedenborg devoted half a lifetime, and an insight born of a regenerating experience. He was enabled "by the Lord's mercy" to inform the Christian hope of immortality with knowledge of the world of the spirit; in Old and New Testament he set forth a meaning which speaks timelessly of the spiritual life and can nourish it now; and he freed Christian teaching from many crippling errors and formulated it anew from the Word of God.

In the theological works of Swedenborg the message of Christianity is restated to inspire the spiritual life of all anew. Its truths present themselves as truths of life here and hereafter. They invite inquiry and ask understanding. They open the door to spiritual renewal and urge upon everyone the personal responsibility to participate in this renewal. The Lord has taken initiative in his coming. We have our response to make. In that response three essentials are urged: that we acknowledge God in the Lord, and that he alone can bring about our redemption and regeneration; that we acknowledge the holiness of the Word and the inspiration which the Word gives us to seek and promote his kingdom; and that we live the life of charity, the exercising in all our relationships, large and small, the neighborliness enjoined by his commandments.

The Swedenborgian Church believes, then, that under Providence the world has received, through the instrumentality of a man, a revelation which confronts it with the universally valid truth of the spiritual life of all human beings. It believes that the Lord Jesus Christ, availing himself of human agency to give us this explicit guidance, has done a sweeping if hidden work of redemption, and created a new heaven and a new earth about us. He is ushering in the epoch, if we will, which he foresaw and which he promised at his first coming. In John's vision on Patmos, the Risen Christ once more promised the dawn of this epoch in the descent of the Holy City, New Jerusalem, to earth. To signalize our conviction that the Lord is fulfilling his promise, we originally organized under the name the Church of the New Jerusalem. The spirit and the humanity which longs to be united to the Lord alike cry, "Come." We lift our voice and pray, "Come. Even so, come Lord Jesus."

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## THE OFFICERS OF THE SWEDENBORGIAN CHURCH

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## GENERAL COUNCIL

*The General Council consists of the Officers of the Swedenborgian Church and the elected members listed below. (Constitution, Article II, Section 2.) The chair of the Council of Ministers is also an ex officio member with vote on the General Council (Constitution, Article II, Section 3).*

*Numbers in parentheses are the terms currently being served for the positions so indicated, persons are limited to two consecutive three-year terms. Those fulfilling unexpired terms are indicated by (\*).*

*Term Expires 2026*

**Rev. Renée Machiniak (1)**  
(248) 229-5668  
[revrenee@aol.com](mailto:revrenee@aol.com)

*Term Expires 2027*

**Rev. Thom Muller (2)**  
(267) 363-0528  
[tmuller@ses.psr.edu](mailto:tmuller@ses.psr.edu)

*Term Expires 2028*

**Rev. Sage Cole (2)**  
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**Kelly Kennedy (1)**

(780) 298-3684  
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**Kei Pang (1)**

(605) 515-1915  
[keipang88@gmail.com](mailto:keipang88@gmail.com)

**Pastor Paul Deming (2)**

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[paul.deming@icloud.com](mailto:paul.deming@icloud.com)

**Tom Murphy (1)**

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**Rev. Rich Tafel, *Chair, Council of Ministers***

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Email: [comchair@swedenborg.org](mailto:comchair@swedenborg.org)

**STANDING COMMITTEES**

*(Constitution, Article II, Section 4 and Bylaws, Article X.) The President of the Swedenborgian Church serves ex officio without vote on all Standing Committees.*

**STANDING COMMITTEE FOR COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION:**

<i>Chair:</i>	Rev. Kevin Baxter	2028	(2)
	Rev. Dr. Dave Brown	2026	(1)
	Tara Conkling	2027	(2)

*ex officio (without vote):* Brittany Price, Editor, *The Messenger*  
 Rev. Thom Muller, Editor, *Our Daily Bread*  
 Rev. Cory Coberforward, Minister, *Spiritual Sunshine*  
 Dr. Rebecca Esterson, Dean, CSS  
 Jackie Shihadeh, Central Office, SCNA

**STANDING COMMITTEE FOR EDUCATION AND RESOURCES FOR SPIRITUAL COMMUNITY:**

<i>Chair:</i>	Dr. Rebecca Esterson, Representative of Center for Swedenborgian Studies, appointed by the CSS Board of Trustees		
	Beki Greenwood	2026	*(1)
	Rev. Shada Sullivan	2027	(2)
	Dell Rose	2028	(1)

*ex officio (without vote):* Kurt Fekete, Youth Director, SCNA

\* Serving a 1-year term to bring the rotation back into bylaw compliance

**STANDING COMMITTEE FOR FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY:**

<i>Chair:</i>	Jennifer Lindsay, Treasurer, SCNA		
	Bill Coffman	2026	(2)
	Stan Conger	2026	(2)
	Kurt Fekete	2027	(2)
	Tom Neuenfeldt	2027	(2)
	Rev. Rachel Madjerac	2028	(2)
	Rev. Jane Siebert	2028	(1)

*ex officio (without vote):* Rev. Dr. Jim Lawrence, President, SCNA

**STANDING COMMITTEE FOR NOMINATIONS:**

*Convention Bylaws, Article X, Sec. 4. "...There shall be a Standing Committee for Nominations of five members to serve for five years each; one member to be elected each year, but not from any Association from which his or her predecessor or any other member of the Committee is a member. The unexpired term of any member may be filled from the same Association. A member moving to another Association shall continue to serve and shall be regarded as coming from his or her former Association; but no retiring member shall be eligible for immediate reelection. Whenever possible, the Standing Committee for Nominations shall propose slates representative of the Swedenborgian Church's overall constituency.*

*It shall be the duty of this Standing Committee to present, at each session of the Swedenborgian Church, nominees for the Swedenborgian Church officers (where applicable), vacancies in the elective members of the General Council and all other Boards and Committees, unless otherwise appointed. Each year the member whose term is next to expire shall act as Chair of the Committee.*

<i>Chair:</i>	Pastor Paul Deming	IL Assoc.	2026
	Nancy Little	ME Assoc.	2027
	Pastor Robbin Ferriman	OH Assoc.	2028
	Pastor Kelly Milne	MNCU	2029
	Terrie Crenshaw	PCA	2030

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## COMMITTEES

**CENTRAL OFFICE REVIEW COMMITTEE:**

*Standing Resolution 11, June 29, 1983: "...it is the responsibility of the Vice President, together with a committee he may appoint, to conduct an annual review of the Central Office, covering staff, employees, organization, etc."*

*Chair:* Kurt Fekete, Vice President, SCNA  
Stan Conger

**COMMITTEE ON AMENDMENTS:**

*Chair:* Rev. Kevin Baxter  
Stan Conger  
Beki Greenwood

**COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY:**

*The General Council, at the request of the Council of Ministers, voted to form the Committee of Inquiry at its June 26, 1996 meeting. It was voted "that the Committee of Inquiry be under the auspices of General Council and that the committee consist of five (5) members to be appointed by the President of Convention in consultation with the Chair of the Council of Ministers of the Swedenborgian Church."*

*Chair:* Pastor Karen Feil  
Rev. Jay Barry  
Barbara Cullen  
Rev. Paul Martin  
Rev. Nancy Piorkowski

*ex officio (without vote):* Rev. Rich Tafel, Chair, Council of Ministers

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**COMMITTEE ON LIBRARY AND DOCUMENTS:**

*“Resolved, That a Committee of three on Library and Documents, one of which shall be the President of the Theological School, shall be appointed by the President of the Convention to see to the collecting, depositing and cataloging of books, manuscripts and other documents which may have been donated to or otherwise procured by the Convention; the Chairman of this Committee shall report to the Convention annually.” (1911 Journal, Minute 90)*

The archives of the Swedenborgian Church are held in two places: histories of societies, organizations, committees, and persons at the Center for Swedenborgian Studies (CSS), and other miscellaneous SCNA materials at a facility in southwest Ohio managed by the Urbana, OH church.

*Chair:* Sue Ditmire  
Pastor Robbin Ferriman  
Dr. Rebecca Esterson, Dean, CSS

*ex officio (without vote):* Rev. Dr. Jim Lawrence, President, SCNA  
Jackie Shihadeh, Central Office, SCNA

**COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY DEVELOPMENT:**

*Established by vote of the General Council in 2024, “There shall be a Committee on Ministry Development whose central focus shall be facilitating ministries within the Swedenborgian Church. The Committee shall serve as a sounding board for ministries and programs in the denomination and shall be concerned with resources, counsel, and spiritual support for ministry visioning and ministry efforts throughout the church.”*

*Chair:* Rev. Dr. Jim Lawrence, President, SCNA  
Dr. Rebecca Esterson  
Rev. Catherine Lauber  
Rev. Rich Tafel

**INVESTMENT COMMITTEE:**

*“The General Council, at its first meeting following each annual session of the Swedenborgian Church, shall appoint an Investment Committee of five members for terms of five years, and each member may be reappointed without term limits. The Treasurer of the Convention shall serve as Chair of the Investment Committee ex officio with voting rights. The Investment Committee is charged with the general oversight and care of the investments and securities of the Swedenborgian Church Common fund, with full power to purchase and sell and to invest and reinvest as in their judgment and discretion may seem advisable.” (Bylaws, Article XVIII)*

<i>Chair:</i>	Jennifer Lindsay, Treasurer, SCNA	
	Rev. Paul Martin	2026
	Pete Toot	2027
	Herb Ziegler	2028
	Holly Gottschalk	2029
	Drew Siebert	2030

*ex officio (without vote):* Rev. Dr. Jim Lawrence, President, SCNA

**RETIREMENT COMMITTEE:**

*Its duties are to administer the proceeds of Convention’s Permanent Pension Fund (1975 Journal, Fund 37) in accordance with the stated purpose of the Fund.*

<i>Chair:</i>	John McIntosh
	Gina Peracchi
	Meredith Conant Piotti

**SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE:**

*The Social Justice Committee is an ad hoc committee created by General Council as a forum to address social concerns for the purpose of bringing information to the body of Convention through the Messenger and other vehicles, and to offer resources for ways to be involved.*

<i>Co-Chair:</i>	Rev. Dr. Amanda Riley
<i>Co-Chair:</i>	Rev. Shada Sullivan
	Alex Gayheart
	Olivia Hackett
	Dru Johnson
	Rev. Dr. Jim Lawrence
	Dr. Page Morahan

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**SPIRITUAL SUNSHINE: A SWEDENBORGIAN COMMUNITY  
ONLINE CENTRAL COMMITTEE:**

*Chair:* Kurt Fekete, Vice President, SCNA  
Rudy Caseres (2026)  
Dr. Emily Tergliafera (2027)  
William Rotella (2028)

*ex officio (without vote):* Rev. Cory Coberforward, Minister, *Spiritual  
Sunshine*

**STRUCTURE REVIEW COMMITTEE:**

*“Design, adopt and maintain an organizational structure that is directly responsive to Convention’s Purpose and needs, and that includes provisions for its own self-evaluation and growth.” (Standing Resolution 1, Objective 9, July 3, 1986)*

*Chair:* Rev. Paul Martin  
Rev. Kit Billings  
Rev. Dr. Gardiner Perry

**SWEDENBORGIAN CHURCH YOUTH LEAGUE (SCYL):**

*Youth Director:* Kurt Fekete  
*President:* Zsa Zsa Dolley  
*East Coast & Activities Officer:* Caroline Phinney  
*Midwest & Service Officer:* Abby Lau  
*West Coast Ambassador & Treasurer:* Lilly Carson  
*Clear Blue Sky Editor:* Nora Barnaby  
*League Chaplain:* Rev. Renée Machiniak

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## BOARDS

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE WAYFARERS CHAPEL:

*The appointive members of the Board shall consist of six persons, two appointments to be made each year by the President of The Swedenborgian Church with the approval of General Council [indicated by <sup>+</sup>]. Three (3) must be appointed from the Pacific Coast Association [indicated by <sup>\*</sup>]. Board members shall be appointed for a term of three years. Those members who have served three consecutive three-year terms, including ex officio members, shall not be eligible for immediate reappointment. Terms end and begin coinciding with the summer convention of the Swedenborgian Church of North America.*

<i>Chair:</i>	Peter Gottschalk	2026	*(3)
<i>Treasurer:</i>	Robert Carr	2026	*(2)
<i>Secretary:</i>	Ben Gunter	2027	*(1)
	Katharine Carr	2027	*(2)
	Stan Conger	2028	+*(2)
	Rev. H. Tafel	2028	+*(2)

*ex officio (with vote):* Michael Robbins, Representative of the PCA  
Rev. Dr. Jim Lawrence, President, SCNA

*ex officio (without vote):* Rev. Dr. David Brown, Chapel Minister

### BOARD OF MEDIATION:

*Consists of five members. "Two such members shall be lay persons appointed by the President, and two shall be ministers appointed by the Chair of the Council of Ministers, and their terms of office shall be the same as that of the President of the Swedenborgian Church. The fifth member shall be the Vice President of Convention who shall serve as chair" (Bylaws, Article XVI).*

*Chair:* Kurt Fekete, Vice President, SCNA  
Matthew Fleming  
Bet Giddings  
Rev. Kit Billings  
Rev. Kathy Speas

**TRUSTEES OF THE BUILDING FUND:**

*The Board of Trustees of the Building Fund shall consist of three trustees who shall be appointed by the General Council...to serve each for three years. (Bylaws, Article XIX) The purposes of this Fund were broadened in 1946 “to aid New Church societies in purchasing, remodeling, or erecting places of worship, Sunday School Quarters and Parish Halls in America.” (1946 Journal, Minute 42 and 1947 Journal, Minute 38)*

<i>Chair:</i>	Mark Careaga	2027	(2)
	Bob Perry	2026	(1)
	Robert Carr	2028	(1)

*ex officio (without vote):* Jennifer Lindsay, Treasurer, SCNA  
 Rev. Dr. Jim Lawrence, President, SCNA

**TRUSTEES OF THE TAFEL FUND:**

*The Tafel Fund, established in 2011 to advance the mission and purpose of the Swedenborgian Church, is a permanent fund restricted to the use of income only. It is administered by a Board of Trustees: three appointed by General Council and those who are seated by virtue of having donated a minimum of \$25,000. The fund was established to honor the service to the General Convention of past and present Tafel ministers.*

*Chair:* Rev. Richard L. Tafel  
 Linda Tafel  
 Rev. Dr. Gardiner Perry  
 Lon Elmer (Appointed)  
 Jennifer Lindsay (Appointed)  
 Rev. Lisa Solwold (Appointed)

**NEW YORK NEW CHURCH LEGACY FUND:**

*The New York New Church Legacy Fund was established in January, 2024. The purpose of the Fund is to “support Swedenborgian societies, associations, start-up and existing ministries, theological schools, camps, retreats, conferences, meetings that are sponsored and/or recognized by the Denomination, and other activities aligned with promoting the interest of the Congregation Mission.” Its mission is to support innovative works that provide useful impact toward greater inclusion, social justice, and leadership for resilient communities.*

*The Legacy Fund Trusteeship is comprised of ten (10) members inclusive of two (2) ex officio members (the “Trustees”). All Trustees shall be members of the Denomination. Five (5) to be elected by New York [indicated by \*], and three (3) to be appointed by the General Council.*

<i>Chair:</i>	Rev. Robert McCluskey	(2027)
<i>Secretary:</i>	Anna Rich Martinian*	(2027)
<i>Treasurer:</i>	Jennifer Lindsay	
	Pastor Karen Feil*	(2026)
	Rev. Youngmin Kim*	(2026)
	Shelley Dolley	(2026)
	Matthew Fleming*	(2027)
	William Linden*	(2028)
	Rev. Rich Tafel	(2028)
 <i>ex officio (with vote):</i>	Rev. Dr. Jim Lawrence, President, SCNA	
	Jennifer Lindsay, Treasurer, SCNA	

**REPRESENTATIVES****DELEGATES TO THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES:**

*The President of the Swedenborgian Church, with the counsel and advice of the Executive Committee of the Council of Ministers, shall make the various appointments of the delegation to the National Council of Churches, and then they shall be confirmed by the General Council.*

<i>Head of Communion:</i>	Rev. Dr. Jim Lawrence, President, SCNA
<i>Delegates:</i>	Rev. Rev. Jay Barry (President’s proxy)
	Pastor Tassy Farwell
	Alex Gayheart

## COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

*All ministers of the Swedenborgian Church, twelve constituting a quorum  
(Bylaws of the Council of Ministers, Article III)*

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

<i>Chair:</i>	Rev. Rich Tafel	2026	(1)
<i>Secretary:</i>	Rev. Kevin Baxter	2027	(1)
	Rev. Dr. Donna Keane	2026	(1)
	Rev. Gabriella Cahaley	2027	(2)
	Rev. Julie Conaron	2028	(1)

### ADVISORY PLACEMENT COMMITTEE:

*This is the sole proper channel of communication for churches or groups seeking to employ a minister, and for ministers seeking employment.*

<i>Chair:</i>	Rev. Dr. Jim Lawrence, President, SCNA
	Rev. Rich Tafel, Chair, COM
	Dr. Rebecca Esterson, Dean, CSS

### COMMITTEE ON ADMISSION INTO THE MINISTRY:

*(Bylaws of the Council of Ministers, Article IV, Section 7)*

<i>Chair:</i>	Rev. Junchol Lee	2028	(2)
	Rev. Gabriella Cahaley	2026	+(1)
	B.J. Neuenfeldt	2027	+(2)
	Rev. Dr. Jonathan Mitchell	2028	(1)
<i>ex officio (with vote):</i>	Rev. Dr. Jim Lawrence, President, SCNA		

### COMMITTEE ON PROGRAM:

*(Bylaws of the Council of Ministers, Article IV, Section 5)*

Rev. Rich Tafel, Chair, COM
Rev. Kevin Baxter, Secretary, COM
Dr. Rebecca Esterson, Dean, CSS

\* *Filling an unexpired term*

+ *Elected by Convention*

**COMMITTEE ON REVISION OF THE ROLL:***(Bylaws of the Council of Ministers, Article IV, Section 8)*

Beki Greenwood, Secretary, SCNA\*  
 Rev. Kevin Baxter, Secretary, COM  
 Jackie Shihadeh, Central Office, SCNA

**COMMITTEE ON WORSHIP:***(Bylaws of the Council of Ministers, Article IV, Section 4)*

*Chair:* Rev. Roslyn Taylor  
 Pastor Paul Deming

**ETHICS COMMITTEE:***(Bylaws of the Council of Ministers, Article IV, Section 6)*

*Chair:* Rev. Catherine Lauber  
 Rev. Betsy Coffman  
 Rev. Solomon Youngmin Kim

**MINISTERS' TRAVEL FUND:**

*Chair:* Rev. Rich Tafel, Chair, COM  
 Rev. Kevin Baxter, Secretary, COM  
 Jackie Shihadeh, Central Office, SCNA

**MISCONDUCT DETERMINATION BOARD:***(Bylaws of the Council of Ministers, Article IV, Section 9)*

*Chair:* Rev. Catherine Lauber  
 Rev. Kevin Baxter  
 Rev. Julie Conaron  
 Rev. Dr. Donna Keane  
 Rev. Solomon Youngmin Kim

**NOMINATING COMMITTEE:***(Bylaws of the Council of Ministers, Article IV, Section 1)*

*Chair:* Rev. Kit Billings 2026  
 Rev. Lisa Solwold 2027\*  
 Rev. Colin Amato 2028

\* *Filling an unexpired term*

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**CHAPLAINCY COMMITTEE:**

*Chair:* Rev. James Barry  
Rev. Gabriella Cahaley  
Rev. Nancy Piorkowski  
Rev. Jane Siebert  
Rev. Lisa Solwold  
Rev. Kathy Speas

**ENDORSER OF MILITARY CHAPLAINS:**

*ex officio:* Rev. Dr. Jim Lawrence

**SWEDENBORGIAN CHAPLAIN TO THE HARVARD CHAPLAINS:**

Rev. Sage Cole

<b>Name</b>	<b>Date of Ordination/Date of (Re)Induction</b>	<b>Date of Severance/ Date of Death</b>	<b>(S) (D)</b>
John Hargrove	1798	1839	D
Ralph Mather	1798	1803	D
Hugh White	1812		
Maskell Mills Carll	1816	1856	D
Adam Hurdus	1816	1843	D
Lewis Beers	1817	1849	D
Richard H. Goe	1817		
David Powell	1817	1823	D
Charles John Doughty	1818	1844	D
Thomas Newport	1818	1841	D
Thomas H. Roberts	1820		
Holland Weeks	1821	1843	D
Thomas Boyle	1822	1823	D
Nathaniel Holley	1822	1861	D
Manning H. Roche	1823	1842	D
Isaac C. Worrell	1823	1857	D
Samuel Henry Wills	1824	1855	D
Lemuel C. Belding, M.D.	1826	1848	S
Eleazer Smith	1826	1866	D
Thomas Worcester, M.D.	1828	1878	D
James Robinson	1831	1840	S
Richard De Charms	1833	1863	D
David Powell, II	1834	1855	D
Henry Aiken Worcester	1834	1841	D
Samuel Worcester	1834	1844	D
Luther Bishop	1838	1856	S
Benjamin Essex	1838	1850	S
Philip Hathaway	1838	1839	S
Adonis Howard	1838	1866	D
Alexander Kinmont	1838	1839	S
Oliver Lovell	1838	1840	S

<b>Name</b>	<b>Date of Ordination/Date of (Re)Induction</b>	<b>Date of Severance/ Date of Death</b>	<b>(S) (D)</b>
Thomas Newport, Jr.	1838	1841	S
Stephen Peabody	1838	1844	S
Joseph Pettee	1838	1891	D
James Seddon	1838	1865	D
Artemas Stebbins	1838	1840	S
Warren Goddard	1839	1889	D
Horatio N. Strong	1839		
Benjamin Fiske Barrett	1840	1892	D
Nathan C. Burnham	1840	1892	D
Samuel Fuller Kike, D.D.	1840	1899	D
Elisha Randolph Hibbard	1841	1847	D
Oliver Prescott Hiller	1841	1870	D
Richard William Hooper	1841	1863	D
George Field	1842	1884	D
John Randolph Hibbard	1841	1884	S
James Scott	1842	1862	D
John N. Hibbard	1843	1888	S
Thomas Peckman Rodman	1843	1870	D
Solyman Brown	1846	1876	D
Edwin A. Atlee	1847	1852	D
William H. Benade	1847	1891	S
Alfred Edmund Ford	1847		
Sabin Hough	1847	1887	D
James Melrose	1847	1860	D
James Park Stewart	1847	1882	D
Thomas Davee Sturtevant	1847	1850	D
Thomas Wilks	1847	1872	D
George Bush	1848	1860	D
Thomas H. Perry	1848	1849	D
Henry Weller	1848	1851	S
Rufus Dawes	1849	1859	D

<b>Name</b>	<b>Date of Ordination/Date of (Re)Induction</b>	<b>Date of Severance/ Date of Death</b>	<b>(S) (D)</b>
Jabez Fox	1849	1898	D
Abiel Silver	1849	1881	D
Elijah Bryan	1850	1867	D
Chauncey Giles	1850	1893	D
Tilly Brown Hayward	1850	1878	D
Silas Jones	1850		
William B. Hayden	1851	1893	D
Samuel Howard Worcester	1851	1891	D
John M. Miller	1852	1875	D
John Philander Perry	1852	1886	D
Thomas Storrey	1852	1860	S
John Williams	1852	1878	D
Robert Children	1854	1870	D
Arthur Otto Brickman	1855	1886	D
Samuel Beswick	1856	1879	S
Williard G. Day	1857	1901	S
Woodbury M. Fernald	1857	1860	S
John Henry Ragatz	1857	1903	D
Frederick William Tuerk	1857	1901	D
Edmund A. Beaman	1858	1908	D
Gerhardt Bussman	1859	1908	D
John Martin Hofer	1859	1869	D
Geirge H. Marston	1859	1865	D
John Curtis Ager	1860	1913	D
Adolph John Bartels	1860	1910	D
Charles Atwood Dunham	1860	1884	D
Joshua Trowbridge Eaton	1860	1888	D
John Isaac Herick	1860	1906	D
James Ellis Mills	1860	1901	D
Timothy Otis Paine	1860	1895	D
James Reed	1860	1921	D

<b>Name</b>	<b>Date of Ordination/Date of (Re)Induction</b>	<b>Date of Severance/ Date of Death</b>	<b>(S) (D)</b>
George Nelson Smith	1860		
John Worcester	1860	1900	D
Richard Norman Foster	1861	1866	S
Farrington McIntyre	1861	1882	S
George Frederick Stearns	1861	1902	S
Charles L. Carriere, M.D.	1862	1915	D
Edwin Gould	1862	1907	D
Edward Craig Mitchell	1862	1911	D
Theodore Edson	1863		
Frank Sewall	1863	1915	D
Charles Hardon	1864	1917	D
Willard Hall Hinkley	1865	1909	D
Samuel M. Warren	1865	1908	D
John Goddard	1866	1935	D
John W. Lever	1866	1886	D
John Faulkner Potts	1866	1923	D
James Elliot Carnes	1867	1872	D
John Ward Hunt	1867	1891	D
Charles H. Mann	1867	1915	S
Joseph Worcester	1867	1913	D
John Doughty	1868	1893	D
Charles C. Lord	1868	1871	S
Calvin Day Noble	1868	1885	D
John Parker	1868	1873	D
Rudolph Leonard Tafel	1868	1893	D
Jacob H. Einhaus	1869	1875	D
Leonard G. Jordan	1869	1891	S
William H. Mayhew	1869	1910	D
Gustave Reiche	1869	1910	D
Samuel S. Seward	1869	1916	D
Louis Hermann Tafel	1869	1909	D

<b>Name</b>	<b>Date of Ordination/Date of (Re)Induction</b>	<b>Date of Severance/ Date of Death</b>	<b>(S) (D)</b>
Theodore Francis Wright	1869	1907	D
Berry Edmiston	1870	1912	D
Adams Peabody	1870	1887	D
Cyrus Young Scammon	1870	1884	D
Edward Payson Walton	1870		
George W. Chase	1871	1910	D
William H. Goodner	1871	1888	S
Edwin R. Keyes	1871	1879	S
Leonardt Tafel	1871	1880	D
F. H. Hemperly	1872	1884	S
Stephen Jepson	1872	1916	D
Lewis Pyle Mercer	1872	1906	D
John Sargon Saul	1872	1921	D
Emory Royal Tuller	1872	1891	D
John Ely Bowers	1873	1892	S
Albinus Finney Frost	1873	1905	D
William D. Hastings	1873		
John Jacob Lehnen	1873	1894	D
William F. Pendleton	1873	1891	S
Warren Goddard, 2nd	1874	1910	D
Joseph A. Lamb	1874		
Solomon Hogue Spencer	1874	1905	D
Horace W. Wright	1874	1920	D
Oliver Dyer	1876	1907	D
Peter Joseph Faber	1876	1897	D
Henry E. Goddard	1876	1905	S
Richard De Charms, II	1877	1892	S
Jacob Kimm	1877	1918	D
James M. Sheperd	1877	1912	D
H. C. Vetterling	1877	1888	S
Richard Ward	1877	1898	D

<b>Name</b>	<b>Date of Ordination/Date of (Re)Induction</b>	<b>Date of Severance/ Date of Death</b>	<b>(S) (D)</b>
John Westall	1877	1890	D
James B. Parmelee	1878	1908	D
Douglas H. Rains	1878		
James Power Smith		1891	D
William A. L. Campbell	1879	1914	S
Fedor Goerwitz	1879	1908	D
Julian Kennedy Smyth	1879	1921	D
George Laurence Allbutt	1880	1922	D
Orson L. Barler	1880	1914	S
Edward C. Bostock	1880	1891	S
Duane Vincent Bowen	1880	1914	D
Howard Cary Dunham	1880	1933	D
Eugene Laible	1880	1883	S
Adolph Roeder	1880	1931	D
John Whitehead	1880	1930	D
Franklin Pierce Baxter	1881	1927	D
Thomas Allibone King	1881	1927	D
Ellis I. Kirk	1881	1901	D
J. S. David	1882	1925	
Benjamin Dorrance Palmer	1882	1901	D
Baman N. Stone	1882	1918	D
Jacob Emanuel Werren	1882	1925	D
Stephen Wood	1882	1897	D
Philip Barraud Cabell	1883	1903	D
Andrew Czerny	1883	1890	S
Eugene Davidson Daniels	1883	1921	D
William Henry Schliffer	1883	1930	D
E. J. E. Schreck	1883	1931	D
Sam C. Eby	1884		
John T. V. Croy	1885	1920	D
Henry Clinton Hay	1885	1936	D

<b>Name</b>	<b>Date of Ordination/Date of (Re)Induction</b>	<b>Date of Severance/ Date of Death</b>	<b>(S) (D)</b>
William Diehl	1885	1916	D
John William McSarrow	1885		
J. M. Washburn	1885	1911	D
William Loring Worcester	1885	1939	D
William Hyde Alden	1886	1906	S
Wellington Hardy Butterfield	1886	1905	D
Henry Hastings Grant	1886	1943	D
Frank Levi Higgins	1886	1928	D
Thomas Franklin Houts	1886	1902	D
John Edward Smith	1886	1930	D
Gardiner I. Ward	1886	1939	D
George Mason Davidson	1887		
John H. Sudbrack	1887	1905	D
Michael John Callan	1888	1907	D
Edward S. Hyatt	1888	1892	S
Theophilus C. Odhner	1888	1891	S
Enoch Price	1888	1891	S
Fred E. Waelchli	1888	1892	S
George Stevens Wheeler	1888	1916	D
William H. Acton	1889	1891	S
George Henry Dole	1889	1943	D
William A. McIntosh	1889	1915	D
N. Dandridge Pendleton	1889	1891	S
Percy Billings	1890	1947	D
Albert Bjork	1890	1920	S
A. J. Cleare	1890	1900	S
David A. Dryden	1890	1905	D
J. A. Hayes	1890	1901	S
Louis G. Landenberger	1890	1925	D
Benjamin P. Unruh	1890	1929	D
Junius Bascom Spiers	1890	1929	D

<b>Name</b>	<b>Date of Ordination/Date of (Re)Induction</b>	<b>Date of Severance/ Date of Death</b>	<b>(S) (D)</b>
John MacPherson	1891	1923	D
Charles A. Nussbaum	1891	1923	D
Christian H. Flemming	1892	1895	D
Clarence Lathbury	1892	1939	D
Adam Bouse Dolly	1893	1914	D
Lewis Field Hite	1893	1945	
Peter Carter Louis	1893	1900	D
John R. Stephenson	1893	1913	D
Herman von K. Crownfield	1894	1912	D
Louis G. Hoeck	1894	1953	D
Hiram Vrooman	1894	1954	D
William H. Adkins	1895	1944	D
Myron Gilbert Browne	1895	1903	D
A. B. Francisco	1895	1952	D
Soren C. Bronniche	1896	1931	D
Joseph Decembre	1896	1907	D
Samuel Worcester, M.D.	1896	1918	D
William Paul Harthill	1897	1920	D
C. Giles Hubbell	1897	1963	D
James Taylor	1898	1922	D
Emanuel Fedor Goerwitz	1899	1903	D
Frank E. Gustafson	1899	1946	D
Walter E. Brickman	1900	1903	S
Joseph Edward Collom	1900	1911	S
Russell Eaton	1900	1949	D
Charles W. Harvey	1900	1952	D
Alexander Henry	1900	1934	S
James Edward Thomas	1900	1925	D
George Wengel	1900	1939	D
Arthur Mercer	1901	1912	D
Abraham Noble	1901	1941	D

<b>Name</b>	<b>Date of Ordination/Date of (Re)Induction</b>	<b>Date of Severance/ Date of Death</b>	<b>(S) (D)</b>
Andrew Parsons	1901	1904	D
Peter Hiebert	1902	1921	D
John Ramsey Hunter	1902	1933	D
Klaas Peters	1902	1932	D
Herbert C. Small	1902	1949	D
Arthur Wilde	1902	1952	D
Clyde W. Broomell	1903	1963	D
John Wesley Stockwell	1903	1952	D
Thomas French, Jr.	1905	1936	D
Paul Sperry	1905	1954	D
George Gay Daniel	1906	1930	D
Eli Wilinson Shields	1906	1913	D
Everett King Bray	1907	1970	D
Harold S. Conant	1907	1942	D
Adolph L. Goerwitz	1907	1956	D
George E. Morgan	1907	1939	D
Robert Samuel Fischer	1908	1922	D
Warren Goddard III	1908	1965	D
Charles Samuel Mack	1908	1930	D
Charles Edgar Ritter	1908	1935	D
Jean Paul Dresser	1909	1935	D
Jacob Schroeder	1909	1932	D
William Frederic Wunsch	1909	1969	D
Edwin M. L. Gould	1910	1935	S
A. J. Lundeberg	1910	1940	D
Ferdinand Muhlert	1910	1917	D
Maro F. Underwood, M.D.	1910	1924	D
Abraham Simons	1911	1952	D
Leslie E. Wethey	1912	1970	D
Rodney Dent Book, M.D.	1913	1937	D
John Hiebert Enns	1913	1932	D

<b>Name</b>	<b>Date of Ordination/Date of (Re)Induction</b>	<b>Date of Severance/ Date of Death</b>	<b>(S) (D)</b>
Walter B. Murray	1913	1947	D
John Enns Zacarias	1913	1963	D
Gould Johnson Brown	1914	1928	S
Norman Goddard	1914	1956	D
Fred S. Mayer	1914	1957	D
George Gordon Pulsford	1914	1923	D
Joel Richard Stewart	1914	1928	D
W. G. Stockton	1914	1925	D
Winfred Walter Tafel	1914	1915	D
Fitz-Herbert A. Wiltshire	1914	1921	D
Lloyd H. Edmiston	1915	1958	D
Harold Ross Gustafson	1915	1966	D
James Priestnal	1915	1957	D
Erich Reissner	1915	1964	D
Louis Rich	1915	1943	D
Louis A. Dole	1916	1964	D
Earl Hamilton	1917	1960	D
William R. Reece	1917	1950	D
Robert J. Strong	1917	1967	D
Samuel O'Dell Weems	1917	1975	D
Henry Karl Peters	1918	1979	D
M. S. Buckingham	1918	1925	S
C. W. Clodfelter	1918	1960	D
Astley Harold Guylee	1918	1930	S
Addison P. Hiller	1918	1944	D
Isami Libbi Watanabe	1918	1934	S
Horatio Willis Dresser	1919/1942	1929/1954	S/D
Thomas L. Nugent	1919	1952	D
Gustave Emile Regamey	1919	1935	D
Herbert Durand Downward	1920	1976	D
Jaroslav Janecek	1920	1954	D

<b>Name</b>	<b>Date of Ordination/Date of (Re)Induction</b>	<b>Date of Severance/ Date of Death</b>	<b>(S) (D)</b>
Henry F. Reynolds	1920	1921	D
John Worcester Spiers	1920	1985	D
Ildefonso Agulo Y. Alla	1921	1923	D
William H. Beales	1921	1967	D
Cornelius Becherel	1921	1946	D
Albert Diephuis	1921	1967	D
Frank Henry Andrew	1922	1929	S
John Daboll	1922	1939	D
K. F. Grosch	1922	1952	S
F. C. Mercanton	1922	1951	D
John James Morton	1922	1928	D
Leighton Coleman Shuster	1922	1933	S
Alfred George Regamey	1923	1975	D
Antony Regamey	1923	1976	D
Pedro Angeles	1923	1930	D
Franklin Henry Blackmer	1923	1977	D
Demetrio G. Del Rosario	1923		
Harry C. B. Flow	1923	1933	S
Horace Wilkinson Briggs	1924	1976	D
Allen Talbert Cook	1924	1936	S
Andre Diaconoff	1924	1984	D
Dirk Diephuis	1924	1956	D
Walter F. Fraser	1924	1970	D
Leonard Immanuel Tafel	1924	1971	D
Fred R. Crownfield	1925	1946	S
Hoxie Yost Smith	1925	1928	D
Yonezo Doi	1926	1982	D
Isaac George Ens	1926	1952	D
Donald C. Gustafson	1926	1951	D
Arthur Albert Huxman	1926	1936	D
Peter Peters	1926	1959	D

<b>Name</b>	<b>Date of Ordination/Date of (Re)Induction</b>	<b>Date of Severance/ Date of Death</b>	<b>(S) (D)</b>
Theodore Stephens	1926	1927	D
Paul O. Flammond	1927	1939	S
Bjorn Johannson	1927	1968	D
Othmar Tobisch	1927	1970	D
Richard Bruno Wezerek	1927	1932	D
Jedidiah Edgerton	1928	1942	D
Jeremiah Ezekiel Jackson	1928	1934	D
Charles H. Kuenzli	1928	1944	D
Eino Hjalmar Frieberg	1929	1930	S
Adolph C. Peterson	1929	1933	S
John L. Boyer	1931	1965	D
Leslie Marshall	1931	1977	D
Wilfred Gould Rice	1932	1989	D
Immanuel Tafel	1932	1962	D
Henry C. Giunta	1933	1957	D
Norman R. Guitry	1933	1939	S
Joy H. Hammond	1933	1973	D
C. D. Mathias	1933	1950	D
Klaas Leo Peters	1934	1972	D
Richard Hugo Tafel	1934	1985	D
Igor Edomski	1935	1952	
Rollo Kitto Billings	1935	1982	D
Brian Kingslake	1935	1973	D
Ernest Albert Tolle	1935	1983	D
William E. Fairfax	1937	1964	D
Sherman S. Newton	1937	1943	S
Clayton Priestnal	1941	1997	D
Karl John Peters	1942	1954	D
David P. Johnson	1943	2010	D
Julian H. Kendig	1943	1958	S
Dionisio A. de Lara	1945	1956	S

<b>Name</b>	<b>Date of Ordination/Date of (Re)Induction</b>	<b>Date of Severance/ Date of Death</b>	<b>(S) (D)</b>
John Haskell Jordan	1945	1986	S
Joseph Hoellrigl	1945	1975	D
Leon Carlyle LeVan	1945	1988	D
Robert Loring Young	1945	1971	D
Reynolds Becherel	1946	1958	S
Edward Hinckley	1947	1963	S
Owen Thiel Turley	1947	2007	D
T. Denton Lee	1948	1967	D
Edwin Gould Capon	1949	2009	D
Samuel Theofil Hardstedt	1949	1973	D
John King	1951	1962	D
Eric John Zacharias	1951	2021	D
Henry William Reddekopp	1952	1994	D
Friedmann Horn	1952	1999	D
Ernest Oliver Martin	1953	2017	D
Erwin Reddekopp	1953	2008	D
Calvin Earl Turley	1953	1984	D
William Ross Woofenden	1953	2012	D
Ernest Lewis Frederick	1954	1994	D
David James Garrett	1954	1986	S
Tomas Aquino	1956	2022	D
Horand Karl Gutfeldt	1956	1997	D
Thomas A. Reed	1956	1973	S
Paul B. Zacharias	1956	2011	D
En Bo Chung	1958	2000	D
George Frederick Dole	1960	2021	D
Werner Siegfried Schmidt	1960	1975	D
Robert H. Kirven	1962	2004	D
Chungsun Lee	1962	2019	D
Raghib Khalil Rizq	1962	2013	D
Richard Hugo Tafel, Jr.	1962	2022	D

<b>Name</b>	<b>Date of Ordination/Date of (Re)Induction</b>	<b>Date of Severance/ Date of Death</b>	<b>(S) (D)</b>
Galen Welsey Unruh	1962	2002	D
Robert E. Bossdorf	1964/1986	2020	D
Theodore Foster	1964	2013	D
F. Robert Tafel	1964	2022	D
Jerome A. Poole	1965	2022	D
Harold Taylor	1965	1999	D
George Daniel McCurdy	1967	1979	S
Claude Bruley	1968	2004	D
Richard E. Coulter	1968	1970	S
Jaikoo Lee	1968	2004	S
James Frank Shaw (lay minister)	1968	1970	S
Yuzo Noda	1973	1990	D
Walter Edward Orthwein III	1973	1979	S
Matthew Samuel Pritchard Glowe	1973	2015	D
Paul Tremblay	1973	2006	D
Robert Murray	1974	1976	D
Dorothea Ward Harvey	1975	2010	D
Richard Meredith Baxter	1976	1993	D
David Lee Rienstra	1978	2018	D
Phillipe Boulvin	1979	1984	S
Gertrude Tremblay	1980	1997	D
Carl Yenetchi	1980	2016	S
Claude Bruley	1982	2004	D
Glenn Stephen Ellis	1982	2004	S
E. Llewellyn Fraser	1983	1989	S
Theodore J. LeVan	1983	2009	D
Theodore J. Klein	1984/2020	2004/2020	S/D
John R. Bennett	1986	1999	D
C. Henry Korsten	1986	2010	D
Marlene K. Laughlin	1986	2009	D
David Sonmor	1986	2022	D

<b>Name</b>	<b>Date of Ordination/Date of (Re)Induction</b>	<b>Date of Severance/ Date of Death</b>	<b>(S) (D)</b>
Judith Dennis	1988	2016	D
Jon Skuli Thorhallsson	1988	2022	D
Kathleen Easton-Gilhooly	1989	2025	D
Min-Heui Cheon	1997	2013	S
Doyle Adam Seward, Jr.	1998	2017	D
Freeman Schrock	2006	2023	D
Jennifer M. Tafel	2007	2023	S
M. Judith Vandergrift	2008	2022	D
Sharon Louise Connelly	2010	2024	D
Anna Woofenden	2014	2022	S
Arthur "Terry" Schnarr	2016	2025	D

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## AUXILIARY AND ASSOCIATED BODIES

*The following organizations are legally independent bodies in which the Swedenborgian Church has an interest.*

### AMERICAN NEW CHURCH SUNDAY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION D/B/A SWEDENBORGIAN CHURCH CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES (SCCM):

<i>Chair/President:</i>	Pastor Kelly Milne
<i>Vice President:</i>	Rev. Kit Billings
<i>Secretary:</i>	Open
<i>Treasurer:</i>	Open

### TRUSTEES OF THE GRAY LEGACY:

**Wesley N. Gray Fund** - Legacy held by three Trustees appointed by the Probate Court of Middlesex County, MA, on joint recommendation of the Massachusetts New Church Union and the General Convention. The Trustees are instructed to expend the net income for “*such church and missionary uses, preferably in Massachusetts first, then in the United States of America, and then in the whole world, as shall seem to them most deserving and most useful towards the growth of the New Jerusalem Church,*” and to render “*a report of said fund and of the proceedings under it...each year to the said General Convention*” for printing in its *Journal*.

<i>Secretary:</i>	Dr. Rebecca Esterson
<i>Treasurer:</i>	Herbert Ziegler
<i>Trustee:</i>	Nancy Little

### DEBORAH'S TREE:

Deborah's Tree is a non-profit ministry that focuses on uplifting the work of female scholars, writers, clergy and artists in the global Swedenborgian faith community. Created by Rev. H. Roslyn Taylor, a minister in the Swedenborgian Church of North America.

<i>Chair:</i>	Rev. Roslyn Taylor
<i>Secretary:</i>	Pastor Robbin Ferriman
<i>Treasurer:</i>	Rev. Julie Conaron

**CENTER FOR SWEDENBORGIAN STUDIES (CSS), FORMERLY  
SWEDENBORGIAN HOUSE OF STUDIES:**

*(Incorporated under the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts on May 17, 1881, as the New Church Theological School)*

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES:**

<i>Chair:</i>	Tom Neuenfeldt
<i>Vice Chair:</i>	Pastor Tassy Farwell
<i>Clerk:</i>	Karen Conger
<i>Treasurer:</i>	Jennifer Lindsay
<i>ex officio (with vote):</i>	Rev. Dr. Jim Lawrence, President, SCNA Dr. Rebecca Esterson, Dean, CSS
<i>Liaison (without vote):</i>	President, Graduate Theological Union

**ELECTED MEMBERS:**

<i>Term Expires 2026:</i>	Lewis Shaw*	(1)
	Karen Conger**	(1)
<i>Term Expires 2027:</i>	Robert Carr*	(1)
	Tom Neuenfeldt**	(1)
<i>Term Expires 2028:</i>	Rev. Dr. Gardiner Perry*	(2)
	Pastor Tassy Farwell**	(1)
<i>Term Expires 2029:</i>	Jennifer Lindsay*	(2)
	Rev. Kathy Speas**	(1)

\*Trustees elected by Representative Class

\*\*Trustees elected by At-Large Class

+ To complete an unexpired term

**GENERAL CONVENTION OF THE NEW JERUSALEM IN THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, INC.**

d/b/a The Swedenborgian Church of North America

**MINUTES  
FROM THE TWO HUNDRED AND FIRST SESSION**

2025 HYBRID CONVENTION  
PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY IN PORTLAND, OREGON

**Friday June 27 to Monday, June 30, 2025**

**Saturday, June 28, 2025  
BUSINESS SESSION I  
9:00 AM PDT**

1. **Convention opened at 9:21 am PT** – Rev. Dr. Jim Lawrence, President of the Swedenborgian Church of North America. Jim led the assembled in an opening prayer and brought the session to order.
2. **Required reading of Article II. Sec. 2 of the Bylaws**, Article IV. Sec.1 of the Constitution and Article II Sec. 2 of the Bylaws were read by Recording Secretary Karen Conger.
3. **President’s Declaration on Present and Voting** – Jim gave a few instructions about addressing the chair, a mic being necessary not only so that those present in the room can hear but so those attending virtually can hear. Robert’s Rules of Order indicates that the phrase “present and voting” is meant to be understood in the literal sense as those presently in the room, not just present at convention.
4. **Reports of the Officers** –
  - a. President Jim gave a brief rundown of his involvement over the past year, especially on the Wayfarers Chapel Board and invited all to look at his report in the Advance Reports.

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**b.** Vice President Kurt Fekete remarked that he sees his main job as one of supporting the president, while his first love remains his involvement with the youth.

**c.** Recording Secretary Karen Conger remarked on her pleasure of having served ten years as secretary as she looks forward to her final year as it unfolds.

**d.** Treasurer Jennifer Lindsay shared that she has now completed her eighth year as treasurer, and she continues to enjoy the job in its many and varied facets. The total assets have increased from \$28M at the end of 2023 to \$48M at the end of 2024. This \$20M increase is primarily comprised of the positive investment return on the Common Fund, plus three unusual financial events (see below). The Common Fund earned a return of 12.1% for the 2024 calendar year, net of fees. Even with the market and economic turmoil of the first few months of 2025 the value of the portfolio has held through Q1 2025. Jennifer wished to bring our attention to three “unusual events” of the last twelve months, all of them positive:

- 1.** The NYNC Legacy Fund has its own Common Fund account with a balance of \$14.9M as of Q2 2025. These funds are a gift to SCNA from the NYNC Society from the sale of its church building in Manhattan. The trustees feel themselves to be on the cusp of being able to begin granting. The NYNC is no longer operational but still exists legally due to the pending longstanding legal issues that should be resolved by the end of 2025. Once the NYNC Society is legally dissolved later in 2025, there will be an additional \$1M added to the NYNC Legacy Fund. The NYNC Legacy trustees are on the cusp of being able to begin awarding grants to our various Swedenborgian projects and ministries

- 2.** The sale of the National Church property was completed in November 2024 and a townhouse in the Dupont Circle area of the District was purchased in early 2025. The former owner of the townhouse, by divine providence, is a member of the church group that purchased the National Church property. The townhouse is owned by the denomination by utilizing \$2.5M from the National Church property sales proceeds. The remaining sale proceeds were used to pay off the Society’s loans from the Building Fund, accomplish

repairs and upgrades to the townhouse, and provide funds for operational support. The new townhouse is now known as Swedenborg House.

3. The St. Louis Society was able to enter into a conservancy agreement for the wooded property located directly behind the church building and parking lot. The conservancy protects the natural space and places a restriction in perpetuity that it can never be developed. Members of the St. Louis Society made a donation of \$200K to offset the reduction in market value of the property with the conservancy agreement in place.

5. Report of the Credentials Committee – Beki Greenwood

Association (Conference)	Churches		Ordained Ministers	Members	Number of Potential Delegates	Number of Actual Delegates
	Active	Inactive				
Eastern Canada (ECC)	1	0	2	60	8	0
Illinois Association	5	0	2	59	8	5
Kansas	2	0	1	54	7	3
Maine	4	0	5	90	11	6
Massachusetts New Church Union (MNCU)	4	1	5	94	11	6
Michigan	1	0	3	53	7	7
Middle Atlantic	3	0	7	102	12	7
New York	2	0	1	18	4	0
Ohio	3	0	6	38	6	6
Pacific Coast (PCA)*	6	0	21	195	22	19
Western Canada (WCC)	2	0	1	62	8	1
At Large	n/a	n/a	n/a	0	2	0
Unknown Affiliation	n/a	n/a	19	2	n/a	n/a
Church Membership Sub-Total	33	1	n/a	827	106	60
COM	n/a	n/a	73	n/a	73	31
General Council (lay officers and members)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	9	7
Total Possible Delegates					188	98

\* Did not submit information for 2024, using 2023 information

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6. **Reports of the Council of Ministers (COM) – Secretary of COM Rev. Kevin Baxter**

a. **Motion:** At her own request, based on her plan of ministry and by recommendation of the Committee on Admission into the Ministry, the Council of Ministers recommends to the General Convention, that Lynn Clare Chittick, who has received a Master of Divinity Degree and a Certificate of Swedenborgian Studies, be ordained into the Ministry of the General Convention, and that the service of ordination be held at this session of convention, her name, after ordination, to be placed on our Roll of Ministers. Rev. Junchol Lee, as the pastor of her home church, rose to second the motion.

Introduction and questions for ordinand:

Q. Lynn, in requesting ordination into the Christian ministry for service in the General Convention of the New Jerusalem in the United States of America and in Canada, do you, in the presence of this Convention, affirm your love to the Lord, your faith in the Lord's divine Word and your allegiance to the heavenly doctrines as unfolded in the theological works of Emanuel Swedenborg?

*A. Yes, I affirm this as my love, my faith and my allegiance.*

Q. To this end, do you faithfully promise to uphold the Constitution of the General Convention and to abide by the Bylaws and practices of its Council of Ministers?

*A. I do promise this, and I ask the prayers of Convention to guide and sustain me in my ministry.*

b. **Motion:** After 38 years in the ordained ministry, the Rev. Kathleen Easton-Gilhooly entered the fullness of the spiritual world on September 21, 2024. The Council of Ministers recommends to the Swedenborgian Church that their name be removed from the Roll of Ministers and added to the Roll of Former Ministers. The Convention voted the acceptance of the motion by standing in silence, and a declaration of "*Well done, good and faithful Servant.*"

c. **Motion:** After 44 years in the ordained ministry (11 with the General Convention), the Rev. Terry Schnarr entered into the fullness of the spiritual world on February 6, 2025. The Council of Ministers recommends to the Swedenborgian Church that their name be removed from the Roll of Ministers and added to the Roll of Former Ministers. The Convention voted the acceptance of the motion by standing in silence, and a declaration of “*Well done, good and faithful Servant.*”

Jim rose to speak about Kathleen Easton-Gilhooly, who grew up in Scotland moving to the United States for her career. She became a member of the Church of the Holy City, in Wilmington, Delaware, and there decided to enter the seminary and was duly ordained into the General Convention on July 2, 1989. She served at the Virginia Street Church in St. Paul, Minnesota, and for several years the church in Mauritius, then traveled around the world teaching English as a second language. We have missed her deeply in the Church, and have now lost a great star.

Jim also spoke about Terry Schnarr, who died on February 6, 2025, ordained into the General Church in June of 1981, and then inducted into the General Convention in 2016. Terry and his wife lived in Canada for a length of time where he was an associate minister with the Church of the Good Shepherd in Kitchener, Ontario, Canada; Terry later served the Chrysalis ministry in Deland, Florida.

7. **General Council Report to the Floor,** – Karen Conger, Recording Secretary – The General Council (GC) met virtually on Saturday, May 31st, 2025, for their pre-convention meeting. Various reports were received including those from the officers, the Operations Manager, and the Chair of the Council of Ministers.

Under President Jim Lawrence’s leadership the GC has recently begun to research Insurance assistance for properties owned by the denomination. This effort ties into a broader, ongoing attempt to support all of our ministries with properties, to protect Convention assets, and help ministries manage their financial responsibilities. As part of this effort, there is active research underway to explore the feasibility of establishing a group insurance policy. This includes looking into whether such a policy could also extend to properties not directly owned

by Convention and whether an umbrella policy could be created to cover additional ministries within the Convention network. Operations Manager Jackie Shihadeh has sent out an email to gather insurance information from various ministries and has begun receiving responses.

The GC received information on the NYNC Legacy Fund and the process which continues to settle the lawsuit with the next-door neighbor to the former NYNC property. There is a light at the end of the tunnel regarding this matter, and it is hoped that matters will soon be settled in a way that benefits the NYNC Legacy Fund, at which point the NYNC will formally dissolve. The Legacy Fund Trust hopes to begin granting funds by the end of 2025.

Jim shared that there is a proposed location for the restoration of the Wayfarers Chapel in the City of Rancho Palos Verdes on a site which offers a significantly improved view, and the branding and public-facing identity of the Chapel are actively being developed. Jim emphasized that things are going exceptionally well, and remarked that it's hard to imagine the future of the Chapel looking any more promising. Attendees at convention will have the opportunity to see the plans and learn more about this inspiring new phase.

- 8. **Explanation of the NemoVote process and invitation to vote:** Jennifer briefly explained the process and advised that the vote would open for the ordinand after the present session and will close at 2pm PT.

9. **Report of the Standing Committee for Nominations**—Chair, BJ Neuenfeldt

- Vice President: Kurt Fekete\*
- Recording Secretary: Karen Conger\*
- Treasurer: Jennifer Lindsay\*
- General Council Lay Person: Emily Teragliafera\*
- General Council Lay Person: LP Paul Deming\*
- General Council Minister: Rev. Sage Cole\*
- Standing Committee for Communication & Information: Rev. Kevin Baxter\*
- Standing Committee for Education & Resources: Beki Greenwood (1-year term)
- Standing Committee for Education & Resources: Dell Rose (3-year term)

- Standing Committee for Financial Accountability: Rev. Rachel Madjerac
- Standing Committee for Financial Accountability: Rev. Jane Siebert
- Standing Committee for Nominations: Terrie Crenshaw (PCA)
- CSS Board of Trustees, representative class: Jennifer Lindsay

\*Indicates incumbent

- 10. Rev. Susannah Currie** rose to announce that the Angel Windows, designed by the Tiffany Studios and originally installed in the Church of the New Jerusalem in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, then sold at auction by the Temenos Church, have been donated to the Museum of Biblical Art, in Dallas, Texas, where they will be an inspiration to folks for years to come. Susannah also gave a fun speech about Fryeburg New Church Assembly, sharing that she and others would love to have more people coming to camp as well as people to help, and also, guest speakers. There are varying degrees of help/benefits available for travel etc. for those who can involve themselves in the life of the FNCA. Also, a cartoon series has been suggested entitled “Swedenborg Unwigged,” with hopes for a future graphic novel, for which they are soliciting input and collaborators.
- 11. Nominations From the Floor** – Jim called for nominations from the floor for all of the offices, and seeing none, the nominations were closed.
- 12. Reports:**
- a. *The Messenger*:** Retired editor Herb Ziegler thanks Beki Greenwood for her five year run as editor, and explained that a search committee (Jim Lawrence, Kurt Fekete, & Himself) has been formed to seek a replacement. At this point the field has been narrowed to two candidates, Brittany Price & Dell Rose, each of whom have been asked to edit and produce an issue of the denominational organ, in order to get an even better sense of how to proceed. Both of these folks are very talented and dynamic, so stay tuned.
- b. *DCM Manager*:** Rudy Caseres advised that he was hired three years ago to head up the IT for Convention, as well as updating the website, and spoke of his enjoyment at meeting folks virtually through their Zoom

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ministries. He was able to visit the Fryeburg New Church last year and is routinely helping with the Wayfarers Chapel AV at their temporary site in Palos Verdes Estates, CA. Rudy expressed his excitement about the opportunity to conduct a mini course at this year's convention session.

c. DC Church/Swedenborg House – Rev. Rich Tafel rose to briefly add to last night's speech, expressing his pride in what they accomplished in the sale of the property at 1611 16th St. in late 2024 and the subsequent purchase of the townhouse in the Dupont Circle area of Washington, D.C.

d. *Our Daily Bread (ODB)* – Rev. Thom Muller reported that he is continuing to supply sermons and articles, providing the larger world with a Convention flavored look at the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg. Since last year's convention there have been about 30,000 visits to [spiritualquesters.org](http://spiritualquesters.org), which represents a 34% increase over the previous year. Archive copies of ODB in PDF are now available, and there have been about 1300 inquiries. They've enjoyed a closer relationship with Rudy Caseres, from which they have greatly benefited. They recently recorded their first podcast, inspired a bit by "Off the Left Eye," and are always looking for additional content (not just from clergy) [odb@swedenborg.org](mailto:odb@swedenborg.org). Thom has noticed that Mailchimp has a tendency to drop folks and he would like to know if anyone has experienced that.

13. **Jennifer opened the ordinand vote;** the vote closed at 2pm PT.

14. **Business Session I recess – 10:55 am PDT**

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**BUSINESS SESSION II**

**2:45 – 4:45pm PDT**

15. **Reconvened – 2:50 pm PDT**

16. **Report on Ordinand Vote** – Jennifer reported that Lynn Clare Chittick was approved for ordination with 49 votes in favor, six opposed, and two blank ballots. The news was met with rousing cheers of approbation!

17. **Rev. Jane Siebert** reported that *The Magic Key*, by Joyce Fekete, will be republished with new illustrations by Zsa Zsa Dolley, and expert editing by Ava Dolley, two of Joyce's granddaughters. Pretty exciting!

**18. Reports Continued:**

e. Social Justice Committee – Chair Rev. Shada Sullivan, who co-chairs this committee with Rev. Dr. Amanda Riley, reported that this year has seen joint efforts with Rev. Sage Cole's Helen Keller Collaborative ministry, beginning with a podcast series on Climate Justice which began in April of this year. They have also created a dedicated Facebook page sharing content intended to be of use to readers in pursuit of social justice as well as having initiated a biweekly online support group entitled *Staying Grounded in Times of Political and Social Upheaval* which gathers weekly.

f. Swedenborg Library and Bookroom, Chicago – Pastor Karen Feil joined virtually from Chicago, IL, to advise that the Library was open to the public for 106 days during 2024 with visitors on 58 of those days. For the last year Dell Rose has served as Program Director, contributing nine programs over the latter half of the year, both personally and drawing upon notable contacts. They are presently mid-stream in their 2025 series of in-person and Zoom programs.

g. Swedenborgians in Action Against Racism (SAAR) – Jim Lawrence reminded us that SAAR debuted a month after the George Floyd murder and the group remains very active with Shada publishing a tri-weekly newsletter. They meet monthly online with two discourses, one theological and one spotlighting Swedenborgian frameworks around behaviors and ethics: what are the lives of use and love in the real world. There was to be a mini course during convention on Ethan Allen Hitchcock. Black history has been a main focus of the committee with Sue Ditmire championing that history in the Swedenborgian Church.

h. Swedenborg Foundation – Robert Carr reported that Chris Barber is the new president of the Board, which currently has a membership of 16 very active folks and a wonderful staff. Publishing and online services, especially "Off the Left Eye," continue to be the main focus. The team is learning to thrive in the online world and the number of views is climbing quickly.

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The New Century Edition project is approaching 20 years, and the volumes keep coming as the Phase 1 project is completed over the next seven years or so. Listening to Eternity is about to be published, as well as a volume of essays of Rev. Dr. George Dole, later next year. The Brickman Family Foundation donated \$2M which is especially welcome as the Foundation has been running a deficit over the last few years. Pete Toot was honored for his service as a director of the Foundation over the last 18 years.

## **19. Special Reports –**

**a.** Wayfarers Chapel – Administrative Director Robert Carr spoke of the sadness that is inevitably experienced when looking at the former site of the Chapel. But many, many parts of the Chapel remain and are being safeguarded in the City of Palos Verdes Yards where space is being rented. A prospective new site has been chosen at Battery Barnes in Rancho Palos Verdes, which has a rich military history including a buried WWII bunker (5000 sq ft in size). It's a beautiful site and the City of Rancho Palos Verdes and Chapel Board are moving forward to get the Federal Government on board, the Coast Guard having decided that Battery Barnes is "surplus property." Fascinatingly, the proportions of the former Chapel site are very similar to the proportions of Battery Barnes. This site is bedrock and has experienced no movement in thousands of years. Robert shared many renderings of what is hoped will be the new Chapel as compared to historic photographs of the former Chapel. Much of the surrounding land is permanent preserve land, just to make it even more special. Since the new site is looking so promising, the Board has decided to begin the work that precedes the construction, much of it financial. It is estimated that the cost will be \$25 to \$30M, though just as the original Chapel was built in phases, so will this be. There are currently only four staff; the importance of keeping the ministry not only viable but thriving cannot be overstated.

Rev. Dr. Dave Brown stepped forward to speak about the ministry that continues to unfold in Rancho Palos Verdes at the St. Francis Episcopal Church in Palos Verdes Estates, who are not charging a rental/use fee. All were invited to contact Dave in order to receive a link to the Sunday service. Dr. Rebecca Esterson wondered about some way to consecrate the new site currently under exploration, it having been formerly used for military purposes.

**20. Business Session II recess – 4:45 pm PT**

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**Sunday, June 29**  
**BUSINESS SESSION III**  
**9:00 –11:30 am PDT**

**21. Reconvene convention – 9:00 am PDT**

**22. Rev. Jane Siebert** rose to speak about Rev. Dr. Dorothea Harvey, and the 50th anniversary of her ordination 50 years ago today! It was a controversial move at the time, however the overwhelming majority of those in attendance on that memorable occasion voted in favor of the decision.

**23. Rev. Ros Taylor** commented about this fall’s meeting of Gathering Leaves ([gatheringleaves.net](http://gatheringleaves.net)), and about Deborah’s Tree, which is a ministry that promotes the work of female scholars, ministers. This year there have been two retreats, which are held in Byrn Athyn, PA.

**24. Herb Ziegler** announced Eric Allison’s book, *Spirit, Adventure & Wonder*, which was very kindly put together by Herb.

**25. Additional Report: Swedenborgian Community Online** (Spiritual Sunshine) – Rev. Cory Coberforward joined the meeting virtually from Missouri to speak about the Swedenborg Community Online. There are now nearly 7,000 subscribers online to their shorts and longer pieces, plus the wonderful weekly email experiences. There are more younger people inhabiting the spaces of Spiritual Sunshine currently.

**26. Additional Special Reports –**

**a. New York New Church Legacy Fund** – Rev. Robert McCluskey, Chair, rose to say a few words about the unfolding ministry as embodied by the trustees of the NYNCLF ([nyncnf@gmail.com](mailto:nyncnf@gmail.com)) who believe themselves to be on the cusp of being able to begin awarding grants. The NYNC still exists legally but not operationally due to ongoing legal issues. Robert was eloquent in his praise of the pastoring of Rev. Rich

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Tafel, as well as that of Rev. Jane Siebert and Rev. Dr. Jim Lawrence.

There will be two types of grants. The first type will be for any recognized SCNA organization/ministry. Grants for projects or ministries in the New York City Tri-state metropolitan area will be prioritized with an openness to the idea of supporting the establishment of a new society located in the New York City area. These grants will be awarded sometime in October 2025 for payment during the 2026 calendar year.

The second type of grant will be for outside organizations serving New York City and the surrounding tri-state metropolitan area. The trustees are using a company called Penn Creative to identify appropriate outside organizations to invite to submit a grant request and to manage the overall grant evaluation process for the prospective outside organization. The priority for outside organizations is for a mission focus in one of four areas: Equity/Social Justice, Climate Change/Environment, Spirituality/Wellness, and Basic Needs.

**b. Helen Keller Spiritual Life Collaborative** – Rev. Sage Cole took the podium to speak about the Collaborative as a “gathering of individuals who are dedicated to making space to explore and live the call of the new church as outlined in the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg, with the intention of living into the deep unity of life that makes possible our incredible diversity.” Earlier this year the Collaborative developed and hosted a virtual event over several days with speakers including Rev. Ray Silverman, Hillary Baack, and others. There will be a Global New Church Prayer Circle session held online for one hour in the morning, one day in each of the months of the last third of 2025, September, October, November and December. See the website ([helenkellercollaborative.org](http://helenkellercollaborative.org)) for further information.

**c. The Gray Fund** (Secretary, Rebecca Esterson; Treasurer, Herb Ziegler; Trustee, Nancy Little) Rebecca reported that recently the Fund’s investment was moved to the Common Fund which has been beneficial. They are inviting requests for larger grants and/or multi-year grants. The first emphasis is in Boston, the second in Massachusetts, and third, in the world.

27. **Opening of Voting – At 10:35am PT** Jennifer announced the opening of the voting and clarified the ballot contents. The vote was set to close at 2:00pm PT.

28. **Business Session III Recessed – 10:45am PDT**

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**BUSINESS SESSION IV  
2:45 PM PDT**

29. **Reconvene convention – at 2:55 pm PT**

30. **Announcement election results – Stan Conger**

<b>Vice President</b> (1 yr. term)	<b>Kurt Fekete</b> 53 votes cast, 53 in favor; the vote carried
<b>Recording Secretary</b> (1 yr. term)	<b>Karen Conger</b> 53 votes cast, 53 in favor; the vote carried
<b>Treasurer Elect</b> (3 yr. term - begins 2026)	<b>Jennifer Lindsay</b> 53 votes cast, 53 in favor; the vote carried
<b>General Council (Lay Person)</b> (3 yr term ‘28)	<b>Emily Tergliafera</b> 53 votes cast, 44 in favor; the vote carried
<b>General Council (Lay Person)</b> (3 yr. term ‘28)	<b>LP Paul Deming</b> 53 votes cast, 48 in favor; the vote carried
<b>General Council (Minister)</b> (3 yr. term ‘28)	<b>Rev. Sage Cole</b> 53 votes cast, 49 in favor; the vote carried
<b>Standing Committee for Communication &amp; Information</b> (3 yr. term ‘28)	<b>Rev. Kevin Baxter</b> 53 votes cast, 53 in favor; the vote carried
<b>Standing Committee for Financial Accountability</b> (3 yr. term ‘28)	<b>Rev. Rachel Madjerac</b> 53 votes cast, 47 in favor; the vote carried
<b>Standing Committee for Financial Accountability</b> (3 yr. term ‘28)	<b>Rev. Jane Siebert</b> 53 votes cast, 45 in favor; the vote carried
<b>Standing Committee for Education and Resources</b> (1 yr. term ‘26)	<b>Beki Greenwood</b> 53 votes cast, 52 in favor; the vote carried
<b>Standing Committee for Education and Resources</b> (3 yr. term ‘28)	<b>Dell Rose</b> 53 votes cast, 49 in favor; the vote carried

**Nominating Committee**

(5 yr. term '30)

**Terrie Crenshaw**

53 votes cast, 53 in favor; the vote carried

**CSS BOT Representative Class**

(4 yr. term '29)

**Jennifer Lindsay**

53 votes cast, 53 in favor; the vote carried

**31. The site/dates for convention 2026** – Rev. Kevin Baxter rose to cordially (and hilariously) invite all to convention 2026 which will be hosted by the Church on the Hill in Boston, Massachusetts, June 26 to June 30th, 2026.

**32. The Business Sessions of the 201st session of the General Convention were adjourned at 3:08pm PT.**

*Respectfully Submitted,  
Karen Conger, Secretary*

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**CONVENTION PREACHERS SINCE 1959**

1959	Ernest O. Martin	Asilomar Conference Grounds, CA
1960	Owen Turley	Lake Forest, IL
1961	Calvin Turley	Washington, DC
1962	Richard Tafel	Pawnee Rock, KS
1963	Paul Zacharias	Miami Beach, FL
1964	Rollo Billings	Philadelphia, PA
1965	Brian Kingslake	Brockton-Bridgewater-Elmwood, MA
1966	Galen Unruh	Urbana, OH
1967	Eric Zacharias	Kitchener, Ontario, Canada
1968	George F. Dole	Windsor, Ontario, Canada
1969	Randall Laakko	Claremont, CA
1971	Erwin Reddekopp	Urbana, OH
1972	Ernest L. Frederick	Boston, MA
1973	Robert H. Kirven	Edmonton, Alberta, Canada
1974	Andre Diaconoff	Urbana, OH
1975	George McCurdy	Urbana, OH
1976	Richard H. Tafel, Jr.	Philadelphia, PA
1977	Dorothea Harvey	San Francisco, CA
1978	Ernest O. Martin	Kitchener, Ontario, Canada
1979	Friedemann Horn	Urbana, OH
1980	Edwin G. Capon	Wellesley, MA
1981	Eric Allison	Urbana, OH
1982	Andre Diaconoff	Irvine, CA
1983	F. Robert Tafel	Wilmington, OH
1984	Ronald P. Brugler	Center Harbor, NH
1985	F. Gardiner Perry III	Windsor, Ontario, Canada
1986	Gladys Wheaton	Boone, NC
1987	Jaikoo E. Lee	Tacoma, WA
1988	David L. Rienstra	Newton, MA
1989	David P. Johnson	Urbana, OH
1990	Jerome A. Poole	Olds, Alberta, Canada
1991	Robert E. McCluskey	Kitchener, Ontario, Canada
1992	Stephen J. Pults	St. Louis, MO
1993	Richard M. Baxter	Wenham, MA
1994	George F. Dole	Arlington, VA
1995	Carl Yenetchi	San Francisco, CA
1996	Horand K. Gutfeldt	Urbana, OH

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1997	Robert H. Kirven	Hutchinson, KS
1998	James F. Lawrence	Leesburg, FL
1999	J. Theodore Klein	Malibu, CA
2000	Paul Martin	Urbana, OH
2001	Renée Billings Machiniak	St. Paul, MN
2002	Paul Zacharias	Gorham, ME
2003	Ken Turley	Geneva, NY
2004	Wilma Wake	Kitchener, Ontario, Canada
2005	Marlene Laughlin	Berkeley, CA
2006	John Billings	Urbana, OH
2007	Eric Hoffman	Holland, MI
2008	Sarah Buteux	Bridgewater, MA
2009	Junchol Lee	Seattle, WA
2010	John Maine	St. Paul, MN
2011	Jonathan Mitchell	Cincinnati, OH
2012	Andrew Stinson	Bridgewater, MA
2013	Jane Siebert	Urbana, OH
2014	Alison Lane-Olsen	St. Louis, MO
2015	David Fekete	Bridgewater, MA
2016	Solomon Youngmin Kim	Urbana, OH
2017	Susannah Currie	West Chester, PA
2018	Kit Billings	San Jose, CA
2019	Kathy Speas	Valparaiso, IN
2020	Paul Deming	Virtual
2021	Sage Cole	Virtual
2022	Anna Woofenden	Long Beach, CA
2023	Richard Tafel	Bridgewater, MA
2024	Elizabeth Coffman	East Lansing, MI
2025	Kevin Baxter	Portland, OR

**MEMORIAL****REV. ARTHUR “TERRY” SCHNARR (1952–2025)**

Terry Schnarr was inducted into the ministry of the Swedenborgian Church of North America in 2016 after many years in the ministry of the General Church. He entered the fullness of the spiritual world on February 6, 2025. Originally ordained into ministry with the General Church in 1981. He served in several ministries in both the General Church and in the New Church of Australia. He applied to become inducted into Convention’s ministry, which was completed in 2016, subsequently serving as Associate Minister at the Church of the Good Shepherd in Kitchener and at the Chrysalis Center in Deland, Florida, and he also served for many years in part time capacities as a hospice chaplain. Additionally, Rev. Schnarr served a term on the Oversight Committee of *Our Daily Bread* and a term on the executive committee of the COM itself, and as administrator of “Information Swedenborg, Inc.,” a Canadian non-profit corporation.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Rev. Dr. Jim Lawrence*

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## REPORTS OF OFFICERS, BOARDS, COMMITTEES, AND ASSOCIATED BODIES

### PRESIDENT

Many activities, challenges, and visions are happening in our larger church family. A significant event this year has been working with new Central Office Manager, Jackie Shihadeh, who is ground zero for organizing and shepherding the next annual convention as well as many other activities throughout our organizational life. Though the 2025 convention is the cumulative work of many people, the President also journeys with much of it. My work also involves considerable interaction with other employees of SCNA, too, including the Digital Communications Manager, Rudy Caseres, *The Messenger* former editor, Beki Greenwood, as well as leading the search committee for the next editor, and as an ex officio member of (without vote) on the Investment Committee, I also get to appreciate the work of our financial leaders, notably Jennifer Lindsay and Gina Peracchi, our Accounting Manager.

More towards the foreground some of the work of my joys and labors include: trying to explore larger denominational challenges in supporting our ministries and evolving new approaches of support; serving ex officio on the Board of Trustees of the Center for Swedenborgian Studies, where I served as Dean for 21 years and continuing the effort to reach new potential leaders for our church and to extend our voice and reach as a tradition by being a major player at one of the largest theological consortia in North America; and serving as chair again this year in the work of SAAR (Swedenborgians in Action Against Racism), where a committed group gets quite a bit done developing the contributions toward justice for marginalized communities in the name of the Swedenborgian Church of North America. The two most significant investments of my time this year have been with Wayfarers Chapel and the New York New Church Legacy Fund, which both deserve a little more comment here.

**Wayfarers Chapel:** Wayfarers Chapel is wholly owned and operated by the Swedenborgian Church of North America. Though there are regular attendees for Sunday services who have often formed strong relationships and a feeling of community, there is no legal congregation, and all powers for decisions are made by the board of trustees. As an ex officio member of the Wayfarers Chapel board holding the power of appointments to the board, Wayfarers is always a crucial commitment of the President's duties, but more so this past year due to the current crisis. We met monthly all this past year with some special meetings as well, and

the work has been rewarding as we turn crisis into opportunity by relocating and reconstructing Wayfarers 2.0 from original design and materials. My personal emphasis on the Wayfarers team is to make sure the ministry keeps going, and five of us have shaped a team called Exploring New Earth with Rev. Dr. David Brown's leadership. The ministry continues every Sunday in a hybrid format and with special commitments to messaging on the website and doing fundraising.

**The New York New Church Legacy Fund:** The president is an ex officio trustee of the newly legal New York New Church Legacy Fund that completed the legal dissolution of the former congregation and the legally established 501c3 in New York State, whose sole work is now supporting programs out of the significant endowment created from the sale of the prince of a property on Murray Hill to the country of Serbia for its new site as a Consulate in New York City. The transition work was expertly guided by Rev. Rich Tafel, and the new NYNCLF trustees team is led by Rev. Robert McCluskey with great skill. Considerable work has been done this year to kick off the significant gifts the new ministry will be able to support.

**Pastoral Ministry Comings and Goings and Significant Shifts:** As chair of the Advisory Placement Committee, I have been involved with several ministries undergoing leadership searches. Currently, there are four active searches for varying degrees of a pastoral position that include The Church on the Hill in downtown Boston, the Church of the Holy City in Edmonton, Canada, the New Church of the Southwest Desert in Silver City, NM, and the Swedenborg Chapel in Cambridge, MA. This work entails many communications and sometimes visits.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Rev. Dr. Jim Lawrence, President*

## VICE PRESIDENT

This is my fourth full reporting year in the position of Vice President. I continue try my best to contribute and be of use. Most of our church business is conducted in hybrid, meaning I have the option to attend either in-person or virtually. Aside from our annual Convention General Council meetings, I have elected to attend our business meetings primarily virtually on Zoom. Our new Central Office manager, Jackie Shihadeh, and accounting manager, Gina Peracchi, continue to do exceptional jobs running the duties of Central Office from their homes.

Here are the Vice President highlights of year 2024—2025:

- Chair of the Board of Mediation committee. Did not meet during this reporting period.

- Participated in monthly Swedenborgian Community Online (aka, Spiritual Sunshine) committee calls and continued as Chair of that committee. Other Spiritual Sunshine committee members are currently Rev. Cory Coberforward, Emily Tergliafera, Rudy Caseres, and William Rotella. Under the leadership and direction of Cory, Spiritual Sunshine has reached new spiritual seekers with engaging content on YouTube and the website, swedenborgiancommunity.org. Cory is producing great material, including weekly videos and monthly mediations. Spiritual Sunshine is using social media to reach out to denomination members and individuals around the world seeking to advance their spiritual journey.
- Attended monthly Executive Committee (ExCom) meetings, responded to emails and text messages, and addressed ExCom issues throughout the year to conduct the ongoing business of the General Council. It is a joy to work with President, Rev. Jim Lawrence, Secretary, Karen Conger, and Treasurer, Jennifer Lindsay. They are doing inspiring work for the denomination, and I am blessed to serve with them all.
- Attended all six General Council meetings (June/July 2024 pre- and post-Convention, August, November, and March) and presented VP reports along with other assigned duties.
- Chair of Central Office Committee. Involved in interviewing candidates and hiring our new Central Office manager, Jackie Shihadeh. Initiated monthly calls with Central Officer manager.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Kurt Fekete, Vice President*

## SECRETARY

Per the duties outlined in the Journal I have taken minutes at all meetings of the General Council and Executive Committee. I have sent correspondence to organizations and individuals on behalf of the General Council as directed, as well as working closely with the president to create and manage the agenda for the above meetings. We are in the process of planning for this year's hybrid convention meetings at Portland State University, which will include voting both for virtual attendees and those attending in person. In order to determine accurate delegate numbers, statistics have been collected and compiled from ministries, associations, and conferences throughout the denomination in North America. Later this year I will be assisting Operations Manager Jackie Shihadeh in compiling and editing the 2025 Journal, though she does the yeoman's effort. The move

to a virtual Central Office at the beginning of the COVID lockdowns continues to work very well, and Jackie is a top caliber Operations Manager who's a pleasure to work with. Gina Peracchi is another blessing to the denomination and represents another reason for me to be thankful for the team at the Central Office. The Executive Committee, made up of President Jim Lawrence, Vice President Kurt Fekete, and Treasurer Jennifer Lindsay, are wonderful friends and colleagues; they serve the denomination admirably.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Karen Conger, Recording Secretary*

## TREASURER

The Office of Treasurer is busy throughout the year with a variety of Zoom and in-person meetings, written reports, administrative duties, and strategic planning sessions. Gina Peracchi, Accounting Manager, and I work closely on a weekly basis to manage the checking and saving accounts, bookkeeping, payables, and other financial reporting. We also interact directly with the independent financial auditors who perform the annual financial review.

This past year witnessed a few unexpected financial changes related to various buildings and properties across our ministries. The New York Society established the New York New Church Legacy Fund with the proceeds from the sale of its church building in Manhattan. This fund is a gift to SCNA and will provide grants to our various ministries starting in early 2026. I look forward to seeing what new ministry ideas flourish with that beautiful legacy.

The National Church was sold in late 2024 and SCNA purchased a new building in early 2025 with part of those sale proceeds. SCNA is the legal owner of the new property, while the Society will utilize and maintain the property. It is envisioned that this space will be a gathering place similar to the Swedenborg House in London. General Council will have the opportunity to visit this property in DC during its regularly scheduled meeting in November 2025.

The St. Louis Society created a conservancy easement for the wooded part of its property. With this conservancy easement, the St. Louis Society will design and maintain a walking trail through the woods that honors Emanuel Swedenborg with various quotations along the way. As part of this conservancy easement, an Agency Fund was established by members of the St. Louis Society to provide ongoing financial support to the Society. SCNA will hold and manage this Agency Fund as we do for several other funds on behalf of various ministries.

The Wayfarers Chapel continues to be dismantled and in storage awaiting its future location to be secured for its reconstruction. The Wayfarers' Board is in regular contact with the local city and county officials to find a viable site for our beautiful glass church to stand for many years to come.

### **Financial Results**

The independent financial auditors will complete their professional review of the 2024 financial statements during July 2025. I will provide a verbal update at the Convention Session.

The Common Fund experienced a positive 12.1% return during 2024. Consequently, SCNA incurred a capital gain of \$2.6M on our combined restricted and unrestricted funds during 2024. This gain has held steady during the first quarter of 2025 as the markets have been even during the first three months of the year. Overall, the SCNA continues to be on firm financial footing.

### **Virtual Voting**

General Council is in support of maintaining the ability to vote virtually to enable as many delegates as possible to participate in the annual elections. Thus, the Office of Treasurer continues to manage the virtual voting process by interacting with the vendor Nemovote, creating the virtual ballots, and assisting delegates with accessing the Nemovote platform for voting purposes at the 2025 Convention.

### **Other**

Besides chairing the SCFA and Investment Committee (see separate SCFA and Investment Committee reports), I also serve as a member of the Building Fund Committee, a trustee for the Tafel Fund, and a trustee for the New York New Church Legacy Fund.

It is a privilege to serve General Convention as Treasurer and an honor to be entrusted with this responsibility. The regular Zoom meetings and email communications provide a strong connection with our far-flung community during those months between Convention Sessions and other in-person meetings. For this I am grateful. I look forward to seeing everyone again in person and virtually at the 2025 Convention Session in Portland, OR.

***Respectfully submitted,***

***Jennifer Lindsay, Treasurer***

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## GENERAL COUNCIL

Since the 2024 convention in East Lansing, MI, at Michigan State University, the General Council has met virtually or in a hybrid format a total of six times. During the virtual Spring 2025 General Council meeting the items of business undertaken included the continuing process of the New York New Church Legacy Fund, developments at Wayfarers Chapel, and the new Swedenborg House property in Washington, D.C. In her report treasurer Jennifer Lindsay advised the General Council that total assets increased from \$28M at the end of 2023 to \$48M at the end of 2024. This \$20M increase is primarily comprised of the positive investment return on the Common Fund, plus three unusual financial events having to do with the New York New Church Legacy Fund, the sale of the former National Church property in Washington, D.C., and The St. Louis Society conservancy agreement (see the Business Meeting Minutes of Convention 2025 for further information). Additionally, updates on the upcoming annual convention to be held in Portland, OR, at Portland State University have been received regularly from the Central Office.

A few of the many other items of business undertaken by the General Council during the past year have included various appointments of personnel to committees, and a COM proposal for new support structures which resulted in the appointment of an ad hoc committee to determine ways and means to more fully support our clergy in their day to day duties.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Karen Conger, Recording Secretary*

## COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

On the 27th of July, the Rev. Rich Tafel called the meeting to order shortly after 9:00 PDT at the University Place Hotel and Conference Center in Portland, Oregon. There were 28 ministers, six Licensed Pastors, four CAM candidates, and a few other guests.

After dispensing with the normal business of minutes and the like, the chair reviewed the work of the Executive Committee throughout the year. The Misconduct Process for Clergy and Licensed Pastors was reviewed by an attorney and found to be very good. In examining the issues, we believe a simple addition of an initial gathering of both the Committee on Inquiry and the Misconduct Determination Board would insure both training and clear communication. The establishment of the Chaplain Committee, which serves as an oversight and re-

source group for our chaplains. Because of this, the Church has regained its ability to endorse chaplains to military and government agencies. The chair has been working with General Council to explore creative ways of supporting ministries throughout convention.

Rev. Baxter answered questions on the current process but then proceeded to talk about the value of prevention. We will be working on ethics videos and misconduct training to help us respond, should the need arise.

Of significant note, the Council took some time to brainstorm and examine the requirements for the denomination's ordination process. The Rev. Junchol Lee will be leading a group to examine our current handbook and process in the light of the cultural shifts, with comments collected in small group discussion.

This did not dampen the spirits of the Council as we received Visions of Ministry from both Ben Gunter and Paul Deming. In addition to theirs, we also received and approved of the plan of ministry of Lynn Chttick Thompson.

The Advisory Placement Committee informed the assembly that Rev. Alison Lane-Olsen has begun a pastorate in Bath, ME, which is on the heels of last year's pastoral shifts of Rev. Lauber to Fryeburg, ME, and Rev. Moore to Kitchener, ON, Canada.

The meeting recessed for a presentation on, "The Enneagram for Spiritual Leadership: Cultivating Self-Awareness and Pastoral Wisdom," which was facilitated by the Rev. Sara Nave Fisher from the Disciples of Christ.

Following which, ministers presented with Rev. Robert McCluskey giving an update on the New York Church Legacy Fund. Rev. Sage Cole presented some thoughts on the Helen Keller Collaboration and Rev. Dr. Gard Perry has designed a seven-session online course of study on the glorification experience of the historical Jesus. Rev. Ros Taylor presented about the content creator resources through the Swedenborgian Content Creator's network. She spoke about the need to have interaction and asked folks to do the likes needed by the end of the day. Rev. Ros Taylor also shared some thoughts on Deborah's Tree and Gathering Leaves, which will be held at Temenos this year.

The Council would also like to thank Jackie Shihadeh, Rudy Caseres, and all the support staff that made our meetings possible.

The Council elected The Rev. Junchol Lee as the Chair of CAM, The Rev. Julie Conoran to the Executive Committee of COM, The Rev. Dr. Jonathan Mitchell to continue on the Committee on Admission into the Ministry, The Rev. Lisa Solwold to the nominating Committee, and for the 2027 Convention Preacher, The Rev. Alison Moore.

**Motion:** After 38 years in the ordained ministry, the Rev. Kathleen Easton-Gilhooly entered the fullness of the spiritual world on September 9th, 2024. The Council of Ministers recommends to the Swedenborgian Church that their name be removed from the Roll of Ministers and added to the Roll of Former Ministers. The Convention voted the acceptance of the motion by standing in silence, and a declaration of “Well done, good and faithful Servant.”

**Motion:** After 44 years in the ordained ministry (11 with the General Convention), the Rev. Terry Schnarr entered into the fullness of the spiritual world on February 9, 2025. The Council of Ministers recommends to the Swedenborgian Church that their name be removed from the Roll of Ministers and added to the Roll of Former Ministers. The Convention voted the acceptance of the motion by standing in silence, and a declaration of “Well done, good and faithful Servant.”

**1. MOTION:** At her own request, based on the plan of ministry and by recommendation of the Committee on Admission to the Ministry, the Council of Ministers recommends to the General Convention that Lynn Chittick Thompson, who has received a Master of Divinity Degree and a certificate of Swedenborgian Studies, be ordained into the ministry of the General Convention and that this service of ordination be held at this session of the General Convention, her name after ordination to be placed on our Roll of Ministers.

*Respectfully Submitted,*

*Kevin Baxter, Secretary of the Council of Ministers*

## STANDING COMMITTEE FOR COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

The Standing Committee on Communication and Information met periodically throughout the year. We work with *the Messenger*; the Digital Communication Manager, and Central Office. To coordinate our efforts, Spiritual Seekers (*Our Daily Bread*) and Spiritual Sunshine are invited to the meeting. Bringing together all the denominational internet folks is invaluable.

The SCCI discussed the future of the messenger format. Beki Greenwood proposed a shift from a paper copy to a digital format for their publication. There would need to be a paper copy for archival purposes.

Working with Rudy Caseres, we looked at the denomination’s YouTube Channel and the other social media platforms and discussed possibilities beyond convention to drive traffic to the site. What are the emerging issues we should be examining? We also have been discussing the difficulties working with such vastly independent churches and associations. The lack of local expertise and program-

ming makes it difficult to use grass roots efforts for programming. In addition, how do we create a unified denominational presence in such diversity? Would it be possible to use times when people are gathered to generate content that can be edited and used throughout the year?

Talking with ODB, we explored issues surrounding needs for web unified technical, web coding skills. But this also raises into question whether or not multiple hosting sites are effective and efficient.

We also discussed looking at ways to help put denominational resources like music and other things onto the website. We have a variety of resources that have been compiled over the years and exist in a paper format. Questions about copyright and access to the files would need to be explored. The first step is to at least create places where we can link to other people who have put valuable resources online.

The goal before is to distill some of the topics and ideas down into achievable goals for the next convention.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Rev. Kevin Baxter, Chair*

## ***THE MESSENGER***

*The Messenger* is an official publication of the Swedenborgian Church of North America (typically ten issues, including combined January/February and July/August issues), and had a good year of supporting and serving its readers. *The Messenger* publishes information that the Church wishes to communicate to the membership, such as church membership statistics, reports from meetings of the General Council and the Board of Trustees of the Center for Swedenborgian Studies, nomination information, news about ministries of the church, updates from committees, and information about the upcoming Annual Convention. In addition to news articles and announcements, *The Messenger* published articles on theology; Swedenborg and Swedenborgian related issues; articles by and about churches, church members, clergy, and other ministries; and personal reflections from members and clergy. We print 153 physical copies and email out almost 1500 copies each issue.

April 30, 2025 was the last day for Editor Beki Greenwood. After over five years, she had to give up this role for personal reasons. A search process for the new Editor is in progress at this time, and she looks forward to supporting the next editor. *The Messenger* would not be possible without the volunteer editorial support from a variety of people: Rev. Kevin Baxter, Polly Baxter, Jennifer Darcy,

Jason Greenwood, Robert Leith, Rev. Rachel Madjerac, Brittany Price, Jackie Shihadeh, Dr. Emily Tergliafera, & Trevor Woofenden, with special thanks to the Editorial Advisory Committee—Dr. Rebecca Esterson, Rev. Dr. Jim Lawrence, and Herb Ziegler.

*Respectfully submitted,*  
*Beki Greenwood, Editor*

## **OUR DAILY BREAD**

*Our Daily Bread* continues at [spiritualquesters.org](http://spiritualquesters.org) has had a positive year as we continue to provide a variety of sermons, articles, and original content. Our mission continues to be to provide Swedenborgian content with a “Convention-flavor” to both the general public and Swedenborgians alike.

Since the Fall of last year, we have had around 30,000 visits to our “Featured-Programming” page, continuing a steady trend of viewership, and representing a 34% increase within the past year.

Our most-visited pieces this past year have reached 4,100, 972, and 884 visits, respectively, with an increase of over 100% in our top-viewed piece. The average piece, be it a sermon, blog, or A/V content, receives between 500 and 1000 views. We currently have 908 followers on our Facebook page, who receive notifications of each new posting on their personal Facebook “wall.” We have found that our social media presence has been a great tool, in addition to our denomination and ministries’ other virtual outlets, of sharing about Convention-related programming and events that are happening around the country.

We have also been happy to see that our pieces informing people of our Annual Convention, as well as those sharing about previous Conventions, have been notably successful in terms of viewership.

As planned, we have set up an “archive” page on the website, containing a database of older digitalized pdf issues of ODB from the “in-print” days. Much to our delight, the archive has been visited a total of 1360 times since its recent installation, indicating the interest which exists in continuing to go back to older editions for insight, inspiration, research and nostalgia. We also have noticed that our pieces which have been posted within the last 10 years continue to be viewed and engaged with.

We have formed a deepened partnership with Rudy Caseres, who has been working with Rev. Thom in modernizing our creation of original content. We have begun work on a Swedenborgian video podcast in which we will discuss relevant topics in a casual setting, which will be posted regularly on YouTube and social

media. Rudy came up to El Cerrito from Los Angeles for a weekend to assist Rev. Thom with new tech possibilities, including the acquiring of professional recording equipment. We look forward to seeing how our new work will be received, and presenting this at next year's Convention.

We continue to gather input from people in the denomination about a future re-naming/re-branding of our ministry to carry a more unique and noticeable, possibly Swedenborg-explicit name.

We are quite happy with how this year has gone, and excited with what this year still has to offer in terms of new creative ways to continue to maintain and expand our mission.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Rev. Thom Muller, Managing Editor*

## **STANDING COMMITTEE FOR EDUCATION AND RESOURCES FOR SPIRITUAL COMMUNITY**

SCER met over zoom and worked by email this year to help plan the programming for Convention 2025 in Portland. Members gave input into the theme of Convention, "Spiritual Innovation for a Changing World," and on the choice of Convention speaker Rev. Rich Tafel. As a committee we focused the majority of our energy on developing 12 Mini Courses for Convention on a range of themes. Half of the Mini Courses were in person and half were hybrid, meeting the needs of both those attending in person and those attending online. We continue to be able to offer modest financial support to some presenters for the cost of attending Convention each year. The purpose of this funding is to supporting a diversity of voices and offerings at our annual meetings. The Convention Mini Courses were as follows:

- Created in the Image of God: Imago Dei and D.E.I. with Dr. Rebecca Esterson
- Spiritual Boundaries in Relationships with Rev. Alison Moore
- All is Within: The Internal Sense of the Writings with Rev. Thom Muller
- Building a Successful Hybrid Ministry with Rudy Caseres
- What are the Main Differences of the Swedenborgian Beliefs from Mainline Christianity, and Why? with Rev. Junchol Lee
- The Labyrinth as a Spiritual Praxis with Dr. Dylan Odhner
- Swedenborg, Alchemy, and Activism: Life of an American Philosopher-Soldier with Rev. Dr. Jim Lawrence and Michael Goos
- Glorification: An Overview with Rev. Dr. Gard Perry

- Tools for Healing the Pain of Polarization with Rev. Roslyn Taylor
- Paul: The Difficult Apostle with Dell J. Rose
- Meditation for Children with Sarah Wood Vallely
- Honoring Historic Sacred Spaces: Restoration and Evolution with Rev. Shada Sullivan

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Dr. Rebecca Esterson, Chair*

## **STANDING COMMITTEE FOR FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY**

In September 2024, the SCFA met in a hybrid manner with some of the members meeting in person at the Mercy Conference and Retreat Center in St. Louis, MO (Mercy Center) while other members participated virtually via Zoom.

During the September meeting the SCFA reviewed, discussed, and modified the initial draft 2025 General Convention budget and recommended that it be forwarded to General Council for approval; appointed itself to also serve as the Augmentation Fund Committee; and made granting decisions for applications related to the Augmentation Fund, Missions Fund (including New Directions grants), and Lungerich Fund.

The SCFA continued to utilize the following five priorities in its grant decision making and assessment that were confirmed during the November 2018 General Council meeting.

- Focus on the promotion of a General Convention based Swedenborgian perspective to the broader world and community.
- Impact on people and the potential for growth in the number of people served. Ability to attract people to participate in the ministry or project.
- Expressed commitment to the ministry or project, including buy-in from the local Swedenborgian religious leaders and donations of time and money from the local community.
- Effort toward becoming sustainable and self-funded with other sources of financial support.
- Accountability to the General Convention denomination including a willingness to accept and incorporate constructive feedback.

The Augmentation Fund Committee continues its expectation that any minister whose compensation is supported by an Augmentation Fund grant will attend both COM meetings and Convention during the year of the grant.

The SCFA received far greater requests for 2025 Missions grants than the fund was able to support with current year earnings. However, over the past several years, there were unexpended Missions funds due to reduced activities by ministries during the years impacted by the pandemic. Thus, the SCFA approved a one-time exception to grant an amount of 2025 Missions grants in excess of the fund's current year earnings. Fortunately, this will allow for a greater number of ministries to receive a Missions grant in 2025.

The ministries and projects supported through the SCFA grant decisions for calendar year 2025 are:

#### **Augmentation Fund**

- Fryeburg Church
- Garden Church (San Pedro)
- General Convention – Committee on Admission to the Ministry
- General Convention – Office of the President
- Hillside (El Cerrito)
- Kitchener
- St. Paul (automatic per donor requirement)
- Spiritual Sunshine (Online)
- Washington, DC
- Wayfarers Chapel
- Wilmington

#### **Missions Fund (Including New Directions Grants)**

- Deborah's Tree (Online)
- Garden Church (San Pedro)
- Helen Keller Center
- Rainbow Church (Online)
- St. Louis
- Southwest Desert (Silver City)
- Washington, DC
- Wayfarers Chapel
- Wilmington

#### **Iungerich Fund**

- Helen Keller Spiritual Life Collaborative
- St. Louis
- Sound, Scripture & Swedenborg (Rev. Catherine Lauber)
- Southwest Desert (Silver City)

- Spiritual Sunshine (Online)
- Swedenborg Foundation

Each Missions and Jungerich grant recipient is expected to submit both a mid-year and year-end report on the use of the grant and how it supported the ministry or project.

The SCFA found the Mercy Center to be a beautiful and hospitable facility that is also geographically convenient for those traveling from across the continent. It also provides an opportunity for the committee members to visit the St. Louis church.

After having met at the same Mercy Center for three consecutive years, the SCFA plans to meet at the Mercy Center in Burlingame near San Francisco during September 2025. This will provide an opportunity for the committee members to visit the San Francisco and Hillside churches.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Jennifer Lindsay, Chair*

## **CENTRAL OFFICE REVIEW COMMITTEE**

The Central Office Review Committee is chaired by the Vice President of the Swedenborgian Church. Both the Operations Manager and Accounting Manager continued to work out of their respective home offices throughout the entire reporting period. Central Office rents record storage space in the basement cage of the Swedenborgian Chapel in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Central Office also maintains a Post Office box in Cambridge. The Accounting Manager visits these two physical locations as needed to collect mail and conduct any on-site business. This has worked well, and it is anticipated that Central Office personnel will continue to work out of their home offices.

Personnel: Brittany Price resigned as Operations Manager in September 2024 when she relocated to New Zealand with her family. Brittany has been an exceptional Operations Manager, and we will miss her dearly. I was involved in the interview process for our new Operations Manager. In September 2024, Jackie Shihadeh was hired as Operations Manager. Jackie trained with Brittany for a portion of the month before Brittany departed. Jackie immediately stepped into her position with enthusiasm and vigor, and she has done an admirable job publishing the journal, organizing, scheduling, and attending numerous Zoom committee meetings, fielding questions, along with organizing her first hybrid in-person/virtual Convention. Jackie is running the business of Central Office smoothly

and capably, learning tasks quickly, and working to maintain and update the denomination website. Jackie is an active member on the Standing Committee for Communication and Information and attends Executive Committee and General Council meetings. Jackie is accommodating, flexible, friendly, and efficient. We are blessed to have her working with us. Welcome Jackie!

Accounting Manager, Gina Peracchi, continues her outstanding work. Gina conducts the business of both the Operations Manager and Accounting Manager whenever there are vacancies in the Operations Manager position. Gina is wonderful to work with and is extremely reliable and consistent. She works closely with the Treasurer on financial accounting, administers payroll efficiently, handles the distribution of payment and reimbursement quickly and accurately, and oversees projects skillfully. Gina is an incredible asset to the denomination, and I greatly enjoy working with her.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Kurt Fekete, Vice President*

## COMMITTEE ON AMENDMENTS

No meetings were held in 2025.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Rev. Kevin Baxter*

## COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY

No issues were referred to the Committee of Inquiry and no meetings were called as a result.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Stan Conger, Chair*

## COMMITTEE ON LIBRARY AND DOCUMENTS

We only met a couple times in 2024—2025. The Iron Mountain Records that were at Berkley were beginning to be sorted and also the ones at Springfield, Ohio.

In Ohio, about 50 of the boxes had their general contents identified. Due to two of the 3 people in Ohio working on the project dealing with their parents near end of life, we did not get much done.

Next year we will make some real progress.

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A reminder to please keep in touch with us and let us know before you decide to discard old church records or even Swedenborgian Books or memorabilia.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Sue Ditmire, Chair*

## **COMMITTEE MINISTRY DEVELOPMENT**

The Committee on Ministry Development held several conversations with ministers and ministers in training this year but will not mention names or ministries here. However, let this first report continue to send out the message that there is a new Committee on Ministry Development available for brainstorming, consultation, and dream weaving both for church programs or individual professional leaders.

*Respectfully Submitted,*

*Rev. Dr. Jim Lawrence, Chair*

## **INVESTMENT COMMITTEE**

At the end of both October 2024 and April 2025, the Investment Committee convened for its regularly scheduled semi-annual meetings. In addition, the Investment Committee held a special meeting in May 2025 to specifically discuss the possibility of adding Private Equity investments to the portfolio. All three of these meetings were held via Zoom. Our current investment advisor from Marquette Associates, Lauren Cellucci, joined the meetings to provide updates regarding the overall economic market, reports on the performance of the Common Fund portfolio, and recommendations on potential changes to investments in the Common Fund portfolio.

There are greater than 30 participants in the Common Fund that represent many of our churches, camps, and associations — as well as the General Convention, the Center for Swedenborgian Studies, the Wesley Gray Legacy Fund, and the New York New Church Legacy Fund.

As of December 31, 2024, the total value of the entire Common Fund was \$85.7M. Due to the combined value of all the Common Fund participant accounts, each participant pays an economically low annual investment management and advisory fee of 0.57% (57 basis points) of their respective account value.

Five years earlier, the total value of the entire Common Fund was \$49.7M and the annual investment management and advisory fee was 0.64% (64 basis points). Common Fund participants should be grateful for all the asset growth, additional

contributions, and new account participants that have occurred over the past five years. Because of the much higher total value of the entire Common Fund, each Common Fund participant benefits from an overall reduction in their annual fees of seven basis points.

The Common Fund earned a positive return net of fees of 12.1% for the calendar year 2024. During early 2025, the equity markets continued to maintain their value without significant losses or gains overall. The Common Fund earned a return net of fees of 0.0% during Q1 2025.

As of March 31, 2025, the Common Fund generated the following annualized returns net of fees (payout rate plus unit value increase):

- 5.9% over 1 year
- 5.2% over 3 years
- 7.6% over 7 years
- 7.3% over 10 years

The Investment Committee aims for the Common Fund to earn at least a 6% targeted annual rate of return on average which is provided to Participants in the form of the payout plus the increase in the value of the underlying units owned by the Participants. Due to the strategy of the Investment Committee to not provide Participants the entire rate of return in the form of the payout during bull market years, the Common Fund has proven able to withstand dips in the market while continuing to provide a reliable quarterly payout to all Participants.

During its October 2024 meeting, the Investment Committee voted to increase the 2025 quarterly payout rate by 3.65% from \$0.3425 per unit to \$0.355 per unit.

*Respectfully submitted,*  
*Jennifer Lindsay, Chair*

## **RETIREMENT COMMITTEE**

*No report submitted.*

## **SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE**

From May 2024 — May 2025 the Social Justice Committee has:

- Offered a Standing Resolution on Climate Justice at Convention 2024, which was accepted by majority vote of the delegates.

- Explored joint initiatives with the Helen Keller Spiritual Life Collaborative, beginning with a podcast series on Climate Justice, to be offered in April 2025.
- Created a dedicated Facebook page, sharing content and offerings intended to be of use to readers in pursuit of social justice.
- Initiated a biweekly online support group entitled Staying Grounded in Times of Political & Social Upheaval.

The SJC continues to meet monthly on the 2nd Tuesday of the month. We welcome new members! Please contact either co-chair to get involved.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Rev. Dr. Amanda Riley, Co-Chair*

*Rev. Shada Sullivan, Co-Chair*

## SWEDENBORGIANS IN ACTION AGAINST RACISM

Swedenborgians in Action Against Racism 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).

**Newsletter:** The SAAR newsletter continued to be published on an approximately triweekly schedule in 2024.

At Convention 2024, SAAR offered a Standing Resolution entitled *Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery and Statement of Support for Indigenous Peoples in Pursuit of Restitution and Reparations*, which was adopted by a majority vote.

For Convention 2024, SAAR offered two Mini Courses:

1) *Bound Together on Indigenous Land: Steps to Liberation and Regeneration: Presenting considerations and a starting outline for any organization or community to begin to pursue a course toward Indigenous land acknowledgement, covering purposes, intentions, commitment, engagement with local indigenous communities, statement drafting, public announcement and visibility, alliance, support, and activism.*

2) *Institutional Repentance and the Process of Repair: Exploring the process of repentance outlined by the twelfth-century Jewish philosopher Maimonides and comparing it to a similar process outlined by Swedenborg, as well as considering what a process of repentance looks like in an institutional context, and how actions toward repair can be taken.*

Throughout the year, SAAR has continued to support the research, writing, and editing of the book *Missional & Marginalized: Black Ministers in the Swedenborgians Convention* by Sue Ditmire.

We welcome new members! Please feel free to reach out to a member of our working group: Sue Ditmire, Andrew Dodd, Alex Gayheart, Jim Lawrence, Robert McCluskey, Page Morahan, Lea Park, Shada Sullivan.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*The Swedenborgians in Action Against Racism Leadership Team*

## **SPIRITUAL SUNSHINE: A SWEDENBORGIAN COMMUNITY ONLINE**

The purpose of Spiritual Sunshine is to create vibrant online spiritual content, connections, and outreach for people around the globe to explore, share, and deepen their faiths as well as connect them with the broader Swedenborgian Church of North America! We aim to create an open and welcoming online space for new spiritual seekers, introduce spirituality and facets of the Swedenborgian faith in an accessible way through powerful testimony, logical exploration, and life experience with it, and direct seekers to the wider church to encounter the true Swedenborgian Community Online (most of you). And this last year we feel like we've done just that!

We have continued to share our message in various places and have reached hundreds of thousands, including on YouTube and our website ([spiritualsunshine.org](http://spiritualsunshine.org)), where folks can find many of our other offerings. As people contact us, we not only provide pastoral space, but we also make a point to direct seekers to our denomination's wider online efforts as we see SpS as a gateway to this larger community.

Your support in the Spirit (and otherwise) has been very valuable! We believe that despite Swedenborgians limited numbers, our vast impact both through Swedenborg's teachings and our communities' hearts, heads, and hands has been quite outstanding! Keep up your great work and remember that the most impactful thing you can do is allow your infinite spiritual sunshine to shine.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Rev. Cory Coberforward, Minister*

## **STRUCTURE REVIEW COMMITTEE**

*No report submitted.*

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## YOUTH DIRECTOR

My twenty-third year as your Youth Director has been rewarding and exciting! I continue to work primarily with youth ages 10 – 18, however, I also organize the children’s program at Convention and assist with the young adult 18 – 30 year-old Transitions group. Transitions is growing, and I plan on doing more work with this group over the coming years. Our preteen program is called SPLATz (Super Powered Lovable Almost Teens). Our teen program is the SCYL (Swedenborgian Church Youth League). Growth of the SCYL programs has been steadily increasing, since Covid restrictions have lifted. We are now at a higher number of retreat and camp teens than pre-Covid. SPLATz has not recovered yet, but I remain optimistic with sight of some younger children at our summer camps. We are excited to be growing in teen numbers and spirit as we work to support the growing needs of youth today.

Here are the Youth Director highlights for 2024:

- May 2024 Memorial Day SCYL Almont Retreat – Theme: *The Universal Human*.
- Convention 2024 – Michigan State University, E. Lansing, MI. SCYL Worship theme: *Envisioning the Future of AI Bots in Our Church Community*.
- July 2024 Almont Summer Camp – 7th – 9th grade class. Camp theme: *The Book of Revelation*.
- August 2024 Fryeburg Summer Camp – Briefly visited youth at camp.
- October 2024 SCYL Cedar Hill Retreat – Theme: *Buried Treasure, Hidden Gems, and Heavenly Secrets*.
- December 2024 Almont Winter SCYL Retreat – Theme: *Heaven and Hell: Here and Now*.

I’m extremely grateful to all of you who generously give time and money to our denominational youth program. Without your support there would be no youth events. Our youth truly benefit from this spiritual and nurturing experience in their lives. I look forward to the coming year with much enthusiasm. We have an extremely busy year of retreats and camps including the 2025 International Youth Camp in England at Purley Chase Retreat Center. I am thrilled to be leading the youth in such spiritual splendor!

***Respectfully submitted,***

***Kurt Fekete, Youth Director***

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## YOUTH LEAGUE

The SCYL had many fun adventures over the past year. We started off strong with the Memorial Day retreat at Almont, where we discussed the Universal Human. We were especially passionate about deciding where we would live in the heavenly body and enjoyed activities like go-karting and mini-golfing. Not long after, we met up again for the 2024 Convention at Michigan State University in Lansing to prepare a nuanced worship service surrounding AI while having fun together. We all loved playing volleyball in the gym and even joined the adults for an excursion on a river boat. Some of us teens continued to attend the Fryeburg and Almont Summer Camps. As usual, I had a blast at both, and even made some new friends who have since joined the SCYL. The Fall Cedar Hill retreat was beautiful, and we were fond of walking down to the beach for sunsets. Finally, the SCYL wrapped up 2024 with the Winter retreat on Heaven and Hell: Here and Now at Almont. It is safe to say that all of us thoroughly enjoyed our time together and are eager to participate in next year's packed agenda. We have so many exciting events coming up, and I cannot wait to lead the SCYL through this last year as President.

*Respectfully Submitted,*

*Zsa Zsa Dolley, President, SCYL*

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE WAYFARERS CHAPEL

After a tumultuous 2024, in 2025 Wayfarers Chapel is working hard to enter into what we believe will be our phoenix church phase, as we enter into a new era we call "Wayfarers Chapel 2.0." As a reminder, 2023 was a banner financial year for the Chapel and we were readying for a top-to-bottom Chapel restoration. Then, in late 2023, land movement accelerated rapidly, causing us to close the Chapel in February 2024, and conduct a full disassembly of its parts and pieces in 2024, to save the Chapel from becoming a twisted, broken ruin. In hindsight, we are grateful we disassembled the structure promptly, because the land movement continued at a fast pace throughout 2024 (and much of this year), and the chapel would have been completely destroyed if we had not disassembled it in time.

We are pleased to share the good news that, from May through December 2024, all of the original Lloyd Wright buildings on the site were fully disassembled, leaving only concrete foundations and sidewalks (in turn, these too were later removed). To the degree possible, all Chapel materials were carefully la-

beled, cataloged and stored in a safe location. We even took time to laser-clean and prime the rusting steel fretwork that had held the Chapel's glass. Much of the original Palos Verdes Stone that had lined the Chapel's walls and tower was also carefully removed and placed on palettes, with a catalog and ID system that will allow us to place the stones in the exact same positions when we rebuild the Chapel walls. All work was executed by a caring team of historic preservation architects and contractors, under the leadership of Chapel President Peter Gottschalk.

We call our original site the "legacy site." We do not believe it will ever be prudent to rebuild on the legacy site due to its long history of land movement, which destroyed one Chapel building in the 1980s, and all the remainder in 2024. We are now working to secure a new site for rebuilding our campus.

We are pleased to share the news that our local city Rancho Palos Verdes (RPV) and we have identified a very promising site called Battery Barnes. It is only 1.5 miles from our heritage site. It is surplus Coast Guard land that RPV is actively working to arrange for the Federal Government to transfer ownership to RPV. If and when RPV secures ownership, they would work out a legal agreement whereby Wayfarers would rebuild on this site. The Battery Barnes property is about 3.9 acres in size, and has dramatic coastline views. The site is as good, or even better than our heritage site.

Our ministry efforts in 2025 continue unabated, in fact, we expanded them. Our minister Rev. Dr. David Brown continues to offer weekly Sunday services to our local attendees. These services are conducted at a facility provided to us for free by the St. Francis Episcopalian church in Palos Verdes. We are so grateful to that wonderful congregation for their support in our hour of need. In addition to these services, this year Rev. Brown added a new virtual ministry called Exploring New Earth.

We reformed our administrative staffing in 2025 to meet the needs of our Wayfarers 2.0 project. At the end of 2024, Rev. Dan Burchett retired, as long-planned. He served the Chapel in a variety of roles from 2000 through 2024. We owe eternal thanks to Dan for his leadership, devotion and good stewardship. Under his administrative management from 2018 through 2024, the Chapel built up a large savings account (for our planned restoration). These funds enabled us to disassemble the Chapel and continue our scaled-down operations so long as we are closed. At the beginning of 2025, Chapel board-member Robert Carr started as the new Administrative Director. He serves half-time, and as a non-paid volunteer. Early this year we hired Stephanie Cartozian as our half-time Communications & Fundraising Director. The two of them will jointly manage our fundraising and rebuilding efforts. Our fundraising campaign is named Rebuilding the Wright

Legacy, emphasizing the importance of the community coming together to rebuild our National Historic Landmark (our buildings are considered to be the masterpiece of Lloyd Wright Jr., who was the son of Frank Lloyd Wright).

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Robert Carr, Treasurer*

### **BOARD OF MEDIATION**

The Board of Mediation is chaired by the Vice President of Convention. The Board of Mediation did not meet during the past year.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Kurt Fekete, Chair*

### **TRUSTEES OF THE BUILDING FUND**

Convention's Building Fund Committee, composed of the Trustees of the Building Fund and with *ex officio* representation by Convention's President and Treasurer, reviews loan requests from churches and camps for building repairs, improvements, and purchases. The Committee also administers the Mary Baldwin Grant, announced in July 2024 and which offers financial support for costs related to building maintenance, repairs, and restoration for church properties deeded to Convention. The Committee conducts its business via email and meets by conference call as needed to deliberate and finalize decisions. The Committee's business during the past year included distribution of funds from the Mary Baldwin Grant to the Church of the Holy City in Wilmington, Delaware, and to Hillside in El Cerrito, California.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Mark Careaga, Chair*

### **TRUSTEES OF THE TAFEL FUND**

The Tafel fund was established by Rev. Dick and Linda Tafel to help ministries with unusual financial needs. It is a permanent fund restricted to the use of its income only. Funds are distributed on a reimbursement basis.

During the past year five grants were made: (1) to fund the production of a memorial edition reprint of *The Magic Key*, by Joyce Fekete for youth education on correspondences in the Bible and spiritual development for youth but also effective in adult education, as well. (2) Almont New Church Assembly to support

increasing the commissions of the teaching staff, in addition to providing means for those who may be experiencing financial hardship and would be unable to attend otherwise. (3) from President Rev. Dr. Jim Lawrence on behalf of the SCNA requesting funding support for the annual denominational convention in Portland, Oregon scheduled to meet June 26 – July 1, 2025. (4) the Swedenborgian Church Youth League to facilitate travel to Purley Chase Retreat Center in the UK for a gathering with other teens; if any funds are left, they would go to support teens wishing to attend upcoming SCYL retreats. (5) Fryeburg New Church Camp to fund upgrades to several bathrooms making them ADA compliant and in general more accessible.

The Board of Trustees meets three times a year to consider requests made before January 15th, May 15th, or September 15th.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Karen Conger, Trustee*

## **DELEGATES TO THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES**

The delegates this past year have been in addition to the President as Head of the Communion, also Alex Gayheart of the Illinois Association and Rev. Dr. David Fekete. Our primary activity this past year has been participating in the social justice work of the NCC and its collective voice to society on critical issues facing the country. This is the most publicly visible role of the National Council of Churches in society, which issues from the Joint Action and Advocacy Convening Table. The NCC has a long history of working on behalf of the marginalized and of being a prophetic voice for justice and peace, and these public announcements are carefully cultivated to address important current issues. Alex Gayheart has

taken the lead in helping our delegation respond to many requests for voice and participation.

*Respectfully Submitted,*

*Rev. Dr. Jim Lawrence, Acting Denominational Representative to the NCC  
Governing Board*

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**AUXILIARY AND RELATED BODIES****SWEDENBORGIAN CHURCH CHILDREN'S  
MINISTRIES**

*No report submitted.*

**TRUSTEES OF THE GRAY LEGACY**

The Gray Fund was established by the will of Wesley N. Gray, a Reading, Massachusetts roofing contractor, member of the Boston Society of the New Jerusalem, and dedicated supporter of the knowledge and works of Emanuel Swedenborg. His will, after provisions for his wife, extended family, and workers, left the remainder of his estate to a trust that would distribute funds according to his specifications and under the direction of three trustees. The original three trustees were named in the will with instructions that replacements would be selected by the trustees with the concurrence of the Massachusetts New Church Union and the General Convention of the New Jerusalem.

The key wording in the will (revised in 2005) follows:

“... the Standing Committee of the Massachusetts New Church Union, and the General Council of the General Convention of the New Jerusalem in the United States of America, to be held by said Board of Trustees for the following purposes, to wit: To keep safely invested and to pay over the net income after all expenses and the usual allowance for their services are paid, to such Church and missionary uses, preferably in Massachusetts first, then in the United States of America, and then in the whole world, as shall seem to them most deserving, and most useful toward the growth of the New Jerusalem Church . . . .[italics added]”

The Gray Fund assets are invested in the Common Fund, established by General Convention to invest, manage, and pay out investments by constituent and related entities of the General Convention. The trustees make available for grants the annual payout as determined annually by the Investment Committee of the General Convention, generally at or close to four per cent of funds invested. Given an expected return on investment of about seven per cent, averaged over ten years, this allows reinvestment of three percent of the increase in value, thus maintaining the viability of the fund into the future, assuming annual inflation to be close to three per cent over a ten-year period.

**Grant Procedures:**

- The trustees make a call for proposals for the next calendar year.

- Churches and organizations can make requests for the next calendar year only or for up to three years, renewable by application annually.
- Grantees must provide a report at the conclusion of the grant project.
- If funds remain to be granted for the following calendar year after awards are made, the Gray Fund will consider requests for funding on a rolling basis.

The Gray Fund deadline for 2026 requests is October 31. Please email your grant requests to the Gray Fund secretary, Rebecca Esterson, at [resterson@gtu.edu](mailto:resterson@gtu.edu) by this date.

The following is a list of grants for the year 2024-2025. These grants were made under the Trustees' interpretation of the will of Wesley N. Gray to fulfill programs and forms of ministry in Massachusetts, the United States, and the world.

#### **Grants 2024-2025**

- SCYL travel, over 3 years.....\$9,000
- Fryeburg New Church Assembly.....\$1,800
- Hele Keller Spiritual Life Collaborative.....\$900
- Center for Swedenborgian Studies.....\$4,000
- Fryeburg New Church Assembly, over three years.....\$15,000
- Helen Keller Spiritual Life Collaborative.....\$17,583
- Convention.....\$2,000
- Gathering Leaves.....\$4,000
- The Church of the Holy City, Wilmington.....\$4,972.50
- Church of the Open Word: Garden Chapel Sanctuary.....\$11,325
- San Francisco.....\$2,000

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Rebecca K. Esterson, Secretary*

## **DEBORAH'S TREE**

Deborah's Tree promotes the work of female Swedenborgian writers, scholars, clergy and artists. We have continued to reach out to our global Swedenborgian community, and a bit beyond. Every week we have added video and written content to our website ([deborahstree.org](http://deborahstree.org)) and social media, and we have held two hybrid retreats.

Our Spiritual Inspiration program consists of weekly short videos and weekly literary excerpts. Three female Ministers and one female Licensed Pastor create the videos, and two members of the Home Church in Bryn Athyn create the illustrated literary excerpts.

All of these are also posted on our social media: YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram. We have continued to see growth in traffic to our website, Instagram and especially our YouTube channel, and consistent numbers on Facebook.

Last fall we joined the newly created “Swedenborg Social Media Network” which has brought online Swedenborgian content creators together in a Facebook group. The group shares experience, recommendations and technical tips, and meets monthly in a Google hangout. Deborah’s Tree has benefitted in some specific ways from the network, such as the recommendation to use paid promotion of our content on YouTube rather than Facebook, for a wider reach to people who might be interested in learning about Swedenborg.

Our morning fall retreat was about “Healing the Pain of Polarization.” The topic for our half-day spring retreat was “Celebrating the Divine Feminine.” We have developed a fairly consistent community of people who attend both in-person and virtually.

The Home Church in Bryn Athyn has continued to invite the Deborah’s Tree community to their monthly hybrid Saturday Brunches, which feature a wide range of speakers, and time to commune together. The talks are recorded and posted on the Deborah’s Tree website and social media, and we have hired a part-time video editor to help us post our backlog of material.

Our weekly newsletter goes out to 134 subscribers, all of whom are affiliated with the global Swedenborgian community. They represent the Swedenborgian Church of North America, the General Church of the New Jerusalem, the Lord’s New Church, the New Church in Australasia, and the Philippine New Church.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Rev. Roslyn Taylor, President*

## **CENTER FOR SWEDENBORGIAN STUDIES (CSS)**

### **HIGHLIGHTS**

#### **LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES:**

We recently received a box of materials for our Helen Keller collection from Urbana University, via Rev. Sage Cole, much to our excitement. The box includes 4 original letters from Keller, which adds tremendously to our existing collection. We have hired a third person to our digital archives team, the new GTU student C.J. Swenson, who studies Swedenborg and Van Dusen. The team is finishing touches on the web interface, and we hope to have the archive go live this fall or winter.

**SWEDENBORG SOCIETY CONFERENCE:**

The Swedenborg Society in London is hosting a conference on Swedenborg in early November, with scholars from many countries in attendance. The conference title is “Retracing Swedenborg: Texts, Contexts, and Changing Perspectives.” We will have three CSS representatives giving papers, including myself, Devin, and our new student C.J.

**STUDENT JOURNEY HIGHLIGHTS:**

In addition to the new PhD student mentioned above, we have one new CAM approved student and two students who are applying for ordination candidacy and beginning MA programs. Three of our existing students are planning on ordinations over the next two summers and we will have one additional certificate graduate at this year’s convention. We also have two new LP students from the San Francisco Swedenborgian Church and the Portland New Church in Maine.

**FUNDS AND GRANT APPLICATIONS:**

The transfer of Convention’s Advanced Degree Fund, for “for SSR ordination-track students who are seeking advanced degrees” has been completed. We are currently using it to support our Nunc Licet fellowship and one clergy person who is enrolled in a DMin at PSR (Rev. James Barry). We have received an initial inquiry from one other clergy person. The fund continues to be managed by a committee consisting of the CSS Dean, the Chair of COM, and the President of the denomination.

We received the first annual installment from the Boston Church’s fund for the library of the New Church Theological School. At Convention Rev. Kevin Baxter gave us a check for \$40,000. This will be used to support our library staffing, and we expect to receive similar amounts every year going forward.

We submitted two grant proposals this fall, one from the Iungerich Fund to continue funding our digital archive project and one from the New York New Church Legacy Fund for “Recruiting Future Leadership for the Swedenborgian Church of North America.” The latter grant would allow us to continue developing scholarship and fellowship opportunities for our students. We await responses on both requests.

**CURRENT SWEDENBORGIAN STUDENTS**

In addition to online learners and GTU students who interface with the work of CSS through courses and advising, there are 4 Swedenborgian ministry students,

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2 Licensed Pastors in training, 4 Swedenborgian Studies Certificate student and 7 Licensed Pastors in our learning community, and 2 prospective students.

**Ordination Track (CAM Approved):**

**Tirah Keal**, Nunc Licet Fellow, United Lutheran Seminary, MDiv

**Paul Deming**, Nunc Licet Fellow Beginning Masters at Eden Theological Seminary near St. Louis

**Ben Gunter**, Nunc Licet Fellow, San Francisco Theological Seminary, MDiv

**Dell Rose**, Director of the Swedenborg Library in Chicago

**Prospective Students, Ordination Track (Not Yet CAM Approved)**

**Tassy Farwell**, Licensed Pastor at Hillside Community Church

**Aaron Kahlow**, studying interreligious chaplaincy, GTU

**Others earning Certificate in Swedenborgian Ministry Studies**

**Michael Goos**, MTS, Pacific School of Religion

**Robert Hagan**, Pastor in Ghana (is seeking affiliation with the SCNA)

**Tamara Hunter**, Special Education Teacher in Santa Fe

**William Shih**, Fellow at the Haas School of Business, UC Berkeley, from Taiwan

**Lara Wallace**, Kansas Artist

**Licensed Pastor Continuing Education:**

**Heather Garland** from, San Francisco Swedenborgian Church

**Circe Moss MacDonald**, Portland New Church, Maine

**Licensed Pastor Continuing Education: Connie McOsker** (Garden Church);

**Paul Deming** (St. Louis); **Linda Browning Callender** (Silver City); **Tassy Farwell** (Hillside); **Robbin Ferriman** (Urbana, OH); **Kelly Milne** (Bridgewater, MA); **Jae Hyon Chung** (Korean New Church, Irvine, CA)

**LICENSED PASTOR AND CLERGY CONTINUING ED COURSES**

- “Introduction to Swedenborgian Theology” with Rebecca Esterson
- “The Glorification as the Lived Experience of the Historical Jesus” with Gard Perry

**FALL 2025 COURSES**

- SWEDENBORG SEMINAR with Devin Zuber and Rebecca Esterson
- AUTOTHEORY, AUTOTHEOLOGY (HARRA-5050) with Devin Zuber
- SPECIAL READING COURSE: QUEER THEOLOGY THROUGH A SWEDENBORGIAN LENS with Devin Zuber

**SPRING 2026 PREVIEW**

- JANUARY TERM: CHURCH POLITY AND PRACTICE
- CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY THROUGH A SWEDENBORGIAN LENS with James Lawrence

- GREENING SWEDENBORG (HSRA-3783) with Devin Zuber

### **Library and Staff**

Library: **Ryan Justice** has been promoted to Assistant Librarian. Ryan is assisting Michael with cataloguing and circulation, and is overseeing the digital archives project. The bulk of his work at the moment is overseeing the work of those doing scanning and digital record creation, and coordinating with various parties to link the archive data with our website.

Library: **Michael Yockey** continues to work remotely. He is moving again, from Paradise CA, and will be working from a new remote location. He continues to sort church archive boxes, in addition to working with Ryan on the daily functioning of the library.

Administrative Assistant: **Dorothy Calimeris** continues to manage the office and coordinate communication. We rely heavily on her steady presence to keep things running smoothly.

Financial Manager: **Alan Thomsen** continues to work with CLA on our accounting and our audits, and to manage the day-to-day activities related to our finances. We continue to rely on his detailed knowledge of our funds and his good judgement on all manner of things.

Other Library Staff: We have two very part-time staff working on scanning documents for the digital archives project: **C.J. Swensen** (scanning the Van Dusen collection), and **Suze Eveland** (finishing the other collections, and scanning a new collection of historic church photographs).

### **FACULTY ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS**

In addition to attending conferences, giving lectures in various venues, and developing critical research for publication, our faculty continue to be active in the local churches. Devin Zuber served as the interim pastor of the San Francisco Swedenborgian Church this summer, where he also co-organized a symposium for the Church's 130th year anniversary, "Splendid Survivors: Architectural legacies of the Bay Area Tradition Today." Rebecca Esterson serves on the board at Hillside Community Church in San Francisco. Both offered workshops and attended the West Coast Swedenborgian Retreat with their families over Labor Day weekend.

Rebecca Esterson will be completing a unit of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) this spring at the Sutter Hospice in San Francisco. She will take the semes-

ter off from teaching and GTU committee work, and Jim Lawrence will fill in by offering a course to CSS students in the spring.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Dr. Rebecca Esterson, Dean*

*Tom Neuenfeldt, Chair*

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**CHURCH STATISTICS**

THE SWEDENBORGIAN CHURCH STATISTICS — AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2024

<u>Association</u>	<u>Churches</u>		<u>Ordained Ministers</u>		<u>Active Members</u>	<u>Number of Delegates</u>
	<u>Active</u>	<u>Inactive</u>	<u>Active</u>	<u>Active</u>		
Eastern Canada Conference	1	0	2		60	8
Illinois Association	5	0	2		59	8
Kansas Association	2	0	1		54	7
Maine Association	4	0	5		90	11
Massachusetts New Church Union	4	1	5		94	11
Michigan Association	1	0	3		53	7
Middle Atlantic Association	3	0	7		102	12
New York Association	2	0	1		18	4
Ohio Association	3	0	6		38	6
Pacific Coast Association*	6	0	21		195	22
Western Canada Conference	2	0	1		62	8
At Large	n/a	n/a	n/a		0	2
Unknown	n/a	n/a	19		2	n/a
<b>Totals</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>73</b>		<b>827</b>	<b>106</b>

\*Did not submit information for 2024, using 2023 information instead

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**REPORTS OF ASSOCIATIONS AND CHURCHES**
**EASTERN CANADA CONFERENCE**

*No report submitted.*

**CHURCH OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD**

*Kitchener, Ontario*

This year was a transitional year for Church of the Good Shepherd. In July our delegation to Convention returned with a renewed purpose. We interviewed Rev. Alison Moore for the position of Minister with our congregation and held a Candidating session with her, giving as many members as possible opportunity to meet her, share discussions with her and generally get acquainted or reacquainted (Rev. Moore interned with us.)

By September of 2024 we signed a contract with Rev. Moore and resumed normal church activities.

Over the months we were without a minister we stayed in a Swedenborgian mind set by sharing worship over Zoom with Fryeburg and the church in Royal Oak, Michigan. We are eternally grateful to the ministers and the boards of those churches for their support.

We continued to meet at the church building and shared the worship service on a large television we purchased for that purpose so we could keep in close contact with each other. If other churches would like to know more about that I would be happy to discuss it with you.

With strong leadership, we were back to looking for growth opportunities, as there is a future for our faith, if only people know about us!

During the summer months we replaced our heating boiler, had the roof repaired so we could now focus on congregation building rather than boiler and roof problems.

We also added another congregation to those using our building for Sunday worship — a Catholic congregation who holds worship in Urdu. We also share facilities with a very lively Nepali Pentecostal church.

We resumed our regular activities — Spiritual Expressions during the week, Book Club, Women's Lunches, Men's Group, Sunday School and started to branch out — our Men's Group is now a Pub Night that all genders are welcome to. That group also started holding Family Spaghetti Dinners regularly to promote stronger involvement.

In November we held our 15th annual Shepherd's Christmas Market.

We also hired a new Office and Rental Coordinator, Caitlin Newberry. She has given our web page a huge facelift. We also have a substack you can subscribe to that pulls together our in house publications and our Facebook and YouTube presence in one place. Please have a look and subscribe if you wish, there's no cost.

Christmas events started with the Installation Service for Rev. Alison Moore lead by Rev. Dr. Jim Lawrence. Then our regular Christmas events were held all through Advent culminating with our traditional Christmas Eve service.

Attendance continues to rise.

Early in January we faced a heartbreaking loss when Lyndsay Wilson, daughter of Deb Smith (Wilson) lost her battle with cancer. Lyndsay grew up in the church and had been a Sunday School teacher for several years.

In April one of the members of our founding family, Lynne Schneider, passed into spiritual life rather suddenly.

Our congregation remains strong and lively. We will be welcoming 6 new members in September.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Jean McDermott, Board Director*

## ILLINOIS ASSOCIATION

Our biennial meeting was held in Chicago at the Swedenborg Library on Saturday, April 26, 2025. Attending in-person were Paul Deming from the St. Louis Church of the Open Word with Dell Rose and Karen Feil of the Swedenborg Library Chicago. Participating via Zoom were Bud Phillips of the DesPlaines Society; Elizabeth Zeno and Gordon Meyer of the Virginia St. Church; Kei Pang of the St. Louis church; and Barb Halle of the LaPorte New Church.

Reports given by the various churches/societies. A concern raised was the rising costs of building insurance that the societies are experiencing, affecting both St. Paul and LaPorte.

Paul Deming reported that two acres of the St. Louis church property have been designated at a natural sanctuary for animals, and non-buildable in the future. The \$200,000 value of that land, owned by General Convention, was purchased from the denomination by St. Louis; the denomination then donated those funds to a St. Louis-designated Common Fund account.

Bud Phillips reported that Des Plaines has made donations to local charities in the DesPlaines Society's name.

The Association's income is allocated to the St. Louis, LaPorte, and St. Paul churches at the present time, and the Association has operated at a slight deficit due to the total allocations requested. We are working on revised investments to eliminate the need for deficit spending.

Officers elected for the next two years:

- President Paul Deming, St. Louis
- Vice President Dell Rose, Chicago
- Treasurer Karen Feil, Chicago
- Secretary Elizabeth Zeno, St. Paul

Barbara Halle was thanked for her years of service as treasurer to the Illinois Association.

Following the meeting, Dr. Vadim Putzu presented a program on "The Missouri Platonist—Thomas Moore Johnson in the Swedenborg Library.

*Respectfully submitted,*  
*Karen Feil, Treasurer*

**CHICAGO SOCIETY OF THE NEW JERUSALEM/THE  
SWEDENBORG LIBRARY AND SPIRITUAL GROWTH CENTER**

*Chicago, Illinois*

The Library was open to the public for 106 days during 2024, with visitors on 58 of those days, including a young American descendent of the Swedburg family, travelling via train across the U.S. We had visitors to the Library from as far as Mexico and South Africa.

In addition to our regular Wednesday and Friday afternoon hours, the Library hosted a prayer service and nine Zoom programs during the year. We also hosted Rev. Sage Cole's "New Jerusalem" study program in the Library early in the year, with Karen Feil participating as a panelist in two of the programs.

In June, Dell Rose contracted with the Library to perform the services of Program Director, contributing nine programs over the latter half of the year, both personally, and drawing upon notable contacts. Dell represented us at the 2024

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Convention of the Swedenborgian Church of North America, and presented a Mini Course there.

Library member and artist Victoria Martin presented two art workshops in the Library based on Swedenborg's correspondences of numbers and colors to her cohort of artist friends.

As outreach, in July, we hosted Dell's colleague Dr. Per Faxneld of Sweden who was briefly in Chicago on his way to a conference in Kalamazoo, for a presentation on Hilma af Klint, one of the earliest creators of abstract art, at the Swedish-American Museum in Chicago. The hastily assembled event drew about 40 people from the Andersonville neighborhood, and including program directors from other cultural institutions such as the Chicago History Museum. We were pleased to develop a relationship with the Swedish American Museum, and several of us attended their annual fund-raising dinner.

Chicago history teacher Eric Heim assisted director Karen Feil over the summer months in sorting through generations of Western New Church Union publishing and the archives of the Chicago Society of the New Jerusalem.

We are presently mid-stream in our 2025 series of in-person and Zoom programs. The first edition of a scholarly journal on Swedenborgian topics, edited by Dell Rose will be released in the May 2025.

Pastor Karen Feil stepped in as Acting President of the Illinois Association at Rev. Kit Billings' request in 2024.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Karen Feil, Licensed Pastor/Director, Swedenborg Library*

## **LENOX TOWNSHIP CHURCH OF THE NEW JERUSALEM**

*Norway, Iowa*

### **Introduction**

Greetings to all members of the Swedenborgian Church. As we reflect on the past year, we are filled with gratitude for the many blessings as a community we have the opportunity to care for this church building.

### **1. Spiritual Growth and Worship**

This year, we have continued to foster spiritual growth through our regular worship service, happening in the middle of August every year. Our service has seen an average attendance of 90+ people. We had a small Christmas gathering in December with musical guests and the reading of some scripture.

## **2. Looking Ahead**

As we move forward into the next year, we are excited about the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead. We plan to have our annual worship service in August, and continue to offer the historical significance and stories to our members, and community members.

## **3. Construction Improvements**

We have done a lot of work over the past 5 years on the building itself, new roof, siding, windows, fix foundation issues, and we have started repainting the inside. We have the addition of new signs for the church, one located on the church building, and one located near the entrance, all through memorial donations. There is always maintenance done on the church through the landscape and cleaning.

## **Conclusion**

We are grateful to get to care for this historic church that was a light in many eyes for many years and continue the stories that were told. We have had some changes in the leadership for the Church for the next generation to care for the church for the future. Please address any changes that need to happen.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Jordan Uthoff, President*

## **LAPORTE NEW CHURCH**

*LaPorte, Indiana*

Sunday Service Schedule: 1st & 2nd Sundays are contemporary services; 3rd Sundays are traditional services with communion open to all; 4th & 5th Sundays are informal Coffee Talks.

Our in-person church attendance has been decreasing but with the virtual option, overall attendance and offerings have remained fairly steady. Although a young adult confirmation class series was held during spring and summer, there were no confirmands for this reporting period.

We are very happy that after many years with no young children, we were able to resume our Sunday School (6 children so far) and childcare, on a monthly basis early this year. We thank Dawn Fox as our talented and dedicated teacher. We have the joy of welcoming back a young woman who as a child in the 1980-90's was in our church's Sunday School and Youth League. She now has two young

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sons in Sunday School. All the children have added new light and energy to our group.

Also earlier this year, we began to hold lay-led 4th Sunday Coffee Talks around the table in the Fellowship Hall instead of a formal worship service in the sanctuary. Leaders choose their own topics and their own style, opening the door for often casual, sometimes deep and personal discussions, shared thoughts and insights. These are all well-received and attendance is always as good as other Sundays. They are often also offered virtually. The two contemporary sanctuary services include time following the pastor's message for comments and discussion from both those in the pews and virtually. We often have monthly sermon themes, with the topic and a question or two emailed by Rev. Kit before the service. Anyone may reply to him with the option that their thoughts may be shared during his Sunday message.

We have quarterly Family Nights in the Fellowship Hall, open to everyone, with dinner and a fun craft; a purely social time with friends. Often there is an online book group happening. We will host the Midwest Peer Supervision Retreat in May.

Our small group does its best with community outreach. Rev. Kit offers a monthly worship service at a nursing home. We hold about six Rummage Sales a year at Manna House, which benefits everyone in various ways, including our environment. In addition, we now donate 10% of the sales proceeds to a local charity. Rev. Kit offers Adult Grief Support Groups twice monthly at Manna House, with sporadic attendance. We participated in the local Faith & Community United prayer breakfast at the Civic Auditorium honoring the work and ministry of Fred Rogers. We are currently connecting with a local nursing home to offer a few hours of monthly volunteer services.

The huge highway reconstruction project in front of the church has now begun and will take about 18 months, with work done on sidewalks, utilities, and landscaping. We don't know just how this will affect church events during weekdays but weekends should be quiet. Hopefully.

While we are all getting a bit older and a bit more tired, we continue to do our best to support the wonderfully uplifting life our ministry offers and supports. We understand that we must stay on top of publicity and social media and are grateful that doing so remains within our financial means. We continue to hope that our efforts will reach more people inspired by this faith of ours.

*Respectfully submitted,*  
*LPNC Executive Board*

**VIRGINIA STREET SWEDENBORGIAN CHURCH***St. Paul, Minnesota*

Our core weekly church functions enjoyed consistent attendance in-person as well as online. We invested resources in enhancing the experience of online worship participants. In addition to Sunday worship, the congregation learned much about Swedenborgian ideas in weekly Bible study, Arcana study (reading *Secrets of Heaven*), and an Introduction to Swedenborg class.

Other events included a church retreat which generated a number of ideas on how build our community and be of service to the neighbors around us. In September, we held a special worship service and luncheon to honor the amazing music provided by Sylvia Lange over 7 decades of faithful service. Last summer we tried a new type of event weekly watching a Swedenborg Foundation *Off The Left Eye* video together then sharing our thoughts and responses. We found it to be a wonderful way to explore Swedenborgian concepts and get to know each other. The church once again hosted the St. Paul Art Crawl in October and May with artists and musicians from the congregation and neighborhood. Each event attracts 200-300 people. On Christmas Eve we presented a pageant for the community. This year, Rev. Hoffman began the event by describing some correspondences of the Christmas story and how they relate to our own spiritual development.

In the past year we welcomed three new members and had a memorial for one member who passed into the spiritual world.

On a more practical level, we dealt with a squirrel in the attic, a failing water heater, and preventing ice dams. One big concern for us is securing property insurance for our very old building. Our previous insurance provider did not renew our policy. Thanks to Gordon Meyer's heroic effort, we located a broker working with a company willing to provide coverage, but the cost was more than triple what we had budgeted. We are quite concerned about what will happen when it is time to renew.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Liz Zeno, President*

*Carla Abler-Erickson, Treasurer*

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**CHURCH OF THE OPEN WORD***St. Louis, Missouri*

The Garden Chapel Sanctuary (GCS) continued to offer Sunday morning services both in-person at the chapel and online, led by Pastor Paul Deming. Services were held every Sunday except for two instances when inclement weather prevented gathering. Music during services was provided by Gigi Darr (piano & keyboard), Parker Seely (bass guitar), Jacqueline Blanc (pipe organ via Zoom) and Pastor Paul (guitar and vocals), with occasional guest performances—including an appearance by Ralph Butler, one of St. Louis’ premier musicians and entertainers. Audio and video production was supported by volunteers or pre-configured by Pastor Paul. Throughout the year, we welcomed several visitors, including guests from a sister church in Michigan and Pastor Paul’s fellow seminarians from England. Online attendance continued to grow, drawing members and guests from across the U.S.—including Arkansas, Michigan, Kansas, and Illinois—as well as internationally from France and Switzerland. Approximately 10 wedding ceremonies were officiated by Pastor Paul and Suzy Deming during this period.

**Special Events and Community Engagement**

We proudly maintained our tradition of hosting the annual Beatlefest on the first Sunday in October, with performances from several of St. Louis’ top musicians. Our annual Eve of Christmas Eve concert brought together vocalists from area churches and choirs and included a special reception for performers during rehearsals. Both events were well attended and drew participants from the surrounding neighborhood as well as from our wider GCS community. The chapel also hosted multiple community gatherings, including meetings for Dignity Period, a charitable non-profit organization, and a local Gurdjieff study group. Pastor Paul continued to offer weekly guitar lessons to students of all ages at the chapel.

**Conservation Milestone**

A significant highlight this year was the successful launch of our Conservation Easement Project in partnership with Open Space STL. This agreement ensures the permanent protection of approximately two acres of woodland on the church grounds, preserving the area for contemplative use and ecological health. This initiative was made possible by the support of our General Council (GC) and a generous \$200,000 donation from a private family trust, establishing an endowment for the ongoing stewardship of the sanctuary. Plans are underway to develop the Emanuel Swedenborg Nature Trail, featuring interpretive signage with spiritual correspondences and messages from Swedenborg’s writings. Pastor Paul and Kei Pang traveled to Philadelphia last fall to learn sustainable trail-building tech-

niques from Rev. Kent Rogers. Their visit included a walk along the “Spiritual Trail” on the Lord’s New Church property—formerly the estate of the late Rev. Theodore Pitcairn—and nearby Pennypack Ecological Restoration Trust. They also visited the Temenos Retreat Center, located on 57 wooded acres in Chester County, Pennsylvania. Pastor Paul was additionally honored to speak as a guest of Rev. Shada Sullivan at the Church of the Holy City in Wilmington, Delaware.

### **Financial Overview & Planning**

The board met regularly on the first or second Sunday of each month. GCS has remained financially solvent through the generous support of the Illinois Association, board members, and congregational giving. However, a tripling in property insurance premiums is projected to result in a deficit in 2025. We have requested financial support from the General Convention, as the property is under its ownership. Looking ahead, we have begun the process of redefining our mission, values, and purpose with the aim of expanding our outreach to the local community and aligning more closely with non-profit organizations focused on environmental stewardship and social justice.

### **Current Officers & Board Members**

- **Pastor:** Paul Deming | paul.deming@icloud.com | (314) 803-6519
- **Wedding Coordinator:** Suzy Deming | suzy.h728@yahoo.com | (314) 732-7660
- **Board President:** Deborah O’Reilly | deboreilly@yahoo.com | (314) 575-5549
- **Treasurer:** Duane Beougher | dvbeougher@yahoo.com | (314) 749-1076
- **Acting Secretary:** Kei Pang | keipang88@gmail.com | (605) 515-1915
- **Board Members:** Michael Holper | mjholper65@gmail.com & Graziella Chabanel | gchabanel@gmail.com

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Kei Pang, Secretary*

## KANSAS ASSOCIATION

The Kansas Association met in Pawnee Rock, Kansas, on Sunday, May 4, 2025. The morning worship service was led by Rev. Jane Siebert. The service became even more special with the baptisms of Connor and Brantley Spreier. Afterwards, a delicious dinner along with much good visiting was enjoyed.

The President of the Association, Carl Helm, opened the meeting at 1:30 p.m. The minutes of the 2024 annual meeting and the treasurer’s report were read and approved.

Reports for the past year from both Pretty Prairie and Pawnee Rock were given. Both Societies have remained active in both their church life and within their respective communities. Sunday school and morning worship services have continued except for several bad weather times. In November, members of both churches gathered at the home of Toni Stimatze for a joint service led by Rev. Billie Blair. A short business meeting was held at this time to elect a new treasurer, Roy Prescott. Long time treasurer Linda Kraus made the decision to retire. December brought about the Christmas decorating of our churches and focusing on the Advent Season. Members of both churches gathered at Carl and Connie's home for a wonderful party of great food and a gift exchange. Lovely and memorable Christmas Eve services were celebrated in both churches. Meaningful Easter services were held in April. Though we are a small group, there is much love and commitment.

A time was made for September 2025 to once again come together at Toni Stimatze's house.

Elections were held for the slate of officers as well as two trustees. There was no further business to discuss and the meeting was brought to an end

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Veneta Lane, Secretary*

## **CHURCH OF THE NEW JERUSALEM**

### *Pawnee Rock, Kansas*

June, July, and August and the first Sunday in September we only had Sunday School. In Sunday School we used the Dole Notes and also used some of the Youtube material from off the left eye. For the rest of the year we held Church Services and Sunday School almost every Sunday with these Services being led by Connie Helm, Tricia Prescott and Roy Prescott.

On February 4, we held the annual meeting for our Church. Our Church service was led by Connie Helm, following the service we enjoyed a potluck dinner, after which we had the business meeting and election of officers.

On Sunday March 31, 2024 we participated in the Sunrise Service "The Way of the Cross" in the community Easter service. Being the only church still holding regular services, our Church has the leadership for this service and without our church the service would not happen. Thank all those that helped and participated in the program. Roy and Tricia Prescott are coordinators.

Last year's Kansas Association meeting was held April 28, 2024 in Pretty Prairie, Kansas, Rev. Jane Seibert led the service and Carl Helm led the meeting.

Elections were held and results were : President Carl Helm, Vice President Howard Bowman, Secretary Veneta Lane, Treasurer Linda Kraus and Trustees Joan McDonald, Connie Helm, Megan Alexander.

On November 17, members of both Kansas Churches met at the home of Toni Stimatz for a Service led by Rev. Billie. In our business meeting Roy Prescott was elected Kansas Association Treasurer to replace long time treasurer Linda Kraus. We then enjoyed a great lunch. A big thanks to Toni.

In the business meetings, after our regular church services we donated to the hurricane victims and the Giving Tree at Larned High School.

On November 24, 2024 we enjoyed a great potluck lunch while we decorated our Church for Christmas. We had a lot of helping hands.

Connie hosted the Christmas luncheon December 11 at our home for both Kansas Churches members and past members. We had good food, a fun gift exchange, and a great time.

On December 22, during our Sunday School time we sacked 75 sacks of candy, nuts and fruit to be handed out at the Christmas Eve Program.

On December 24, at 5:00 PM we had a beautiful Christmas Eve Program. It was directed by Tricia Prescott and Anita Wilson. We had over 100 people in our church. It was nice to have a large crowd. We rewarded people that participated in the program with a \$5 gift card. We also passed out candy sacks and fruit to all in attendance.

I want to thank all the members of the Church. Being a small church I think we all seem to come together and everyone helps where needed. I'd like to thank, Tricia Prescott, Roy Prescott, and Connie Helm for partnering to do the services and Vivian Bright plays the Piano or organ when Karen is gone. Karen Hadley for her beautiful organ music. Howard Bowman for being the Treasurer. I also would like to thank Howard, Tricia, and Anita for all the work we do mowing and trimming at the Church and the Rock, and trash removal on the Rock. Thanks to Anita Wilson for keeping the inside of the church looking beautiful, and for taking care of the flower bed outside. Thanks also to Anita for being the Secretary of the Board. Thanks to Tricia Prescott and Anita Wilson for directing the Christmas Eve program. Also want to thank Chris Long and Megan Alexander for being the readers and all others on stage and those that sacked candy and fruit. It was a beautiful program. I want to thank Jennie Wilson for being organist for the Christmas program. I would also like to thank my wife Connie who helps with a lot of extra things that need doing for the church. I appreciate her doing the newsletter.

The church donated to the Barton County food bank, student Christmas gifts from the giving tree (at Larned), and a Larned after-prom party. During our an-

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nual meeting we review the funding of the scholarships in the name of the Frank, Viola, Milton and Wilford Unruh family and the other gifts are given in the name of the Frank and Luelma Hejny family.

Photos of our activities can be found on the church facebook page.

This completes the 136<sup>th</sup> year of our church. I sincerely hope God will bless this church with many more years to come.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Carl Helm, President*

## **NEW JERUSALEM CHURCH**

*Pretty Prairie, Kansas*

*No report submitted.*

## **MAINE ASSOCIATION**

*No report submitted.*

## **BATH NEW CHURCH**

*Bath, Maine*

After serving our congregation for nine years, the Rev. Dr. Reuben P. Bell stepped down as our minister August 2024. Following this, our Pastoral Search Committee placed a call for a minister in *the Messenger*. By early 2025, three candidates responded.

In the meantime, the Rev. Alison Lane-Olsen began serving as our interim minister in early October. She provides meaningful and thoughtful spiritual guidance for all who worship with us.

On June 15, at our Annual Spring Meeting, the Pastoral Search Committee recommended Rev. Alison be asked if she would consider being the congregation's regular minister. The congregation voted to do this, and Rev. Alison accepted our invitation.

We are fortunate to have the musically gifted Louine Gagnon continue as our organist and pianist. She brings to every Sunday service an array of wonderful, uplifting music. This spring, Louine introduced three hymns of her own composition, which she sang at the piano, as part of a Sunday service.

We had a successful Community Christmas Caroling event last December. Also, for the second year and to mark the season, the church had its 40- foot spruce tree adorned with colorful outdoor lights.

Our weekly services continue to be recorded live, helping to reach out to those unable to attend in person.

*Respectfully Submitted,  
Rob Lawson, President*

## FRYEBURG NEW CHURCH

*Fryeburg, Maine*

In 2024, for the first time, we partnered with other area non-profits to staff our Fryeburg Fair food booth, which is by far our single largest fundraiser every year. They helped with our staffing needs, increasing our visibility within the greater Mt. Washington Valley area, and earned some funds for their own organizations. Typically, we sell any leftover food to our members, but last year, we donated many pounds of hot dogs, hamburger meat, eggs, etc. to the food pantry at the North Fryeburg Community Church, unknowingly on a day when its grocery store donations did not include meat. “Divine Providence” indeed.

In January of this year, we launched the first of our “community worship meetings,” which are held informally every other month downstairs in the church’s Fellowship Hall. The meetings feature guest speakers and are publicized to the local community from which several people have been introduced to our congregation.

We continue to make our space to available community groups, as well as regular Saturday Tai Chi practice, twice-monthly Games Night to another Fryeburg non-profit, and we host musical concerts throughout the year in our sanctuary.

Rev. Catherine has helped grow the Fryeburg New Church’s visibility significantly within the greater Fryeburg community through a Tuesday morning coffee group, her participation in the Clery of the Eastern Slopes’ group and community events, and her pastoral care sessions.

Under her leadership, our reputation as a welcoming church family has grown and strengthened.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Susan W. Logan, Chair*

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**FRYEBURG NEW CHURCH ASSEMBLY***Fryeburg, Maine*

The Fryeburg New Church Assembly ([www.fryeburg.org](http://www.fryeburg.org)) will hold its annual summer session this year from July 26 – August 10. Our first week theme this year is “God’s Promises in the Bible” and second week “Practicing Heaven: How Can We Live Heaven Now?” We are excited to be welcoming Rev. Chuck Blair, pastor of NewChurchLive, as this year’s Rev. Everett K. Bray Visiting Lecturer, who will be joining us for both weeks of camp this year. We are continuing to offer our Opening Weekend Program, this year Rev. Sage Cole with Rev. Susannah Currie will present “Be Love, Be Honest, Be Useful,” exploring these primary aspects of the Divine. We will be offering our religious programming to anyone with our hybrid lectures. All are welcome to participate. The Twelfth Annual Dole Three Miler Road Race ([www.dole3miler.com](http://www.dole3miler.com)) will be held on Saturday, August 9, 2025. This event continues to be one of our biggest fundraisers and anyone may attend (walking or running) either in-person or may complete a virtual race. The Buildings and Grounds Committee has another long list of projects to complete this season. A tree fell down last October causing damage to two of our cabins and they were sealed up for the winter. Repairs will continue now that winter is behind us and be completed this summer. We are also updating our main restroom to be fully ADA compliant and making changes to the two main floor bedrooms that have half baths to better serve our campers with mobility restrictions. Thank you to the Tafel Fund for supporting this endeavor.

The FNCA Board of Directors continues to prioritize our kids and teens by offering financial assistance to teens who want to attend the FNCA traveling from a distance or to FNCA youth who wish to attend other Swedenborgian events and camps. Another thank you to the Gray Fund for supporting the future of our church in these kids. We are looking forward to the 2025 season and welcome all to join us!

*Respectfully Submitted,*

*Rebekah Greenwood, FNCA Secretary*

**PORTLAND NEW CHURCH***Portland, Maine*

The Portland New Church proposed numerous changes in May of 2025 including acceptance of our Licensed Pastor Lorraine Kardash's decision to retire at the end of the Summer 2025. We also approved a name change: from The Portland New Church Interfaith Community to The Portland New Church Center for Sacred Arts. This name change reflects both our Swedenborgian roots and our commitment to diverse, creative, inter-spiritual, and earth-honoring community life.

**Leadership & Transition**

We deeply appreciate Pastor Lorraine Kardash whose many years of service, integrity and care she poured into this community will be felt long after her retirement. Our Council is led by Anne Gresinger (President); Nanci Adair (Secretary); Lorraine Kardash (Treasurer); alongside dedicated lay leaders who support building operations, programming, and community outreach. Anne Gresinger is also our fantastic Building Use Coordinator; it's a big job she does with grace and presence, and she's also our website administrator.

**Identity & Mission**

As an historic Swedenborgian congregation founded in 1831 and housed in a 1908 sanctuary on Stevens Avenue in Portland, Maine, our community is grounded in the Swedenborgian emphasis on inner light, divine love, and service to the common good. We continue to be a vibrant gathering place for all ages and walks of life. Our plan to broaden the name PNC Center for Sacred Arts reflects our evolving commitment to support spiritual expression through creative exploration.

**Offerings & Programming**

Over the past year, we have:

- Hosted monthly Cosmic Mass Interspiritual services drawing on Creation Spirituality, hosted by Ritual Lab.
- Held monthly Second Sunday Swedenborgian-based services.
- Offered monthly Third Sunday Recovery Services to the community, led by Interfaith Chaplain Harvard MacFarlane.
- Offered monthly Art Creation Fourth Sunday Services.
- Supported 'Visiting Ministers' in the Sunday Service lineup.
- Facilitated the Sacred Mask Sunday Workshop in May 2025.
- Labyrinth Walks were offered regularly, in our backyard Labyrinth.

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- The Chaplaincy Institute of Maine, an Interfaith Seminary, had an office and classroom in the bottom floor of the PNC. They used the Sanctuary on many occasions.

We are proud to support a diverse array of building users, each bringing their own unique offering to the space. This list is a list of the range of experiences that have taken place here from May 2024 —May 2025, offered by a community that continues to grow in both depth and diversity. I've left out personal names, since I don't have permission to use them here:

- Art Camp Children's After School Program
- Baby Showers
- BahavaVibe Rhythm Tribe Dance Events
- Bible Study
- Book Study
- Buddhist Meditation
- 'Call to Ancestral Healing'
- Chaplaincy Institute of Maine Weekend Workshops
- Chaplaincy Institute of Maine Alumni Gathering
- Children's Birthday Parties
- Christmas Eve Gathering
- Contra Dances
- Crystal Light Chakra Activation with Live Music and Singing
- Dance Performance Rehearsals
- Dance Practices
- Devadas Kirtan
- Death Café
- Divination Workshops
- Drumming Classes
- Gurdjieff Group
- Hana Dance
- 'Honoring Our Grief'
- Imaginal Practice
- ImprovAganza
- Interfaith Ministers of New England Fall Retreat
- Introduction to Watercolor
- Landscape Watercolor Painting
- Maine Holotropic Breathwork
- Maine Pagan and Alternative Spiritual Alliance Magical Workings Workshop
- Meditation and Reflection Classes

- Men's Group
- Megu Practice
- Mom's Group
- New Moon Ensemble Rehearsal
- O-L-L-I (Osher Lifelong Learning Institute) World Dance classes
- Open Studio with Visual Artists
- Pagan Potlucks
- 'Rev Dev' Services
- Sacred Harp Singers
- Shakuhachi Concert
- Shamanic Journey Circle
- 'Snow Waltz'
- Solstice Celebration
- Spiritual Solution AA Meetings
- 'Star Power'
- Support Groups
- Tango Social Dances
- Annual Thanksgiving Cooper Book Singing
- Therapeutic Breath and Ecstatic Dance
- WholeHeart Yoga Center Classes

Some of these classes and experiences occur on a weekly basis; some events are one-offs. Every Monday, we have 5 different groups using the building throughout the day! You can see that The Portland New Church Center for Sacred Arts is a vibrant and welcoming hub where a wide variety of events, gatherings, and creative expressions unfold throughout the year.

### **Building Improvements**

Installation of a new Furnace in January 2025

### **Vision for the Future**

To transition into a phase of re-visioning; growing our community of "Friends" and "Members"; increasing outreach and visibility; beautifying and improving the outdoor garden features, and continuing to steward our historic building as a sanctuary for creativity, justice, and sacred belonging. We remain grateful to the

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wider Swedenborgian network for its ongoing support, and we continue to seek pathways for spiritual formation that honor both tradition and innovation.

*Respectfully Submitted on behalf of retired Pastor Lorraine Kardash,  
Eco Chaplain Circe Moss MacDonald, Spiritual Director, Portland New  
Church Center for Sacred Arts*

## MASSACHUSETTS NEW CHURCH UNION

The Massachusetts New Church Union had a significant year in many respects. Sadly, after years of effort working with the Newtonville Society—which remains in a liminal state, the MNCU sold the Church of the Open Word, a Ralph Adams Cram building. It was historic in nature, with an historically significant organ, but the costs of maintaining a building without a congregation that could afford to meaningfully contribute to its upkeep was too much. While the façade is going to be maintained due to its existence in an historical district. The MNCU continues to ask questions around the future of the Newtonville Society, which is small in number.

The MNCU continues to support its societies through ministry grants to assist congregations with financial needs. We are pleased to report that the MNCU voted to readmit the Boston Society of the New Jerusalem, one of the charter members of the organization. The Union and Boston are both happy to be reacquainted and look forward to a future of united ministry to the Commonwealth.

We continue to await people interested in starting new ministries. Some funding does exist for church planting in Western Massachusetts; however, such efforts need to be proposed and reviewed by the Board. As a state, we are committed to the formation and training of ministers, which allowed us to financially assist persons admitted on the ordination track to do field training at our churches.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Officers of the MNCU*

## NEW JERUSALEM CHURCH

*Bridgewater, Massachusetts*

The 2024—2025 church year in Bridgewater began with incorporating the theme of the Word, by ‘digging deeper’ into various aspects of the Word. We explored historical themes, and relational and personal development in our spiritual journey as seen in the Word. Our services are led by Pastor Kelly Milne and each

Sunday we live stream our service on Facebook. This continues to be popular and there is a core group that signs in weekly. Pastor Kelly teaches our Sunday School each week. The children vary in age from 6—14 and join in the first part of our weekly church service. The children have taken a more active role in decorating the church each season and are encouraged to see their own work appreciated by all who attend our services.

We continue to share in a traditional Thanksgiving dinner with the Elmwood Church, with this past year being held in Elmwood. Rev. Donna Keane and Pastor Kelly continue to record “Pastor’s Corner,” with various topics inspired by Swedenborg. The show is now picked up by national and local cable stations.

We have begun to offer a ‘craft group’ to the community at least one Sunday a month. There is a small group that is consistent in attendance and we hope that this continues to grow. There is hope that more community oriented offerings will continue to bring awareness of our presence.

As many churches have been struggling in recent years with attendance and support, we are not exempt from this, yet we remain hopeful in continuing to bring the Word and our theology to the world around us each day.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Kelly Milne, Licensed Pastor*

**CAMBRIDGE SOCIETY OF THE NEW JERUSALEM D/B/A  
SWEDENBORG CHAPEL**

*Cambridge, Massachusetts*

It has been a year of transitions for the Cambridge Society. In June 2024, we said goodbye to Rev. Sage Cole, who joined us in 2015. We sincerely appreciate Sage’s nine years of faithful service to the Society and to the local community, and we wish her success with the Helen Keller Spiritual Life Collaborative. We have been meeting roughly monthly since September, with fellowship gatherings at the chapel to enjoy time together and discuss next steps, and we held two lay-led services at Christmas and Easter time.

On May 4, 2025, we hosted a memorial service for our longtime friend and member, Carl von Essen, who passed peacefully into the fullness of the spiritual world on February 5, 2025, at the age of 99. The service was well attended by approximately 100 people, most of whom stayed afterwards for a reception in our parlor, which may never have seen so many people at once!

During this transitional period, we placed a pause on our wedding ministry for several months due to lack of resources for keeping up with the number of inquiries for new bookings. After catching our collective breath, we recently brought on Pastor Kelly Milne, from the Bridgewater Church, to serve as our wedding coordinator (she has also officiated quite a few of our weddings), and we began accepting new reservations in early June. We hosted nine weddings in calendar year 2024 and have hosted six weddings so far this year, with three more scheduled for September.

In December 2024, P.J. Buehler stepped down as our president after serving for ten years. We are deeply grateful to P.J. for years of faithful service to our Society, including countless hours spent taking care of our buildings and grounds and his very popular wildflower initiative.

Our annual meeting in early June 2025 included discussions with the Boston Church on the Hill and the New Church of Boston (General Church) about potential collaborations and resource-sharing, which would enable us to hold monthly worship services while we continue our ministerial search. The Search Committee conducted a series of meetings throughout the year, designed to help us reflect upon, clarify, and articulate our self-image as a ministry, the needs and goals of the congregation, and our role in the community. We recently issued a call to General Convention for a new minister, and we're looking forward to meeting prospective candidates, with faith and hope that after this transitional period a new chapter will open at Swedenborg Chapel.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*The Officers of the Cambridge Society*

### **ELMWOOD NEW CHURCH**

*Elmwood, Massachusetts*

*No report submitted.*

### **CHURCH OF THE OPEN WORD**

*Newtonville, Massachusetts*

*No report submitted.*

**BOSTON SOCIETY OF THE NEW JERUSALEM/CHURCH ON THE HILL**

*Boston, Massachusetts*

The Boston Society of the New Jerusalem (Church on the Hill) is celebrating its reunion with the Swedenborgian Church (the General Convention of the New Jerusalem). As it has been some time since we have reported, this report will highlight a bit larger than an annual report. Our, Rev. Pastor Kevin Baxter, leads our historic congregation. For those who do not know, we were founded in 1818 (a year after the first Convention). Since that time, we have razed our original building and replaced it with a high-rise apartment building, the first two floors are church space. It makes an odd urban sanctuary that is located adjacent to the state capital building.

We hold 52 Sunday worship services, which are streamed on our YouTube channel and our website. In addition to those, we also have an Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, and a Good Friday service. Each week we have prayer, Bible Study/Spirituality, daily AA groups, games, and the Pastor's Coffee. Once a month, we host a community program and meal to feed the mind and the body. Our annual concert program holds 8 —10 concerts a year, four of which feature our 12-person choir. We held our annual Swedenborg Birthday Party and June 19th Celebration.

As we are adjacent to the state capital, we often house groups of people seeking to dialogue and make changes within the state (lobby). We open our space for any group that seeks to give voice to the social needs of society in a loving and appropriate way.

A major point of pride is our mission work. The Mission Committee works diligently to find organizations and opportunities to do good within our city. Sometimes these take us on tours of great programs and at other times programs and lunches to learn more about what is happening. This past year, we granted just under half a million dollars to a variety of great programs that transform lives, both physically and mentally.

This year we will be searching for a new Assistant Minister or Ministry Fellow to assist Rev. Baxter in facilitating the ministry of our church. In addition, we will be launching our new website and online giving system. As a church known for

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most of its life as the hidden church, we are simply looking to become visible and known.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*The Officers of the Boston Society*

## MICHIGAN ASSOCIATION

Meeting was called to order at 10:03am by Vice President President Marjie Leas.

Opening prayer and devotion, “Divine Providence Reflection” was offered by Rev. Renée.

- Barb Boxwell, Rhett Billings, Tom Neuenfeldt also read passages.
- Discussion was had regarding people’s own experiences with Divine Providence.

14 in attendance were: Pastor Rev. Renée Machiniak, Vice President Marjie Leas, Secretary Ian Barber, Treasurer B.J. Neuenfeldt, Trustee Sharon Billings, Trustee Tom Neuenfeldt, Trustee Mary Lou Jerrett, Barb Boxwell, Jan Milan, Craig Carson, Katie Carson, Rhett Billings, Lori Patana, Jeanine Keller.

### **Report of the Secretary**

- Ian handed out copies from the Michigan Association Annual Meeting from 2023.
- Corrected “Tourangeau”
- Corrected “Rev Glenn”
- Corrected “Jerrett”
- Corrected “Fades” in So Faiths The Light to So Fades The Light
- Removed Rev and confirmed from Connie and added “consecrated as a licensed Pastor”
- B.J. moved to accept as amended, Rhett seconded. Passed unanimously.

### **Report of the Treasurer**

- B.J. handed out copies of the ‘Financial Report: Oct. 1, 2023 - Sept. 30, 2024.’
  - Proposed Budget items for Convention Delegates Assistance from \$48,000 to \$4,800
  - Proposed Budget items for Convention Delegates Assistance from

\$15,000 to \$1,500

- Marjie moved to file the report as presented

### **Almont Retreat Center Facilities Report - Lori Patana**

- Late winter, we had the well line replaced, from the corner of Heritage to the Dorm. Once replaced, the grass seed was laid
- Carson's and Jeff helped set up camp and attended to other small projects throughout the year. With Tom, Jill and the newest additions, was during work week and camp, with the assistance of Jeff and Craig the transitions group has taken over the winterization and unwinterization of
- camp, giving Tom a much deserved break.
- Summer School, Teen and Transistion Retreats, Weddings and Receptions, Family Reunion, and various gatherings throughout the year.
- Board continues to raise money from "Brick The Yard".
- Paining the Chapel.
- Hoping to celebrate the 150th Anniversary of the Chapel with hopes to have an open house with the assistance of volunteers during Almont's Heritage Festival on August 9, 2025.

### **Ministerial Reports - Rev. Renée**

- Rev. Renée provided a copy of her report.
  - Discussion was held on creating a YouTube Channel
  - Rev Renée amended her being on General Council
- Report is on file.

### **Old Business**

- Convention 2024
  - Boat Ride was great, Alexis Wright playing Violin. And Rev. Renée and Rhett talked to Steven Dison, President of Boston Church, and have made a special connection.
  - Rev. Jay Barry was inducted.
  - Great participation from Michigan Association.
  - Learning about the Wayfair Chapel.
- New Ministries Report
  - Dagmar wasn't able to write a report, due to recent health ailments.
    - Working on a certification for cooking for her ministry.
- Satellite Gatherings
  - Midland Gathering, 19 people in attendance.

- Women's Retreat
  - Was cancelled
- Other
  - Camp went well with the theme of Revelation.

### **New Business**

- Convention 2025
  - Portland, Oregon at Portland a state University
    - Dates TBC (Last week in June, First week of July)
- Presentation of 2024-25 Budget
  - B.J. presented the Proposed Budget for 2024-25
    - Added a Line Item for assistance for Youth Travel to Eng land and the West Coast Retreat.
      - \$15,000 for the Budget.
    - Removed “(2x \$400)” from the Ministers Travel.
    - Added a Line Item for Wayfair Support.
      - \$20,000 for the Budget.
    - Added a Line Item for Disaster Relief with Samaritan's Purse.
      - \$5,000 for the Budget.
    - Craig wanted to thank Michigan Association on behalf of Almont for the generous support.
  - Ian moved to approved the Budget as amended, Rhett supported. ◦ ◦
  - Passed unanimously.
- Women's Retreat
  - March 28-30th.
    - Retreat has been renamed to Spring Retreat so all can be welcomed, mainly targeted to adults.
- Michigan Association Meeting 2025.
  - October 4, 2025 at 12:00pm with a lunch at 11:00am
- Nomination for One (1) Trustee
  - Marjie nominated Barb Boxwell. Barb Boxwell accepted.
  - Ian moved to cast a unanimous ballot for Barb Boxwell, second by Mary Lou. Passed
- Election of Officers for 2025 Year
  - President - Barbara Barber
  - Vice President - Marjie Leas
  - Secretary - Ian Barber

- Treasurer - B.J. Neuenfeldt
- Trustee - Tom Neuenfeldt
- Trustee - Mary Lou Jarrett
- Trustee - Barb Boxwell
  - B.J. moved to cast a unanimous vote in support of the slate of officers as presented, second by Marjie. Passed
- Voting on ANCA Constituent Membership
  - Tom spoke on the ANCA Constituent Membership
  - Marjie moved to ANCA as a Constituent Member of Michigan Association, Barb Boxwell second. Passed unanimously.
- Teen Closet - Refurbishing the Chairs
  - Craig spoke on what had been cleaned from the camp
    - Chairs and other items had to be thrown out due to the condition they had been in in storage.
- Other thoughts/ideas/insights to share
  - Boston Church is hosting Intensives for Students of the seminary
  - Barb Boxwell talked about a Tiny House Community in the Midland Area and they are looking to get churches involved.
  - Jan and Pam would like to prepare a banner for the altar for the church for the 150th
    - Wanting to know the original name of the Church.

Ian moved to adjourn, seconded by Jan. Passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 12:13pm.

*Respectfully submitted,*  
*Ian Douglas Barber, Secretary*

## **ALMONT NEW CHURCH ASSEMBLY AND RETREAT CENTER**

*Allenton, Michigan*

The Almont New Church Assembly continues to be an active camp and retreat center nestled in the wooded outskirts of Detroit, MI. Craig Carson remains in his position as the summer school's Director. Between camp sessions 2023 and 2024, there was a 27% increase in summer school attendance, which is fantastic news! We were overjoyed to welcome newcomers and old friends alike. With the prospect of preparing spaces for increased internal and external use, the board has

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been busy updating and refurbishing many spaces at the retreat center; including but not limited to: painting the interior and exterior of the chapel, completing finishing touches within the Rec Hall, repairing and repainting the porch off of Pfister Lounge, updating the furniture in the Heritage Hall Library, clearing away brush from the fence lines, replacing the sound system and updating light fixtures in the Dining Hall, and purchasing new Dining Hall tables. Our former Music Cottage has been christened, “The Joyce” in honor of Joyce Fekete, one of Almont’s beloved matriarchs. This year’s summer camp session’s theme, “The Magic Key” will be in honor of her.

The Executive Board continues its work towards the “Brick the Yard” campaign in which the purchase of personalized bricks will be used towards refurbishing the tennis courts into useful outdoor space. There will also be the purchase of four picnic tables in which individuals or church associations may donate towards personalized engraving plates to adorn the picnic tables. In addition to hosting the campers of the Summer School, our Facilities Manager, Lori Patana, has also hosted multiple outside rentals including: weddings, family reunions, canning/cooking/sewing groups, as well as youth and young adult retreats from within Convention. We are truly blessed to have the time, talent, and treasure of many supporters who wish to see the retreat center remain an active and vibrant place.

*Respectfully submitted,*  
*ANCA Executive Board*

## CHURCH OF THE HOLY CITY

### *Royal Oak, Michigan*

The Royal Oak Church of the Holy City continues to offer hybrid worship services throughout the year, meeting in-person at the Women’s Club and in our backyard garden, as well as online Zoom. We are grateful to have some of our isolated members join us on Zoom regularly. Our average attendance over the past year has grown from 22 people to 26 and we are grateful to welcome several new regularly attending friends on Sundays. A Membership class was offered on December 1st, at the beginning of Advent.

Throughout the 2024 year, we offered monthly online Wednesday Meditations and a community in-person outreach program “Awakening Wonder,” enjoying an average of 10 people in attendance discussing various spiritual topics. We enjoyed a December online evening Advent class: “Angels Among Us.” The church enjoys our Sunday morning musicians, violinist Jenni Burke and guitarist Tom

Allen, pianist Karen Billings and guitarist Joel Palmer. Church Updates were sent out to members and friends to keep everyone connected. We are deeply grateful to church friends Joel Palmer and LeeAnne Whitman for the October 2024 Fundraiser Concert which raised \$300.00 for our treasury.

Our church collected donations to support service dogs for veterans and participated in our city's "Clean Veterans Graves" at Oakview Cemetery in May and September. In the winter, we organized food donations for the Starr Presbyterian Homeless Shelter Warming Center. As pastor, I continued to serve in our city as a volunteer oncology chaplain and volunteer police chaplain. I continued as a volunteer with the Royal Oak Lions Club serving as a Director on their Board of Trustees and I participated in ongoing educational programming offered by our denomination. The Church gratefully received a \$500.00 Gray Fund grant to assist hosting guest speaker, holocaust survivor, Irene Miller, in the fall 2023; this was organized by member Sue Fabian. Our church bought and gave away a box of Irene's book, into No Man's Land, and donated remaining funds from the event to Peaceful Tomorrows in loving memory of Alicia Titus and family.

I continued to serve as Youth Chaplain at the December Almont Teen Winter Retreat and the Memorial Day Teen Retreat.

participated in Flowerfest but cancelled our 2024 Women's Retreat due to low turnout. This year, Tammara Mounce and Jan Milan are assisting with the organization of our spring 2025 retreat, which will be for all adults March 28-30, 2025. I participated in the Midwest Peer Supervision in LaPorte in April 2024. In May 2024, I co-organized and co-led the first online Gathering Leaves Midwest Conference with Charlotte Gyllenhaal. I hosted local Women's Alliance gatherings.

I lectured and supervised seminary student, Tirah Keal, at the 2024 Almont Summer School sessions and participated in C.O.M. meetings and Convention in June 2024 in E. Lansing, MI, offering a mini-course on church history in Michigan. We are most grateful for our church and Michigan Association members who worked hard with the Convention Planning Committee to prepare and offer a most successful 2024 Convention session! I continue to mentor monthly Licensed Pastors, Robbin Ferriman and Tassy Farwell, as well as participate in quarterly mentor supervision and Swedenborgian Pastors' Support Groups. I offered worship with The New Church of Montgomery on Sunday, August 25, 2024, for their Homecoming celebration.

As our new church year began this autumn, our Satellite group of Swedenborgians and guests met at the Midland Olive Garden with 19 people in attendance! We enjoyed fellowship, a good meal and reflected on the theme of "Divine Providence." In the fall of 2024, the Royal Oak Church joined the Royal Oak Interclub

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Council to increase community connections and networking. I also began guitar lessons to eventually help supplement music for our worship services. In 2025, we decided to discontinue online Wednesday Meditation and added Theological Thursdays and then replaced “Awakening

Wonder” with Game Night: “Games, Giggles & Goodies.” Changes bring new life as grow together in faith.

**2024 STATISTICS:**

**BAPTISMS:0**

**WEDDINGS: 0**

**2 FUNERALS/MEMORIALS:** Joyce Fekete (07/20/2024) & Lori Gocsik (10/3/24)

**NEW MEMBERS: 0**

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Rev. Renee Machiniak, Minister*

**MIDDLE ATLANTIC ASSOCIATION**

No meetings were held.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Rev. Rich Tafel, President*

*Rev. Shada Sullivan, Secretary*

*Robin Tafel, Treasurer*

**CHURCH OF THE HOLY CITY**

*Wilmington, Delaware*

CHC Wilmington has had a very fruitful year!

In October 2024, we were honored to receive entrance into The National Fund for Sacred Places grant program, which has given us access to a \$100,000 matching grant for the restoration of our building. We welcome donations towards the matching portion of the grant, and have been working very hard to fundraise for the match. This grant and the matching funds will support our Phase Two restorations: comprehensive masonry repair throughout the building, which will mitigate water infiltration that has been endangering the integrity of our stained glass windows. We are currently receiving bids for the work, which will likely occur later in 2025. Previous to the masonry work, we also completed our Phase One restora-

tions in the Fall of 2024: replacement of corroded flashing on the roof, as well as guttering and downspouts, and re-pointing masonry on our tower.

In addition to our regular services, we have also added monthly Dinner Church gatherings, and a re-launch of our Children & Youth Ministry program, both undertaken by our Ministry Intern, Tirah Keal. Other programming additions include a hybrid discussion group entitled: Journey of Faith: Exploring Spiritual Questions Together.

This year we have expanded our program of free concerts. We continue to host the Copeland String Quartet, and have now added groups offering jazz, blues, and classical guitar.

This year we also hired a Building & Community Manager, Austin Cassidy, to help oversee the health of our building and its various uses. Austin was integral in helping to transform our downstairs Sunday School Room, into a multipurpose Community Room, which now has the modular capacity to host multiple programs and gatherings in comfort.

We continue to host meetings of the local advocacy group Green for the Greater Good, which has helped to guide the creation of a neighborhood park and green space to be completed this summer. We have also granted them permission to build two raised bed vegetable gardens in our backyard, which will be used to grow food for various local food pantries and organizations.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Rev. Shada Sullivan and the CHC Executive Committee*

## **CHURCH OF THE HOLY CITY**

*Washington, District of Columbia*

Several closely linked events dominated the year between May 1, 2024 and May 1, 2025—the sale of and departure from our magnificent Gothic temple on 16th Street, NW and the purchase and occupation of our new home, an elegant and spacious townhouse at 2023 Q Street, NW, conveniently located near Dupont Circle. With the active involvement of the church’s board, Rev. Rich Tafel has labored long and hard to put us on course to realize a new vision of “church.” The sympathetic support of General Convention in this momentous undertaking is gratefully acknowledged.

The new space was occupied in time for the Easter service to be conducted there. A piano concert followed, establishing that both worship and musical events can be nicely accommodated. Tentatively, we identify our new home as Sweden-

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borg House, embracing Church of the Holy City and other component elements. We have been devoting serious thought to the manifold uses to which the various rooms on four floors and basement could be dedicated. In this, we are guided by a vision that emphasizes making our new home a welcoming place, a community of faith where people can be mentored in entrepreneurship that embodies spiritual values and where big questions can be freely and seriously discussed. We foresee creation of an entity that can serve as a focal point for dealing with a range of community concerns and interests. Among activities envisioned are engagement with other faith communities and working with conflict resolution organizations and other entities committed to building community and promoting shared values. At present, we hope to help provide sympathetic and informed discussion of the future for those in Washington, DC whose careers have been disrupted and whose families face an uncertain and anxious future.

We are well launched on the venture of “reimagining church.” We invite the interest and participation in this venture of fellow Swedenborgians.

*Respectfully submitted,*  
*Ross Capon, Secretary*

#### TEMENOS

*West Chester, Pennsylvania*

*No report submitted.*

#### NEW YORK ASSOCIATION

This year, no meetings were held by the New York Association.

After the dissolution of the New York Society of New Church, only one church remains in existence within the New York Association.

We are currently considering merging with the Middle Atlantic Association to enhance connectivity and collaboration with other associated churches within the Convention.

This potential conjoining aims to foster a stronger community and ensure the continuation of our shared values and mission.

*Respectfully submitted,*  
*Rev. Youngmin Kim, President*

**KOREAN NEW CHURCH***New York, New York*

Throughout this year, our Sunday worship services were conducted via Zoom. This virtual format enabled members to participate from their homes, ensuring comfort and safety. It provided a consistent and accessible means of worship for our congregation, irrespective of physical distancing measures.

Additionally, we organized several gatherings at the retreat centers. These events provided significant opportunities for members to connect and deepen their acquaintances. Such face-to-face interactions proved invaluable in fortifying our community bonds.

Reverend Kim had the honor of officiating a resurrection service for one of our devoted members. This solemn and heartfelt ceremony underscored our church's commitment to supporting its congregation through all stages of life.

During the year, we bid farewell to one of our esteemed members who returned to her hometown in China. Her departure is profoundly felt by our community, but we extend our blessings and warmest wishes.

We are actively seeking a property within a two-hour driving distance from New York City to facilitate future church activities. This endeavor aims to provide a dedicated space for worship, community events, and other church-related activities, fostering the growth and development of our congregation.

We anticipate another year filled with worship, community building, and spiritual growth. We express our gratitude for your continued support and prayers.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Rev. Youngmin Kim*

**NEW YORK NEW CHURCH***New York, New York*

*See page ( ) for NYNCLF report.*

**OHIO ASSOCIATION**

*No report submitted.*

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**NEW CHURCH OF MONTGOMERY**

*Cincinnati, Ohio*

*No report submitted.*

**CLEVELAND SWEDENBORG CHAPEL**

*Cleveland, Ohio*

The Cleveland group is meeting on Sundays as a Bible Study group. We have four active members at this time. Barb is a friend of Jack Cashin and joins us also.

We meet at Panera's when the weather is cold and in different parks in the warmer weather.

Steve Dzeba leads our Bible Study group. He prepares a small luncheon for all when we meet in the parks. When we use the Panera's we have lunch together afterwards, sometimes treating each other.

We get inquiries from time to time about attending our group, but usually nobody follows through on attending.

We studied the entire Bible using the Dole notes and now are rereading and studying *Heaven and Hell*.

We are a close group and often see each other outside the Bible Study group.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Janie Dzeba, Secretary*

**URBANA SOCIETY OF THE NEW CHURCH**

*Urbana, Ohio*

**Worship & Related Activities:**

**Worship Services** are held weekly with an ongoing Zoom option. Except for special services, we continue hold a reading & discussion time during the service rather than a sermon. We have been using "Immortal Diamond" by Richard Rohr, our discussions focused on a contrasting and comparing the book with Swedenborgian thought. We hold special services for World Day of Peace, Epiphany, Palm Sunday, Easter, Earth Day, Pentecost, Thanksgiving, Advent, and Christmas Eve. Services are led by Rev. Betsy Coffman and Robbin Ferriman, L.P., who function as a team ministry.

**Meditation Group:** One of our members, Sherry Rutledge, leads a weekly Zoom meditation and study group which is open to non-members as well as members.

**Denominational Activities/Programs:**

**Convention 2024**— Seven members attended Convention in East Lansing MI, while several others attended virtual events. One teen attended the youth program. Our minister, Rev. Betsy Coffman, led the Convention Service and Communion, with assistance from Rev. Catherine Lauber and SCYL.

**Ohio Association 2024:** Members met in the Cleveland area from Oct. 4th-6th at an area hotel. Our spiritual program theme was “Honoring the Past-Envisioning the Future,” led by Rev. Ros Taylor. Members enjoyed Saturday night out at a local theater production of Robin Hood. Sunday Service and Communion were led by Rev. Betsy Coffman and Robbin Ferriman, LP.

**Community Outreach & Connections:**

Two 12-step meetings are held in our church weekly, and we continue our Wedding outreach. A number of church members volunteer their assistance at the Johnny Appleseed Educational Center and Museum for events or to assist with other needed tasks.

Donations were made to our local “Caring Kitchen” community shelter, the county Community Christmas program, the school “Backpack Friday” program and the Johnny Appleseed Foundation/Museum.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Rev. Betsy Coffman*

## PACIFIC COAST ASSOCIATION

The PCA held its 2024 annual meeting in-person on Saturday, October 12, 2024, in San Pedro, CA. The Garden Church hosted a lovely dinner with chamber music in its garden on Friday evening and arranged for a sunset dinner sail on a tall ship from the Los Angeles Maritime Institute on Saturday evening. Several of the Wayfarers’ Board members joined the sunset dinner sail after holding their own meeting that day as well. On Sunday, attendees of the PCA annual meeting along with Wayfarers’ Board members joined together to attend a worship service led by Rev. Dr. Dave Brown with the Wayfarers’ community at the St. Francis Episcopal Church in Palos Verdes Estates.

PCA Officers continue to hold the PCA annual meeting in person every other year to be more fiscally economical and to reduce the level of effort on the mem-

bership for meeting planning. This decision also enables the PCA to support its ministries with financial grants and provide travel assistance to its ministers and licensed pastors who wish to attend the annual COM meeting and Convention. The 2025 PCA annual meeting will be held virtually in October.

Due to good stewardship and reduced annual meeting expenses, the PCA was able to provide grants to our ministries to support various projects and initiatives this past year. Grants totaling \$4,500 were awarded during Spring 2025.

The PCA assisted one of our ministers and one of our licensed pastors to travel to the 2024 COM meeting and SCNA Convention Session in East Lansing, MI. The PCA continues to support the SCNA Convention Session by contributing \$2,000 to both the 2024 Convention in East Lansing, MI and the 2025 Convention in Portland, OR.

Similar to the PCA annual meeting, the West Coast Peer Support event is held in person every other year. The next West Coast Peer Support for the PCA ministers will be held in Spring 2026.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Rev. Junchol Lee, President, Pacific Coast Association*

## AGAPAO CHURCH

### *Orange County, California*

Agapao church has no in-person worship due to most members having personal health issues. Instead of meeting weekly we gather together once a month on each member's house and have fellowship. This year we are focusing more on our spiritual relationship with God through in dept meditation.

My YouTube Channel, Agapao ComeUnity is gradually growing with over 2K subscribers. This channel is dedicated mainly for Korean viewers who are interested in Swedenborg but also others who are just interested on spiritual matters. One video, 'Awaken from Death' has been very popular with over 120K views so far. My subscription and views of my videos has been steadily growing as I make more videos.

My latest uploads "The Worlds in space" and "Helen Keller" are entire books series shows progress. Gradually the views are increasing. Lastly, I created "Swedenborgian House Insight Talks" simple, short and practical message we can practices in daily life.

I will be focusing more on my YouTube channel this year with various contents to help with our spiritual journey.

**My Youtube channel:** *AGAPAO ComeUnity* (@agapaocomeunity6556)

“Gloy to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace, good will toward men”

Lk 2:14

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Jae Chung, Licensed Pastor*

## **THE GARDEN CHURCH**

*San Pedro, California*

Thursday, May 1st marked 10 years making church together at our garden space on W. 6th St. in downtown San Pedro. This year we have seen our church community grow with the addition of 1 new member and two baptisms.

In October, we were honored to co-host the Pacific Coast Association Meeting with Wayfarers Chapel. The weekend meeting included an elegant evening meal in the garden with live jazz from the Harbor Jazz Ensemble, and a garden to table meal from a local chef. On Saturday we had an education session lead by Rev. Dr. David C. Brown on The Most Ancient Church. The morning education was followed by lunch in the garden provided by a local restaurant before we returned to the indoor space (The Grand Annex located across the street) for our afternoon hybrid meeting. Our evening activity included an evening sunset sail around LA Harbor with dinner on a Tall Ship. Sunday morning PCA members attended worship with the Wayfarers Chapel community in Palos Verdes at St. Francis Episcopal Church where they worship every Sunday morning.

Rev. Dave and Pastor Connie have faithfully run our monthly Theological Thursday education group. It has been a wonderful point of connection for us. In November, Rev. Sage Cole the visionary leader of the Helen Keller Spiritual Life Collaborative visited us in the garden leading us in worship as well as our Theological Thursday discussion.

We had a dry winter prior to the wildfires, which allowed us to celebrate Advent and Christmas outdoors in the garden. It has been a blessing each year to watch how our Holiday worship services have become part of the larger community. As you all are likely aware, January brought devastating wildfires to Los An-

geles. Members of The Garden Church donated time and supplies to the fire relief efforts and in support of the fire fighters. Before the fires were contained, we did have to cancel outdoor gatherings due to air quality concerns. Since the wildfires we have been praying for the people, communities, land and animals impacted by the fires including our ocean which is subject to runoff from the burn areas.

Spring is always a busy time in the garden. This Spring brought us Holy Week and Easter surrounded by flowers from the late rains. Then two more full to the brim Sundays with our annual Interfaith Earth Day Sunday worship arranged in conjunction with the San Pedro Faith Consortium and our 10-year Anniversary held on May 4th. The Annual Interfaith Earth Day included speakers from the Jewish, Islamic, Christian and Muslim traditions. It is always a blessing to worship with other faiths respecting differences and celebrating our similarities. God is here. Our 10-year anniversary celebration included two celebrations. The first was on Thursday, May 1st, as part of the 1st Thursday art walk we invited 10 community members to light a candle for our 10 years making church together and shared a slideshow with our community found on our Youtube channel. Then on Sunday, May 4th we commissioned a new alter/communion table to replace the one which was succumbing to termites. The new alter was blessed and anointed by Rev. Dave and is part of a redwood recovered from the Wayfarers Chapel property. Later in the service, honorably retired Rev. Dr. Jonathan Mitchell officiated communion using our new table.

This past year in the garden has been one filled with tender moments, miracles, and blessings. We are eager to see what our Lord has in store this coming year.

*Respectfully Submitted,*

*Rev. Dr. Amanda Riley, Lead Pastor*

## **SWEDENBORGIAN CHURCH OF SAN FRANCISCO**

*San Francisco, California*

After 25 years in the ministry, 14 of which serving as the lead minister for the Swedenborgian Church of San Francisco, Rev. Junchol Lee will be taking a well-deserved sabbatical for four months in 2025. Rev. Dr. Devin Zuber will serve as our minister during this time.

Rev. Junchol Lee was elected to the Board of the San Francisco Interfaith Council in June 2024, and he will continue with these duties during his sabbatical. This position will increase our ministry's visibility in the broader local com-

munity. We are blessed to have both Rev. Junchol Lee and Rev. Dr. Devin Zuber serving as our ministers this year.

Our worship services continue weekly in-person and live-streaming online with an average in-person attendance increasing over the last six months to 40. Our Easter Sunday worship service was filled to standing room only with many children participating in the service by providing much joy and percussive instrumental sounds.

We continue to offer Sunday school, which continues to grow as more young families find our church, as well as a weekly Swedenborgian reading group and Bible study. We have had the pleasure of confirming four new members with another couple planning to be confirmed later this year.

Our sanctuary has a lovely acoustic quality that musicians truly appreciate. Thus, we have also been able to host a series of concerts throughout the year that are open to the local community as well as our congregation. These have been well received and enjoyed by many. In addition, we offer docent-led weekly tours of our sanctuary and gardens to the public every Sunday afternoon.

We continued to hold traditional annual events including the 87th Celebration of Marriage service in March, the Animal Blessing Service in September, and a Pumpkin Carving gathering for the community in late October.

We are blessed to have made wonderful progress over the past year toward our congregational priorities: providing meaningful worship services and classes, strengthening and maintaining a caring and supportive community, and building financial security. We are grateful for the enthusiasm and hard work of our staff and congregational volunteers for making all this possible.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Léa Park, Secretary*

**HILLSIDE, AN URBAN SANCTUARY  
SWEDENBORGIAN SOCIETY OF THE EAST BAY**

*El Cerrito, California*

Hillside, an Urban Sanctuary, home of the Swedenborgian Society of the East Bay, has had a very positive year, as we continue our mission of providing Swedenborgian programming to our growing spiritual community as well as the general public.

We meet on Sundays for a contemplative service, which combines traditional and meditative formats, and includes a weekly sermon and lively open discus-

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sion, followed by social hour, and hold a total of four weekday small groups, led by Rev. Muller, including our Swedenborg reading group, dream group, “Cloud of Unknowing” reading/meditation group, which consists of readings from this classic of Christian mysticism followed by periods of silent meditation, and our “Good Play” mindful gaming group, at which we play board games which have a non-violent or spiritual message. It has been nice to see core groups manifesting around these, including folks who do and don’t attend our Sunday services. This year, we welcomed 3 new formal members, and currently have a significant number of regular attendees who have not yet taken the step of pursuing formal membership.

Our average Sunday service attendance has increased this year to an average of 20-25 people, compared to between 15 and 20 people in past years. This is mainly due to an influx of new congregants, most of which live in El Cerrito and Berkeley, and includes several students at the GTU and Berkeley. Most of our Sunday services, generally 3 out of 4, are led by Rev. Thom Muller, with Licenced Pastor Tassy Farwell, Rev. Alex Rush, Rev. Dr. Jim Lawrence and Dr. Rebecca Esterson preaching on a regular basis as well. Tassy has also regularly been playing the piano at our services, as part of a rotation which includes highly esteemed local musicians from a variety of backgrounds.

As in past years, we have been regularly organizing “Spiral Lectures,” talks on alternative spirituality, which have drawn both members and newcomers. As in the past, an Outreach Grant from the Pacific Coast Association has made this programming possible. Lectures have included such topics as Astrology, Zoroastrianism, Ancient Egypt, and the Gurdjieff work.

Our philosophy continues to be to provide programming that is both explicitly and heavily Swedenborgian, and at the same time radically inclusive, non-dogmatic and dialogical.

We have undergone, and continue to undergo, a number of much-needed maintenance projects at our beautiful but aging buildings. The most major recent project has been a structural renovation of the western part of our deck, which had started to become a major safety hazard due to dry rot and deterioration, causing the deck to separate from the main structure. This project was successfully completed, to the satisfaction of our county inspector, with generous support from the Building Fund, for which we are extremely grateful.

We continue to host a large array of spiritual, musical and other non-profit groups and events at Hillside, and pleased with an increase of explicitly spiritual groups using our space. In this pastyear, this has included a growing number of Buddhist groups, which we are very happy about.

Recently, two of the Buddhist groups and Hillside collaborated in installing a small Buddhist shrine in our garden, with the blessing of the local Ohlone Native American tribe. This is a beautiful physical manifestation of our ever-increasing inter-faith community-making.

We continue to rent the downstairs of our building to a German-language after-school program, Bay Area Kinderstube, which has been a reliable source of income for us, and a pleasant relationship.

This past year has been very positive for us, as our spiritual community grows and continues to find new ways to speak to the spiritual needs of our congregants and neighbors.

We will have several members of Hillside attending this year's General Convention, and look forward to continuing our deep and fruitful relationship with the denomination.

*Respectfully submitted,*  
*Reverend Thom Muller*

### **WAYFARERS CHAPEL**

*Rancho Palos Verdes, California*

*(Please see page 98 for annual report)*

### **NEW CHURCH OF THE SOUTHWEST DESERT**

*Silver City, New Mexico*

New Church of the Southwest Desert continues to survive and evolve through many challenges.

Sunday services continue in a format that includes candle lighting, opening the Word, readings and prayer, and viewing "Off The Left Eye" episodes followed by group discussions. Once a month we watch recorded messages from Rev. Renee Machiniak. We plan to get a dedicated computer for live participation. We have also welcomed two new regular attendees who discovered us through our Facebook page. They contribute fresh energy and viewpoints to our gatherings.

Linda Callander, LP, commutes from Alamogordo at least once a month, and led both Palm Sunday and Easter services. She looks forward to attending this year's Convention in Portland.

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Chandra Visser continues to lend her invaluable support and talent, going so far as to pre-record music in anticipation of extensive hand surgery. Ongoing musical events (Open Mic and Folk Circle) have been temporarily suspended due to her surgery. She is now recovering and hopes to be playing again soon. She continues to rise to the occasion in so many ways, acting as our point of contact person in Silver City.

We continue on in faith and trust!

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Linda Callander, NCSWD Board President*

**SWEDENBORGIAN CHURCH OF PUGET SOUND D/B/A  
SWEDENBORGIAN SPIRITUAL COMMUNITY OF PUGET SOUND**

*Seattle, Washington*

*No report submitted.*

**WESTERN CANADA CONFERENCE**

*No report submitted.*

**CALGARY NEW CHURCH SOCIETY**

*Calgary, Alberta*

Greetings from the Calgary New Church Society.

We continue to hold monthly virtual gatherings/services where someone from the group volunteers to lead the service. There is time before and after to check in with each other, share news and have a time of companionship.

During the service, people volunteer to read Bible verses and from Swedenborg. The volunteer leader reads the sermon and we often have live music provided by Lorrie Lipski. After the sermon, there is time for reflection and discussion, which offers added meaning, richness and personal insights. Residents of the four western provinces join on a regular basis.

Our former president and life-long Swedenborgian, Sharon Williams, passed into the next life in the fall of 2024.

Western Canada Conference AGM will be held on May 3, 2025 and is hosted by the Edmonton New Church Society.

Our slate of officers as elected at our most recent AGM are:

- **President:** Dianne Roesinger- karter@shaw.ca (403)-239-4192
- **VP/Secretary:** Esther Fyk- estherfyk1952@gmail.com, (204)-621-7787
- **Treasurer:** Hartmut Lipski- lipskis@oldsnet.com, (403)-507-6672

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Esther Fyk, Secretary*

## CHURCH OF THE HOLY CITY

*Edmonton, Alberta*

Greetings from Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. Looking forward to working together for the church.

Summer at Paulhaven was very productive. Renovations on the lodge have started with most of the windows being replaced. The dorms have had all windows and doors replaced. Looking forward to Paulhaven camp 2025.

We were blessed to have a visit in November from Reverend Jim Lawrence. Reverend Lawrence held a Communion service and Baptism for Virginia Faye Fleming. We have been working hard towards making the Wedding Chapel more visible on social media. The church Brides room has had a refresh with new flooring and a fresh paint job. Thanks to Leah Fleming for taking on the project with help from other members. We have also managed a refresh of the front foyer and stairs at the church. New flooring and some paint have made the entrance fresh and inviting. New lighting has been installed in our chapel for an upgraded look.

Big thanks to Linda Reed for holding church and Wedding services. Big thanks to Taunya Semken for organizing the Casino fundraiser, which will be held in the 2nd quarter of 2025. The Casino funds really help to maintain all the church services.

In remembrance of our sister, Sharon Lynne Williams ( Reddekopp) May 10th, 1946 – September 21st, 2024 RIP. Sharon was an integral part of the Western Canada Conference. Sharon held many positions from president to editor of the WCC Newsletter. Her presence will be missed by all who knew her.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Ardith Francis, President*

## VIRTUAL COMMUNITIES

## THE RAINBOW CHURCH OF THE NEW JERUSALEM

The mission of the Rainbow Church (RC) is to create a safe virtual space where LGBTQ+ folks and allies interested in Swedenborg and the New Church theology can come together in community without the barriers or challenges of physical geography.

Sunday gatherings led by Rev. Colin Amato, regularly reaching about 40 people on average, are a combination of weekly worship services with the aim of spreading the inclusive theology of the SCNA and biweekly virtual coffee hours to provide time to socialize as well as explore spirituality through the lens of Queer Theology and Queer Theory. Facebook/Instagram reels featuring shorter clips from Rev. Colin's sermons reach over 115 people on average.

In addition to social and ministerial engagement through Facebook and Instagram, the RC has a new website, [www.rainbowchurchswedenborgian.org](http://www.rainbowchurchswedenborgian.org), which is being further developed to increase visibility and to provide more spiritual support to the queer community, resources for spiritual and mental wellbeing, and ways to participate in Rainbow Church offerings. We welcome contributions from any who would like to submit content related to welcoming and embracing those who identify as LGBTQ+ found within and inspired by Swedenborg's writings and the New Church theology to add to our Spiritual Seekers page that is currently under construction.

This ministry is successfully providing safe spaces for the LGBTQ+ community to learn about and explore the New Church theology and Swedenborg, experience unconditional love, acceptance and validation desperately needed during these times of targeted hate and erasure, receive support, and grow spiritually. The Rainbow Church is devoted to continuing to build this ministry of care and spiritual nourishment for the Queer community.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Reverend Colin Amato*

**SPIRITUAL SUNSHINE***(Please see page 96 for annual report)***HELEN KELLER SPIRITUAL LIFE COLLABORATIVE**

The Helen Keller Spiritual Life Collaborative brings people together around Helen Keller's lived Swedenborgian faith, inspiring others to do the same. The HKSLC became incorporated in the state of Massachusetts on January 1, 2025 as a Swedenborgian church and guided by the values Be Love, Be Honest, Be Useful offers virtual programming and in-person events for collaborators around the world. Under the visionary leadership of founder Rev. Sage Cole, the HKSLC is working to nurture the life of the new church in new ways.

**Activities of the HKSLC**

- Weekly Thursday Be Love, Be Honest, Be Useful Zoom Gatherings.
- The Be Love Podcast, released every Tuesday (Over 40 episodes released so far).
- First annual Celebration of Helen Keller Spiritual Birthday with 6-day March Be Love Virtual Event (over 110 participants).
- Ongoing Be Love, Be Honest, Be Useful Facebook Group engagement (543 members).
- Established a Youtube Channel: @helenkellercollaborative and FB page: helenkellercollaborative (134 followers).
- Published Weekly Essays, videos and podcasts at [www.worshipislife.substack.com](http://www.worshipislife.substack.com).
- Continued expansion of the [www.helenkellercollaborative.org](http://www.helenkellercollaborative.org) website.
- Collaborated with the Social Justice Committee, producing a 3-episode Podcast series Spiritual Ecology: Wisdom for a Changing Planet on climate justice.
- Led in-person Be Love, Be Honest, Be Useful gatherings with the Fryeburg New Church, the Michigan Association at the Almont New Church Assembly and the Fryeburg New Church Assembly.
- Launched a monthly Global New Church Prayer Service in collaboration with Rev. George Magero of the New church Railways Kisii Kenya.
- Launched a 7-part podcast series on the Book of Revelation "The Holy City Is For Everyone," with the Rev. Dr. Ted Cole.

*Respectfully submitted,**The Officers of the HKSLC*

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## ACT OF INCORPORATION

An act to incorporate the General Convention of the New Jerusalem in the United States of America. Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois represented in the General Assembly.

**Section 1.** That Rev. Thomas Worcester, D.D. of Boston, Massachusetts; Rev. J.R. Hibbard of Chicago, Illinois; Rev. T.B. Hayward of Brookline, Massachusetts; Robert L. Smith, Esq. of Jamaica, Long Island, New York; J. Young Scammon, Esq. of Chicago and I.S. Britton, Esq. of Springfield, Illinois; Hon. Jno. B. Niles of LaPorte, Indiana; Dr. Charles Shepherd of Grand Rapids, Michigan; Rev. Chauncey Giles of Cincinnati, Ohio; David Snyder, Esq. of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; N.F. Cabell, Esq. of Warminster, Virginia; Hon. Jno. H. Wilkins and Sampson Reed of Boston, Massachusetts; Oliver Gerish of Portland and Henry B. Hoskins of Gardiner, Maine; their associates and successors, be, and they are hereby constituted a body Corporate under the name of the General Convention of the New Jerusalem in the United States of America; under which name they shall have perpetual succession, with power to receive, take by gift, purchase, devise or otherwise, property and real estate, real, personal or mixed, for educational or religious purposes, and to hold, lease, and sell or convey the same at pleasure.

**Section 2.** The business Affairs of said Convention shall be managed and controlled by its Executive Committee, (or General Council) subject to the direction of the Convention, when in session. Said Committee (or Council) shall be chosen or appointed from time to time, in such manner as the Constitution of said Convention may direct, and act in conformity to its votes. Said Committee (or Council) may create such offices, and appoint such Officers as they may see fit, and remove the same at pleasure; and may change its business affairs in such a manner as a majority of said Committee (or Council) may determine, subject to the control of the Convention.

**Section 3.** Said Convention may sue and be sued, plead and be impleaded, prosecute and defend, in all courts and places, in its corporate name, by Attorney or otherwise. All deeds, conveyances, or leases of the property held by said Convention, for the purpose of leasing or conveying such property, shall be made under the hands of the President and Recording Secretary, and under such seal as said Executive Committee (or General Council) may adopt; but all such deeds must be approved by a majority of said Committee (or Council).

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**Section 4(a).** The purposes for which this Convention exists are: religious, charitable and educational as follows:

1. The specific and primary religious purpose is to aid the teachings of Christianity as taught by Emanuel Swedenborg.
2. The specific and primary charitable purpose is to aid the poor and unfortunate by collection and disbursement of funds, food, clothing and shelter.
3. The specific and primary educational purposes are to distribute funds for scholarships, to help organizations present education programs of general public interest and to disseminate educational material in the public interest.
4. The general purposes and powers are to have and exercise all of the rights and powers conferred on Convention under special charters under the laws of Illinois. However, this Convention shall not, except to an insubstantial degree, engage in activities or exercise any powers that are not in furtherance of the primary purposes of this Convention.
5. No substantial part of the activities of this Convention shall consist of the carrying on of propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, nor shall this Convention participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements), any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office or perform any act that will disqualify the Convention for tax exempt status conferred by any local, state or federal government which has jurisdiction over the Convention.
6. This Convention is incorporated and exists not for pecuniary profit and no part of any net earnings shall inure to the benefit of any person, private shareholder or individual.

**Section 4(b).** The property of this Convention is irrevocably dedicated to religious, charitable and educational purposes and no part of the net income or assets of the organization shall ever inure to the benefit of any director, officer or member thereof or to the benefit of any private persons. On the dissolution or winding up of the Convention, its assets remaining after payment of, or provision for payment of, all debts and liabilities of this Convention, shall be distributed to a nonprofit fund, foundation, or corporation which is organized and operated ex-

clusively for religious or charitable or educational purposes and which has established its tax exempt status under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and/or any future provisions amending, succeeding, supplementing or replacing this section.

If this Convention holds any assets in trust, or the Convention is formed for charitable purposes, such assets shall be disposed in such a manner as may be directed by decree of a court with jurisdiction over such trust, its assets or the Convention, on petition therefrom by the Attorney General or by any person concerned in the liquidation, in a proceeding to which such Attorney General is a party.

**Section 4(c).** All the property of the Convention held or located in the State of California is irrevocably dedicated to religious or charitable or educational purposes meeting the requirements for exemption provided by Section 214 of the Revenue and Taxation Code, and/or any future provisions that amend, supplement, succeed or replace such section, and upon dissolution or winding up of the Convention such property shall be distributed to a nonprofit fund, foundation, or corporation with religious or charitable or educational purposes meeting the requirements for exemption provided by Section 214 of the Revenue and Taxation Code. In all other respects, property in the State of California shall be subject to Section 4(b) above.

**Section 5.** Nothing in this Act contained, shall be so constructed as to interfere with the right of said Convention to alter, amend or abolish its Constitution, or to form a new one whenever it shall see fit to do so.

*Approved January 29, 1861*

The original Act of Incorporation is on file in the Office of the Secretary of the State, Springfield, Illinois; and it has also been recorded on page 1 of Record 48 in that Office.

By vote of a number of members of the New Church from various parts of the United States, assembled in Philadelphia on January 1st, 1817, a call was issued for a convention of the receivers of the doctrines of the New Jerusalem Church to be held in Philadelphia on May 15th of that year, “for the purpose of consulting upon the general concerns of the Church.”

The first meeting of the General Convention occurred as planned on May 15-17, 1817.

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The General Convention was incorporated, under the laws of Illinois, on January 29, 1861. Its legal office is at the rooms of the Chicago Society of the New Jerusalem, 77 W. Washington Street, Room 1700, Chicago, IL 60602-2901.

**CONSTITUTION**  
**of the General Convention of the New Jerusalem**  
**in the United States of America, Inc.**

**Article I.**  
**Name, Purpose and Membership**

**Section 1.** This body shall be called the General Convention of the New Jerusalem in the United States of America, Inc., commonly known as the Swedenborgian Church.

**Section 2.** The Swedenborgian Church exists to help people be open to the Lord's presence and leading, especially by fostering personal and ordained ministries which facilitate the spiritual well-being of people, and which have in common a working for the Lord in bringing in the New Age, the descent of the Holy City, New Jerusalem.

The light in which we seek to walk shines from the Lord Jesus Christ in His second coming, available to us through the divine presence in our hearts and minds, and through revelation in the Holy Scripture and in the life and teaching of the Lord's servant, Emanuel Swedenborg.

This section shall hereinafter be referred to as the PURPOSE of the Swedenborgian Church.

**Section 3.** Constituent bodies of the Swedenborgian Church shall be those collective bodies which subscribe to this Purpose and which unite with the Swedenborgian Church in performing the distinctive uses of a church. All bodies entitled to voting delegates at the time of adoption of this article shall be considered to be constituent bodies. Additional bodies may be admitted to membership on recommendation of General Council and vote of the Swedenborgian Church.

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.

For membership in the Swedenborgian Church, an adult active member is

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one who is at least eighteen years of age and who has been accepted by a constituent body through confirmation or by transfer, and who within the calendar year immediately preceding a session of the Swedenborgian Church has shown an active interest in his or her membership by joining in programs of worship and work or by contributing physically or financially.

## **Article II.**

### **Officers, Councils and Administrative Functions**

**Section 1.** The officers of the Swedenborgian Church shall be a President, Vice President, Recording Secretary, and Treasurer, all elected by ballot. The President and Treasurer shall each be elected for three-year terms, and the Vice President and Recording Secretary shall each be elected for one-year terms. The President and Treasurer shall assume the duties of their offices at the close of the next annual meeting after their election and the other officers shall assume the duties of their offices at the close of the annual meetings at which they are elected.

The election for President and Treasurer shall be held at the annual meetings of the Swedenborgian Church in the year prior to the beginning of each such term. In the absence of such session the term of office of the President shall be extended for one year following the succeeding session in order that the succeeding President may be elected one year prior to taking office. In the event of the death, resignation or incapacity of the incumbent President and/or Treasurer, the successor shall be installed for a full term immediately after the successor's election. A President who served for two successive terms shall not be eligible for election to the next succeeding term. The other officers shall be eligible for re-election without limitation.

The newly elected Treasurer shall be the Treasurer-elect and participate as a non-voting member of Standing Committees and other committees with the current Treasurer, including but not limited to, the Investment Committee and other funding committees. In the absence of such annual meeting of the Swedenborgian Church, the term of office of the Treasurer shall be extended for one year, in order for a new Treasurer to be elected one year prior to the expiration of the outgoing Treasurer's term.

**Section 2.** There shall be a General Council consisting of the President, Vice President, Recording Secretary, Treasurer *ex-officiis*, together with three ministers and six laypersons to be elected by ballot by the Swedenborgian Church,

one minister and two laypersons to be elected annually for terms of three years. Members who have served for two consecutive three year terms shall not be eligible for immediate re-election.

**Section 3.** There shall be a Council of Ministers consisting of all the ministers of the Swedenborgian Church, of whom twelve shall constitute a quorum. This Council shall select a Chair who shall be an ex-officio member, with vote, of General Council.

**Section 4.** There shall be Standing Committees as specified in the Bylaws. Standing Committees shall consist of three members, one to be elected annually for a three-year term, or of six members, two to be elected annually for three-year terms, together with such ex-officio members as the Bylaws shall require. Members who have served two consecutive three-year terms shall not be eligible for immediate re-election. Each Standing Committee shall have specific focus as defined in the Bylaws and unless otherwise provided in the Bylaws shall elect a chair.

**Section 5.** *Left blank for future use.*

**Section 6.** All elected persons shall hold office for the respective terms for which they are elected, or until their respective successors shall have been elected or qualified, provided, however, that the terms of all such elected persons shall be automatically extended for one year for each year in which because of national emergency or other compelling reason no annual meetings of the Swedenborgian Church are held.

**Section 7.** The term ‘year’ or ‘years’ as used in the Article shall mean, unless otherwise specified, the periods between elections at succeeding annual sessions of the Swedenborgian Church.

### **Article III. Duties and Powers**

**Section 1.** The President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer shall perform the duties implied by the names of their several offices, the duties listed in the Bylaws and such other duties as the Swedenborgian Church may require of them.

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**Section 2.** The General Council shall serve as the Executive Committee of the Swedenborgian Church, shall have superintendence of the business of the Swedenborgian Church, and shall exercise the powers of the Swedenborgian Church in the interim of its sessions. It shall be responsible for all corporate, legal and financial functions of the Swedenborgian Church and shall act as a Court of Appeals as defined in the Bylaws. The President, the Vice President and the Recording Secretary of the Swedenborgian Church shall be ex-officio Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary, respectively, of the General Council. The General Council may fill any vacancy in the General Council or in any office or position regularly elected by the delegates; provided, however, that any such appointment to fill a vacancy shall last only until the next session of the Swedenborgian Church.

The General Council shall annually review all committee and Standing Committee reports and shall recommend to the Church any necessary revisions or clarifications of fundamental principle or priority. It shall receive budget recommendations, revise them as its wisdom shall indicate, and adopt a budget.

**Section 3.** The Council of Ministers shall have as its central focus the facilitating of ordained ministries serving the Swedenborgian Church's PURPOSE. It shall have primary responsibility in matters pertaining to doctrine and worship of the church and shall have charge of the ministry. This council shall oversee the pastoral, teaching, liturgical and administrative dimensions of the ordained ministry; it shall practice and support disciplined and creative theological research and reflection, and it shall oversee the provision of ordained ministry of the Swedenborgian Church and its collective bodies. It also bears responsibility for the pastoral support of all ministries and for providing them with clear ethical standards. It shall exercise such disciplinary functions over the ordained clergy as it may in its collective wisdom adopt, subject to the provisions of the Constitution and Bylaws.

**Section 4.** *Left blank for future use.*

**Section 5.** The primary duties of each Standing Committee shall be to facilitate, initiate and evaluate activities relevant to its focus. Its primary means shall be the provision of supportive supervision for the planning, realization and evaluation of such activities, such supervision to function under criteria approved by the Swedenborgian Church. It shall be responsible for annual review of its efforts with explicit reference to the Swedenborgian Church's Purpose, Objectives

and Strategies as listed in the Standing Resolutions.

Persons or groups desiring denomination support for new or existing activities shall communicate their desire to the President, who shall refer the request to an appropriate Standing Committee. The Standing Committee shall then appoint a supervisor acceptable to the requesting persons or groups to assist in the planning and the evaluation of the activity.

Within the limits of its budget, each Standing Committee shall meet at least semi-annually, either in person or electronically, as provided in the Bylaws. They shall submit written reports, at least annually, to General Council via the Recording Secretary.

Within the limits of its budget, each Standing Committee shall enlist the services of resource persons as supervisors, make decisions concerning the funding of activities in its care and receive and evaluate reports therefrom, submitting to the General Council at least annually a report of its decisions and the activities in its care.

The Chair of each committee shall bear primary responsibility for coordinating these activities with those of other Committees.

#### **Article IV.**

#### **Representation and Voting**

**Section 1.** All members of the Swedenborgian Church shall have the right to be present at its meetings and to take part in its deliberations. They may be eligible for election or appointment to any office or position in the Swedenborgian Church as the Constitution and Bylaws shall provide. But the right to vote shall be limited to the members of the Council of Ministers, to the lay officers of the Swedenborgian Church, to members of the General Council during their terms of office and to the delegates of constituent bodies entitled to representation at the annual meetings. No member shall be entitled to more than one vote.

**Section 2.** Every constituent body of the Swedenborgian Church shall be entitled to two delegates and an additional delegate for every ten members, such delegates to be members of the body which they represent.

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Membership is to be determined as of the 31st day of December of the calendar year immediately preceding the date of the Swedenborgian Church annual meetings. For this purpose, only adult active members as defined in Article I, Section 3 shall be counted. It shall be the joint responsibility of the members and the bodies involved to ensure that no member is counted by more than one body for delegate strength.

**Section 3.** In determining delegate strength and in selecting delegates, only those bodies shall be included which are in good standing with the Swedenborgian Church.

Good standing of constituent bodies shall be forfeited if such body, without express consent of the Council of Ministers, employs a minister on an annual basis who is not on the Roll of Ministers as defined in Article XII, Section 1 of the Bylaws.

## **Article V. The Ministry**

**Section 1.** The Swedenborgian Church shall at its discretion, on recommendation of the Council of Ministers, and subject to the provisions in Article XII of the Bylaws, authorize the ordination and induction of qualified individuals to serve as its ministers. Such ordination and induction shall confer the privileges and responsibilities of leading in worship, administering the rites and sacraments, teaching, and pastoral care, together with those of full membership in the Council of Ministers.

**Section 2.** The Swedenborgian Church's interest in education for its ministers shall be exercised through the General Council in its role as the representative class of members of the Corporation of the New Church Theological School. It is the denomination's interest that such education focus on the spiritual growth of its participants by development in understanding of our theology, sensitivity in human relations, appreciation of other traditions and the technical skills required for effective ministry.

**Article VI.****Meetings of the Swedenborgian Church**

**Section 1.** Sessions of the Swedenborgian Church shall be held at least triennially, at such times and places as it may determine. Meetings of the Swedenborgian Church must be called with 90 days' notice published in *The Messenger* or through a mailing to the members.

**Section 2.** A quorum to hold a convention shall consist of twenty percent of the number of persons qualified to vote as defined in Article IV, Representation and Voting.

**Section 3.** A quorum to conduct business at the convention shall be a majority of the registered voters at the convention, as defined in Article IV, Section 1, Representation and Voting.

**Section 4.** Virtual conventions and annual or special meetings of the Swedenborgian Church may be held when authorized by the General Council and may include electronic voting. The General Council may authorize hybrid, virtual, and in-person meetings to allow greater participation, which may include electronic voting or a combination of in-person and electronic voting. All such meetings and voting must comply with all other existing constitution and bylaw sections.

**Article VII.****Amendments**

This Constitution may be amended at any session of the Swedenborgian Church by a two-thirds vote of those present and voting, provided that the proposed amendment shall first have been referred to the General Council, and public notice of the substance thereof shall have been given at least three months before the time of such meeting. Such notice may be dispensed with for any special occasion by a three-fourths vote of those present and voting.

*Revised June 28, 1996.*

*Adopted as Amended June 27, 2021.*

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## BYLAWS OF THE SWEDENBORGIAN CHURCH

### Article I.

#### Religious Observances of the Annual Meeting

**Section 1.** The annual business meeting of the Swedenborgian Church shall include each day a reading from the Word and prayer.

**Section 2.** The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper shall be administered at an appropriate time during the annual meetings of the Swedenborgian Church.

### Article II.

#### Enrollment of the Swedenborgian Church

**Section 1.** A Committee on Credentials, to consist of three persons, shall be appointed prior to the opening of each session of the Swedenborgian Church, to examine the credentials of the delegates, and to make up the Roll of the Swedenborgian Church; said Committee to sit during the whole of that session and to add to and correct the Roll, as may be proper.

**Section 2.** Friends of the Swedenborgian Church, who are in attendance at any session of the Swedenborgian Church, are invited to inscribe their names and residences in a register to be kept for that purpose and to take seats in the meetings. Such registry shall entitle them, without vote, to participate in its deliberations by addressing the Chair for permission to speak from the floor.

Article IV, Section 1 of the Constitution and Article II, Section 2 of the By-laws shall be read by the Recording Secretary immediately after the opening of the session of the Swedenborgian Church.

### Article III.

#### Order of Business

Reports and Communications shall be presented in the following order:

1. Reports of the Officers of the Swedenborgian Church
2. Report of the General Council
3. Report of the Council of Ministers
4. Reports of the Committees
5. Reports of the Associations
6. Reports of Churches not affiliated with Associations
7. Reports of Trustees
8. Reports of Auxiliary Bodies
9. Special Reports

10. Unfinished Business
11. New Business

When any report called for is not ready, its presentation shall be postponed until all other reports have been presented in their order. This rule shall not apply to the reports of the Council of Ministers or of the General Council, which may be presented as soon as prepared.

No debate shall be allowed on any of the above reports until all of them have been presented; but a motion to refer, or to adopt a recommendation without debate, shall be in order.

The above Order of Business may be suspended at any time by a two-thirds vote.

#### **Article IV.**

##### **Annual Meeting Planning and Operation**

###### **Section 1. Planning for Sessions of the Swedenborgian Church.**

The President shall appoint a committee representing the Swedenborgian Church body for each year's session for the purpose of planning the overall program, including selection of theme, specific programs, allocation of times for these programs and development of the published program.

###### **Section 2. Local Arrangements.**

The President may appoint a committee representing the local church or association where the sessions are to be convened for the purpose of planning and coordinating with the Central Office and the host institution such matters as transportation, housing, meals, meeting room requirements, audio-visual equipment, special event requirements, and any other arrangements appropriate for the planned program.

###### **Section 3. The Swedenborgian Church Business.**

The Executive Committee of the General Council shall serve as the Committee on Business for each year's session. It shall be the duty of this committee to assign the order under which different subjects shall be presented and the time allotted to each subject, and to prepare and print the program for that session; but such program may be changed at any time by majority vote of the delegates. Any item of new business wished to be placed on the floor for the session must be submitted in writing to the Recording Secretary of the Swedenborgian Church. To ensure an agenda position in the Order of Business, the items must be submitted in advance.

**Article V.****Parliamentary Procedures**

**Section 1.** The provisions of Robert's Rules of Order, so far as they are consistent with the Bylaws, shall govern the proceedings of the sessions. The President shall at the beginning of each session appoint an advisor on parliamentary matters.

**Section 2.** The yeas and nays shall be taken whenever they are called for by one-fifth of the persons voting.

**Section 3.** No member shall speak more than five minutes at one time, nor more than twice upon any subject, without affirmative vote of the delegates present.

**Article VI.****Duties of the President**

**Section 1.** The President shall perform the duties required by the Act of Incorporation, the Constitution and these Bylaws. The President shall preside over sessions of the Swedenborgian Church, and shall address the Swedenborgian Church setting forth the state of the Church. In the absence of the President, the Vice-President shall fulfill these duties.

**Section 2.** All Committees shall be appointed by the President of the Swedenborgian Church, unless otherwise ordered by the Swedenborgian Church, or provided in the Constitution or Bylaws; and vacancies in Committees so appointed shall be filled by the President. Vacancies in Standing Committees shall be filled by the President of the Swedenborgian Church should they occur between annual meetings of the Church, with such appointed members remaining in their positions until elections are held as provided in the Bylaws.

**Section 3.** The President shall have the privilege of participating, ex-officio without vote, in the meetings of all Standing Committees and committees.

**Article VII.****Duties of the Recording Secretary**

**Section 1.** The Recording Secretary shall perform the duties required by the Act of Incorporation, including the execution of deeds, conveyances or leases, provided by the Act of Incorporation; and any duties that may be prescribed by the Constitution, the Bylaws, the Swedenborgian Church or by the General Council.

**Section 2.** The Recording Secretary shall be responsible for securing reports from the bodies below named, to be received at least four weeks prior to each annual session of the Swedenborgian Church, or if any such session is not

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held in any one year, not later than June 30th of such year. The Recording Secretary shall see that copies of such reports, so prepared, are mailed to each minister and association of the Swedenborgian Church, and to such officers or interested persons as may be deemed desirable at least ten days prior to each session, and distribute them to members at the annual session. Reports received after the deadline may be presented to the Swedenborgian Church orally or in print, in full or in summary.

Such reports are to be requested from: Officers, General Council, Council of Ministers, Support Units, Committees, Associations, Trustees, Auxiliary Bodies and Churches not affiliated with Associations.

**Section 3.** The Recording Secretary shall be responsible for providing the Committee on Credentials with a list of the number of delegates to which each constituent body is entitled, as defined in Article IV, Section 2 of the Constitution. The necessary information shall be solicited from the constituent bodies in the January preceding the session. Any constituent body failing to comply with this requirement by April 1 shall forfeit the right of its additional delegates (as defined in Article IV, Section 2 of the Constitution) to vote at that session. Should such body submit the necessary information after the deadline, this forfeiture may be waived by a three-fifths vote of the Swedenborgian Church. A numerical table of the maximum delegation shall be published in *The Messenger* not less than one month before each annual session.

**Section 4.** The Recording Secretary, with such persons as may be appointed by the General Council, shall constitute a Committee on the *Journal*, to procure each year the publication of the *Journal of the Swedenborgian Church*. Said *Journal* shall include the Act of Incorporation, the Constitution and Bylaws, the minutes of the session of the Swedenborgian Church held during the current year; the names of the officers, General Council members, administrative bodies and members of committees of the Swedenborgian Church, current membership statistics, and any other matter that is required by the Constitution or Bylaws to be included; together with any reports presented to the Swedenborgian Church as provided by these Bylaws in such forms as such committee shall deem proper, together with any additional information which the Committee shall deem appropriate. Such Committee shall cause to be printed such number of copies of the *Journal* as it may deem necessary, and arrange for the distribution thereof.

**Section 5.** The Committee on the *Journal* shall publish in a supplemental or special *Journal* every five years such matters of information of a permanent nature, not required to be published in each *Journal*, as it may deem suitable; and

shall distribute such supplemental or special *Journals* in the same manner as the *Journals*.

### **Article VIII.**

#### **The General Council**

**Section 1.** The General Council shall meet without notice within forty-eight hours after the final adjournment of the Business Session of the Swedenborgian Church. The Council shall also hold two other regular meetings, an interim meeting and a meeting just before the convening of a session of the Swedenborgian Church. Twenty days' notice of these meetings and of any special meetings called by the Chair or by any five members of the Council, shall be given by letter to all members of the Council at their last known address, the time to be computed from the mailing of the letter. The notices of special meetings shall contain brief statements of the purpose of the meetings. At all meetings of the Council seven shall constitute a quorum.

**Section 2.** There shall be an Executive Committee of the General Council consisting of the President, Vice President and the Secretary of the General Council, and the Treasurer of the Swedenborgian Church, which shall deal with any matters referred to it by the General Council. In routine matters not involving policy decisions, the Executive Committee may act for the General Council between General Council sessions, all such actions to be reported to the next meeting of the General Council.

**Section 3.** Any action required or permitted to be taken at a regular meeting of the Council may be taken without a meeting if two-thirds of the members of the Council consent to the action in writing and the written consents are filed with the records of the General Council's meetings; provided further that if any member entitled to vote on such action shall so request, the Secretary shall notify all members of the General Council in writing of any objections to the action and allow two weeks from the date of such notice before the count of the vote is finally made.

**Section 4.** The General Council may, in its discretion, appoint such officers or employees not otherwise provided for, as it may deem necessary or desirable; and it shall define the duties of such officers and employees, and such officers and employees shall hold office at the pleasure of the General Council.

**Section 5.** The General Council shall serve ex-officio as the representative class of members of the Corporation of the New Church Theological School, and in accord with the provisions of the Bylaws of said Corporation shall represent the denomination's interest.

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**Section 6.** Any member of General Council, of any committee appointed by General Council, or of any Support Unit who fails to attend at least one duly called meeting during a calendar year may be deemed by General Council to have submitted his or her resignation, and shall be so informed by the Secretary. If no good and sufficient reason for said absence is offered, General Council may appoint a qualified individual to serve until the next meeting of Convention.

**Article IX.**

**Article X.**

**Standing Committees**

(Established by Article II, Section 4 of the Constitution)

**Section 1. The Standing Committee For Financial Accountability.**

There shall be a Standing Committee for Financial Accountability whose central focus shall be on the wise use and development of such resources as are directly under the Swedenborgian Church's control, and the provision of advice and counsel in such matters to the Swedenborgian Church's collective bodies. It shall oversee the management of the Swedenborgian Church's properties and investments, shall seek new sources of material support and shall provide consultants for the Swedenborgian Church's collective bodies toward the best coordinated and wisest use and development of their financial and physical resources. This Standing Committee shall work in close cooperation with the Common Fund Investment Committee. It shall consist of six (6) members, two of whom are to be Swedenborgian ministers or pastors, four of whom are to be lay members of the Swedenborgian Church, plus the Treasurer of the Swedenborgian Church, ex-officio with vote, who shall serve as its Chair.

Based on its assessment of the overall needs of the denomination, the Standing Committee for Financial Accountability shall make recommendations to General Council as to how best to manage its funds and properties. It shall administer all funds, including but not restricted to, the Augmentation Fund, the Mission Fund, and the Iungerich Fund. It shall oversee the distribution of all restricted and unrestricted funds of the denomination and their application process, if any. It shall receive all preliminary budget requests, including but not restricted to, those from General Council, the Council of Ministers and all Standing Committees and committees, and shall prepare therefrom a preliminary budget for submission to the General Council.

**Section 2. The Standing Committee For Education and Resources for Spiritual Community.**

There shall be a Standing Committee of Education and Resources for Spiritual Community, whose central focus shall be the development and dissemination of resources for worship, small groups, church growth, stewardship, and board development and outreach. It shall be concerned with resources, personnel and programming, and will strive to provide materials for the development of ministries and seek to anticipate and develop programs and resources for local communities' needs for worship, programming and outreach. It shall consist of three (3) members, including at least one minister with five or more years of pastoral experience, plus a representative appointed by the Center for Swedenborgian Studies Board of Trustees.

**Section 3. The Standing Committee For Communications and Information.**

There shall be a Standing Committee for Communication and Information consisting of three to six members, the number to be determined annually by the President of the Swedenborgian Church based upon the needs of the church at that time. The Standing Committee's central focus shall be on coordinating, initiating and promoting communication both within and across the boundaries of the denomination in all variety of media. It will seek to foster coordination among the Swedenborgian Church's publishing and information and technology activities. This Standing Committee will be alert to the climate of opinion both within and beyond the boundaries of the Swedenborgian Church and will also be alert to developments in communication technology. The official organ of the denomination, *The Messenger*, and the denomination's WEB presence shall be under the supervision of this Standing Committee.

**Section 4. The Standing Committee For Nominations (moved from Article XVII to this article).**

There shall be a Standing Committee for Nominations of five members to serve for five years each; one member to be elected each year, but not from any Association from which his or her predecessor or any other member of the Committee is a member. The unexpired term of any member may be filled from the same Association. A member moving to another Association shall continue to serve and shall be regarded as coming from his or her former Association; but no retiring member shall be eligible for immediate reelection. Whenever possible,

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the Standing Committee for Nominations shall propose slates representative of the Swedenborgian Church's overall constituency.

It shall be the duty of this Standing Committee to present, at each session of the Swedenborgian Church, nominees for the Swedenborgian Church officers (where applicable), vacancies in the elective members of the General Council and all other Boards and Committees, unless otherwise appointed. Each year the member whose term is next to expire shall act as Chair of the Committee.

**Section 5.** It is recommended that no individual serve on more than two administrative bodies or more than two committees of the Swedenborgian Church, the Standing Committee for Nominations and the Chair being similarly instructed. This does not apply to persons serving ex-officio as provided by the Constitution and Bylaws.

## **Article XI.**

### **Electronic Meeting Guidelines**

**Section 1.** Virtual conventions and annual or special meetings of the Swedenborgian Church; General Council, Cabinet, and other boards and committees, of the Swedenborgian Church may use telephone conferencing and electronic communication to conduct business when not in regular session, or when face-to-face meeting is impractical. Such communication must follow procedures adopted by the denomination to ensure an orderly deliberative process is honored.

**Section 2.** It is critical to the deliberative process that all members of a body participate in discussion and votes at the same time (synchronous meetings). Thus, business requiring voting must be done by phone conferencing or "real-time" electronic conferencing (e.g., instant messaging or chat).

**Section 3.** All deliberations conducted by telephone or electronic means shall be duly recorded and filed with other records of the body. These minutes shall be reviewed and approved at the next meeting of the body.

**Section 4.** Procedures for using phone conferencing and electronic communications will be the responsibility of a standing committee, appointed by the President. Such committee will present to the General Council proposed procedures for the General Council's approval. This committee shall also be responsible for proposing to General Council from time to time revisions that may be desirable for the efficient and orderly operation of the church's business.

**Section 5.** The procedures approved by General Council under this Article shall be communicated by the Central Office to all members of all boards, and committees of the Swedenborgian Church at least once a year, following the close

of annual convention sessions. They shall also be published in the annual Journal of the Swedenborgian Church.

**Section 6.** Nothing in this Article is meant to prohibit the use of e-mails, faxes, or other electronic media for communication and information sharing purposes.

**Section 7.** Virtual conventions and annual or special meetings of the Swedenborgian Church shall follow the policies listed below, along with any additional procedures adopted by the General Council whether temporary or via a standing resolution. General Council may call a virtual convention with electronic voting whenever an in-person convention is deemed by it to be impractical, too costly, or at any time when a virtual convention is desirable. It shall establish a Committee on Virtual Conventions to organize any such meeting. The committee must ensure that the meeting structure complies with all then existing articles of the constitution and bylaws.

A suitable outside vendor shall be chosen to handle electronic voting. The General Council or the Executive Committee of General Council shall select the vendor.

Only delegates eligible to vote shall be provided access to the voting system and shall be limited to one vote for each eligible position or issue being considered. All members and friends shall be afforded the opportunity to participate in the meeting. A quorum for such a meeting shall be the same as described in Article VI of the constitution.

Due and timely notice and publication of such notice shall be the same as the then current constitution and bylaw sections state.

The Committee on Credentials, in consultation with the Recording Secretary, shall submit a list of eligible voters to the General Council committee organizing the meeting, by a date established by the President of Convention. The General Council's Committee on Virtual Conventions shall consult with the election vendor to establish election access protocols, in consultation with the credentials committee.

Hybrid meetings are those meetings allowing any combination of in-person participation and voting, and electronic participation and voting. Hybrid meetings will be treated in the same way as any virtual meeting with electronic voting. Any delegate voting virtually must be able to both participate in the meeting concurrent with other meeting attendees and vote at the same time voting opens for all other delegates.

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**Article XII.****The Council of Ministers**

**Section 1.** Application for ordination or other matters relating to the office of the ministry shall first be received and considered by the Council of Ministers. Its report on such matters as require immediate action shall be privileged at any session of the Swedenborgian Church.

**Section 2.** The Council of Ministers shall revise the denomination's Roll of Ministers annually, and shall report such revision to the Swedenborgian Church for its actions.

**Section 3.** Every minister ordained or inducted by authority of the Swedenborgian Church, and not serving any church, ministry, or other collective body acting under the rules of the Swedenborgian Church, shall report his or her official acts to the Council of Ministers. If the minister shall have performed no official acts, he or she shall report that fact, and shall signify whether he or she desires to be retained on the denomination's Roll of Ministers.

**Article XIII.****The Ordained Ministry**

**Preamble:** Jesus said unto his disciples, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain." (John 15:16)

The ordained ministry exists to facilitate the spiritual well-being of people, helping them to be open to the Lord's leading and enabling them to live useful lives. Resources for the ordained ministry in serving the church include the Holy Word, the doctrines of the church, the rites and sacraments, experiences of worship, and growth-oriented skills insofar as they promote the process of regeneration.

**Section 1.** A member of the Swedenborgian Church shall be ordained into or inducted into its ministry by recommendation of the Council of Ministers and by affirmative vote of the Swedenborgian Church. The Council of Ministers shall have first received a written vision of ministry from the applicant, and determined that one of the following requirements has been met;

1. He or she shall have earned a Master of Divinity Degree from the Pacific School of Religion, the Certificate in Swedenborgian Theology from Pacific School of Religion, and passing evaluations on all denominational requirements.
2. He or she shall have earned a Master of Divinity Degree or equivalent degree from an accredited institution, the Certificate in Swedenborgian The-

ology from Pacific School of Religion, and passing evaluations on all denominational requirements.

3. After preparation recognized by the Council of Ministers as adequate, and he or she shall have served as an Authorized Candidate for the Ministry for one year.
4. After preparation recognized by the Council of Ministers as adequate, a minister ordained in another communion who accepts the doctrines of the Swedenborgian Church and expresses allegiance to the Constitution and Bylaws of the Swedenborgian Church may be inducted into our ministry.

Those persons applying for ordination or induction shall also have a request for employment from a church or other employing body of the Swedenborgian Church, or shall have a proposal for ministry approved by the Council of Ministers. Upon recommendation by the Council of Ministers, and affirmative vote of the Swedenborgian Church, upon ordination or induction his or her name shall be added to the Roll of Ordained Ministers.

## **Section 2. The Ordaining Minister.**

(a) A Minister who is elected President of the Swedenborgian Church shall be invested with the office of Ordaining Minister during his or her term as President. The Ordaining Minister shall be empowered to ordain duly qualified candidates for the ministry (cf. Section 1), to authorize for one year Candidates for the Ministry (cf. Section 3), to confer upon suitable persons, at the request of the church to be served and in accordance with the provisions of Article XIII (below), the title Lay Leader, and to consecrate as Worship Leaders persons selected by their congregation or group to provide leadership for public worship (cf. Article XIII, Section 2).

b) In the event that a lay person is elected as President of the Swedenborgian Church, then the Chair of the Council of Ministers shall be invested with the office of Ordaining Minister, during his or her term as chair.

(c) When the President is the Swedenborgian Church's Ordaining Minister and is adjudged by the General Council to be incapacitated, the Chair of the Council of Ministers shall be invested with the office of Ordaining Minister until such time as the President is recovered. In the event of resignation of the President, the investiture of the Chair of the Council of Ministers shall be for the duration of his or her term of office, until such times as the Swedenborgian Church shall again have a minister as its President.

(d) In the event that subsequent to the invoking of the provisions of section 2(c), or when the President of the Swedenborgian Church is a lay person, the Chair of the Council of Ministers should resign, or become incapacitated or

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die, the Secretary of the Council of Ministers shall be invested with the office of Ordaining Minister, such investiture to terminate upon the recovery of the chair, or in the case of the chair's death or resignation, upon the election of a new chair of the Council of Ministers, or on the election of a minister as President of the Swedenborgian Church.

(e) In the event that it is not possible for the Ordaining Minister to travel to a suitable place for the ordination of candidates for the ministry, he or she may appoint an ordained minister to act as the Ordaining Minister pro tem for a specific ordination.

**Section 3. The Authorized Candidate for the Ministry.**

(a) A member of the Swedenborgian Church, after preparation recognized by the Council of Ministers as adequate, may upon recommendation of the Council of Ministers, and after affirmative vote of the Swedenborgian Church, be authorized by the Ordaining Minister as an authorized candidate for the ministry and for one (1) year. He or she may lead in worship, teach the doctrine of the Church and officiate at resurrection services. Such persons shall be known as Authorized Candidates for the Ministry. Where authorization does not lead to ordination at the end of one year, the candidacy may be reviewed by the Council of Ministers.

(b) The Ordaining Minister of the Swedenborgian Church may empower an Authorized Candidate for the Ministry or a Swedenborg School of Religion student intern to perform a marriage where the laws of the state or province permit and in specific instances may empower him or her to administer the Sacrament of Baptism and/or the Holy Supper.

**Section 4. Special Circumstances.**

The Swedenborgian Church by a three-quarters vote may, in individual cases, dispense with limiting requirements, outlined in Article XIII, upon the recommendation of the Council of Ministers showing the need or desirability thereof, such recommendation to be made only on the agreement of at least three-fourths of the members of the Council of Ministers present and voting at the Council Session.

**Section 5.** The Swedenborgian Church's Roll of Ordained Ministers is the record of all those who have been ordained or inducted into the ministry of the Swedenborgian Church.

**Article XIV.****The Ministry of Lay Persons**

**Preamble:** Every Christian is called to minister. Jesus said that inasmuch as we minister to one another, we minister unto Him. “I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.” (Matthew 25:35-36)

The Apostle Paul declared that “there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of working, but it is the same God who inspires them all in every one. To teach is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.” (I Corinthians 12:4-7)

The church encourages all members to exercise their unique talents and gifts in assimilating the spiritual and well-being of people. Some are called to ordained ministry within the framework of the Swedenborgian Church. Others are called to specific, part-time service in the church and are recognized and consecrated as Lay Leaders and Worship Leaders. Other men and women are called to minister to the world and around them, in their homes, and in their chosen vocations. In addition, some wish to offer their gifts through programs and services in the church. The Swedenborgian Church encourages these ministries and recognizes them as manifestations of the Spirit of God.

**Section 1. Lay Leader.**

- (a) The Swedenborgian Church commends the efforts of lay people throughout our church who have served in many ways and ministered to the needs of local churches. Out of this experience, the Swedenborgian Church sees the potential for even greater service to the church by trained qualified lay persons to augment the work of its ordained ministry.
- (b) In order to meet ongoing needs of local churches, suitable persons may be consecrated as Lay Leaders to serve particular congregations or to serve within clearly defined geographical areas. For such consecration, the following requirements must be met.
  - (1) The candidate must apply to the Swedenborgian House of Studies for enrollment in its Lay Leadership Education program. This application must be supported by the endorsement of the individual’s congregation or appropriate supervisory body, granted on the basis of leadership ability, knowledge of the Church’s teachings, character, and devotion to the Church. Neither acceptance into the program nor completion of the program guarantees approval by the Council of Ministers.

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- (2) On satisfactory completion of the first year of this program, duly certified by the School, the individual must request of the Ordaining Minister and be granted status as a Probationary Lay Leader, this request to be supported by the recommendation of the Council of Ministers. With this status, the candidate is authorized to lead in worship, teach the doctrines of the Church, and officiate at resurrection services. The expected duration of this status shall be two years. The Committee on Admission Into the Ministry or other committee recommended by the Council of Ministers will be responsible for monitoring the progress of Probationary Lay Leaders. The Ordaining Minister may rescind the status of Probationary Lay Leader if the candidate fails to keep pace with the educational requirements, if the congregation or appropriate supervisory body requests such rescission, or for other due and weighty cause. If for good and sufficient reasons the person is unable to complete the prescribed training within the normal period, the Ordaining Minister may extend the authorization for one year. Extensions of more than one year will require review by the Council of Ministers.
- (3) Consecration as a Lay Leader, administered by the Ordaining Minister, shall take place when the following conditions have been met.
- a) The Swedenborgian House of Studies shall certify to the Council of Ministers that the educational program has been satisfactorily completed.
  - b) The congregation of the candidate shall reaffirm to the Council of Ministers its desire for such consecration.
  - c) The Council of Ministers shall recommend the consecration to the Swedenborgian Church.
  - d) Said Church shall authorize the consecration. The consecration itself shall take place in a public service held in the congregation or area to be served.
  - (c) Henceforth, the title “Lay Leader” shall be reserved for individuals so consecrated.
  - (d) Following consecration, the Lay Leader may administer all the rites and sacraments to the congregation or in the area served. This authorization shall include the right to perform marriages where the laws of the state or province permit. Lay leaders are expected to comply with the guidelines for ministerial conduct.

- (e) Lay leaders shall be accountable to the Ordaining Minister of the Swedenborgian Church, who shall be responsible for providing appropriate supervision. If the Lay Leader serves a congregation which employs an ordained minister, said minister shall act as the immediate supervisor and the Lay Leader shall not offer pastoral or liturgical services without the knowledge and consent of this minister. The local congregation or other supervisory body shall have the right to terminate the services of the lay leader. A lay leader may not serve in another congregation or geographical area without a request from the new congregation or other supervisory body, and the approval of the Council of Ministers.
- (f) Administrative details of the above procedure shall be available in writing from the Swedenborgian House of Studies and the Council of Ministers.

**Section 2.           Worship Leader.**

Nothing in this Article shall in any way be interpreted to place restrictions on those lay persons selected by their congregation or group to provide leadership for public worship. Indeed, an appropriate service of consecration for such persons functioning as worship leaders is recommended. Following consecration, such persons shall be known as Worship Leaders.

**Section 3.           Special Circumstances.**

The Swedenborgian Church by three-quarters vote may, in individual cases, dispense with limiting requirements, outlined in Article XIV upon the recommendation of the Council of Ministers showing the need or desirability thereof, such recommendation to be made only on the agreement of at least three-fourths of the members of the Council of Ministers present and voting at the Council session.

**Section 4.           The Roll of Lay Leaders.**

Any person consecrated as a Lay leader shall have his or her name listed on the Roll of Lay Leaders with indication of the church or area which each serves. The names shall appear on the Roll so long as the persons continue actively to serve the church or area for which they were consecrated.

**Section 5.           Licensed Pastors**

Upon application by a member of the Swedenborgian Church and an eligible and recognized body of the Swedenborgian Church of North America, and with preparation recognized by the Council of Ministers as adequate, the candidate upon recommendation of the Council of Ministers, and after affirmative vote of the Swedenborgian Church, may be given license to pastor a society by the Or-

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daining Minister for two (2) years. Said license empowers the bearer to provide all sacerdotal duties and to fulfill the pastoral role. Such persons shall be known as “Licensed Pastors.” The license may be renewed by vote of the Council of Ministers upon recommendation of the Committee on Admission to the Ministry. A Licensed Pastor must maintain a mentor relationship with an Ordained Minister of the Swedenborgian Church and follow the Guidelines for Ministerial Conduct. The two year license period will have educational objectives that will prepare the “Licensed Pastor” for Ordination over an extended period of time if the licensee wishes to apply to the Committee on Admission to the Ministry for Authorized Candidacy for Ordination. A licensee may make application to the ordaining minister to become a “Lay-Leader” if they wish to not renew a license.

### **Article XV.**

#### **Theological School**

**Section 1.** The Swedenborgian Church shall by majority vote nominate annually the number of nominees for election by the Board of Trustees of the New Church Theological School, commonly known as the Swedenborgian House of Studies, as provided for, or allowed, by the Bylaws of the Corporation of the New Church Theological School, and shall forward these nominations to the General Council, in its role as the representative class of the Corporation of the New Church Theological School, for consideration for election to the Board of Trustees.

### **Article XVI.**

#### **Board of Mediation**

There shall be a Board of Mediation consisting of five members. Two such members shall be lay persons appointed by the President, and two shall be ministers appointed by the Chair of the Council of Ministers, and their terms of office shall be the same as that of the President of the Swedenborgian Church. The fifth member shall be the Vice President of Convention who shall serve as Chair.

Whenever any dispute or irregularity shall arise which affects the fulfillment of the PURPOSE of the Swedenborgian Church or any of its constituent or subsidiary bodies, if the efforts of the ministers or officers immediately concerned have not proved effective, the President or the General Council shall refer the situation to the Board of Mediation; or any member, collective body, or subsidiary body may apply to said Board for relief or determination. The Board shall then use its best endeavors to resolve the matter through the voluntary agreement of

those concerned, or failing to effect such resolution shall render a judgment as to the disposition thereof, after hearing the complaints and considering the facts.

Should the Board be unable to effect a resolution or settlement, it shall render its report or judgment to the General Council, together with such recommendations as it may deem appropriate. The General Council as the Executive Committee of the Swedenborgian Church shall then take such actions and issue such directions as it shall deem suitable. Anyone aggrieved by said report or judgment shall have the right of appeal to the General Council, as a final resort to seek reconsideration by the delegates at the annual session of the Swedenborgian Church.

Any member of the Board of Mediation may decline to participate in the consideration of a specified situation due to conflict of interest. In this case, the President of the General Convention or the Chairman of the Council of Ministers, as may be appropriate, shall appoint a substitute, who shall serve as a full member of the Board during its consideration of that issue only.

#### **Article XVII.**

**(Moved to Article X and Article XVII blank for future use).**

#### **Article XVIII.**

##### **Common Fund Investment Committee**

The General Council, at its first meeting following each annual session of the Swedenborgian Church, shall appoint an Investment Committee of five members for terms of five years, and each member may be reappointed without term limits. The Treasurer of the Convention shall serve as Chair of the Investment Committee ex officio with voting rights. The Investment Committee is charged with the general oversight and care of the investments and securities of the Swedenborgian Church Common fund, with full power to purchase and sell and to invest and reinvest as in their judgment and discretion may seem advisable. Any members constituting a majority of said Committee may exercise all of the authority and powers hereby granted to or conferred upon said Committee. This Committee is authorized to make investments and reinvestments in such bonds, notes, debentures, corporate stocks and other securities and such real estate, real estate mortgages, interests in real estate mortgages, and other property as the Committee, in the exercise of reasonable intelligence and caution, shall deem best. This Committee shall work in close cooperation with the Standing Committee for Financial Accountability.

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**Article XIX.**

**Board of Trustees of the Building Fund**

**Section 1.** The Board of Trustees of the Building Fund shall consist of the Treasurer plus three trustees who shall be appointed by the General Council, to serve three years. One of the trustees, including the Treasurer, shall be a member of the General Council.

**Section 2.** The Board of Trustees shall review Building Fund loan applications. Loans of up to \$50,000 may be funded by the Board of Trustees of the Building Fund. Loans over \$50,000, but less than \$100,000, shall be reviewed by the Trustees, with a recommendation referred to the Executive Committee of General Council for final approval. Loans in excess of \$100,000 shall be reviewed by the Trustees, with a recommendation referred to the full General Council for final approval.

**Section 3.** General Council may periodically adjust the dollar amounts based on governance oversight.

**Article XX.**

**The National Church**

The Board of Trustees of the National Church, now holding the title to and having control of the Church property in Washington, D.C., shall continue to consist of fifteen members who shall be citizens of any part of the United States and of whom a majority shall be chosen from some other place than the city of Washington, DC, and shall not be selected from any one association, and vacancies in their number shall be filled by the Board with approval of the President and the Secretaries of the Convention, having in mind the restrictions stated above, and five members shall constitute a quorum.

**Revised June 30, 2007.**

**Article XXI.**

**Application for Admission as a Constituent Body**

The application of an Association, Church or other body of the Church to be received by this body and represented in the Swedenborgian Church, may be made through the General Council, and upon their recommendation shall come before the annual session. When the session has voted to receive such Association or other body, the President shall announce the names of its delegates, and invite them to come forward. The President shall then inform them of the vote, and all rising, shall give the new delegates the right hand of fellowship, and welcome them to all the privileges enjoyed by other delegates.

**Article XXII.****Indemnification**

To the extent now or hereafter permitted by the laws of the State of Illinois, the corporation shall indemnify its officers and directors against all costs and expenses reasonably incurred by him or her in connection with or arising out of any claim, action, suit or proceeding of whatever nature in which he or she may be involved as a party or otherwise or with which he or she may be threatened by reason of his or her having served as an officer or director of the corporation or by reason of any action alleged to have been taken or omitted by him or her as such officer or director, whether or not he or she be such officer or director at the time of incurring such cost or expense, including amounts paid or incurred in connection with reasonable settlements (other than amounts paid to the corporation itself) made with the approval of the General Council and with a view to curtailment of costs of litigation.

**Article XXIII.****Amendments**

These Bylaws may be amended at any session of the Swedenborgian Church by a three-fifths vote of those present and voting, provided that the proposed amendment shall have been first referred to the General Council, and public notice of the substance thereof shall have been given at least three months before the time of said meeting. Such notice may be dispensed with for any special occasion by a three-fourths vote of those present and voting.

Dated May 3, 1985

Typed July 2, 1985

Revised July 10, 1985

Delegate Version

Revised October 31, 1985

Revised December 7, 1985

Revised General Council, February 1, 1986

Revised May 27, 1986

Revised June 26, 1992

Revised July 8, 1994

Revised July 7, 1995

Revised June 28, 1996

Revised June 26, 1998

Revised July 9, 2005

Revised July 1, 2006

Revised June 28, 2013

Revised June 28, 2013

Adopted as amended July 1, 2017

Adopted as amended July 3, 2018

Adopted as amended July 3, 2019

Adopted as amended June 27, 2021

Adopted as amended June 30, 2024

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## STANDING RESOLUTIONS

### 1.

(Adopted by the General Convention July 3, 1986)

#### THE PURPOSE OF CONVENTION

The General Convention exists to help people be open to the Lord's presence and leading especially by fostering personal and ordained ministries which facilitate the spiritual well-being of people, and which have in common a working for the Lord in bringing in the New Age – the descent of the Holy City, New Jerusalem.

The light in which we seek to walk shines from the Lord Jesus Christ in His second coming, available to us through the divine presence in our hearts and minds, and through revelation in the Holy Scriptures and in the work of the Lord's servant Emanuel Swedenborg.

With the purpose of creation being a heaven from the human race, we see the central purpose of the church as the promotion of the process of regeneration. External forms such as buildings, liturgies and organizational structures are valid only insofar as they are useful to this end. It is especially vital for an "organized religion" that its life of piety be constantly grounded in a life of charity. In the case of our Convention, constant accountability to the standards of Scripture and doctrine is the primary warrant for our existence as an organization. In particular, we are offered a vision of a New Age, a New Church radically different from the old, by which we can evaluate our present practices and directions.

#### OBJECTIVES

1. Facilitate the formation and growth of groups of people who support each other in understanding, loving and living "the life that leads to heaven." We will work to bring together such individuals and groups in a network which amplifies the creative spiritual energy that emerges when we work together.
2. Bring doctrine and life together constructively. We will support this being done in a way that allows them to challenge and enrich each other and that encourages the diverse activities of Convention to express Convention's Purpose consistently.
3. Provide for the discovery, development and evaluation of excellence.
4. Commit ourselves to growth in the number of active members.
5. Continue our commitment to the cause of religious unity.

6. Clarify and intensify our participation in and contribution to the Lord's New Age.
7. In accordance with our Doctrine of Use and in cooperation with Convention's constituent bodies, improve the management and use of the physical/financial resources available for the fulfillment of our Purpose.
8. Design and implement effective means of communication: means which will ensure an open and timely flow of information and will promote Convention's Purpose.
9. Design, adopt and maintain an organizational structure that is directly responsive to Convention's Purpose and needs, and that includes provisions for its own self-evaluation and growth.

### **Objective 1**

*The Formation and Growth of Groups* – Facilitate the formation and growth of groups of people who support each other in understanding, loving and living “the life that leads to heaven.” We will work to bring together such individuals and groups in a network which amplifies creative spiritual energy that emerges when we work together.

Regeneration, or the life of charity, takes place in connection with other human beings, and is impossible in isolation. The spiritual model we are offered, one of individuals gathered into societies which in turn are gathered into provinces, is inseparable from that individual's relationship with others in his or her immediate society; and the spiritual well-being of the society is inseparable from its relationship with the larger church, and with the world in which it is living.

Healthy relationships are characterized by both love and wisdom, which means that neither uncritical acceptance nor unsympathetic criticism is truly constructive. As even love of self is necessary and good in its proper place, so particular interests, talents and skills contribute to the health of the whole as they are appropriately and appreciatively related to each other.

### *Strategies*

- A. Provide administrative, material and advisory support for the formation and growth of such groups.
- B. Provide training and resources for effective acts of worship, both individual and collective.
- C. Provide for the training of appropriately skilled leaders.
- D. Clarify criteria for membership in Convention in accord with Convention's Purpose and suggest ways for people to become members.

- E. Foster an understanding of networking, particularly as it applies to Convention.
- F. Establish and maintain communication among individuals and groups who share particular interests in common, or who face the same circumstances.
- G. Establish and maintain inventories of the available talents, skills, and resources that are necessary for the formation and growth of groups, and provide for the best possible ways of meeting these groups' needs.
- H. Design and implement a means of evaluating the effectiveness of these strategies as they contribute to the formation and growth of groups within the church.

## **Objective 2**

*Doctrine and Life – Bring doctrine and life together constructively. We will support this being done in a way that allows them to challenge and enrich each other and that encourages the diverse activities of Convention to express Convention's Purpose consistently.*

This objective rests in the principle that doctrine alone, like external worship alone, does not make the church, but a life according to it. It looks toward a rejoicing in the fact that there are some of us who start from the books and some of us who start from involvement with people. For doctrine and life to come together, these need to be experienced as complementary rather than competitive approaches, each acknowledging its own incompleteness and therefore its needs for the other. Like the first objective, it assumes that the church cannot find an inner or spiritual well-being without trying to contribute to the spiritual well-being of the world in which it is living, and it further assumes that this contribution will not be made by conforming to that world but by seeking to understand and live our own distinctiveness.

### ***Strategies***

- A. Bring people of different perspectives together for specific purposes such as: worship, team ministries, workshops, camp programs, committees, music, and writing projects.
- B. Support thinking that encourages differences of opinion, that acknowledges both the value of a variety of different approaches and the need to continue an on-going process, and that recognizes the beauty of finding inward coherence in a diversity of outward forms.
- C. Develop the ability to use everyday language to express theological ideas.
- D. Develop supportive procedures and resources for program planning and

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evaluation. These procedures and resources must insist that theological presuppositions be made clear, that results be honestly evaluated, and that our primary concern be the relation between our central Purpose and the actual results of the program.

- E. Accept and fulfill our responsibility to express a spiritual perspective on contemporary issues in local, national and global affairs.
- F. Provide for the discovery, nurture, and integration of diversity in all levels of structure.
- G. Design and implement a means of evaluating the effectiveness of these strategies.

### Objective 3

*Excellence* – Provide for the discovery, development, and evaluation of excellence.

The Lord has created each one of us with quite extraordinary potentialities, and the church evades its responsibility if it falls into that common pitfall of volunteer organizations, becoming a haven for mediocrity. For example, we somehow expect people to become effective church treasurers by virtue of election, providing neither resources nor training, and then lament the sad state of local accounting procedures. It is the committee's sense that we are, as a church, already doing many of the "right things," and that we could do them more effectively if we worked toward providing appropriate training for available talent.

#### *Strategies*

- A. Develop and maintain an accessible inventory of available talents and skills.
- B. Develop and maintain an accessible inventory of needed talents and skills.
- C. Develop and maintain an accessible inventory of training possibilities.
- D. Facilitate the acquisition of needed talents and training in skills.
- E. Develop means for identifying and improving criteria of excellence.
- F. Update Convention's understanding and appreciation of excellence.
- G. Design and implement a means of evaluating the effectiveness of these strategies.

### Objective 4

*Numerical Growth* – Commit ourselves to growth in the number of active members.

This is the "let's finally face facts" objective. It is not an end in itself, and

must not be achieved to the detriment of other directives, any more than an individual should focus on physical health to the neglect of regeneration. But it also follows that just as physical health for the sake of use cannot be neglected, and must be given specific attention, so we need to give specific attention to numerical growth for the sake of use. Given the intense need for the New Church in the world around us, we cannot avoid our responsibility to find means of outreach that really work, and the clear, objective criterion lies immediately to hand.

### *Strategies*

- A. In cooperative effort with associations, societies, and other constituent bodies, develop programs intended to achieve growth.
- B. Develop centralized efforts that both encourage a desire for growth among Convention's constituents and strengthen our self-image.
- C. Develop centralized efforts that create interest among non-Swedenborgians and thus stimulate growth.
- D. Create programs that offer assistance and incentive to ministers and constituent bodies so that they develop the skills and programs necessary to increase growth.
- E. Design and implement a means of evaluating the effectiveness of these strategies.

### **Objective 5**

*Religious Cooperation – Continue our commitment to the cause of religious unity.*

With the Lord working through all religions to provide the means for the life that leads to heaven, we are again called to a relationship of critical supportiveness. The committee is not recommending any notable increase in our national involvement, but the strategies are intended to relate that involvement more clearly to our purpose and to our other objectives.

### *Strategies*

- A. Continue our involvement in the National Council of Churches and make significant contributions to the policies and programs of the Council.
- B. Improve upon the reporting of our Council representatives to Convention and make resources and services of the Council available to our churches.
- C. Support our ministers' and laity's regional and local involvement in councils of churches and in interfaith activities.
- D. Foster among our church membership an attitude of appreciation and open-

mindedness toward the religions of the world.

- E. Provide for the ongoing evaluation of our participation in ecumenical activities, with a view toward focusing that participation in areas most closely related to our central purpose.
- F. Design and implement a means of evaluating the effectiveness of these strategies.

### Objective 6

*The New Age – Clarify and intensify our participation in and contribution to the Lord's New Age.*

There are strong indications in the world around us that the whole climate of thought is beginning to change. Specifically, the materialistic, mechanistic, “either-or” mentality so hostile to our message is under attack from within the scientific community itself, and there is a widespread resurgence of interest in spirituality. Again, the committee recommends a policy of critical supportiveness, with a strong sense that there are major opportunities in this area for both internal and external growth. The phrase “critical awareness” is intended to convey our belief that not everything new is necessarily in accord with our purpose, and that we have a great deal to learn about how the Lord is working for the new church in the world around us.

#### *Strategies*

- A. Foster an awareness of the freshness of our theology and its implications for our activities.
- B. Foster critical awareness of the congenial trends that occur in thought and activity outside Convention.
- C. Make ourselves and our theology known and available to persons involved in such thought and activity.
- D. Encourage and support involvement in New Age activities.
- E. Encourage the participation of “New Age” persons in Convention events and programming.
- F. Design and implement a means of evaluating the effectiveness of these strategies.

### Objective 7

*Use Our Resources – In accordance with our Doctrine of Use and in cooperation with Convention's constituent bodies, improve the management and use of the physical-financial resources available for the fulfillment of our*

*Purpose.*

We are per capita a startlingly wealthy church, and yet we seem to have trouble finding the money to do what needs to be done. Given growth in the clarity of our sense of purpose, we need to be candid with ourselves about our use of resources, and foster a motion from less effective to more effective uses. The committee recognizes and values the distribution of responsibility inherent in our present situation of local autonomy, and insists that this motion cannot be healthy unless it is voluntary; but it also insists that the principle of local autonomy must not be used to evade accountability to the principle of use.

***Strategies***

- A. In cooperation with Convention's constituent bodies, create and maintain an inventory of these physical and financial resources.
- B. Create and implement a system to improve the management of Convention's resources. This system should include provisions for: resources evaluation, cost/benefit financial planning, accounting, and other necessary items.
- C. Create and implement a system to aid Convention's constituent bodies in the management of their resources, and provide guidelines, standards, education, and other assistance.
- D. Create and implement a system to aid Convention's financial resources. This program will take advantage of the breadth of our current support base and will seek new sources of income.
- E. Keep Convention's constituent bodies aware of the programs and persons involved in the efforts to accomplish this objective.
- F. Design and implement a means of evaluating the effectiveness of these strategies.

**Objective 8**

***Communication*** – *Design and implement effective means of communication: means which will ensure an open and timely flow of information and will promote Convention's Purpose.*

The technology is available for the body of Convention to have a “central nervous system” that will overcome many of the liabilities of our wide geographical distribution, and both within and outside the church there is the expertise to design a system that will suit our particular needs. This objective relates closely to the “networking” strategy under Objective 1, as providing the means by which information resources may be made available when and where they are needed, and kindred individuals and groups kept in touch with each other.

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**Strategies**

- A. Provide means for the on-going evaluation of Convention's communication activities. Make sure that they are consistent with Convention's central Purpose.
- B. Establish and maintain a central information exchange to collect, store, correlate and disseminate information both within and beyond Convention. This central exchange will:
  - Incorporate a relational structure rather than a hierarchical one.
  - Take advantage of advancing technology. For example, computers, video, communications satellites, etc.
  - Be the hub of a "distributed information system" (see Strategy C)
  - Administer this "distributed information system."
- C. Design and implement a "distributed information system." This system will provide for the open, direct and timely flow of information among the various constituent groups and individuals of Convention.
- D. Design and implement means to coordinate Convention's various publications and productions. This way we will strive for greater effectiveness and economy.
- E. Establish and maintain means to ensure that our communications to the world at large are coordinated and considered, and foster an appreciation of Convention's purpose and objective.
- F. Recognize and promote clear and precise communication.
- G. Design and implement a means of evaluating the effectiveness of these strategies.

**Objective 9**

*Organized Structure – Design, adopt, and maintain an organizational structure that is directly responsive to Convention's Purpose and needs, and that includes provisions for its own self-evaluation and growth.*

**Toward a Theology of Polity**

The writings of our Church do not describe for us a particular form of church organization. Swedenborg insists that there must be order in the church; but since the possibility of a separate "Swedenborgian" ecclesiastical organization was not significant enough to mention, he was content to leave us with a few observations about church government based on eighteenth century European models.

Heavenly government is also a less useful model than we might expect. Since

heaven is characterized by essential unanimity, its “political system” can be described as democracy, aristocracy, oligarchy, anarchy, dictatorship, communism, socialism, or what you will.

Our own polity has evolved pragmatically. It began from the desire of separate societies to get together on some regular basis, and has grown and changed in response to changing circumstances. It is largely a traditional pattern: though if one sees democracy as a result of the Second Coming, this would then be a major “New Age” feature.

Essentially though, our own polity rests on Newtonian, Euclidian mechanical models. That is, it seeks to promote order and effectiveness by such devices as marking off areas of responsibility—drawing a single territorial map, as it were—and by a system of checks and balances.

This leads to such anomalies as having the Board of Education responsible for Leaguers’ travel to convention, the Board of Missions’ virtual exclusion from the field of missionary publication, and cumbersome procedures for the guidance and support of any venture that does not fit some existing category. It also means that it is quite possible for an individual to have been a lifelong member of one of our societies without being able to identify one thing that Convention has done for the welfare of that society.

In order to distribute responsibility as widely as possible under this system, we need our policy that a single individual not serve on more than two Convention boards or committees at once. This means, however, that it is rare for members of one board to have an appreciation of the problems and labors of another; and General Council depends for its information largely on minutes which are not designed for such communication.

Essentially, the Ad Hoc Committee sees a pressing need that we reconceptualize our organizational presuppositions on a more profound and more realistic model, looking at patterns of relationship that are actually productive. We see three basic essentials in this—clear and direct lines of mutual communication and accountability, the ready gathering of compatible interests, skills and resources for particular tasks, and a constructive accountability to our common theological convictions.

The model that we have in mind may be unfamiliar in terms of physical models, but it is immediately recognizable in terms of personal experience. It involves seeing the identity of an individual or group as essentially determined not by fixed boundaries or “externals,” but by a particular center; and by the relationships of that center to other centers. Boundaries or circumferences may then expand or contract as we generalize or specialize; and the overlaps, rather than be-

ing problems to be eliminated, are the utterly necessary fields of mutual support, enlightenment and cooperation.

In this model, the primary function of the centralized administration would be to administer decentralization. This central body should be granted such power, and only such power, as it needs to accomplish this task, and should be held accountable by Convention to policies and priorities determined by Convention.

***Strategies***

- A. Design an organizational structure that is directly responsive to Convention’s Purpose and needs, and includes provision for its own self evaluation.
- B. Create an ongoing process which ensures that the organization exercises self evaluation, is open to change, and encourages growth.
  - 1. Generate criteria for self evaluation and prepare a plan for adapting to change and growth.
  - 2. Generate feedback and data annually and encourage continual feedback.
  - 3. Assess and review the organization annually.
  - 4. Revise and adapt the plan each year and revise the structure as necessary.

**2.**

(Adopted by the General Council, July 18, 1949)

***Resolved:*** With regard to properties of local societies in which Convention has a contingent interest through conveyances providing that, in certain circumstances, the title would come to Convention, it is the policy of Convention not to make contributions toward the cost of maintenance of such properties, such maintenance being the sole responsibility of the Society in whose hands the title to the property is vested.

**3.**

(Adopted by General Convention, June 1960, Min. #58)

(Amended by General Convention, July 1, 1989, Min. #61)

(Amended by General Convention, June 30, 2015, Min. #20)

**A Standing Resolution to Swedenborgians Everywhere:**

***Resolved:*** The General Convention/Swedenborgian Church assembled at Bridgewater State University, Bridgewater, Massachusetts for Convention June 30, 2015 reaffirms its belief that the Church Universal includes those of diverse origins.

In its ever-growing desire to serve all of God's children, the General Convention (aka The Swedenborgian Church), urges Swedenborgians everywhere to acknowledge that the Church Universal is inclusive and to act in this spirit. Let no Society of the Church exclude any from membership on such considerations as ethnic origin, race, color, sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression, condition of health, handicap, or economic status; but seeking those who accept our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ as Redeemer of the world and who accept the essentials of faith of the Church, welcome all with joy and affection into the full and free community of the Church.

4.

(Adopted by General Convention, August 3, 1969)

**Resolved:** That the Secretary of Convention maintain a register of young men and women within the fellowship of the Swedenborgian Church who are recognized by the Selective Service System as conscientious objectors to war, and that the President of Convention appoint a minister to serve as spiritual counselor and advisor to these young men and women and to others who may apply to the Selective Service System for recognition as Conscientious Objectors; the purpose being that the Church might in this way show its sympathy with those whose conscience dictates such a step and may be of some assistance to them as they struggle with all of the implications and legal problems which such classification brings.

5.

(Adopted by General Convention, August 3, 1969)

**Resolved:** That the General Convention support the legalization of abortion in cases where it is responsibly applied for the physical and emotional welfare of those involved. Be it also resolved that such therapeutic abortion shall be considered primarily a matter of concern between the patient, attending physician, and personal counselor.

6.

(Adopted by General Convention, July 2, 1976)

**Resolved:** That General Council be given a standing order to recommend to the Convention the names of such persons who in its opinion should qualify for emeritus status, for a vote by Convention.

## 7.

(Adopted by General Council, January 22, 1977)

**Resolved:** It is recognized that the establishment of the requirements for membership is the responsibility of the individual society or other body, and that various types of membership are utilized by different bodies. However, for the purpose of determining delegate strength for the voting at Convention sessions only adult active members defined as follows shall be counted: An adult active member of a society is one who is eighteen years of age or older and who has been accepted by the Society through Confirmation or other appropriate service of introduction, or by transfer from another Society, and who within the year has shown active interest in his/her membership. This is demonstrated by joining in the programs of worship and work or by contributing toward its needs physically and financially. It shall be the joint responsibility of members and Societies involved to ensure that the member is not counted in more than one Society's count for delegate strength.

## 8.

(Adopted by General Convention on recommendation of its Council of Ministers, July 1, 1978)

## SWEDENBORG'S REVELATION

### Perspectives of the General Convention

The Lord's Second Coming promised in the Gospels is described in *True Christian Religion* §779 as a process of spiritual reawakening, beginning with a cosmic event in which Swedenborg was called to play a key role. Through spiritual experiences while reading the Holy Word, he received truth from the Lord into his understanding. From this enlightenment he worked out and published teachings for a new church to serve the new age of the Lord's Second Coming. The truth of these teachings revealed by the Lord to Swedenborg is presented to us with the authority of the Holy Word from which they are drawn, and by which they are confirmed. This new revelation teaches us three essential things to believe and do. The first of these is to worship our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ as the one God in whom is the divine Trinity. The second is to hold to the conviction that the Word of God is holy, not only in its plain sense, but also because of the deeper meanings lying within it. The third is to commit ourselves to a life embodying love to the Lord and the neighbor. In living these three essentials, each of us must search with discernment for critical meaning in Swedenborg's theological writings. Any written form of revelation can be misunderstood if it is insisted that

a single interpretation is final and prescriptive. However, we are convinced that if love to the Lord and the neighbor permeate our perceptions, our church will be unified despite any number of particular differences of opinion as to interpretation and application of doctrine. In former times, when Christian doctrine was hammered out by theologians or determined by church councils, unity depended on obedience to creed, with reason subservient to faith. But in this new age, the spiritual freedom of the individual has been restored. Now it is permitted to enter with understanding into the mysteries of faith.

### 9.

(Adopted by General Convention, July 2, 1982)

**Resolved:** It is recognized that it is the responsibility of the church to voice its conviction on ethical and moral issues that arise from time to time in our nation and in our world. Where the issue is one of long-term relevance, and where opportunity has been afforded to societies and associations for prior discussion, a member of Convention may submit to the President, in time for announcement on the first day of a Convention session, a written proposal for a Standing Resolution. The President shall at that time accept motions to refer or to place on the agenda with time for discussion.

Should the issue be one of immediate urgency only a member of Convention may submit to the President, in time for announcement on the first full day of a Convention session, a written proposal that a particular resolution be adopted as “the sense of this meeting.” The President shall at that time accept motions to refer or to place on the agenda with time for discussion. Should such resolution come to a vote, the vote shall be counted and the tally included with any use of the resolution.

### 10.

(Adopted by General Convention, June 30, 1983)

(Amended by General Convention, July 3, 2019)

*[This Standing Resolution is no longer an operating policy of the General Convention.]*

General Convention no longer provides ministers personal loans through the Building Fund. Outstanding loans that remain in good standing will continue as agreed until fully repaid. Ministers with outstanding loans from the building fund, who cease to remain on the Active Roll of the Council of Ministers, may have their loan called in and due and payable within ninety days.”

11.

(Adopted by the General Council, June 29, 1983)

**Resolved:** That it is the responsibility of the Vice President, together with a committee he may appoint, to conduct an annual review of the Central Office, covering staff, employees, organization, etc.

12.

(Adopted by General Council, January 30, 1983)

(Addendum, May 12, 1988)

(Addendum amended and adopted by the General Council on June 25, 2022)

**Resolved:** “Whereas: The American New Church Tract and Publication Society has indicated its desire to turn over its assets to the General Convention of the New Jerusalem in the U.S.A. to continue the purposes for which the Tract Society was established, and

Whereas: these purposes are included within the broad purposes of General Convention; now therefore, be it

**Resolved:** that General Convention agrees to accept the funds of the Tract Society, and if when offered, to be held for the purposes given and specifically that the income of those funds be used first: for the publication and distribution of *Our Daily Bread* and second: for other publications efforts; and further be it

**Resolved:** that the Treasurer of General Convention be directed to assist the Tract Society in the orderly transfer of these funds.”

**Addendum:** Selection and appointment of the Editor of *Our Daily Bread* shall be made annually by the General Council at their Fall meeting. The Editor shall serve, at will, for a period of one year with reappointment, or appointment of a new editor, taking place each year on the anniversary date of appointment.

Should the position of Editor become vacant for any reason between General Council meetings, then the President of Convention may appoint a new Editor in the absence of a special meeting of the General Council. The Editor filling the unexpired term shall then serve until the Fall appointment schedule.

The General Council will serve as the Publisher, having the authority to settle any issues that may arise concerning editorial decisions, but otherwise leaving daily operating decisions to the discretion of the Editor. The publication of *Our Daily Bread* shall not be terminated without a vote of the General Council.

**13.**

(Adopted by General Convention, June 28, 1989)

That the AIDS Ministry Committee appointed by the Cabinet continue to carry out its task which shall include support of Swedenborgian Ministries to HIV persons, their families and friends; facilitation of ecumenical involvement in these ministries; and the provision of educational materials.

**14.**

(Adopted by General Convention, July 1, 2019)

**Statement of the Swedenborgian Church of North America on  
Discrimination**

As Swedenborgians we affirm the core truths of our faith that honor the diversity of both heaven and earth, and recognize that loving people who are different from us is integral to the practice of a religious life.

We also acknowledge that broad generalizations of races, nations, genders, sexual orientations, physical abilities, and religions can be found in our sacred texts when interpreted literally and that these texts have been used on occasion to promote opinions that run counter to these core truths.

We hereby affirm our responsibility to interpret our texts in the light of love and inclusion, in heaven's light, and categorically reject interpretations of the Bible or of Swedenborg's writings that promote a discriminatory viewpoint. Where any translation or interpretation appears to invite the reader to engage in exclusionary or hateful thinking, promote stereotypes, or justify discrimination against anyone for any reason, regardless of the source, we stand against this. If any member, clergy, employee, or other affiliated person indicates by word, deed, works, writings, affiliations, or any other means, racism, anti-Semitism, anti-Muslim bigotry, gender bias, heterosexism, ableism, or any other expression of prejudice, they do not reflect nor represent the practical doctrine of the Swedenborgian Church.

We encourage one another to advocate for those who face discrimination and to address these expressions of bias in our personal interactions and in the larger society. We also acknowledge that forms of discrimination come in many subtle shades, and that we have a responsibility to regularly investigate our actions and beliefs, both individually and collectively to align them with these truths, so that we can be greater vessels for Divine Love in the world.

**15.**

(Adopted by General Convention, July 1, 2019)

**GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES**

For Ministries of the Swedenborgian Church of North America

**Congregational Relations**

- Develop a Congregational Covenant for healthy communication practices in the congregation's life, and ensure the Covenant is visible and frequently referenced.
- Keep the congregation informed about what the ministry governing board or council is doing, such as regularly distributing Minutes to the membership and friends on email.
- Offer open Board meetings for transparency and cohesiveness.
- Conduct periodic congregational surveys assessing experiences in the ministry, since such surveys facilitate a sense of congregational teamwork and enable a transparency and inclusion that often harvests information and viewpoints otherwise held back.
- Use a facilitator sooner rather than later when congregational dynamics seem to be stuck.
- Maintain a standing pastoral relations committee to provide a communication sounding board.

**Administration**

- Maintain clear job descriptions for all paid staff positions, including the ordained and consecrated leadership, and perform annual reviews.
- Develop explicit guidelines on compensating members for work in the ministry.
- Create and annually update a Conflict of Interest Policy for the primary governing board.
- Avoid having more than one family member at the same time on the primary governing board.
- Review Bylaws regularly to ensure they fit the ministry purposes and keep them visible.
- Ensure the Bylaws have a properly worded dissolution clause that protects assets from improper takeover and provides guidelines for how assets will be distributed (e.g., to the denomination, the Association, the theological

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school, a designated Convention ministry, or combination of these).

### **Denominational Relations**

- Follow the denomination's Advisory Placement Committee's guidelines when conducting position searches.
- Send delegates annually to the Association and denominational gatherings and submit an annual ministry report for the denomination's Journal.\*
- Keep the denomination's Central Office supplied with a copy of the ministry's current Constitution and Bylaws.

*\*Note: Receipt of timely annual ministry reports is required in order to be eligible for Augmentation Fund grants.*

## A COVENANTAL SPIRITUALITY FOR THE SWEDENBORGIAN CHURCH OF NORTH AMERICA

### A Covenant between Constituent Bodies and the Denomination

#### **The Swedenborgian Church of North America promises to:**

- Provide ministry resources for growth, outreach, and weekly programming.
- Provide information about potential grant opportunities
- Provide support and guidance when asked regarding internal conflict difficulties
- Support ministries without current ordained or consecrated leadership with 1) a registry of ministers and pastors willing to travel to churches, 2) a list of ministers seeking a pastorate position, and 3) the Advisory Placement Committee's guidelines
- Keep information about the denomination in front of the consciousness of local ministries to encourage relationship to and community with the larger spiritual community of Convention.

#### **Constituent Ministries of the Swedenborgian Church of North America promise to:**

- Participate annually if at all possible in the Association and the summer denominational convention meetings.
- Submit an annual ministry report for the denomination's Journal.
- Follow the denomination's Advisory Placement Committee's guidelines when conducting position searches.

- Keep the denomination's Central Office supplied with a copy of the ministry's current Bylaws, executive committee members, and any changes in pastorate positions and compensation as regards the pension fund.
- Keep the Association and the denomination in front of the consciousness of local members to encourage relationship to and community with the larger spiritual community of Convention.

## 16.

(Adopted by General Convention, June 27, 2022)

### **Welcome and Support of All People in the LGBTQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Plus<sup>1</sup>) Community**

The Swedenborgian Church of North America (SCNA) publicly declares itself to be LGBTQ+ Embracing. The SCNA encourages all its constituent bodies to become LGBTQ+ Embracing.

As an LGBTQ+ Embracing organization, the SCNA recognizes that the LGBTQ+ community, in particular those of color, continue to experience prejudice, discrimination, and condemnation at the hands of many religious institutions. The SCNA will clearly and publicly make known their welcome of all LGBTQ+ people, will advocate in the public sphere for their rights, and will educate themselves on the care and pastoring of people in the LGBTQ+ community. We welcome LGBTQ+ seekers and support their identities and loving relationships. All rites and sacraments of the SCNA are available to LGBTQ+ people including, baptism, confirmation, communion, marriage, consecration as a licensed pastor, ordination, and services of remembrance and resurrection.

The SCNA understands the message of love and inclusion taught to us through the Bible and insights of Emanuel Swedenborg to affirm diversity in all its exciting complexity, offering equal value and worth to all people with a variety of God given gender identities, gender expressions, sexual orientations, and loving relationships. The SCNA will seek to interpret the Bible and the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg in ways that honor the equal value and worth of all sexual orientations, genders, gender identities, and gender expressions. We will support everyone who is engaged in the regenerative journey—individual or partnered. We affirm any partnered relationships that are entered into freely, are grounded in mutual fidelity and respect, and have as their end the well-being and spiritual growth of each partner. We acknowledge that living in truly loving and wise ways

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<sup>1</sup> Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Plus—including: intersex, pansexual, two-spirit, non-binary, gender non-conforming, aromantic, and asexual

is possible for finite and fallible human beings only with the Lord's leading.

As our understanding of this continues to unfold, the SCNA is dedicated to educating itself and others. The SCNA respects the judgment of those who make decisions for its constituent bodies and lends its support to them as they discern whether to become LGBTQ+ Embracing and will offer resources and guidance to facilitate the process.

### 17.

(Adopted by General Convention, June 30, 2024)

### **Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery & Statement of Support for Indigenous Peoples in Pursuit of Restitution & Reparations; Swedenborgians Acting Against Racism (SAAR) has proposed and the General Council has accepted the proposal**

The Swedenborgian Church of North America (SCNA) publicly repudiates the so-called “Doctrine of Discovery” starting in the 15<sup>th</sup> century that was employed by European Christians to colonize and subjugate the lands and indigenous peoples they “discovered” outside of Europe and force upon them European laws, cultural, practices, languages, and religious dogma. Swedenborg revealed that Divine Providence intends for humans to think, intend, and act in spiritual freedom, and not be compelled by outside force. The SCNA encourages all its constituent bodies to recognize, affirm, and support the right of indigenous peoples to celebrate their languages and traditions, pass on their stories, practice their religious rights, and, to whatever extent practicable, to return to their role as stewards over their sacred ancestral lands whereon to reclaim, tend, and protect the resources they once managed and depended upon in the lands they revere.”

### 18.

(Adopted by General Convention, June 30, 2024)

### **Standing Resolution on Climate Justice**

Within the Swedenborgian traditions, our innate connection to nature is deeply valued as a means for communication with the Divine, a way for us to encounter spirituality through the power of correspondences. Swedenborg's theology has long fertilized a history of environmental justice, from the foundation of the Sierra Club in 1892, in San Francisco, to the motivations behind some of the first movements for animal rights in the United Kingdom. For many involved in these movements and traditions, nature was not something corrupt or sinful,

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or base matter that we humans had to transcend, or turn into profit; it was intrinsically, instead, an interconnected web, a ladder extending between all created things, whose dynamic relationships should “stun” our minds with wonder (DLW no. §332).

Our churches have also long esteemed the critical insights afforded by modern science; that we are “now permitted” (*nunc licet*) to enter into the secrets of faith with a scientific understanding of the cosmos. It is with gravest concern that we join the faith leaders of other religious traditions in acknowledging the ongoing consequences of anthropogenic climate change, and the present and future harm that our mistreatment of the environment continues to inflict. With this standing resolution, we affirm the consensus and evidence provided by the scientific community about our quickly warming planet, and believe that we are called upon by our Swedenborgian faith to put our moral concerns into action, to be “of use” to our neighbor, in its broadest sense, to work for the greater good of all living things which refract God’s Divine Love and Wisdom.

The catastrophic consequences of climate change are not equally distributed, and we acknowledge how the brunt of the environmental crisis is most seriously impacting marginalized societies and persons (the poor, the disabled, and various black and brown communities in the global south and elsewhere, indigenous peoples, women and youth). As Christians, we are called to justice and solidarity with those who are suffering—“Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters, you have also done it for me”—and as Swedenborgians, we embrace all persons as members of one universal family in which we share.

We affirm that while a call to climate justice will accordingly take many different forms, that the Swedenborgian faith nevertheless shares a grounded orientation towards the presence of the spiritual as intrinsically part of, and entangled with, the goodness of the natural world (“And God saw that it was good”). We believe that the Divine calls for us to be better stewards of this gift of Creation, so that future generations of human and other-than-human life may flourish, continuing to actualize a heaven on earth, an earth as it is in heaven. We mourn the ongoing, unnecessary loss of biodiversity caused by human greed—this sixth great extinction the earth is undergoing—and commit to regenerating not only our individual selves, but this collectively shared and most precious planet we all call home.

Heeding a call to have radical hope, we encourage Swedenborgian communities in all their varieties of use to consider taking and encouraging the following actions:

For individuals: to be conscientious consumers taking the time to research

the impacts of the greener alternatives they are considering. For congregations: to offer creation care worship and education centering environmental justice, socially-responsible investments, and the local advocacy and support of environmentally just, green efforts. For the denomination as a whole: to explore socially-responsible investments, join/support/promote lobbying efforts of grassroots movements which center environmental justice and aim to build support across bipartisan lines for climate justice legislation.

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## STANDING RECOMMENDATIONS

### To Associations, etc.

Each Association, or other collective body of the Church, is requested to report annually a list of its ministers.

Associations are recommended to make such specific rules, under the general rules for the regulation of the ministry, as they may consider necessary or desirable.

Associations are requested to furnish the Secretaries with copies of all their printed *Journals* of past years, and also copies of their future proceedings, from time to time, as they may be published. (*Journal* of 1900, Minute 163.)

In the apportionment of delegates to the Convention, the Association shall try to secure a proportionate representation of the societies constituting them, and to that end shall consult the wishes of the various societies. (*Journal*, 1937, Minute 50.)

### To Isolated Societies

To establish Sabbath school and to give it watchful care in which the truths of the Church shall be distinctly taught.

To adopt as rules of discipline, or laws of charity, what is taught by the Lord in Matt. v.23, 24, and xviii. 15–17.

To establish free libraries of the theological works of Swedenborg for loan to all who are interested.

### To Ministers

To keep a record of names, ages, residences, etc. of all persons baptized by them.

### To the Standing Committee of the American New Church Sunday School Association

To report annually to the Convention such statistics and such action by the Association as may be of general interest.

### As to Collections of Convention

Collections at the Sunday morning service of the Convention to be for the general use of Convention. (*Journal* of 1993, Minute 6.)

### Procedures of Appointments to the National Council of Churches

The President of Convention, with the counsel and advice of the Executive

Committee of the Council of Ministers, shall make the various appointments to the National Council of Churches, and that these then be confirmed by the General Council.

### **The Nominating Committee**

It is recommended to the Nominating Committee, that when preparing a slate of nominees to fill the elective offices of The General Convention, the slate be of such order that if elected, a nominee shall not serve on more than two Boards or Committees or a Board and a Committee simultaneously. “No individual who has accepted nomination for an office shall accept nomination for another office if election to one would invalidate election to the other.” It is further recommended that this order be kept by the Chair when accepting nominations from the floor of Convention.

### **To the Convention**

To submit (to the President or Treasurer), in advance of the business session of Convention, any request for appropriation of funds.

### **To Leaders** (adopted June 28, 2021)

*A Reminder to Pause Before Hitting ‘Send’, And Then Ask Yourself...  
“How Am I Loving God and the Neighbor in this Post?”*

#### **Good Practices for Social Media Use Understanding**

In today’s world of pervasive social media use, all of our church leaders have become the outward face of the Swedenborgian Church. An essential question our leaders might now mindfully be thinking of asking themselves is: How am I loving God and the neighbor in what I post?

As church leaders—ordained clergy, licensed pastors, lay leaders, committee, and board members—both local and national, we have to be especially discerning as we speak for the local church and for the greater church. Like it or not, we carry additional authority and responsibility. We need to be consciously, and conscientiously, aware that our words and sentiments online can project a positive or negative influence, elicit a calming or angering effect, promote spiritual enlightenment or unrest.

As lay and clergy leaders in the Swedenborgian Church of North America, we affirm our tradition’s embrace of varied opinions as well as the importance of personal choice and freedom in all matters (*Secrets of Heaven* §2876). We value a diverse community that is bound together by shared love of the Lord and service to the neighbor. As Swedenborgian Church leaders, we also carry a responsibil-

ity in all we do and say—this can be especially challenging because of the blur between personal and professional communications. It is hoped that these “Good Practices for Social Media Use” can help lessen that challenge with thoughts on how to maintain a neighborly and respectable social media presence with God’s love and wisdom at the forefront.

It is a given that social media can be used as a powerful, positive tool for communication or a precarious emotional outlet that can lead to risky, contrary, and potentially harmful commentary. It is our responsibility to use our discernment. *Let’s consider asking ourselves the questions below before posting:*

- What kind of conversation am I starting or encouraging?
- Why am I posting? Am I feeling tired, angry, or scared? Am I feeling provoked?
  - If there is conflict—how is my contribution going to de-escalate the situation?
  - If I’ve already contributed to this conversation today—would it better to wait 24 hours before adding anything further?
    - Would I choose to say these things face-to-face?
    - Would this conversation be better handled privately?
    - Will I be embarrassed or cause embarrassment if this post appears somewhere else?
      - Are my comments towards people and/or the church following the sentiment expressed here?
      - What can I do to make this conversation more inclusive, just, and equitable?

In addition to attending to the wisdom of the above list, special attention needs to be focused on how adults interact responsibly with our often-vulnerable youth online. Added to the all important moral, ethical, and spiritual reasons is the liability risk. *Following are further good practices that will help us maintain healthy and safe relationships all around:*

- All public content, communication, and information shared should be professional and youth appropriate.
- Unless other arrangements have been made with parents, leaders should not send requests outside of family to add youth to their network on a social media website (“friend requests”).
- Adults may accept friend requests from youth, however, we should carefully discern the level of contact we should maintain with youth prior to responding to these requests.
- If friend requests from youth are declined, we should explain to the youth

why this was done so as to maintain healthy face-to-face relationships.

- Written messages and transmitted images can often be ambiguous, confusing, and taken out of context. Always follow professional standards and do not share any questionable content with youth.
- Pictures or videos of minors may only be shared with the permission of the minor and their parent or legal guardian.
- Ask yourself: does my communication reflect good and wise practices for working with children and youth? Would you say this to a child or youth if you were face-to-face with them?

And finally, some nuts and bolts for all adults and youth:

*Privacy, Confidentiality, Authorization*

- Respecting Privacy: I will respect my own privacy as well as that of my co-workers/friends and of any organization by not providing or sharing any personal or confidential information, including addresses or locations, without permission from that person or organization. I will ask myself: Is this my news to tell? Do I have permission to share this information?
- I will remember that, unless duly authorized, I will not speak on behalf of the Swedenborgian Church—or even my own local congregation. I will be professional and maintain the integrity of my office as a church leader through social media.
- I will be aware that giving my opinion, especially on hotly debated topics, can be construed as making a statement on behalf of the church.
- For my protection and the protection of the Swedenborgian Church, I note that I am prohibited from using internal or external social media channels to discuss confidential items, legal matters, litigation, or organizational financial performance. Confidential information includes anything labeled as such or information not available to the public.
- I will cite resources and not violate copyright and fair use laws nor plagiarize another's work. If required, I will obtain permission if I wish to use material created by someone else.

Approaching social media with clarity of mind and sincerity of heart contributes to useful experiences that promote healthy interactions, meaningful conversations, and love of the neighbor.

For, as we are reminded,

*“Everyone can see that charity is doing no evil to the neighbor; for charity is love towards our neighbor, and a person who loves anyone wants to avoid doing evil to them. There is a conjunction of souls between them.”* (Doctrine of Charity §14)

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## SEVEN YEAR CYCLE OF ANNUAL THEMES

It is part of the Lord's Providence that in every challenge there is an opportunity and the bigger the challenge, the bigger the opportunity. That's a good thing for us, not least because, as a church, we are facing a very big challenge indeed. The Standing Committee for Education and Resources for Spiritual Community (SCER) every year undertakes a useful way to meet that challenge, one that can offer us a considerable opportunity to grow and move forward as bearers of a new message of hope for the world.

A regular cycle of thematically-unified, denomination-wide programming, built around the key beliefs of our faith, will go far in restoring our church's confidence and capacity to play its proper part in the building of the New Jerusalem. As Swedenborgians we are blessed in many ways but especially with a love of learning. This is our strength and our opportunity. Let's learn and grow into a new future.

### **The Seven-Year Cycle of Annual Themes**

#### 1. THE YEAR OF THE LORD (2019–2020)

the primacy of Spirit:

- the one Lord, Love and Wisdom, Creator and Life
- the unifying truth, hope and power, known by many names
- revealed for us in Jesus, as friend, mentor, model

#### 2. THE YEAR OF THE SPIRITUAL WORLD (2020–2021)

the nature of Life:

- the diverse, multi-dimensional, and eternal nature of life
- the reality of the spiritual world; heaven, hell, and world of spirits
- our journey with angels and demons, from this life to the next

#### 3. THE YEAR OF PROVIDENCE (2021–2022)

the assurance of Purpose:

- the universe makes sense and we have a special, angelic purpose
- the laws of Providence are Love and Wisdom at work for us
- our call to "choose life" and become who we (really) are

#### 4. THE YEAR OF REGENERATION (2022–2023)

the way of Change:

- spiritual life as intentional, committed, relational
- the journey of transformation and the second birth
- the work of repenting, reforming, and regenerating

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5. THE YEAR OF SPIRITUAL USES (2023–2024)

the call to be a Blessing:

- true faith as the life of charity, what we actually do, not just think or say
- discerning our gifts through love in action (charity)
- becoming our true use for the building of the New Jerusalem

6. THE YEAR OF THE WORD (2024–2025)

the power of holy Scriptures:

- correspondences and the Lord's presence in the Word
- the story of our lives in the Word
- the sacred character of all holy texts

7. THE YEAR OF THE NEW JERUSALEM (2025–2026)

the emergence of a New World:

- the Second Coming in the Spirit now
- the new world and new consciousness emerging now
- building the future: the unity of the human family in justice and peace

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## BYLAWS OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

### PREAMBLE

The Council of Ministers (COM) is established by Article II of the Constitution of the General Convention of the New Jerusalem in the United States of America which reads in part as follows: “The officers of the Convention shall be... a Council of Ministers, consisting of all ministers belonging to the Convention, of whom twelve shall constitute a quorum...”

In order that it may in more orderly fashion exercise the powers and perform the duties committed to it by Article III, Section 3, and Article V, Section 1, of the said Constitution, and Article XII of the Bylaws of the said General Convention, the Council of Ministers, establishes these Bylaws as a guide to its procedure.

### Article I.

#### Categories of Membership

- Section 1. Internal Categories of Clerical Standing with COM shall be:**
- Active:** defined as any ordained minister that:
1. is employed as a minister by a constituent body of Convention, or
  2. is involved in a ministry recognized as valid by COM, or
  3. is present at COM annual or regional meetings.
- Inactive:** defined as any ordained minister who does not meet the above requirements, but who has submitted an annual accounting of ministerial activity to the COM Secretary in accordance with denominational Bylaws, Article XII, Section 3.
- Not in Good Standing:** a member who has not met the professional standards of ministry in the Swedenborgian Church.
- Lapsed:** defined as any minister that has not met any of the above requirements and has been not in good standing for a period of three years.
- Retired:** defined as any minister that has drawn on his or her retirement benefits and who has requested to be considered as retired on the Council’s Roll. Only those members that have retired in good standing shall be eligible for supplemental retirement benefits.

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- Severed:** defined as any minister who has been removed from the Roll of Ministers by request or as a result of disciplinary action.
- Deceased:** defined as any minister who has died.

### **Section 2.**        *Definitions of Clerical Standing*

“**Good Standing**” is defined as a member of the Council that: participates in continuing education on a biennial basis for the purpose of building and maintaining professional competence, in accordance with COM Standing Resolutions, paragraph 2, and participates in supervision on an ongoing basis for the purpose of maintaining a personal system of emotional support, in recognition of “Guidelines for Ministerial Work in the General Convention,” Section III, preamble, *and* is not under disciplinary action by the Council of Ministers.

“**Not in Good Standing**” is defined as a member of the Council that has not met the above requirements.

*Amended June 2008, Bridgewater, Massachusetts*

### **Section 3.**        *Credentials*

All members of the Council who are not retired are requested to communicate with the COM Secretary *before the end of May* regarding their continuing education and supervision activities during the time since the last COM annual meeting. Those who do so shall be recorded as in good standing. The names of those who have not done so will be shared with the Executive Committee, who shall respond as follows.

### *Procedure for Changes in Clerical Standing*

A member of the Council’s Executive Committee shall contact any member of the Council whose standing is in jeopardy at least thirty days before the Council convenes for its Annual Meeting. The Executive Committee shall take into account such member’s specific situation and shall suggest reasonable rectifying measures before any change in standing is considered. If the member in question is unwilling to comply with such measures, he or she will be considered temporarily “not in good standing” until such measures are taken. The Executive Committee shall continue to support and encourage an individual who is not in good standing throughout a restorative period.

A member who is not in good standing and who is in disagreement with such a standing may make an appeal to the Council as a whole, whose majority vote shall determine the standing of the member in question. The name of a member

who is not in good standing for a period of three years shall be presented before COM. They shall decide by vote whether or not to designate such member in the Roll of Ministers as “Lapsed.” A person whose membership has lapsed and who wishes to become active again may make a written appeal to the Council’s Executive Committee.

*Amended July 8, 2005, Berkeley, California*

*Amended June 2008, Bridgewater, Massachusetts*

## **Article II. Sessions and Meetings**

**Section 1.** Sessions of the Council of Ministers shall be held in connection with every session of the General Convention, at such times as may be assigned to it by the Business Committee of the Convention.

**Section 2.** Special meetings of the Council may be held at any time at the call of the Executive Committee or by letter vote initiated by petition of at least seven members. Public notice shall be given of the time and place of the proposed meeting.

**Section 3.** Meetings of the Council of Ministers shall be of three types: public meetings, open to anyone who may be interested; business meetings, at which the business of the Council shall be transacted, attendance at business meetings being limited to members of the Council, the President of Convention if said person is not ordained, the Dean and full-time faculty of the Swedenborgian House of Studies, if said persons are not ordained authorized candidates, theological students, and others who may be admitted by vote of the Council; and executive session, for which all persons who are not members of the Council shall withdraw at the request of the Chair. Any guest may be invited to remain for executive sessions at the request of a Council member, together with a three-quarters vote of the Council.

*Amended July 9, 2004, Waterloo, Ontario.*

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**Article III.**  
**Officers**

**Section 1.** The officers of the Council of Ministers shall be a Chair, a Secretary, and three at-large members of the Executive Committee.

**Section 2.** At its 1993 sessions, the Council of Ministers shall elect a chair for a two-year term, and a secretary for a three-year term. In subsequent years, when the offices become vacant, the chair and secretary shall each be elected for a three-year term. Officers who have served two consecutive full terms shall not be eligible for immediate re-election.

*Amended June 27, 1992.*

**Section 3.** The Chair of the Council shall preside at all meetings, and shall, unless in any case it be otherwise ordered by the Council, appoint all members of committees, except the Executive Committee and the Program Committee. The Chair shall designate the chairmen of such committees as he may appoint.

The Secretary of the Council shall perform the usual duties of a secretary, and in addition shall present to the Convention a report of all meetings of the Council, including the titles of all papers presented, a summary of the important business transacted, and a statement of all matters referred by the Council of Ministers to the Convention and of all recommendations made to said Convention.

The Executive Committee shall consist of the Chair, the Secretary, and three members to be elected initially by the Council for terms of one, two, and three years, and thereafter one member to be elected annually by the Council for a term of three years. Executive Committee members who have served two consecutive full terms shall not be eligible for immediate re-election. It shall be the duty of the Committee to fill vacancies and to consider and act on matters connected with the business of the Council in the interim of its sessions. It shall have no power, however, to make decisions in the name of the Council with reference to any matter within the province of the Council's Standing Committees.

*Amended June 2008, Bridgewater, Massachusetts*

**Section 4.** In the interim between the sessions of the Council of Ministers matters requiring the immediate decision by the Council may be acted upon

by vote recorded by the Secretary through a letter, email, or conference call, to be determined by the Executive Committee. For such votes to be valid, at least twenty ministers must cast ballots. If by letter, ballots must be received within 30 days from the date of issuance. If by email, ballots must be received within 7 days from date of issuance. If by conference call, the ballots shall be recorded orally at the time of the call. Every reasonable effort will be made to contact every active member of the Council.

*Amended July 9, 2004, Waterloo, Ontario.*

#### **Article IV. Committees**

**Section 1.** There shall be a Nominating Committee of three persons which shall present to the Council at each annual meeting a full slate of nominees including two nominees for Convention Preacher. At the meeting at which this Bylaw is adopted, one member shall be elected for a three-year term, one for a two-year term, and one for a one-year term, with the member whose term is next to expire to serve as chair.

**Section 2.** The Standing Committees of the Council shall be the Committee on Worship, the Committee on Program, the Committee on Ministerial Ethics, the Committee on Admission into the Ministry, the Committee on Revision of the Roll, the Misconduct Determination Board, and the Advisory Placement Committee.

In addition, the Chair of the Council upon the decease of any member thereof shall appoint a committee to prepare a memorial to be offered for presentation before the Convention. The Council may from time to time order the appointment of such special committees as it may deem necessary.

*Amended June 2012, Bridgewater, Massachusetts.*

**Section 3.** Members of Standing Committees shall serve until their successors are appointed.

**Section 4.** The Committee on Worship shall consider and report on all matters connected with the worship of the Church, as well as proposed changes in or additions to its liturgical books.

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The Committee will explore and develop new forms, style and materials of worship and liturgy to meet the expanding needs of Convention Worship Leaders.

The Committee, or an appointed individual by the Committee, will oversee and coordinate, in conjunction with the host group and/or the Convention Planning Committee, the worship and music expenses of our annual convention.

*Amended June 2009, Seattle, Washington*

**Section 5.** The Committee on Program shall consist of the Chair of the Council of Ministers, the Secretary of the Council, and the Dean of the Swedenborgian House of Studies. Its duties shall be to prepare the program for each session of the Council.

*Amended June 2008, Bridgewater, Massachusetts*

**Section 6.** The Committee on Ministerial Ethics shall consist of the council appointed by the Chair for their depth of pastoral experience and background in the study of ethics. This committee shall:

1. periodically present issues for reflection and discussion for meetings of the Council and shall consist of three members of the council.
2. be available for consultation and advice in cases of need, and
3. propose such revisions in the Guidelines for Ministerial work in the General Convention of Swedenborgian churches as it may deem useful.

**Section 7.** The Committee on Admission into the Ministry (CAM) shall consist of a chair, who will be a member of this council who has served at least one complete term (3 years) on the Committee on Admission to Ministry and shall be elected by the Council for a three-year term; two at-large members who are ministers with at least five years ministerial service within the denomination, one to be elected by the Council of Ministers and one to be elected by Convention; one lay person to be elected by Convention; and the President of Convention. The three elected members are to be elected for three-year terms, one to be elected each year. At-large members who have served two consecutive full terms shall not be eligible for immediate re-election. The chair may not serve more

than two consecutive terms as chair and is not eligible to serve as an at-large member following a term as chair. Members of the regular faculty of the theological school shall not be eligible for election, and should either the President of Convention or Chair of the Council of Ministers be a member of that faculty, said officer shall designate a member of the Council of Ministers as replacement, subject to the approval of the Council.

The primary duty of this committee shall be to oversee the maintenance of high standards for Convention's ministry. To this end, it shall interview all candidates for ordination or induction into our ministry, and make its recommendations to the Council of Ministers. It shall also annually grant or deny the status of candidates for ordination to all Swedenborgian affiliated theological school students or applicants who request it, confer regularly with such students, and report its decisions to each student concerned, to the faculty of the School and to the Augmentation Fund Committee.

It shall also confer with the candidate before ordination, to the end that the candidate may be mindful to the task ahead, and approach the Rite of Ordination truly prepared for consecration to the Lord's service.

*Amended July 9, 2004, Waterloo, Ontario*

*Amended June 25, 2015, Bridgewater, Massachusetts*

**Section 8.** The Committee on Revision of the Roll shall consist of three members; to it shall be referred without further action by the Council all matters of record involving changes in the Roll of Ministers of the General Convention, for report and recommendation to the Council.

It shall also be the duty of this Committee to keep a Roll of Former Ministers of Convention, to which the names of those who have ceased to be minister thereof, through death, resignation, or removal, shall be transferred in accordance with the rules of Convention.

**Section 9.** The Misconduct Determination Board shall consist of five members, three of which will be from the Executive Committee and two from the Ethics Committee. It shall be the duty of this Board to review charges and evidence given it from the Board of Inquiry and determine:

- i) if misconduct occurred, and
- ii) what actions should be taken.

The Misconduct Determination Board is to follow the polices laid out in the misconduct procedures adopted by the Council of Ministers and General Council.

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*Added June 2012, Bridgewater, Massachusetts.*

**Section 10.** The Advisory Placement Committee shall consist of three members; the Chair of the Council of Ministers, the Dean of the Swedenborgian House of Studies, and the President of Convention who serves as Chair. It shall be the duty of this committee to provide resources and advise ministers who are seeking employment within the denomination and also societies that are seeking to call ministers.

*Added June 2012, Bridgewater, Massachusetts.*

**Section 11.** The Chaplaincy Committee shall consist of five members of the council, appointed by the Executive Committee, who are charged with the following tasks. Advising our denominational Endorser, who has the sole authority to accept or not accept an applicant who desires to be endorsed by the Swedenborgian Church. Advising the Committee on Admission into the Ministry regarding candidates on the ordination track. At the request of CAM and/or a candidate for ordination, the committee will provide mentorship for candidates for ordination in matters such as selecting a CPE program to fulfill their requirement for ordination. Providing a “system of support” for CPE students, and endorsed chaplains, such as the accessibility of avenues of communication for our chaplains, written guidelines which must be maintained for endorsement, presentations and papers on Swedenborgian theology and chaplaincy, and a periodic online support group.

*Added June 2024, East Lansing, Michigan.*

## **Article V. Business**

**Section 1.** The business of the Council shall be considered in the executive meetings in the following order:

1. Call to order
2. Address of the Chairman
3. Adoption of report of the Program Committee
4. Appointment of special committees for the session
5. Communications
6. Report of the Executive Committee

7. Reports of Standing Committees
8. Reports of Special Committees
9. Old Business
10. New Business
11. Election
12. Adjournment

The Standing Committees shall report in the order in which they are named in Article III, Section 1. If a report is not ready, it shall be passed over until all other committees have had an opportunity to report, unless the Council set a specific time for hearing of a report. No debate shall be allowed on any of the above reports until all of them have been presented, but a motion to refer or adopt a recommendation where there is no desire to debate shall be in order.

**Section 2.** The parliamentary procedure of the Council of Ministers shall be governed, in all cases not specifically covered by the Constitution and Bylaws of Convention or by these Bylaws, by Roberts Rules of Order. The Secretary of the Council shall keep a copy of these Rules available for ready reference.

**Section 3.** All requests for appropriations in connection with the work of any of the committees of the Council, as being beyond the power and authority of the Council of Ministers, shall, if the Council of Ministers approves, be presented to the General Convention.

## **Article VI. Amendments**

These Bylaws may be amended or suspended by a three-fourths vote of those present at any regular meeting. They may be suspended at special meetings by a three-fourths vote of those present at such meetings.

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## COUNCIL OF MINISTERS STANDING RESOLUTIONS

Whereas ministry as a professional endeavor requires continuous development and personal growth, and, whereas education is a lifelong process not ending with ordination; therefore, be it resolved that the Council of Ministers of the General Convention of Swedenborgian Churches affirms that planned continuing education is not an elective but is a necessary process to build professional competence.

1. Ordained clergy are subject to requirements for mentorship in their first two years of ministry, and annual peer supervision and attendance at Convention's annual meeting throughout their ministry. The secretary of COM will oversee their "good standing" based on annual reporting.
2. The continuing education (CE) is overseen and approved by EXCOM and the following criteria must be met regarding the continuing education unit being chosen:
  1. Areas of study—ministry, spirituality, small group leadership, working with boards, pastoral care, church growth (pick at least 2)
  2. To be earned at Peer Sup, CSS classes, Convention COM Education, Camp Sessions, or training by a legitimate organization that has a relevant knowledge base. Leading a session does NOT count as Continuing Ed.
  3. Requirement is 20 hours of continuing education every two years
  4. 1 credit per hour = 1 in-person professionally-led instruction
3. Retired ministers are not subject to these professional development requirements.

*(Preamble, amended at General Convention, 2023)*

Periodically during its history, Convention has faced issues of suitability for ministry. It has dealt with questions of social class, race, divorce, and gender, as it currently faces the issues of sexual orientation and may in future years face questions presently unseen. Its decisions have in each case affirmed a consistent principle, which the Council of Ministers expresses as follows:

*(Adopted at General Convention, July 3, 1986)*

"In light of the inclusiveness of the vision of the Holy City, New Jerusalem, from which our theological perspective is drawn, the Council of Ministers believes that the central consideration in evaluating requests for ordination is the quality of the ministry that it believes the individual is capable of providing.

"It is the responsibility of the Council of Ministers, using the good office of

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its Committee on Admission to the Ministry, to evaluate the readiness and suitability of individual candidates in accord with the general principles outlined in Article V, Section 2 of the Constitution, and in the Preamble to Article XIII of the Bylaws of the General Convention.

“Article V, Section 2 reads: ‘Through its Board of Managers of the New Church Theological School, commonly known as the Swedenborg School of Religion, the General Convention shall within the limits of available resources, provide for the thorough professional training of individuals seeking ordination, such training to focus on the spiritual growth of its participants by development in understanding of our theology, sensitivity in human relations, appreciation of other traditions, and in the technical skills required for effective ministry.’

“The Preamble of Article XIII reads: ‘Jesus said to his disciples, you have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that you should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain.’ (John 15:16)

“The ordained ministry exists to facilitate the spiritual well-being of people, helping them to be open to the Lord’s leading and enabling them to lead useful lives. Resources for the ordained ministry in serving the church include the Holy Word, the doctrines of the church, the rites and sacraments, experiences of worship, and growth-oriented skills insofar as they promote the process of regeneration.”

## GUIDELINES FOR MINISTERIAL CONDUCT IN THE GENERAL CONVENTION OF SWEDENBORGIAN CHURCHES

The Constitution of the General Convention (Article III, Section 3) assigns to the Council of Ministers “responsibility for the pastoral support of all ministries and for providing them with clear ethical standards.” It adds, “It shall exercise such disciplinary functions over the ordained clergy as it may in its collective wisdom adopt, subject to the provision of the Constitution and Bylaws.”

Given the importance of our purpose—to facilitate the spiritual well-being of people—and the variety of ministries devoted to this end, the task is both urgent and difficult. Our theology points to clear principles of spiritual well-being which do not change. It recognizes also that there are outward behavioral expectations which we ignore at our peril, but which do change with the passage of time, and which vary from region to region.

Accordingly, we have tried in the following revision to distinguish these two aspects of ministerial ethics, in an effort to be uncompromising in devotion to the Lord’s service and responsibly flexible in the means used for that service.

### **Theological Basis**

For the Swedenborgian, spiritual well-being is a state of oneness of heart, mind, and life. The most adequate ministry will therefore lead by affection, precept, and example. Our theology also insists that human life is a process, that we do not achieve perfection, but can move toward it to eternity. As ministers, we need both self-forgiveness and forgiveness of others. Since charity is “acting with prudence to the end that good may result” (*The New Jerusalem and Its Heavenly Doctrine* §100), we are called in all circumstances, without exception, to consider not just what has happened, but what we can do for actual betterment. When we fail to hear or to heed this call, as we all do at times, then the call simply comes again, asking us to recognize our failure, and not to dwell on it but to consider what we can do about it.

In this effort, we cannot stand alone. Our very being is constituted in part by the affection and understanding we receive from each other, and our common involvement in ordained ministry gives special weight to our treatment of each other. Genuine affection, clear understanding, and unflinching fidelity within this fellowship work strongly for our purpose, and their lack brings a profound distress.

Under the Lord’s providence, something could emerge from this distress

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which would recommend itself to everyone. There are times, however, when we fail to discover that ideal solution, and must resort to the discipline authorized by the Constitution. This may be freely accepted by all parties; but even when it is not, the imposition of discipline may be the best course of action available. We must then accept our imperfections and focus our efforts on minimizing the harm. It is at such times that the distinction between fundamental principle and local, human tradition is most critical, and when the spirit of the discipline is as important as the discipline itself.

As concerns ministry in particular, doctrine, history, and experience point up the perils of reliance on the authority of the clergy. It is particularly tempting to try to solve difficult problems by clerical pronouncement, ignoring the fact that to the extent that any course of action is taken under compulsion, it is not conducive to spiritual growth. At the heart of the following guidelines is the conviction that our choices as ministers need to be informed by the central purpose of our church, to facilitate the spiritual well-being of those who rely on us.

## **I. Personal and Interpersonal Conduct**

We are unanimous in our acceptance of the law of love, but not necessarily in our understanding of it. Our understanding of the word “love” is demonstrated primarily by our behavior, which is at least as instructive as our words. We communicate by the way we act that the good life is difficult or easy, joyous or bitter, flexible or rigid; and no amount of talking effaces these messages. It is vital that we recognize that we ourselves are in process, being open about our failings and about our ideals alike.

1. Persons live only as they receive life itself from God. We have made public acknowledgment of that life by seeking and accepting the laying on of hands of ordination. We have a special responsibility to open ourselves to our own emotional, intellectual, and spiritual depths, to the wisdom and power of the Bible, to the theology of our church, and to the Lord in meditation and prayer. To work toward our goals, we need also to keep abreast of current developments in the religious and secular worlds around us, with a special responsibility for attention to currents of thought and feeling within Convention.

2. However differently understood and accepted, the Divine is equally present in all People, regardless of such outward attributes as race, class, sexual orientation, creed, gender, physical capabilities/limitations or age. Prejudice or discrimination of any kind is a denial of this central tenet of our theology.

3. As we are drawn to become more intimately connected to persons in our communities, it can be that a pastor finds a real friendship developing. Choosing

friends from among those one serves and leads has inherent complications. There is a difference between being friendly and being a close friend who shares confidences. It is better to find friends among colleagues and through organizations that promote your values and interests. However, if you develop a close friendship with a congregant, the following steps must be taken.

- Discuss the difficulties of being both spiritual leader and friend.
- Avoid discussing the business of the congregation with him or her.
- Avoid spending time together at congregational events.

4. Pastors who are single must often decide whether to date someone in their congregation. It is, after all, a place to meet someone with similar values and commitments. To date a congregant, however, introduces myriad complications and opportunities for misunderstandings. If you find yourself attracted to a member of your congregation, you must take the following steps.

- Inform him/her that you cannot be his/her spiritual leader and have a romantic involvement. Therefore, if the person wants to pursue a dating relationship, he/she should find someone else to serve as spiritual leader.
- Tell your governing body and supervisor about the relationship.

5. Human sexuality is a gift from the Lord, providing an avenue to the deepest and most abiding of human relationships. It is also an avenue to our deepest vulnerabilities, and its misuse can have tragic personal consequences, and can lead to severe legal consequences. We are called to fidelity in all our relationships, and particularly to the utmost respect for the sexual integrity of all persons. Sexual contact or sexualized behavior between a faith leader and a congregant, client, student, or employee with whom the faith leader has a pastoral or professional relationship is an abuse of power and constitutes sexual misconduct. Sexual misconduct is defined as sexual contact (not limited to intercourse) that violates the trust developed by the congregant, student, client, or employee in the context of the pastoral or professional relationship.

6. The community in which we live is our neighbor, and our constructive participation in its affairs is an essential element in religious life. As ministers urging others to live by the Lord's commandments, we make a special commitment to live consistently ourselves. It is important that we be unquestionably fair in our financial dealings and reliable in keeping commitments made. This includes such matters as preparation for and attendance at meetings, clear and adequate reports, and prompt attention to correspondence. We should neither ask nor expect special favors or immunities because of our ministerial status. Where discounts, privileges, or special fees are offered, they may be accepted with appreciation, and with the acknowledgment that we are to give as freely as we receive, though not

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necessarily in kind. Under no circumstances should special favors or immunities be offered or accepted in exchange for any “gift.”

7. In keeping with our sense of the holiness of all life, we are aware that excessive drinking and other forms of substance abuse, obscene stories and expressions, and raucous behavior diminish our effectiveness, as do the other extremes of prudery and self-righteousness. Both extremes betray a narrow egocentricity that renders us insensitive to the feelings and needs of those around us.

8. Personal appearance is one of the ways in which we communicate with each other, and excessive concern with and willful disregard for appearance are equally damaging. Our dress and grooming should reflect our interest in and concern for the human situations in which we engage and should be in general accord with local traditions.

9. Clergy use of social media for personal and professional use contribute to the public face of our denomination, and therefore constitutes clergy conduct. Decisions about what to post must conform to the ethical standards set forth in these Guidelines. Decisions on how and who to email need careful attention, with thought given to include all who should be included, and not communicating electronically in ways we would not consider communicating in-person or on the phone.

10. There are no quantitative measurements of spiritual well-being, and therefore no simple standards of evaluation of ministerial effectiveness. It is necessary that we be fully honest with ourselves and our employers, neither inventing unnecessary tasks nor avoiding necessary ones, fulfilling the terms of our employment in the spirit as well as in the letter. It is permissible to take other remunerative work with the knowledge and consent of the employer; but again, there is need of honest evaluation of the effect this has on our ministry.

11. The personal nature of ministry can allow it to intrude on the minister’s personal and family life. It is vital that the family not feel engulfed by the church and that the minister have time that is genuinely free for family involvement. Regular days off and complete vacations are necessities, and should be openly negotiated with the employing body.

12. As human service professionals, we are accountable for a self assessment of our physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being. When mental health issues, stress due to family discord, and any other factors interfere with our daily lives and ability to minister to others, we have the responsibility to address our concern with peers, and when warranted, to contract for appropriate professional support. We also have the responsibility to be aware of signs of depression, substance abuse, domestic violence, mental illness, etc. that may arise in congregants, fam-

ily members or colleagues, and to assist them to access appropriate assistance.

## **II. The Relationship to the Group Served**

The relationship of employee to employer can be ambivalent in the ministry. We are enjoined to lead our “employers” by truth to the good of life, a good which is genuine only if it is freely chosen. There are times when it seems that the welfare of the institution is at odds with the welfare of one or another of its members, or of its minister, and the available alternatives seem equally painful. Devotion to our central purpose is essential at all times, and never more than in times of difficulty.

1. Professionals in all the helping professions receive confidences, and are both legally and ethically bound to respect them. Ministers especially tend to be trusted, and a constant sensitivity to that trust is vital. Confidences, whether explicitly labeled or not, are not to be shared, even with colleagues and spouses. However, if individuals give us reason to believe that they are intending harm to themselves or others, we are obliged to weigh carefully the resources we have to prevent such harm, and to act according to our most prudent and compassionate judgment. We are responsible as well to know and to abide by the laws that apply in the particular regions of our ministries. We are to be guided at all times by a pastoral concern for those who trust us.

2. We recognize the trust placed in the therapeutic relationship, its unique power, and the inherent danger of exploitation in any dual role relationship. The role of Pastor and Congregant develops a “dual” aspect when there are additional roles played by either party; i.e., committee chair/member, officer/employee, counselor/counselee, etc. These relationships need careful ethical attention. It is unethical to enter a counseling relationship with anyone with whom we have sexual, family, business, or friendship relationships.

3. Different ministers respond to different aspects of our theology. We should not make our own special interests into idols, but should try to present the full depth and breadth of our teachings and to foster an appreciation of colleagues whose special interests differ from our own.

4. We do not exist in a vacuum, but are sustained in our mental and emotional growth by our communications with each other. Our open acknowledgment of our inter-dependence upon each other is of critical importance to the health of our church.

5. Our belief in the Divine of the Lord entails rather than precludes the presence of that same Divine in all religions of the world. We are true to this principle only as we seek the best in and for all faiths; and we are false to it whenever we try

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to exalt our own religion by demeaning others. Our task is not to try somehow to make our own understanding universal, but to discover the universality to which it points.

6. Ministers are responsible to whole congregations or groups, and have a responsibility to nurture a fabric of healthy relationships. Ministers employed by hospitals, hospice organizations, schools, non-profits, etc. have a call to see these organizations as sacred community, and have the responsibility to support the relationships within these communities in the same manner as described for church communities. In all our communities, the fabric of healthy relationships is damaged by any form of favoritism toward individuals or subgroups, and by involvement in political games. Such issues require particular attention when critical decisions must be made, as when a group is relocating, or a minister is leaving.

7. The health of a society depends not only on its internal relationships, but on its relationships with the community and world in which it finds itself. Every effort should be made to nurture the conviction that the church is not a self-righteous enclave in a world of sin, but a participant in the process of community, nation, and world, called by virtue of its gifts to special service.

8. The minister's relationship to an employing body has personal, professional, and moral dimensions. A formal contract can be helpful in making unspoken assumptions explicit. No agreement, however informal, is to be terminated without adequate notice, except by mutual consent. We should be freely accessible to the employing body for discussion of continuation or termination of service, and should, unless explicitly invited to remain, absent ourselves from further discussion and from the actual voting procedure.

9. The minister's self-evaluation is essential to growth in service. An annual report to the employing body, with an open review of it by that body, is an excellent means of improving the effectiveness of the minister and the group, and of discovering hidden expectations.

10. A group grows far more by making decisions than by having decisions made for it. Ministerial leadership encourages general involvement in the understanding and formulation of policy and in the choice of particular courses of action.

11. Our spouses, while under no professional obligations, may come into positions of significant influence. It is incumbent upon us to do our best to communicate to them both the substance and the importance of these guidelines, and to nurture an appropriate sense of accountability to them.

### **III. Relationship to Other Ministers**

Ministry as a profession is sufficiently different from most others in that we

look particularly to each other for understanding and support. We are not only professionals, but professionals dedicated to a common service to God in a calling that points beyond our human strength. For this we need relationships with our fellow ministers of comradeship, frankness, mutual respect, cooperation, mutual help, and recognition of a spiritual imperative over and above any professional standards. We need to hold ourselves ready to offer affection, understanding, and assistance, defending our colleagues against misunderstanding or injustice, and being with them in loving concern in times of need or distress.

When support and understanding are forthcoming, this is especially meaningful, and when they fail, the sense of lack is especially severe. Our geographic isolation intensifies the significance of every communication, both for better and for worse.

1. Our ministries are tending increasingly to take different forms, and there is a risk that this may provide occasions for dispute. Given the principle that a form is the more perfect as its constituents are distinctly different, and yet united (*Divine Providence* §4), we are called to see these differences as complementary rather than competitive, and to enrich our own limited understandings by insights that come from endeavors outwardly unlike our own.

2. As professionals, we are responsible for normal professional standards. This means a respect for the integrity of the professional work of fellow ministers, doing nothing directly or indirectly to interfere with that work (e.g., performing ministerial services in another parish without its minister's permission). This is in no way to be construed as a license for possessiveness or defensiveness, and calls us to support any efforts that further our central purpose (e.g., welcoming the participation of another minister in any such service, or the performance of tasks complementary to our own). Because we identify so closely with each other, we may well overreact when opinions or policies diverge. In cases of serious professional or personal misconduct, we should in virtually all instances refer the concern to the responsible officials. In most instances of disagreement, however, the most sympathetic interpretation is also the most constructive. Unsympathetic criticism of another minister, particularly one's predecessor or successor, is contrary to the central principles of a life of charity.

3. The relationship between a minister and an employing body is a sensitive one. It is unethical to make overtures to a church or employing body whose minister has not expressed the intent to resign or retire; and if overtures are received from such a body, the well-being of the incumbent minister should be of primary concern.

4. A pastorate, particularly a long one, builds strong bonds of affection which

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can place an incoming minister at a serious disadvantage. Resignation or retirement should be handled with special sensitivity in this regard. Every effort should be made to enable the church to make its own free choice, to create a favorable climate for the successor, and to leave the field free by avoiding anything that might be interpreted as interference with the successor's work. It should be made clear to the church before departure that, however painful it may be, a decisive break in the relationship is necessary. If an invitation is received to perform ministerial services for a former parish, the present minister's permission must be sought and the participation of that minister encouraged.

5. An affirmative attitude needs to be expressed in visible forms. A departing minister should demonstrate his or her acceptance of the successor by some form of public welcome and by cordial introductions to as many of the members as possible. Personal notes and any materials of a confidential nature should be destroyed; but the successor should have free and immediate access to all official records; including membership and address lists, minutes, financial records, and legal and constitutional materials. Every effort should be made not to perpetuate divisions by prejudicing the successor against any individual or group within the church.

6. The best use of our limited ministerial resources requires constant attention. A minister contemplating a change should seek the best information possible concerning current areas of need, using the Ministerial Placement Committee as the most appropriate resource.

7. In the search for ministerial employment, if a minister should feel aggrieved, or should feel that the well-being of another is put at risk, by the conduct of another minister, the first step is to raise the issue privately with the individual concerned. If this effort fails, the good offices of the ordaining minister of Convention should be sought. Should this not provide a resolution, the Council of Ministers may be asked to render assistance.

#### **IV. Relationship to Convention and Association**

The essence of the church is the Divine presence with us as individuals and collectively. This essence is therefore the Infinite; but it works through forms of human design, for which we must take responsibility. Our highest loyalty in regard to Convention and the Associations is to their essential purpose, and this, to be effective, must be expressed in the most critical and caring participation in the organizations themselves.

1. The larger collective bodies of the church have provided the foundation on which current ministries rely, with significant contributions to the local churches,

to theological education, and to resources for ministry. Ordination therefore involves pledges to uphold the Constitution of Convention and be mindful of its welfare; and these pledges should be remembered and fulfilled at all times. We should stand ready to serve Convention, the Council of Ministers, and our Associations gladly as our particular abilities are needed, with the knowledge that their health contributes to the health of our own local efforts.

2. The wisdom and effectiveness of the collective bodies can be no fuller than we make them. Regular attendance at meetings of Convention and the Council of Ministers, responsive participation in them, and regular and accurate reporting of activities, developments, and statistics are the necessary foundations of a supportive larger church.

3. For the sake of the unity of the larger church, it is vital that its individual members share in its essential values. It is the responsibility of the minister on the local level to admit into membership to all who do so share, and not to admit those who, so far as can be ascertained, do not. The irreducible essentials of our faith—the Divine of the Lord, the holiness of the Word, and the life of charity—should be clearly presented, and a genuine commitment to them expressed.

4. Many of us work in relative isolation from each other, and the Supportive Peer Supervision program has been instituted to compensate in some measure for that isolation. It is left to individual ministers to stress the supervisory or the supportive aspects of the program; and this freedom entails a responsibility to exercise it well. Whether through the program or in some other way, it is our duty to periodically review our fitness for Convention’s ministry. Should such a review raise serious doubts, the course of greatest wisdom is to seek the help and counsel of laypersons or clergy with whom there are bonds of affection and respect.

5. Standards for “Good Standing” as a Member of the Council of Ministers, and the requirements for Continuing Education and Professional Supervision, are outlined in Article I of the Bylaws of the Council of Ministers. “Good Standing” membership in the Council gives ministers an external affirmation, in the same manner that upholding these ministerial conduct guidelines gives an internal affirmation, of our appropriate living of our ministerial call from God.

6. Convention and its collective bodies are human institutions, and true loyalty to them includes the duty of thoughtful and constructive criticism. Experience indicates that if such criticism is addressed to the body’s will to improve, without a prejudgment as to the best response, the result will be affirmative. The ideal is an unswerving devotion to fundamental principles, with a willing openness to the process of change.

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**V. Ministerial Misconduct**

1. If an issue of ministerial misconduct arises, persons are required to follow the reporting process outlined in “Procedures for Handling Allegations of Misconduct Against Our Ordained Ministers or Our Lay Leaders” from the *Council of Ministers Handbook* (dated July 2012).

**Epilogue**

For our own sakes, the Lord expects and wants our very best. The preceding guidelines are an effort to define that “best” in the context of our own times and culture, and they are offered in the knowledge that there will be failures and shortcomings. As we try to live up to them, there will be needs for clarification and change, and it is the responsibility of the Council of Ministers to keep us working on the subject of ethics for our ministry. Only to the extent that we are in agreement in principle will the guidelines be felt as supportive of our best rather than as threatening, and it is therefore crucial that any disagreement with them be openly expressed. They are not valid for all time, and will be effective only as they are truly an ongoing part of our collegial process.

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**BYLAWS OF THE CORPORATION OF THE NEW CHURCH  
THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL  
DBA CENTER FOR SWEDENBORGIAN STUDIES**

**Article I.**

**Name, Purpose and Location**

**Section 1.** The Corporation of the New Church Theological School operates the Center for Swedenborgian Studies, an institution serving the General Convention of the New Jerusalem in the United States of America and Canada (hereafter referred to as General Convention). The Corporation was incorporated in 1881 as the Corporation of the New Church Theological School under the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and is a non-profit, tax exempt institution operating for religious and educational purposes.

**Section 2.** The address of the principal of the Corporation shall be as follows: Center for Swedenborgian Studies, 50 Quincy St., Cambridge, MA 02138-3013.

**Article II.**

**Members of the Corporation**

**Section 1.** The membership of the Corporation shall consist of two classes:

**A. At-large Members**

Any person who (i) has been accepted as a member at large of Swedenborgian Church pursuant to the Constitution of the General Convention or (ii) is a member of any Association or Society constituent of the General Convention, who is 18 years of age or older, may become an at-large member of this Corporation by signing these Bylaws and he or she shall cease to be an at-large member hereof upon ceasing to have the qualifications above named, or upon filing with the Clerk a written withdrawal of membership.

**B. Representative Members**

Each member of the General Council of the Convention shall be a representative member of the Corporation upon election to the General Council and each shall cease to be a representative member of the Corporation upon expiration of his or

her term of office on the General Council or upon his or her resignation therefrom.

**Section 2.** An adequate and current alphabetical file of the active membership of the Corporation shall be established and maintained in the offices of the Corporation by the Clerk, and shall be available for inspection at all reasonable times to the Trustees and members of the Corporation.

### **Article III.**

#### **Meetings of the Members**

**Section 1. Place for Meetings.** All meetings of the at-large and representative members shall be held at the principal office of the Corporation in Massachusetts unless the Articles of Organization permit the holding of meetings of members outside of Massachusetts and unless a different place is fixed by the Trustees or the Dean and stated in the notice of the meeting.

**Section 2. Annual Meeting.** The annual meeting of the members shall be held during the annual convention of the Swedenborgian Church. If no annual meeting is held in accordance with the foregoing provisions, a special meeting may be held in lieu thereof, and any action taken at such meeting shall have the same effect as if taken at the annual meeting.

**Section 3. Special Meetings.** Special meetings of the members may be requested by the Chair or by the Trustees, and shall be called by the Clerk, or in the case of death, absence, incapacity or refusal of the Clerk, by any other Officer, upon written application of three or more members entitled to vote thereat.

**Section 4. Notice of Meetings.** A notice of every meeting of the members, stating the place, day and hour thereof and the purpose for which the meeting is called, shall be published by the Clerk in accordance with the provisions of Article V, Section 4 of these Bylaws.

**Section 5. Quorum of Members.** Ten at-large members and a majority of the representative members as shown on the records of the General Convention shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting of the members of the Corporation.

**Section 6. Adjournments.** Any meeting of the members may be adjourned to any other time and to any other place permitted by these Bylaws by the members present at the meeting, although less than a quorum; or by any Officer entitled to preside or to act as Clerk of such meeting if no member is present. It shall not be necessary to notify any member of any adjournment. Any business which could have been transacted at any meeting of the members as originally called may be transacted at any adjournment thereof.

**Section 7. Voting.** Each member of each class of the Corporation shall be entitled to one vote on all matters before the members, and at-large and representative members shall each vote as a separate class. When a quorum is present, a majority vote shall decide any matter except where a larger vote is required by the law, the Articles of Organization, or these Bylaws.

Any election of Trustees by the members of a class shall be determined by a plurality of the votes cast by members of that class present and entitled to vote at the election.

#### **Article IV. Board of Trustees**

**Section 1.** The business and affairs, including all academic affairs, of the Corporation shall be managed by the Board of Trustees, who shall have and may exercise all the powers of the Corporation except such as required by law or the Corporation's Articles of Organization or Bylaws to be otherwise exercised. Except as so limited, the powers and duties of the Board of Trustees shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. to determine and review periodically the purposes and the mission of the institution.
2. to select the Dean of the institution, and to support the Dean in the exercise of his or her responsibilities.
3. to recommend, review, and approve changes in the educational programs of the institution, consistent with its mission.
4. to establish policies and procedures regarding salary schedules, appointment, and dismissal of each class of employees.
5. to oversee and approve the budget of the institution, and establish policy guidelines for the endowment and for all investments and major fund raising efforts.
6. to authorize the purchase, management and sale of all land, buildings or

- major equipment for use by the institution.
7. to authorize the construction of new buildings and major renovations of existing buildings.
  8. to authorize the incurring of debts by the institution and securing thereof by mortgage and pledge of real and personal property tangible and intangible.
  9. to authorize any changes in tuition and fees within the institution.
  10. to authorize officers or agents of the institution to accept gifts or bequests on behalf of the institution.
  11. to ensure that adequate due process policies and procedures exist.

**Section 2. Election and Tenure.** The Board of Trustees shall consist of eight (8) elected members and four (4) ex officio members. At-large members and representative members shall each, voting as a separate class, be entitled to elect four (4) of the members of the Board of Trustees; PROVIDED THAT at least seventy-five percent (75%) of the members of the Board of Trustees elected by the at-large members of the Corporation and at least seventy-five percent (75%) of the members of the Board of Trustees elected by the representative members be members of the Corporation.

Other than as hereinafter provided, Trustees shall be elected for a term of four (4) years. The terms of the elected Trustees shall be staggered, so that the term of one at-large elected Trustee and one representative elected Trustee shall expire each year. When Trustees are elected, their term shall be designated in order to achieve such staggered terms.

No member of the Board of Trustees shall be elected for more than two (2) consecutive full four-year terms unless the members at the annual meeting of the Corporation vote to permit a member of the Board of Trustees to be elected for one (1) additional consecutive four-year term or part thereof, if applicable, where the members agree that extraordinary circumstances warrant such extension of the maximum term; PROVIDED HOWEVER THAT no further extension of the consecutive term of office for such member of the Board of Trustees shall be granted.

Upon the completion of the maximum term of the Board of Trustees, a minimum of a one-year absence is required before eligibility for re-election to membership on the Board of Trustees is restored.

As the terms of the Trustees originally elected by at-large members expire, successors will be elected by at-large members. As the terms of the Trustees originally elected by representative members expire, successors will be elected by representative members.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, any Trustee who fails to attend at least one (1) meeting of the Board of Trustees during any one (1) calendar year of their term (provided that more than one meeting was held in such year) shall be deemed to have submitted his or her resignation as a Trustee, with no further act on his or her part, to the Board of Trustees as of December 31st of such year; PROVIDED THAT the Chair, in his or her reasonable discretion, may waive such resignation requirement (either before or after said December 31st, but prior to the filling of the resulting vacancy) upon the receipt of a written notice from such absentee Trustee providing good and sufficient reasons for his or her absence. In the event that a Trustee shall be deemed to have submitted his or her resignation in accordance with this paragraph, the vacancy thereby created shall be filled in accordance with Section 3 of this Article IV.

The President of the General Convention of the Swedenborgian Church and the Dean of the Center for Swedenborgian Studies shall be ex officio members of the Board of Trustees with a vote. If the Clerk and Treasurer elected by the Board are not members of the Board, they shall become ex officio members of the Board without a vote. The President of the Graduate Theological Union and one representative from the CSS student body (see Section 9) shall sit on the Center for Swedenborgian Studies Board of Trustees without a vote. The aforesaid President, Dean and Graduate Theological Union representative ex officio members serve at the pleasure of the Corporation and are not governed by the term restrictions or rotation requirements of these Bylaws.”

**Section 3. Vacancies.** Any vacancy in the Board of Trustees, however occurring, may be filled by appointment by the Board of Trustees until the next annual meeting provided, however, that a vacancy resulting from the enlargement of the board shall only be filled by election by the members of the Corporation. In the case of a vacancy occurring other than by enlargement of the Board of Trustees such vacancy shall be filled at the next annual or special meeting only by the Class of Members who had elected the prior Trustee.

**Section 4. Enlargement of the Board of Trustees.** The number of the Board of Trustees may be increased or decreased at any annual or special meeting of the members provided however that the number of members of the Board of Trustees shall always be set at an even number.

**Section 5. Trustees' Meetings.** The Board of Trustees shall meet at least three times each year. One of these meetings shall be held without notice as soon as practicable after the adjournment of the annual meeting of members.

**Section 6. Notice of Trustees' Meetings.** Meetings of the Trustees may be called by the Dean, the Chair or any three or more Trustees by a request in writing addressed to the Clerk. Notice of the time and place of all regular meetings of the Trustee shall be given by the Clerk and of any special meeting of the Clerk or the Officer calling the meeting. Notice may be given orally, by telephone, telegraph, e-mail or in writing; and such notice given in time to enable the Trustees to attend, or in any case, notice sent by mail, e-mail, or telegraph to a Trustee's usual or last known place of business or residence or e-mail address, at least ten days before the meeting, shall be sufficient. Any meeting of the Trustees shall be a legal meeting without notice if each Trustee, by a writing filed with the records of the meeting, waives such notice.

The Board of Trustees may permit any or all Trustees to participate in any meeting of the Trustees by, or conduct any meeting through the use of, any means of communication by which all Trustees participating may simultaneously hear each other during the meeting. A Trustee participating in a meeting by this means is considered to be present in person at the meeting.

Every Trustee who attends a meeting without protesting prior thereto or at its commencement the lack of notice to him or her, and every absent Trustee who shall before or after meeting waive notice thereof by a writing filed with the records of the meeting or who shall sign such records, shall be deemed to have been fully notified of the meeting.

**Section 7. Quorum of Trustees.** At any meeting of the Trustees, a majority of the trustees then in office shall constitute a quorum. Unless otherwise provided by law, the Articles of Organization or these Bylaws, a vote of a majority of those present at any meeting at which there is a quorum shall be sufficient to transact business or to take any action by the Trustees.

**Section 8. Action by Unanimous Written Consent.** Any action may be taken by the Board of Trustees without a meeting if the action is taken by the unanimous consent of the Trustees. The action must be evidenced by one or more consents describing the action taken, in writing, signed by each Trustee, or delivered to the Corporation by electronic transmission, to the address specified by the Corporation for the purpose, or if no address has been specified, to the principal

office of the Corporation, addressed to the Secretary or other officer or agent having custody of the records of proceedings of the Board of Trustees, and included in the minutes or filed with the corporate records reflecting the action taken. Action taken under this section is effective when the last Trustee signs or delivers the consent, unless the consent specifies a different effective date. A consent signed or delivered under this section has the effect of a meeting vote and may be described as such in any document.

**Section 9. Student Representative.** At the annual meeting of the Board of Trustees held at the annual meeting of the General Convention of the Swedenborgian Church each year, one student of the Pacific School of Religion enrolled in the Masters of Divinity Program with the Center for Swedenborgian Studies will be asked to serve on the Board of Trustees as a representative of all of the students enrolled with Center for Swedenborgian Studies. Such student representative is to attend all, or at least a portion, of any and all meetings of the Board of Trustees. The Executive Committee will determine in advance of each meeting whether such student representative is to be in attendance for the entire meeting or portion therefore. If attendance of only a portion of the meeting is required, the Executive Committee will also determine the parameters of attendance. Such position is an ex officio representation with no vote. Such student will be expected to make a report to the Board of Trustees at each meeting.”

## **Article V.**

### **Officers of the Board of Trustees**

**Section 1.** The Officers of the Board of Trustees shall be the Officers of the Corporation and shall consist of a Chair, a Vice Chair, a Clerk, a Treasurer, and other such officers, including one or more Assistant Treasurers and Assistant Clerks, as the Trustees may determine. These Officers shall be elected annually at the meeting of the Trustees following the annual meeting of the members by the Board of Trustees and shall serve until their successors are elected and assume the duties of their respective offices. The Chair and Vice Chair must be Board members but the Clerk, Treasurer, Assistant Clerks and Assistant Treasurers, need not be. Officers are eligible for re-election.

All Officers of the Board of Trustees shall serve at the discretion of the Board of Trustees and shall be subject to removal by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the Trustees present at a meeting of the Board of Trustees.

A vacancy in any of the offices of the Board of Trustees may be filled at any meeting of the Board of Trustees.

**Section 2. Chair.** The Chair of the Board of Trustees shall preside at all meetings of the Board of Trustees and at the annual Corporation meeting, serve as Chair of the Executive Committee, and appoint all committees and their Chairs in consultation with the Dean of the Center for Swedenborgian Studies.

The Chair shall perform such other duties as may be prescribed by law or by the action of the Board.

**Section 3. Vice Chair.** The Vice Chair of the Board of the Trustees shall perform such duties as shall be assigned by the Board. In case of death, absence, or inability of the Chair of the Board of Trustees to act, the Vice Chair shall discharge the duties of the Chair until such time as a new Chair is elected by the Board.

**Section 4. Clerk.** The Clerk shall serve as the Clerk of the Corporation and shall keep the records of the Corporation and the Board of Trustees, and shall give notice of all meetings of the Board of Trustees and of the members.

The Clerk shall be responsible for the maintenance of the file of the membership of the Corporation. He or she shall provide the notice of the Annual Meeting of the Corporation to be published in *The Messenger* at least 60 days prior to the date of the meeting. If *The Messenger* is not published at a convenient time, notices of the Annual Meeting shall be sent by first class to each member at least ten days before such Annual Meeting. Notice of special meetings of the Corporation shall be issued in the same manner. It shall be sufficient notice if mailed to the last and usual place of residence of each member in accordance with the records in the membership list. The Assistant Clerks shall have such powers and duties including any and all of the powers and duties of the Clerk as the Board of Trustees may prescribe.

**Section 5.** The Treasurer shall be responsible for carrying out the mandates of the Board of Trustees in overseeing the financial resources of the Corporation, including cash securities, stocks, bonds and all other property, personal or real, owned by the Corporation. The Treasurer shall assure that all books and accounts are accurately kept, and furthermore, shall present a full and detailed statement properly audited by an independent certified public accountant to the Corporation at its annual meeting and, if requested, at any other meeting of the

Board of Trustees or any meeting of its committees. The Assistant Treasurer shall have such powers and duties including any and all of the powers and duties of the Treasurer as the Board of Trustees may prescribe.

## **Article VI** **Committees of the Board**

**Section 1. Executive Committee.** There shall be an Executive Committee consisting of the Officers of the Board of Trustees. The Dean shall be an ex officio member of the Executive Committee with a vote. The President of the General Convention shall be an ex officio member of the Executive Committee with a vote. The Executive Committee shall have authority to act on behalf of the Board of Trustees on all matters except for the following which shall be reserved for the Board as specified elsewhere in these Bylaws: Dean Selection; Trustee and Board Officer Selection; Charter and Bylaws Amendment; Review of Institutional Mission and Purposes; Incurring Corporate Indebtedness; Expenditure of Funds Not Provided for in the Budget; Approval of the Annual Budget; the Conferral of Degrees; and the Purchase and Sale of Real Estate.

**Section 2. Nominating Committee – At-Large Class.** On or before March 1 every year the Chair shall appoint a Nominating Committee to select at-large nominees for the Board of Trustees. The Nominating Committee shall be composed of three at-large members of the Corporation at least one of whom shall not be a member of the Board of Trustees. The Nominating Committee shall make its report to the Annual Meeting of the Corporation.

**Section 3. Nominating Committee – Representative Class.** General Convention shall present nominees to the representative class at the Annual Meeting of the Corporation.

**Other Committees.** At the discretion of the Board of Trustees, other committees may be formed and discharged as needed.

## **Article VII.** **Officers of the Institution**

**Section 1.** The Dean shall be the chief educational and administrative officer of the institution. He or she shall exercise general responsibility for the overall affairs of the institution and shall bring those matters to the attention of the Board

of Trustees that are appropriate and necessary to keep it fully informed and to enable it to meet its policy-making responsibilities. The Dean shall be an ex officio member of the Board of Trustees and of all committees thereof.

The Dean shall appoint all other administrators, staff members, and temporary faculty members. Regular faculty appointments shall be presented to the Board for prior approval.

**Article VIII.**  
**Indemnification**

**Section 1.** Each person now or hereafter a Trustee or Officer of the Corporation (and his or her heirs, executors and administrators) shall be entitled, without prejudice to any other rights he or she may have, to be reimbursed by the Corporation for, and indemnified by the Corporation against, all costs and expenses reasonably incurred by him or her in connection with or arising out of any claim, action, suit or proceeding of whatever nature in which he or she may be involved as a party or otherwise or with which he or she may be threatened by reason of his or her having served as a Trustee or Officer of the Corporation, or by reason of any action alleged to have been omitted by him or her as such Trustee or Officer, whether or not he or she be such Trustee or Officer at the time of incurring such cost or expenses, including amounts paid or incurred in connection with reasonable settlements (other than amounts paid to the Corporation itself) made with the approval of the Board of Trustees of the Corporation and with a view to the curtailment of costs of litigation.

No such reimbursement of indemnity shall be paid or made for any expenses incurred or settlement made by such Trustee or Officer in connection with any matter as to which he or she shall be finally adjudicated in any such action, suit, or proceeding not to have acted in good faith and in the reasonable belief that his or her action was in the best interest of the Corporation, nor shall the amount of any such reimbursement or indemnity paid or made to any Trustee or Officer in respect of any matter on which settlement or compromise is effected, including the amount paid by such a Trustee or Officer in such settlement, exceed the expense which might reasonably have been paid or incurred by such Trustee or Officer in conducting such actual or threatened litigation to a final conclusion.

Payment by the Corporation of expenses incurred by such Trustee or Officer in defending any claim, action, suit or proceeding in advance of its final disposition may be made upon receipt of an undertaking by the person indemni-

fied to repay such payment if he or she shall be adjudicated to be not entitled to indemnification under the laws of Massachusetts. The Corporation and its Trustees and Officers shall not be liable to anyone for making any determination as to the existence or absence of liability, or for making or refusing to make any payment hereunder the basis of such determination, or for taking or omitting to take any other action hereunder, in reliance upon the advice of counsel.

### **Article IX.**

#### **Miscellaneous Provisions**

**Section 1.** The Bylaws of the Corporation may be made, amended or repealed at any Annual or Special Meeting of the Members at which a quorum is present by an affirmative two-thirds vote of those at-large and representative class members present and voting, each class voting as a separate class, provided that notice of the substance of the proposed amendment is stated in the notice of such meeting.

### **Article X**

#### **Dissolution**

Any action to dissolve the Corporation of the New Church Theological School must be approved by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Board of Trustees before being referred to the eligible Voting Members of the Corporation. There shall be a meeting of the Corporation called to specifically to consider such action, for which meeting legal notice has been issued to all Members eligible to vote in accordance with the provisions of these bylaws. At said meeting, if 2/3 of all of those physically present and eligible to vote agree to dissolve the Corporation of the New Church Theological School, then all of its property, real and personal, after paying all just claims upon it, shall be conveyed to and vested in the General Convention of the New Jerusalem in the United States of America or its legal successor. The Board of Trustees of the School shall perform all actions necessary to this end.

The invested funds are to be conveyed to the General Convention of the New Jerusalem and may be used to fund programs that met the Mission of the New Church Theological School during its existence:

- To prepare qualified individuals for ministry in the Swedenborgian Church and world
- To serve as a center on the leading edge of Swedenborgian scholarship

• To share its resources of scholarship, leadership, and people with the wider church and community.

## **Article XI.**

### **Miscellaneous Provisions**

**Section 1. Parliamentary Authority.** The parliamentary procedure shall be governed, in all cases not specifically covered by these Bylaws, by Robert's Rules of Order.

**Section 2. Fiscal year.** Except as from time to time otherwise determined by the Trustees, the fiscal year of the Corporation shall end on June 30th.

**Section 3. Seal.** The seal of the Corporation shall, subject to alteration by the Trustees, bear its name and the year of its incorporation.

**Section 4. Execution of Instruments.** All check, deeds, leases, transfers, contracts, bonds, notes and other obligations authorized to be executed by and officer of the Corporation in its behalf shall be signed by the Chair or the Treasurer except as the Trustees may generally or in particular cases otherwise determine.

**Section 5. Evidence of Authority.** A certificate by the Clerk or a temporary Clerk as to any action taken by the Trustees or any officer or representative of the Corporation shall as to all persons who rely thereon in good faith be conclusive evidence of such action.

**Section 6. Articles of Organization.** All references in these Bylaws to the Articles of Organization shall be deemed to refer to the Articles of Organization of the Corporation, as amended and in effect from time to time.

## **Article XII.**

### **Former Bylaws**

**Section 1.** All former Bylaws will be revoked and repealed immediately prior to the Annual Meeting following the adoption of these Bylaws, provided that General Convention, by appropriate votes, supports the provisions therein.

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## BYLAWS OF THE WAYFARERS CHAPEL

The Wayfarers Chapel is a national memorial to Emanuel Swedenborg and its services and programs bear witness to the vision of Christianity set forth in the teachings of Swedenborg and in the tradition and practices of the Swedenborgian Church.

Honoring and respecting a variety of approaches to the religious life, the Chapel welcomes all people. The Chapel gardens and grounds are to be maintained beautifully, so that the whole site may be consecrated to the worship and love of God, nurturing the experience of the Divine presence among us.

The uses of the Chapel are many, providing a unique experience for individual wayfarers, couples, groups, and families as a place to meditate and commune with God; a place to nourish the soul and spirit unfettered by the usual man-made structural separations from the natural world that God has created.

The Chapel and grounds provide an inspirational background for the celebration of worship; sacraments and special services to commemorate our Lord's birth, the Last Supper, and resurrection; and the celebration of marriage, baptism, and the transition which is called death.

The educational ministry of the Chapel can be carried out in the Visitors Center including the sale of books, classes and discussion groups, exhibits, lectures and films. Marriage counseling, personal growth enhancement programs and community events are also an integral part of experiencing the Wayfarers Chapel.

In summary the Chapel's uses are: solace and meditation for the wayfarer, celebration of the Christian rites and sacraments, educational programs and exhibits, personal growth programs, and community involvement in an environment as harmonious with God's own natural beauty as the imagination can envision.

### BYLAWS

#### PREAMBLE

The Board of Directors was established by a vote of the General Convention of the New Jerusalem in the USA, Inc., currently known as and hereinafter referred to as The Swedenborgian Church, at its session in June 1950. The vote at that time read in part as follows: "Resolved – That the use, maintenance, and management of the property at Palos Verdes now known as 'The Wayfarers Chapel: a National Memorial to Emanuel Swedenborg,' be placed in the hands of a Committee consisting of five members, a majority of whom shall be members of this Convention, who shall be appointed by the President with the approval of the General Council, and in addition the President of Convention and the President of

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the California Association (now known as the Pacific Coast Association) both ex officio: . . . the initial appointment of said five members to be for terms of one, two, three, four, and five years each; three of said members to be residents within the limits of the Pacific Coast Association.”

At the annual session of The Swedenborgian Church in June 1979, the General Council increased Board membership from five members to seven.

At the annual session of The Swedenborgian Church in June 1983, the General Council reduced the number of appointed members from seven to six.

## ARTICLE I

### MEMBERSHIP ON THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

#### Section 1.

In accordance with the action of the General Convention cited above, the appointive members of the Board shall consist of six persons, two appointments to be made each year by the President of The Swedenborgian Church with the approval of General Council. Board members shall be appointed for a term of three years. Terms shall commence and end with the close of the denomination’s annual convention. Those members who have served three consecutive three-year terms, including ex-officio members, shall not be eligible for immediate reappointment.

A member who is chairperson of the Board at the completion of the third year of his/her membership term shall have that membership extended to the close of the next fall meeting of the Board.

A person appointed to fulfill an unexpired term of two years or longer is eligible for reappointment to only two additional consecutive three-year terms. Vacancies on the Board shall be filled by appointment by the President of The Swedenborgian Church with approval of General Council.

#### Section 2.

Ex officio members of the Board shall include the President of The Swedenborgian Church, the President of the Pacific Coast Association, and the members of the Leadership Team. In the absence of the President of the Swedenborgian Church, the President’s designated representative may represent the President and be accorded full voting privileges. In the absence of the President of the Pacific Coast Association, or when a Leadership Team member is President, a designated representative may be appointed to represent him/her, and be accorded full voting privileges. The Leadership Team members shall serve without vote.

**Section 3.**

Three or more of the appointive members of the Board must reside within the limits of the Pacific Coast Association. All voting members of the Board must be members of The Swedenborgian Church.

**ARTICLE II****OFFICERS****Section 1.**

The officers of the Board of Directors shall be a Chairperson, Treasurer, and Secretary.

**Section 2.**

The Chairperson of the Board shall preside at all meetings of the Board and its Executive Committee. In the absence of the Chairperson, the Secretary will convene the meeting and preside over the election of a Chairperson, Pro Tempore.

**Section 3.**

The Executive Committee shall consist of the Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer and one other Board member (called a Member at Large) plus the Leadership Team serving ex-officio, without vote. The Executive Committee shall have the power to act for the Board in the interim between Board meetings with the limitations set forth in Article IV, Section 2.

**Section 4.**

The Officers and other members of the Executive Committee shall be elected by the Board at the fall meeting and serve for one year.

**ARTICLE III****MEETINGS****Section 1.**

There shall be three regular meetings of the Board, to be held normally in January, May, and September, open to all members of The Swedenborgian Church. The September meeting shall be the annual meeting. Special meetings of the full Board may be called by the Executive Committee or any three members of the Board, two of whom shall not be part of the Leadership Team. With the approval of the Board, any meeting can be held via telephone conference call. Votes taken by letter or the internet shall be confirmed at the next regular meeting of the Board. Minutes of the Board meetings shall be distributed to Board members and

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shall be approved at the next meeting of the Board. A quorum shall consist of four voting members.

**Section 2.**

In the interim between Board meetings, the Executive Committee may meet if necessary. The Chairperson shall schedule an Executive Committee meeting upon request of any two members of the Executive Committee, one of whom may be an employee of the Board, or at the request of three members of the full Board, one of whom shall not be part of the Leadership Team. The Executive Committee minutes shall be distributed to all Board members. Actions of the Executive Committee shall be confirmed at the next meeting of the Board.

**Section 3.**

Between meetings of the Board, votes may be taken in any written form with the same effect as if taken at a regular meeting of the Board, except that in such written votes a two-thirds vote of the whole Board shall be necessary to decide the matter, and provided further that if any member of the Board requests its Chairperson in writing to delay action on the request under consideration, the Chairperson shall notify in writing all members of the Board of all objections made and reasons therefore, and shall allow two weeks for reversal of votes before the count of the vote is finally made.

**Section 4.**

The provisions of Robert's Rules of Order shall be used as a guide for the conducting of business.

**Section 5.**

Meetings of the Board or Executive Committee may be conducted by conference call, computer conference, or face to face.

## ARTICLE IV

### DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

**Section 1.**

The Board of Directors shall have superintendence of the services, programs, and activities of the Chapel. It shall employ the Leadership Team and evaluate their performance annually.

Members of the Board shall make themselves available to listen to problems and concerns of the Leadership Team and either individually or as a group, but decisions can only be made by the full Board or the Executive Committee as outlined in Article III.

The Board of Directors shall establish the general policies of the Chapel and

develop long-range plans for improvements.

The Board shall adopt the annual budget, submit copies to the General Council for their information and approval, and require a financial audit on the same schedule as the General Convention's audits, with a financial review in the years audits are not conducted.

The Board shall submit an annual report of The Wayfarers Chapel to the Secretary of The Swedenborgian Church for inclusion in the annual Journal of The Swedenborgian Church.

In carrying out its duties, the Board is responsible to The Swedenborgian Church and its General Council.

### **Section 2.**

The Executive Committee shall act for the Board of Directors in the interim between Board meetings. Between Board meetings it shall have the authority to amend the budget so long as expenditures do not exceed the anticipated income.

The Executive Committee shall carry out the directives of the Board and act on all matters referred to it by the Board. It shall evaluate the effectiveness of the Leadership Team members and make recommendations to the full Board regarding their employment and salaries and other matters germane to Chapel operation.

### **Section 3.**

The Leadership Team shall implement policies of the Board through day-to-day administration of Chapel activities as designated in the Responsibility Matrix. They shall employ, supervise, and evaluate Chapel staff. They shall keep the Board and Executive Committee informed of services, programs, activities, capital improvements, and the financial status of the Chapel.

### **Section 4.**

The Leadership Team, working with the Treasurer, shall annually prepare a preliminary budget for the Board.

In carrying out their duties, the Leadership Team is responsible to the Board of Directors and its Executive Committee.

## **ARTICLE V**

### **AMENDMENTS**

These Bylaws may be amended at any meeting of the Board of Directors by a two-thirds vote of the Directors present at the time the vote is taken provided that notice of the proposed amendment shall first have been sent to Board members at least two weeks before the Board meeting. This notice may be dispensed with for any special occasion by a unanimous vote of the Board members present and

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voting, provided a quorum exists. Bylaw amendments are also subject to approval by the General Council.

Amendments to these Bylaws are subject to approval of the General Council.

Revised September 21, 2007. Approved by General Council July 2, 2008.

Revised January 8, 2010. Approved by General Council September 5, 2013.

Revised September 21, 2013. Approved by General Council November 1, 2013.

Revised March 11, 2023. Approved by General Council March 11, 2023

## **BYLAWS OF THE SWEDENBORGIAN COMMUNITY**

A fully online, minister-led outreach and connectional ministry of the General Convention of the New Jerusalem, Inc.

The mission of this ministry is to create:

- a community where members are known to each other, feel free to share openly their personal journey of faith, and feel nurtured and supported in their walk with the Lord.
- an open and welcoming community for new spiritual seekers, introducing the Swedenborgian faith in an accessible way through powerful testimony and life experience with it.

### **BYLAWS**

#### **PREAMBLE – HISTORY**

At its fall meeting in 2004, the General Council of the Swedenborgian Church (General Convention) determined to research the idea of an online ministry that would connect distant Church members and also be an outreach ministry to the world. A Research Committee was appointed for this project. The Research Committee reported regularly and in the summer of 2005, the General Council accepted a proposal to establish an online-only outreach and connectional ministry. The Research Committee was discharged with thanks and a Steering Committee was appointed to organize and create this Internet Ministry, with initial funding from the denomination.

In the fall of 2005, the Steering Committee brought a complete proposal to establish [www.swedenborgiancommunity.org](http://www.swedenborgiancommunity.org) along with a request to fund a dedicated part-time minister. The General Council approved both requests and the search for a minister was opened. The General Council approved a part time contract for the first denominational “cyber minister” in the early spring of 2006, supported the design and implementation of a dedicated website for this new ministry and [www.swedenborgiancommunity.org](http://www.swedenborgiancommunity.org) was officially launched at the denomination’s annual convention at Urbana University on June 26, 2006.

The Steering Committee continued to serve through June 27, 2008, when it was officially thanked for its diligent, excellent work and discharged. The General Council appointed an oversight committee for [www.swedenborgiancommunity.org](http://www.swedenborgiancommunity.org) at its meeting on June 27, 2008. This committee is appointed annually by the General Council and has been named The Central Committee since 2011.

The General Council affirmed [www.swedenborgiancommunity.org](http://www.swedenborgiancommunity.org) as a specific, recognized ministry of the denomination at its post-convention meeting

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on July 8, 2012, in Bridgewater, MA.

## **ARTICLE I. CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**

**Number and terms.** The Central Committee of [www.swedenborgiancommunity.org](http://www.swedenborgiancommunity.org) shall consist of three appointed members. Central Committee members will serve three-year terms, with one consecutive renewal possible. Terms of service will be staggered so that the entire committee membership is not new each year.

**Central Committee Member Functions.** The types of expertise and experience that the Central Committee will consider in recommending new members for the appointment include: familiarity with the functions of the General Convention, writing, ministry, financial budgeting and reporting, Internet technology, program creation and presentational skills. All Central Committee members will be/become registrants of the ministry, and at least one should be selected from the online community. At least two must be members of a General Convention ministry.

**Appointment Process.** Upon ratification and implementation of these Bylaws, the Central Committee will recommend Committee appointments to the General Council annually for affirmation by the General Council at its post-convention meeting.

**Ex officio members.** The minister of [www.swedenborgiancommunity.org](http://www.swedenborgiancommunity.org) will serve ex officio without vote on the Central Committee, and is not counted toward a quorum. The Vice-President of the General Convention will serve ex officio with vote on the Central Committee.

**Quorum.** A quorum is achieved with one less than the number of voting Committee members at the time. If the Committee size should be reconfigured to six or more members, one more than half of the number of voting members will constitute a quorum.

## **ARTICLE II. OFFICERS**

The Central Committee will self-select its internal organizational structure regarding facilitator, financial overseer and secretarial position from within its membership. If the Committee size should be reconfigured to six or more members, the Committee will formally vote to fill offices.

**ARTICLE III. MEETINGS AND DECISION-MAKING**

Regular and special meetings will be held via telephone conference call or computer-generated voice or video conference. As is possible, the Central Committee will meet in person during the annual convention of the Swedenborgian Church.

Generally, the Central Committee will make decisions through consensus. The Committee will have formal votes on legal matters such as the minister's annual contract recommendation, finalization of the annual budget for [www.swedenborgiancommunity.org](http://www.swedenborgiancommunity.org) and on any major changes to the ministry's website.

**ARTICLE IV. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE****Section 1. General responsibilities**

The Central Committee shall establish the general policies and have superintendence of the services, programs and activities of this ministry.

Individual members of the Committee shall make themselves available to listen to problems and concerns of the Minister or other employees, but decisions and/or adjudications can only be made by the Central Committee as a whole.

The Central Committee shall submit a report on the work of the online ministry to the General Council at least annually.

The Central Committee will also submit a report for inclusion in the annual Journal of the Swedenborgian Church.

Other reports will be prepared and submitted as necessary.

**Section 2. Personnel Responsibilities**

The Central Committee, following the denomination's open search process, will select the Minister for [www.swedenborgiancommunity.org](http://www.swedenborgiancommunity.org) from the Roll of Ministers of the General Convention and recommend the hiring of that minister to the General Council of the General Convention. The contract will be between the selected Minister and the General Convention.

The Minister is responsible to the Central Committee and the Central Committee will evaluate the Minister annually. The Minister will implement policies of the Central Committee through day-to-day programming and services of [www.swedenborgiancommunity.org](http://www.swedenborgiancommunity.org). The Minister will report regularly to the Committee (frequency to be determined by the Committee and the Minister), and will direct/supervise and evaluate any part time technical/administrative assistant

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if one should be in place.

### **Section 3. Financial responsibilities**

The Central Committee, in consultation with the Minister, shall annually prepare a budget for the needs of [www.swedenborgiancommunity.org](http://www.swedenborgiancommunity.org). The Committee shall adopt the annual budget and submit it to the General Council for its approval. The annual budget for this ministry will be part of the complete annual budget of the General Convention, but the budget for [www.swedenborgiancommunity.org](http://www.swedenborgiancommunity.org) will be administered by the Central Committee.

All financial transactions for [www.swedenborgiancommunity.org](http://www.swedenborgiancommunity.org) will be handled through the General Convention's Central Office. As long as the day-to-day financial transactions are handled through the denomination's Central Office, and the ministry's annual budget is an identified part of the denomination's annual budget, audits and financial reviews of the finances of [www.swedenborgiancommunity.org](http://www.swedenborgiancommunity.org) will be part of the overall audit/review process of the denomination as established by the General Council.

### **ARTICLE V. AMENDMENTS**

These Bylaws may be amended at any meeting of the Central Committee by a two-thirds vote of the members present at the time the vote is taken, provided that notice of the proposed amendment shall first have been sent to Committee members at least two weeks before the Committee meeting. This notice may be dispensed with for any special occasion by a unanimous vote of the Committee members present and voting, provided a quorum exists.

Amendments to these Bylaws are subject to the approval of the General Council of the Swedenborgian Church in North America.

*Approved by the General Council of the General Convention, June 25, 2013*

*Adopted by Central Committee of [www.swedenborgiancommunity.org](http://www.swedenborgiancommunity.org), July 13, 2013 (Central Committee membership at time of vote: Dr. Page Morahan, Rev. Dr. Jonathan Mitchell, Ms. Christine Laitner; Rev. Dr. Wilma Wake, ex officio w/o vote)*

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## SWEDENBORGIAN BODIES

*The following Swedenborgian organizations are independent of our organization but wish to maintain a close relationship with us. We welcome them in our fellowship.*

### UNITED STATES:

#### **The General Church of the New Jerusalem**

*Mailing Address:* Box 743, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009

P: (267) 502-4900

*Exec. Bishop:* Rt. Rev. Peter M. Buss, Jr.

*Website:* [www.newchurch.org](http://www.newchurch.org)

#### **The Lord's New Church Which is Nova Hierosolyma**

*Address:* 1725 Huntingdon Road  
Huntingdon Valley, PA 19006

P: (215) 947-2727

*Email:* [info@thelordsnewchurch.org](mailto:info@thelordsnewchurch.org)

*Website:* [www.thelordsnewchurch.org](http://www.thelordsnewchurch.org)

### **GREAT BRITAIN: The General Conference of the New Church of Great Britain**

*First Conference 1789; General Conference Deeds enrolled 1822. Incorporated, 1872*

*Headquarters:* Purley Chase Centre, Purley Chase Lane, Mancetter,  
Nr Atherstone, Warwickshire CV9 2RQ, England

*Spiritual Leader:* Rev. J Dunion  
[jack.dunion@generalconference.org.uk](mailto:jack.dunion@generalconference.org.uk)

*Chair:* Mrs. M. L. Cowie

*Web Site:* [www.generalconference.org.uk](http://www.generalconference.org.uk)

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**THE CONTINENTAL (EUROPEAN) ASSOCIATION OF THE NEW CHURCH**

*(Organized in 1965 by the French Federation, the Swiss Bund, the New Church in Germany, the New Church in Vienna, and the New Church in Italy.)*

*Secretary:* Rev. Jean Vidil  
c/o Nouvelle Eglise et Centre Swedenborg  
Rue Caroline 21  
CH-1003, Lausanne, Switzerland  
P: (0) 21-23-78-77

**AUSTRIA: The New Church Society of Vienna**

*President:* Mr. Werner Prochaska  
Soesergasse 4, A-1010 Vienna

*Secretary:* Mrs. Gerda Scholz  
Untere Augartenstrasse 1/3  
A-1025 Vienna

*Services:* Intermittently at the home of Mr. W. Prochaska

**DENMARK: Den Nye Kirkes Menighed**

*Vice President:* Mr. Oliver Boolsen  
Nansensgade 7 1 tv., 1366 Copenhagen V.  
Tel: 31 13 52 39

*Secretary:* Miss Inger Ullrich,  
Osterpark 1, 2630 Tastrup  
Tel: 43-99 25 59

*Treasurer:* Mr. Manfred Ullrich  
Valbyholm 33, 2, 292 Skellet, 2500 Valby  
Tel: 36-45 00 30

*Board Member:* Mrs. Laura Boolsen  
Osterbrogade 228, 1.th. 2100, Copenhagen O  
Denmark  
Tel: 369-27 04 15

*Pastor:* Rev. Gudmund Boolsen  
Osterbrogade 228, 1.th. 2100 Copenhagen O  
Denmark

**FRANCE: Association Cultuzelle La Presle**

*Secretary:* Colette Gagnon  
Gvaude Rue, 71520 Tramayes

**Chrysalis Centre (Workshops and Seminars)**

*Leader:* Rev. Patrick Duvivier  
Ipailla 06540 Saorge, France

*Phone:* 06 13 51 32 58

*Email:* [Francecomechrysalis@msn.com](mailto:Francecomechrysalis@msn.com)

**GERMANY: Neue Kirche in Deutschland**

*President:* Mrs. Barbara Schmidt,  
Rosbaumweg 21D-78 Freiburg i Br.

**Berlin**

*President:* Mr. Peter Keune  
Schmarjestr. 2, D – Berlin – 37

*Secretary:* Mr. Werner Podlich  
Falkenseer Chausse 207, D-1 Berlin 20

*Treasurer:* Mrs. Gertrude Engling

*Services:* Fontane Str. 17 A, Berlin 33, Grunewald

**Berlin-Grunewald**

*Lay Leader:* Mr. Peter Keune  
Nordrhein Westfalen, Heuverstrasse 16, D-463  
Bochum

*President:* Mr. Horst Moelleken  
Im neuen Weg 34, D-5480 Remagen

*Secretary:* Rekha Moelleken  
Im neuen Weg 34, D-5480 Remagen

*Treasurer:* Bernhard Willimzig, Detmold

**South West Germany**

*President:* Frau B. Schmidt  
Rosbaumweg 20, 79110 Freiburg, Germany

*Secretary:* Mr. Friedmann Schmidt  
Keferstrasse 3, Villigen D-7730

*Lay Leader:* Mr. Friedmann Schmidt

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**ITALY: Italian Society of the New Church**

*Secretary:* Signor Fabio Barzelatto  
Casella Postale 34, 30035 Mirano (VE), Italy

**SWEDEN: Nya Kyrkans Svenska Forsamling**

*President:* Mr. Milan Pokorny  
Tallvagen 11, 12163 Johanneshov

*Secretary:* Mr. Nils-Sture Jansson  
Distingsgrand, 37, Hagersten, Stockholm C

*Services:* Tegnerluden 7, Stockholm  
(Occasionally at Gothenburg)

*Pastor:* Rev. Daniel Fitzpatrick

*Lay Leader:* Mr. Nils-Sture Jansson

**SWITZERLAND: Neue Kirche Der Deutschen Schweiz**

Apollostrasse 2, CH-8032 Zurich  
[www.swedenborg.ch](http://www.swedenborg.ch)

*President:* Mr. Heinz Grob Freie Str 22, CH-8280 Krenzlingen  
Apollostrasse 2, CH-8032 Zurich

*Treasurer:* Mr. Philippe Galland, Rue San Pierre 3, case postale  
62631002

*Pastor:* Jean Vidil  
Rue Caroline 21, CH-1003, Lausanne  
Tel: (0) 21-23 7877

**PHILIPPINES: The National Convention of the Swedenborgian Churches  
(Philippines), Inc.**

*Incorporated in 1952. Consists of nine congregations totaling approximately 500 members.*

*General:* Rev. Tomas C. Aquino

*President:* Dr. Simplicio de los Santos

*Ministers:* Rev. Tomas C. Aquino, Francisco Guzman,  
Rev. Amos C. Aquino, Simplicio de los Santos

**AUSTRALIA: The New Church in Australia**

*Registered Office:* 4 Shirley Road, Roseville, NSW 2069  
*President:* Rev. David Moffat  
 E: [d\\_a\\_moffat@yahoo.com.au](mailto:d_a_moffat@yahoo.com.au)  
*Treasurer:* Mr. Graham J. Hanna  
*Secretary:* Mr. Kevin B. Attwatter  
 P.O. Box 9043, Port Macquarie, NSW, 2444  
*Website:* [www.newchurch.net.au/](http://www.newchurch.net.au/)

**AUSTRALIA: Australian New Church College**

*Director of*  
*Spiritual Training:* Rev. David W. Millar  
 E: [dwmilla@gmail.com](mailto:dwmilla@gmail.com)  
*Regional Spiritual*  
*Director (Logopraxis):* Sarah Walker  
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**NEW ZEALAND**

*Auckland,* New Chrisitan Church in Auckland, meeting via  
 Zoom  
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**SOUTH AMERICA**

**Argentina, Buenos Aires**

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**Bolivia, La Paz**

Richard Lago  
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**CARIBBEAN**

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**India, Madurai**

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**Korea, Seoul**

Rev. Young K. Lee, IPO Box 1707

**Sri Lanka, Rajagiriya**

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**AFRICA****South Africa**

Mooki Memorial College, P.O. Box 592, Orlando East 1803,  
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President: President Archbishop Benjamin Ngwexane

**Nigeria, Ondo**

The New Church in West Africa

Conference Secretary: Rev. Lawrence Wariboko

Headquarters: Owo, Ondo, Nigeria

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Rev. Raghil Rizq

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Please notify the Secretary of the Swedenborgian Church and the Central Office of any changes to this list.

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OFFICERS

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Vice President .....Peter Heuss

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Treasurer ..... Grace Sudden

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Member Churches and Camps: Church of the Good Shepherd (Kitchener, Ontario)

ILLINOIS ASSOCIATION

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OFFICERS

President .....Pastor Paul Deming

Vice President .....Dell Rose

Secretary ..... Elizabeth Zeno

Treasurer ..... Pastor Karen Feil

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Member Churches and Camps: The Swedenborg Library & Spiritual Growth Center (Chicago, Illinois); LaPorte New Church (LaPorte, Indiana); Lenox Township Church of the New Jerusalem (Norway, Iowa); Virginia Street Church (St. Paul, Minnesota); Church of the Open Word (St. Louis, Missouri)

---

**KANSAS ASSOCIATION**

**CONTACT:**

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**OFFICERS**

**President** .....**Carl Helm**

Vice President ..... Howard Bowman

Secretary ..... Veneta Z. Lane

Treasurer ..... Roy Prescott

**Member Churches and Camps:** Church of the New Jerusalem (Pawnee Rock, Kansas); Pretty Prairie New Jerusalem Church (Pretty Prairie, Kansas)

**MAINE ASSOCIATION**

**CONTACT:**

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**OFFICERS**

**President** ..... **Pastor Lorraine Kardash**

Vice President ..... Martha Richardson

Secretary ..... Rev. Catherine Lauber

Treasurer ..... Rev. Susannah Currie

**Member Churches and Camps:** Bath New Church (Bath, Maine); Fryeburg New Church (Fryeburg, Maine); Fryeburg New Church Assembly (Fryeburg, Maine); Portland New Church (Portland, Maine)

**MASSACHUSETTS NEW CHURCH UNION**

**CONTACT:**

**Pastor Kelly Milne**, MNCU, 50 Quincy Street, Cambridge, MA 02138  
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**OFFICERS**

**President** .....**Rev. Kevin Baxter**  
Vice President ..... Rev. Dr. Donna Keane  
Secretary ..... Pastor Kelly Milne  
Treasurer ..... Mark Careaga  
Board Members: Marie Benoit, (Representing Bridgewater), Merrilee Phinney (Representing Bridgewater), Mark Careaga (Representing Cambridge), Herb Ziegler (Representing Cambridge), David Horton (Representing Elmwood), Rol-lie Lock (Representing Elmwood), Stephen Dyson (Representing Boston), Pat Blakeney (Representing Boston)

**Member Churches and Camps:** Boston Society of the New Jerusalem/Church on the Hill (Boston, Massachusetts); Bridgewater New Jerusalem Church (Bridgewater, Massachusetts); Cambridge Society of the New Jerusalem (Cam-bridge, Massachusetts); Elmwood New Church (Elmwood, Massachusetts)

**Inactive Churches:** Church of the Open Word (Newtonville, Massachusetts)

**MICHIGAN ASSOCIATION**

**CONTACT:**

**Barbara Barber**, 1247 Fontaine Street, Madison Heights, MI 48071  
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**OFFICERS**

**President** ..... **Barbara Barber**  
Vice President ..... Marjory Leas  
Secretary ..... Ian Barber  
Treasurer ..... B.J. Neuenfeldt  
Trustees ..... Tom Neuenfeldt, Mary Lou Jarrett, Barb Boxwell

**Member Churches and Camps:** Almont New Church Assembly (Allenton, Michigan); Royal Oak Church of the Holy City (Royal Oak, Michigan)

MIDDLE ATLANTIC ASSOCIATION

CONTACT:

Rev. Rich Tafel, 2023 Q Street NW, Washington, DC 20009

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OFFICERS

President ..... Rev. Rich Tafel

Vice President ..... open

Secretary ..... Rev. Shada Sullivan

Treasurer ..... Robert W. "Robin" Tafel, Jr.

Member Churches and Camps: Church of the Holy City (Wilmington, Delaware); Church of the Holy City (Washington, District of Columbia); Temenos (West Chester, Pennsylvania)

NEW YORK ASSOCIATION

CONTACT:

Rev. Solomon Youngmin Kim, Mailing address: c/o Rev. Youngmin Kim, 309 Lafayette Avenue, #13A, Brooklyn, NY 11238-6901

E: koreannewchurch@yahoo.com .....(718) 316-8296

OFFICERS

President ..... Rev. Solomon Youngmin Kim

Vice President ..... open

Secretary ..... Anna Martinian

Member Churches and Camps: Korean New Church (New York, New York)

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OFFICERS

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Vice President ..... Sue Ditmire

Recording Secretary..... Pastor Robbin Ferriman

Corresponding Secretary..... Anna Clem

Treasurer ..... Frank G. Doyle III

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PACIFIC COAST ASSOCIATION

CONTACTS:

Rev. Junchol Lee, 3200 Washington Street, San Francisco, CA 94115

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OFFICERS

President .....Rev. Junchol Lee

Vice President ..... Nancy Leras

Secretary ..... Ben Gunter

Treasurer ..... Jennifer Lindsay

Members-at-large..... Dr. Rebecca Esterson, Pastor Helen Barler

Member Churches and Camps: Agapao Church, (Santa Ana, California), The Garden Church, (San Pedro, California), New Church of the Southwest Desert (Silver City, New Mexico), Swedenborgian Church of Puget Sound (Seattle, Washington), Swedenborgian Church of San Francisco (San Francisco, California), Hillside, an Urban Sanctuary (El Cerrito, California), Wayfarers Chapel (Rancho Palos Verdes, California)

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Secretary ..... Taunya Semken Proudlove

Treasurer ..... Ardith Francis (acting)

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Kelsey Wiens, *Manitoba Representative:* Gord Schellenberg, *Saskatchewan*

*Representative:* Darlene Sawatzky

**Member Churches and Camps:** Calgary New Church Society (Calgary, Alberta); Church of the Holy City (Edmonton, Alberta); Paulhaven Camp (Edmonton, Alberta)

**DIRECTORY OF CHURCHES AND MINISTRIES**

Please notify the Secretary of the Swedenborgian Church and the Central Office of any changes to this list.

**CALIFORNIA**

**EL CERRITO**

**SWEDENBORGIAN SOCIETY OF THE EAST BAY**

**HILLSIDE, AN URBAN SANCTUARY**

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**Minister** ..... **Rev. Thom Muller**

**Licensed Pastor** ..... **Pastor Tassy Farwell**

**President**..... **Alexander Rush**

Vice President ..... *open*

Secretary ..... **Rev. Dr. Jim Lawrence**

Treasurer ..... **Holly Gottschalk and Pastor Tassy Farwell**

Board.....**Dr. Rebecca Esterson and Sandy Wright**

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**AGAPAO CHURCH**

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**Licensed Pastor and President**..... **Pastor Jae Hyon Chung**

Vice President ..... **Tae Hwa Jo**

Treasurer ..... **Sandy S. Kim**

**RANCHO PALOS VERDES**

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**Chair..... Peter Gottschalk**  
 Secretary ..... Ben Gunter  
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 Board Members.... Stan Conger, Rev. H. Tafel, Katharine Carr, Michael Robbins,  
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**SAN FRANCISCO**

**SAN FRANCISCO SWEDENBORGIAN CHURCH**

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**Minister ..... Rev. Junchol Lee**  
**President ..... Joshua Jennings**  
 Vice President ..... Will Slocum  
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**Licensed Pastor** .....**Pastor Connie McOsker**

Chair..... Dottie Wine

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Secretary ..... Elizabeth Sala

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Members: Carl John; Reneé Almaz; Connie McOsker

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**President** .....**Jean Dougherty**

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CHURCH OF THE HOLY CITY

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Member-at-large: Niki Ahamdi and Mathias Valenta

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W: [www.swedLib.org](http://www.swedLib.org)

*Library Hours: Wed. & Fri., 1pm-5pm Central Time*

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President ..... Catherine Laakko

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Secretary/Treasurer ..... Pastor Karen Feil

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Vice President ..... Tammara Mounce

Secretary ..... Dawn Fox

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Trustee: Phaithoon Inthisane

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**LENOX TOWNSHIP CHURCH OF THE NEW JERUSALEM**

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Treasurer ..... Angela Dooley

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**PAWNEE ROCK**

**CHURCH OF THE NEW JERUSALEM (SWEDENBORGIAN)**

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**President** ..... **Carl Helm**

Vice President ..... Howard Bowman

Secretary ..... Veneta Lane

Treasurer ..... Linda Kraus

Trustees: Joan McDonald, Connie Helm, Megan Alexander

**PRETTY PRAIRIE**

**NEW JERUSALEM CHURCH**

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Vice President ..... Veneta Lane

Secretary ..... Jean Conkling

Treasurer ..... Debbie Siebert

Trustees: Ron Graber, Linda Kraus, Melvin Schwartz

**MAINE**

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**BATH CHURCH OF THE NEW JERUSALEM**

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**Minister** ..... **Rev. Alison Lane-Olsen**

**President** ..... **Robert Lawson**

Vice President ..... Barbara Trott

Secretary ..... Gretchen Goodine

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Board Members: Jody Evans

**FRYEBURG**

**FRYEBURG NEW CHURCH**

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**Minister** .....**Rev. Catherine Lauber**

**Chair**.....**Susan Logan**

Vice Chair ..... *open*

Secretary ..... Stew Frost

Treasurer ..... Jennifer Layne-Eastman

Trustees: Jonathan Crowe, Alexis Miranda, Terri Carlson Rideout, and Ellen Schwindt

**PORTLAND**

**THE PORTLAND NEW CHURCH CENTER FOR THE SACRED ARTS**

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Vice President ..... *open*

Secretary ..... Nanci Adair

Treasurer ..... Pastor Lorraine Kardash

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**BOSTON SOCIETY OF THE NEW JERUSALEM/CHURCH ON THE HILL**

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Ministerial Fellow ..... Ben Gunter

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Vice President ..... Janet Forbes

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**BRIDGEWATER**

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**Moderator** ..... **Marie Benoit**

Secretary ..... Susan Lemee

Treasurer ..... *open*

Church Committee: Gloria Costello, Diana Leach, Leanne O'Donaghue, Peg Peters, *Open*

**CAMBRIDGE**

**CAMBRIDGE SOCIETY OF THE NEW JERUSALEM**

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Secretary ..... Andrew Sciarretta

Treasurer ..... Mark Careaga

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**Minister** ..... **Rev. Dr. Donna Keane**

**President** ..... **Roger Grindle**

Vice President ..... *open*

Secretary ..... Jennifer Horton

Treasurer ..... Rollie Locke Jr.

**NEWTONVILLE**

**CHURCH OF THE OPEN WORD**

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 127, Elmwood, MA 02337

**President** ..... **Dr. Gretchen Frauenberger**

Vice President ..... Rev. Gladys Wheaton

Secretary ..... Antonio Ortega

Treasurer ..... *open*

**MICHIGAN**

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Vice President ..... Tammara Mounce

Secretary ..... Katie Carson

Treasurer ..... Betsy Aldrich

**ROYAL OAK**

**ROYAL OAK CHURCH OF THE HOLY CITY**

Royal Oak Women’s Club, 404 S. Pleasant Street, Royal Oak, MI 48067

*Mailing Address: P.O. Box 1415, Royal Oak, MI 48067-1415*

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**Minister** ..... **Rev. Renée Machiniak**

**President** ..... **Rhett Billings**

Vice President ..... Sheila Linna

Secretary ..... Ian Barber

Treasurer ..... Barbara Barber

Trustees: Sharon Billings, Sue Fabian, Dan Linna, Sr.

**MINNESOTA**

**ST. PAUL**

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**Licensed Pastor** ..... **Pastor Gordon Meyer**

**President** ..... **Elizabeth Zeno**

Vice President ..... *open*

Secretary ..... Jeremy Rose

Treasurer ..... Carla Abler-Erickson

Trustees: Eric Hoffman, Paul Chaple, Julia Robinson

MISSOURI

ST. LOUIS

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Licensed Pastor .....Pastor Paul Deming

President ..... Debbie O'Reilly

Vice President ..... open

Secretary ..... Kei Pang

Treasurer ..... Duane Beougher

Board Members: Michael Holper, Graziella Chabanel

NEW MEXICO

SILVER CITY

THE NEW CHURCH OF THE SOUTHWEST DESERT

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Vice President/Secretary ..... Patte LeVan

Treasurer ..... Dawn Larsen, CPA High Desert Accounting

Members-at-large: Debi Merrifield

NEW YORK

NEW YORK

KOREAN NEW CHURCH

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Minister/President..... Rev. Solomon Youngmin Kim

Vice President ..... Wan Soo Kim

Secretary ..... Ming Hao Jie

Treasurer ..... Young Chon Min

OHIO

CINCINNATI

NEW CHURCH OF MONTGOMERY

845 Congress Avenue Glendale, OH 45246

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 42466, Montgomery, OH 45242-0466

E: newchurchofmontgomery@gmail.com (513) 515-4542

W: [www.newchurchofmontgomery.org](http://www.newchurchofmontgomery.org)

- President ..... Gloria Toot
- Secretary ..... Shannon Fischer
- Treasurer ..... Pete Toot

CLEVELAND

SWEDENBORG CHAPEL

Mailing Address: c/o Steve Dzeba 2439 Abington Road, Fairlawn, OH 44333

E: stevedzeba@yahoo.com (216) 262-0056

- President ..... Jack (John) Cashin
- Vice President ..... Lois Krebs
- Secretary ..... Janie Dzeba
- Treasurer ..... Steve Dzeba
- Member: Norman Bestor

URBANA

URBANA SOCIETY OF THE NEW CHURCH

330 South Main Street, Urbana, OH 43078

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 840, Urbana, OH 43078-0840

E: urbanachurch@yahoo.com (937) 653-6810

W: [www.weddingchapel-urbana.com](http://www.weddingchapel-urbana.com)

- Minister ..... Rev. Betsy Coffman
- Licensed Pastor ..... Pastor Robbin Ferriman
- President ..... Albert Cowen
- Vice President ..... open
- Secretary ..... Corina Fain
- Treasurer ..... Bill Coffman
- Trustees: Kent Myers, Cindi Haimerl, Mike West

PENNSYLVANIA

WEST CHESTER

TEMENOS

685 Broad Run Road, West Chester, PA 19382-1705

Mailing Address: 1564 Telegraph Road, West Chester, PA 19382-1501

E: info@temenoscommunity.org (610) 696-8145

W: www.temenoscommunity.org

Acting Pastor ..... Rev. Yung Me Suh Morris

Co-President.....Anna Montejo

Co-President..... Nancy Bradley Siebert

Vice President ..... Rev. Roslyn Taylor

Secretary ..... open

Treasurer ..... Robin Tafel

Board Members: Patrick Cody, Cynthia Sperberg, Beth Steines

WASHINGTON

SEATTLE

SWEDENBORGIAN SPIRITUAL COMMUNITY OF PUGET SOUND

Mailing Address: c/o Michael Robbins, 22481 Sunridge Way NE, Poulsbo, WA 98370

E: mrs@msrplans.com (206) 355-3750

W: www.swedenborgianspiritualcommunity.org

President .....Michael Robbins

Vice President/Secretary ..... Chris Metcalfe

Treasurer ..... Garry Kersten

CANADA

ALBERTA

CALGARY

NEW CHURCH SOCIETY

E: lipskis@oldsnet.ca

President ..... Dianne Roesinger

Vice President/Secretary ..... Esther Fyk

Treasurer ..... Hartmut Lipski

EDMONTON

CHURCH OF THE HOLY CITY (SWEDENBORGIAN)

9119-128 A Avenue, Edmonton, AB T5E 0J6

E: holy9119@telus.net (780) 475-1620

W: [www.edmontonholycity.com](http://www.edmontonholycity.com)

President ..... Ardith Francis

Vice President ..... open

Secretary ..... Kurtis Schreiber

Treasurer ..... Barry Reed

Casino Director ..... Taunya Semken

Board Members: Randy Runka, Guy Spencer, Kelly Kennedy, Leah Fleming

ONTARIO

KITCHENER

CHURCH OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD

116 Queen Street North, Kitchener, ON N2H 2H7

E: pastor@shepherdsway.ca (519) 743-3845

W: [www.shepherdsway.ca](http://www.shepherdsway.ca)

Minister ..... Rev. Alison Moore

President ..... Jean McDermott

Vice President ..... Kate Harvey

Secretary ..... Deb Smith

Treasurer ..... Tracey Sanders

Directors: David Ingard, Debbie Gehl, Francis Gresham, Judy Pidgeon, Susan

Hemmerich

**VIRTUAL**

**RAINBOW CHURCH OF THE NEW JERUSALEM**

A new-start ministry program that exists virtually at:

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100089465225640>

E: [onaroleplay@yahoo.com](mailto:onaroleplay@yahoo.com)

**Minister .....Rev. Colin Amato**

**SPIRITUAL SUNSHINE:**

**A SWEDENBORGIAN COMMUNITY ONLINE**

W: [www.swedenborgiancommunity.org](http://www.swedenborgiancommunity.org)

**Minister .....Rev. Cory Coberforward**

**Committee Chair..... Kurt Fekete**

Committee Member .....Rudy Caseres

Committee Member ..... William Rotella

Committee Member .....Dr. Emily Tergliafera

DIRECTORY OF CAMPS  
AND CONFERENCE CENTERS

ALMONT NEW CHURCH ASSEMBLY AND RETREAT CENTER

1513 Cameron Road, Allenton, MI 48002-2201

(810) 798-8487

E: lorip.almontretreatcenter@gmail.com

W: [www.almontretreats.com](http://www.almontretreats.com)

Summer School Director: Craig Carson

A family camp. Modern facilities and a pond for swimming and fishing make this camp outstanding, but the keynote of Almont is Camp Spirit! From the flag raising ceremony and the singing of “Fling to the Breeze Our Glorious Banner!” to the evening vesper service, Almont campers of all ages are alive with projects, classes, games, and skits—helping one another, working and playing together as a big family.

- President/Director .....Craig Carson
- Vice President .....Tammara Mounce
- Secretary .....Katie Carson
- Treasurer .....Betsy Aldrich
- Trustee..... Erika Dearing
- Trustee..... Oliver Hamilton
- Trustee.....Victoria Mounce
- Retreat Center Manager ..... Lori Patana

**FRYEBURG NEW CHURCH ASSEMBLY**

Route 302, 84 Main Street, Fryeburg, ME 04037-1147

E: [info@fryeburg.org](mailto:info@fryeburg.org)

*summer sessions only:* (207) 935-2338

W: [www.fryeburg.org](http://www.fryeburg.org)

**President:** Daniel Dyer

(207) 890-9787

E: [ddyer@fryeburg.org](mailto:ddyer@fryeburg.org)

**Camp Director:** Dr. Emily Tergliafera

E: [etergliafera@fryeburg.org](mailto:etergliafera@fryeburg.org)

**President** ..... **Daniel Dyer**

**Camp Director** ..... **Dr. Emily Tergliafera**

Vice President ..... Rev. Kevin Baxter

Secretary ..... Rebekah Greenwood

Treasurer ..... Robert Perry

Clerk..... Kristina Madjerac

Additional Board Members: Katie Brown, Miriam Lexie, Evan Palazzo, Rev. E.

Kent Rogers, Trevor Woofenden

*Non-Board Positions:*

Religious Programs Coordinator..... Rev. Susannah Currie

Dole 3 Miler Race Director..... Jonathan Crowe

**About the Fryeburg New Church Assembly:**

The FNCA is a two-week, multi-generational, Swedenborgian family camp typically held the beginning of August, located on 20+ acres of pine forest on the banks of the refreshing waters of the Saco River in Fryeburg, Maine.

The Main Building includes our dining hall, kitchen, lecture hall, adult lounge, children’s lounge, teen girls’ dorm, several second-floor private rooms, and two first floor rooms—each with a private half bath. Other buildings include nineteen family units located in cabins along the ridge overlooking the river, teen boys’ dorm, teen lounge, and laundry room. Tent and RV sites are also available with a bathhouse nearby. The Summer Session program includes something for everyone: chapel, lectures, religion classes and special programming for the children and teens, swimming, canoeing, and evening programs presented by campers. Horseshoes, volleyball, four-square, and ping-pong are enjoyed during free time, working up an appetite for delicious meals provided by professional cooks, supplemented by a well-stocked salad bar.

What was originally called “the Promised Land” is now called “Our little slice of Heaven on Earth.”

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**PAULHAVEN**

c/o The Church of the Holy City

9119-128 A Avenue, Edmonton, AB T5E 0J6 Canada

*For information, contact Dianne Roesinger (403) 239-4192*

Paulhaven Camp is held at a wooded site on a lovely lake. Accommodations are primitive. The children are housed in cabins, but there is no running water, so this is a true camping experience. Adults do the cooking, but the children share in the chores of housekeeping. The religious program is staffed by members of the Western Canada Conference, which sponsors the camp. Swimming, boating, crafts, sports, hiking and group activities are enjoyed by campers and staff together. Campers come from widely scattered places, and camp is a high point in the lives of youngsters who often get only this opportunity to be with other New Church children.

**TEMENOS**

1564 Telegraph Road, West Chester, PA 19382-1501

(610) 696-8145

E: [info@temenoscommunity.org](mailto:info@temenoscommunity.org)

W: [www.temenoscommunity.org](http://www.temenoscommunity.org)

**DIRECTORY OF NEW CHURCH  
LIBRARIES, BOOKROOMS, AND PUBLISHERS**

**UNITED STATES**

**CALIFORNIA**

**SAN FRANCISCO: SWEDENBORG LIBRARY**

3200 Washington Street, 94115-1622

(415) 346-6466

**DELAWARE**

**WILMINGTON: NEW CHURCH BOOK ROOM**

1118 North Broom Street, 19806-4315

(302) 654-5014

**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

**WASHINGTON: BOOKS FOR GROWING**

1611 16th Street NW, 20009-3001

(202) 462-6734

**ILLINOIS**

**CHICAGO: THE SWEDENBORG LIBRARY & SPIRITUAL GROWTH CENTER**

77 West Washington Street, Room 1700, 60602-3182

(312) 346-7003

E: [info@swedlib.org](mailto:info@swedlib.org)

F: (312) 346-7004

E: [SwedLib@gmail.com](mailto:SwedLib@gmail.com)

W: [www.SwedLib.org](http://www.SwedLib.org)

**INDIANA**

**LAPORTE: MANNA HOUSE BOOKROOM**

812 Indiana Avenue, 46350-3406

(219) 362-1959

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**KANSAS**

**PRETTY PRAIRIE: REV. ERIC ZACHARIAS MEMORIAL BOOK ROOM**

106 North Maple Street, 67570

(620) 899-2200

**MASSACHUSETTS**

**CAMBRIDGE: MASSACHUSETTS NEW CHURCH UNION**

50 Quincy Street, 02138-3013

(617) 864-4552

**MINNESOTA**

**ST. PAUL: VIRGINIA STREET CHURCH**

170 Virginia Street, 55102-2116

(651) 224-4553

**PENNSYLVANIA**

**WEST CHESTER: SWEDENBORG FOUNDATION**

320 North Church Street, 19380-3213

(610) 430-3222

E: [info@swedenborg.com](mailto:info@swedenborg.com)

W: [www.swedenborg.com](http://www.swedenborg.com)

**CANADA**

**KITCHENER, ONTARIO: CHURCH OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD**

116 Queen Street North, N2H 2H7

(519) 743-3845

E: [office@shepherdsway.ca](mailto:office@shepherdsway.ca)