



**Register for the Annual Convention by June 13!**

[Registration form and information on page 73](#)

## Urbana & Franklin Universities Form Partnership

BY BETSY COFFMAN

**O**n April 29, Urbana University in Urbana, Ohio, and Franklin University in Columbus announced a partnership agreement.



Many of our church members, especially those who had been affiliated with Urbana University, may have been shocked to hear that it has essentially been acquired by Franklin University of Columbus, Ohio, making Urbana a subsidiary of Franklin. This may be especially confusing after the recent *Messenger* article announcing the “Campaign to Transform Urbana University.”

In June of 2013, when the annual convention was held at Urbana University, the board and administration had no idea that Urbana would be in the place in which it found itself this spring. Although the board was aware that the financial situation was tenuous and that strengthening it was a priority, they still had every reason to think that Urbana could gain solid financial ground, especially with its new president and some very excellent people who joined the administration and board late in the summer.

For those who know the history, Urbana has gone through many shaky financial times over the years and has almost closed on a number of occasions. *The Will to Survive* by Frank Higgins, follows Urbana’s history from its founding in 1850 until 1975. General Convention has been historically a major factor in Urbana’s ongoing survival, but is no longer in a position to “rescue” the institution as it had done in the past.

**The stated vision of this merger will preserve Urbana University’s name, traditions, and heritage. Urbana will function as a subsidiary of Franklin . . . .**

In the end, the issue became one of time. The university’s strong fundraising efforts and several other new program initiatives that would have strengthened it financially did not have time to be realized before a crisis was reached. The crisis evolved because operating cash ran, out presenting the very real potential of having to close the university, possibly before the end of the semester and graduation.

When the board realized this possibility, they decided to identify and approach other institutions that might be

interested in some type of merger or collaboration that would include the infusion of financial support. Franklin University was immediately interested.

This interest had been initiated at a board meeting two years ago, when Franklin’s president, Dr. David Decker, was approached to discuss a collaboration in a very casual way.

Franklin’s focus traditionally has been adult learners, and they have a very successful online course platform and technology. They are in a stable financial position and their strategic plan includes extending and diversifying their educational offerings. Their mission and values statements are quite similar to those of Urbana. Franklin is attracted to Urbana’s strong teacher education program, athletic teams and related sports programs, and several of Urbana’s master’s programs that they do not have. Urbana’s more traditional and residential student population and campus setup are additional attractions.

Fast forward to the present financial crisis; the boards and leadership of both institutions worked together to develop an acquisition agreement that included Franklin’s assumption of Urbana’s assets and debt.

The stated vision of this merger will

[Continues on page 68](#)

## The Editor's Desk

### Principles— Religious and Secular



#### A Black Mass

Perhaps you've heard about it: The Harvard Extension Cultural Studies Club in Cambridge, Massachusetts, announced its intention to celebrate a "satanic black mass" in a university student pub (located, incidentally, directly opposite the Cambridge Swedenborg Chapel). Outrage ensued, locally and the nationally, from the Catholic Church, students, and commentators, over the perceived denigration of Catholic mass and the Christian faith; counter-protests were quickly organized. Many protesters decried the right of others to denigrate their

religious beliefs through mockery. The kerfuffle eased when the club cancelled their mass at the last minute.

This is America, where we have freedom of speech of course, including the right to perform offensive rituals, and Harvard's president had announced she abhorred the event, in fact would attend a mass at the scheduled time, but that Harvard upheld the right of free speech in the academy.

#### Religious Censorship

*The Hindus: An Alternative History* by Wendy Donniger, published in India in 2010, was subject to multiple civil and criminal lawsuits brought by Dina Nath Batra, a member of a far-right Hindu organization. The law forbids "deliberate and malicious acts intended to outrage religious feelings of any class of citizens." After four years of litigation, the publisher, Penguin Books, agreed to stop publishing the book in India. The specific offenses that Batra claims are well known and respected academic and religious understandings of Hinduism in India.

#### Free Expression and Piety

The black mass proposed by the Cultural Studies Club was advertised as a cultural exploration, not a religious

event, and *The Hindus* is an academic work, not a religious book that aims to support a religious viewpoint. Reactions that confuse the spirit of free inquiry into religion with religious dogma are a threat to the concept of free speech and a threat to the understanding and practice of their own religions. Although we may be outraged, and express that outrage freely, by what others say or mock about our religion, we should be careful that we do not deny the right of people to speak and act freely.

I am blessed to be part of a denomination, and its seminary, that believes and practices free inquiry as well as its solid theology.

—Herb Ziegler

## Contents

<a href="#">Urbana &amp; Franklin Universities Form Partnership</a> .....	61
<a href="#">The Editor's Desk</a> .....	62
<a href="#">Letter from the President</a> .....	63
<a href="#">Nominees for Elected Positions in the Church</a> .....	64
<a href="#">First Annual Rev. Dr. George F. Dole Celebration 3 Mile Road Race</a> .....	66
<a href="#">Lessons from My Mother</a> .....	67
<a href="#">A Fork in the Road</a> .....	68
<a href="#">Esterson Receives Award</a> .....	68
<a href="#">General Council Spring Meeting</a> .....	69
<a href="#">Changing Lives: I Am Connecting with this Church and Its Teachings All over Again</a> .....	70
<a href="#">Parsonage Tax Exemption Threatened</a> .....	71
<a href="#">What's Happening in the Web Community?</a> .....	71
<a href="#">SHS Board Meets Amid Changes and Challenges</a> .....	72
<a href="#">2014 Annual Convention Registration Form</a> .....	73
<a href="#">Passages</a> .....	75
<a href="#">Letters to the Editor</a> .....	75
<a href="#">Annual Convention 2014</a> .....	76

## Church Calendar

- May 23–26: West Coast Swedenborgian Retreat • Sonoma, CA
- May 23–26: SCYL Memorial Day Retreat • Almont Retreat Center • Allenton, MI
- June 7–8: Western Canada Conference Annual Meeting • Church of the Holy City • Edmonton, Alberta
- July 2–6: 2014 Annual Convention St. Louis, MO
- July 26–August 3: Almont Summer School • Allenton, MI
- August 2–17: FNCA Summer Camp Session • Fryeburg, ME

## the Messenger

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**Deadline for submissions** is six weeks before the first day of the month of issue.

The opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect the views of the editor, the Communications Support Unit, or the Swedenborgian Church.

## Letter from the President



Dear Friends,

It was a cold and long winter, but today spring is here at last. The snow is gone, the foam green is returning to the trees. Our raspberries are sprouting leaves and new shoots are pushing up from the ground. Daffodils are bright yellow and even a hardy primrose that was supposed to be an annual survived the winter and is in full bloom. Contrary to all expectations, its will to live has overcome the assumption that it had seen its time.

It makes me think of the number of our churches that continue to exist despite all of the reasons they could fade away. Somehow, somehow, the will to live asserts itself and perseveres in spite of indications, predictions, assumptions, and expectations to the contrary. There are more than a few that are flowering in spite of the long, cold winter of economic hardship and continuing cultural transformation. I think of each of them with the same gladness and affirmation that I experienced seeing that renegade primrose. It confirms in life the belief in the ongoing and ever presence of Divine Providence. The love and wisdom of God manifesting in the world, albeit at times in admittedly small and unassuming ways, is irrepressible and in fact inevitable.

The other fascinating parallel between nature and Divine presence in the world, is that in the face of all, it continually finds its own means of expression. And we as human beings, created in the image and likeness of God, are in fact an essential part of that relentless creativity. The restless soul, the curious mind, the urge to create that lives within each of us, is God's presence seeking to manifest

through us. And each of us in our own unique way gives expression to that presence with what we do with our time and our life energy. Each of us has gifts and life and time. And just as in the parable Jesus taught, at some unknown point in the future, the master will come to us and ask what we have done with the talents that were given us in the time that we had. How we have lived will be the only answer we can offer.

This summer we go to St. Louis to gather at the Gateway to Providence and join in a communal commitment to being led by the Lord. It is Divine Providence that is the assurance of our purpose on earth, as a denomination, as our individual churches and communities, and as individual people in the world community in which we all live. It is my hope that together we renew our commitment to be determined and persevering in bringing our gifts to flower in spite of all that might indicate, influence and invite otherwise. Each flower, no matter how insignificant it seems in relation to the hugeness of creation, is a contribution to the beauty of that creation. In the same way, each of us, each of our churches, and all of us together in this relatively tiny denomination are making a contribution to the beauty of God's creation. Let us not hide those gifts or be self-deprecating about what we have to offer and what we can do out of concern for what they are not or how they compare to what others may do. We each have our place and purpose in life and it is our task to simply give what we have and let the Lord make of our efforts what is needed for Providence's purpose. If that little primrose had not made it through the winter and stubbornly bloomed, even when it wasn't supposed to, I never would have known and, truth be told, never would have missed it. But it did bloom, and small and insignificant as it may be, it brought real joy to me at a time when I needed it. In my eyes, and I dare say in God's, that is more than enough reason for being.

—*Blessings, Rev. Ken*

## Nominees for Elected Positions in the Church

The Nominating Committee recruits and puts forward nominees for election to offices and positions in the denomination at the annual convention. In addition to the two candidates to be elected as representative-class trustees on the SHS board, two candidates are to be elected as the at-large class trustees nominated by the SHS Board of Directors.

The Nominating Committee is still soliciting candidates, but as of *the Messenger* going to press, the candidates listed in the table at right have been nominated for election at the 2014 Annual Convention.

Nominations to all offices and positions can be made from the floor of the annual convention.

### Candidate Statements

The following candidates have submitted statements for the May *Messenger*. The statements of candidates marked with an asterisk (\*) appeared in the April *Messenger*.

#### MINSU: Dick Tafel

I bring fifty-plus years of pastoral experience to MINSU. I led the Cincinnati Church as they relocated, found property, and built a new house of worship after the old one was taken for a highway project. We developed community focused programs like a teen coffee house, counseling and personal growth programs, and a successful wedding ministry. We also developed and built a retreat center and camp called "Beside-the-Point."

In 1996, I started a new congregation here in the Fort Myers Beach area (Florida) from scratch, built on the premise of thinking outside the box. We adopted as our theme: "feed the hungry, clothe the naked, comfort the afflicted, and nurture children," sponsoring a thrift store and clothing dis-

Position to be Filled	Term (Yrs)	Candidate
Vice-President	1	Betsy Coffman (I)*
Secretary	1	Susannah Currie (I)*
Treasurer	1	Polly Baxter (I)*
General Council layperson (2 to be elected)	3	Barbara Cullen (I)* Lon Elmer (I)*
General Council Minister	3	Sky Paradise*
Communication Support Unit (COMSU)	3	Katie Rienstra Pruiett (I)
Education Support Unit (EDSU)	3	Paul Deming
Financial and Physical Resources Support Unit (FPRSU)	3	Jennifer Lindsay (I)
Information Management Support Unit (IMSU)	3	Kevin Baxter
Support Unit for Ministries (MINSU)	3 3 1	Dick Tafel (I) Marjory Leas Nadine Cotton
Committee on Admission to the Ministry (CAM)	3 2	Rebecca Esterson Jane Siebert
Board of Trustees of SHS, representative class (4 to be elected)	2 3 2 3	Nancy Little Alison Longstaff Robert Morrill (I) Gard Perry
Board of Trustees of SHS, at-large class (3 to be elected)**	3 3 1	Jenny Caughman Pina Wharton John Titus (I)
Nominating Committee (2 to be nominated, 1 to be elected)	5	Sue Ditmire* David Fekete*

(I) Incumbent

\*\* Nominated by the Swedenborgian House of Studies (SHS) Board of Trustees

tribution, food pantry, and after-school program.

These experiences have served me well during one term on the Ministries Support Unit, and I look forward to the privilege of contributing for another term.

#### CAM: Rebecca Esterson

Rebecca Esterson is a member of the Cambridge Society of the New Jerusalem and holds the position of Swedenborgian Scholar in Training at the Swedenborgian House of Studies. She is a third year PhD student in the Graduate Di-



vision of Religious Studies at Boston University. Her dissertation will involve a study of Swedenborg's *Arcana Coelestia*. She lives in the Boston area with her husband and two young sons, and plans a move to Berkeley in the summer of 2015 to join the community of scholars at the Swedenborgian House of Studies.

#### FPRSU : Jennifer Lindsay

Jennifer Lindsay is a member of the San Francisco Society. She currently serves as treasurer for both the San Francisco Society and the Swedenborgian House of Studies. She has served on FPRSU (and the Augmentation Fund) for the past three years and from 2001 through 2007. She also previ-

[Continues next page](#)

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ously served on the Board of Managers for the Wayfarers' Chapel from 2001 through 2007. For each of these positions, Jennifer uses her business experience from consulting with technology clients who have compliance and internal investigative matters to resolve. She is a principal with KPMG LLP and co-owns two wine bars in San Francisco.

### SHS Board of Trustees: Nancy Little

I am pleased to be nominated to the Board of Trustees of SHS. I've been familiar with SHS and its previous incarnation, the Swedenborg School of Religion, SSR, since the 1980s. My interest in SHS stems from my work in higher education; I am a librarian and adjunct faculty member at a community college in Springfield, Massachusetts. I initially thought about serving on the SHS board three years ago when I learned that they had let their librarian go, and thought that the SHS might benefit from having a librarian serve on the board of trustees. At the time, my term as president of the Women's Alliance was winding down, and I had a few other volunteer positions that were keeping me busy and occupied. Since then I've stepped down as registrar for Fryeburg New Church Assembly, which took up a lot of my time. When I saw that there were spots open this year, I thought I would put my name in.

If you've been to annual conventions regularly sometime in the past thirty-plus years, we've probably met.



If my name or face isn't familiar to you, here's my story.

My family moved to Elmwood Village, a neighborhood of East Bridgewater, Massachusetts, in 1975. I began attending Sunday School at the Elmwood New Church, practically across the street, that fall. So many of the children talked about Blairhaven camp in South Duxbury that I begged my mother to let me go—I went for the first time in the summer of 1976. The camp was a blast, and that's where I was introduced to Swedenborg. I joined the church in 1976 and was active in the youth group at the Elmwood Church throughout high school. I attended my first annual convention in 1979 at Urbana College [University]. A group of teens from Elmwood raised money to take the bus from Boston to Ohio, and I attended every convention after that until 1986.

I was involved with the youth league at the national level, serving as East Coast representative, *Clear Blue Sky* editor and eventually president of what was then called the NCYL. After my involvement with the League came to an end, I, along with Kathy Tafel and a few others, founded Transitions for college age to thirty-year-old members of the church. Around the same time, I was appointed by then president Cal Turley to serve as youth delegate to the National Council of Churches, and served for ten years.

In addition to my involvement with the Youth League and Transitions, I served on the Massachusetts New Church Union Standing Committee and the Blairhaven Committee.

In 1998, after a brief hiatus from church involvement, I resumed attending the Fryeburg New Church Assembly (FNCA) summer camp, having attended as a teen. I didn't jump right in with both feet but rather tested the waters, as I like to do. Four years later I volunteered to be the camp registrar, serving for ten years until I stepped

down last summer. Two years ago, I was appointed to the FNCA Buildings and Grounds Committee. I have also served on the FNCA Outreach Committee since its inception in 2010.

In 2008, I attended an annual convention again and was delighted to see so many familiar faces. I attended my first ever Women's Alliance luncheon and was elected president. (Let this be a warning to you all.) I served as president for three years. It was great to be back!

In 2012, I got a call from President Ken Turley asking me to serve on General Convention's Library and Documents Committee—he'd heard of my interest in libraries. I agreed to serve, and was shortly appointed as chair. We were called upon by General Council to draft a documents retention policy, which was approved at their November 2012 meeting.

Most recently, I served on the steering committee for Gathering Leaves '13, which was held at FNCA in September.

I have a Master of Library Science degree from Simmons College in Boston and I serve on the board of trustees for our public library in Hatfield, Massachusetts.

I've been married to Trevor Woofenden (Trevor the Gamesman) since 1998. We met when I was a camper at Blairhaven in the 1970s and he was a lifeguard and the activities director. When Trevor was camp director in 1982, he hired me to be a junior counselor and dishwasher. It was the best summer job ever!

### Alison Longstaff

The Rev Alison Longstaff is a lifelong academic. Raised in the General Church, she left that body to pursue ordination with the Swedenborgian Church of North America (General Convention). Ordained in 2009, she worked part-time at Church of

[Continues on page 66](#)

## First Annual Rev. Dr. George F. Dole Celebration 3 Mile Road Race

**C**aptain's Log: Star Date 1954. We have gone back in time to a galaxy far, far away to witness a historic moment that one young native of Fryeburg, Maine, was fortunate to be a part of.

The weather in Oxford, England, was less than ideal for a record breaking attempt. Fifteen mile per hour winds with gusts up to twenty miles per hour had twenty-two-year-old George Dole wondering if the race at the Iffley Road Track would be cancelled. But the man who was to create history on May 6 had been training in high winds, and he was determined. Ten minutes before the gun went off, the flag on top of St. George's tower fell limp. George took the pole position at 6:00 PM and exactly three minutes and 59.4 seconds later, Roger Bannister accomplished his goal of becoming the first person to break the four-minute mile, a record that had previously seemed unattainable. This incredible event is still celebrated sixty years later.

While he did not win that day, Rev. Dr. George F. Dole has led a life of useful service as a pastor, a professor, an author, and director of the Swedenborg Foundation. He continues to win the hearts of his students, parishioners, colleagues, countless friends, and community members. George returns to Fryeburg every August to lecture at the Fryeburg New Church As-

sembly on the banks of the Saco River. At eighty-two years old he continues to run on Haleytown Road and more recently on the new Rail Trail.

His friends at the Fryeburg New Church Assembly (FNCA) have planned a celebration of his achievements by hosting a three-mile race on the Rail Trail on August 9. The race be-



*The start of the famous race:  
Roger Bannister 3rd from left; George Dole far right*

**To view an interview with George Dole about this event, go to <http://on.wcsh6.com/1kUhiJ9>**

gins at 8:00 AM at the Visitors Center near the Maine/New Hampshire state line (located conveniently across the road from FNCA). Runners and walkers of all ages and levels are encouraged to attend. Proceeds of the race will help support FNCA, the Fryeburg New Church, and the Mountain Division Rail Trail.

On Friday evening at 8:00 on August 8, George will present a free talk about the 1954 race with Roger Bannister at the lecture hall of the Fryeburg New Church Assembly. All are welcome to attend.

Call 508-649-5982 or go to [www.dole3miler.com](http://www.dole3miler.com) for registration and sponsorship information.

—Jonathan Crowe for the Dole  
3 Miler Race Committee

### Nominees

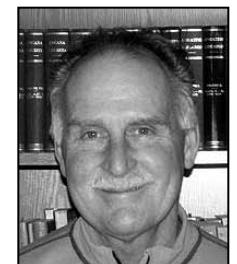
*Continued from page 65*

the Good Shepherd in Kitchener Ontario from 2008–2012. Alison then returned to school to pursue a second Masters Degree, this time in Spiritual Care and Psychotherapy which she achieved in the Spring of 2013. She was searching for where she might begin a doctorate degree when she received and accepted the call to serve the congregation of the Bath Church of the New Jerusalem, in Bath, Maine. Her three adult children are all thriving in Ontario and stay in close contact with her. She is thrilled to be asked to serve on the Board of Trustees for the Swedenborg House of Studies.



### Gard Perry

The Rev. Dr. F. Gardiner Perry serves as Spiritual Care Counselor for the Hospice Program of Carroll County, New Hampshire, where he provides Spiritual Needs Assessments for patients and their families. Gard is active in the New Hampshire Pastoral Counselors Association, where he participates on a curriculum development committee to help pastoral counselors integrate their own spirituality into their counseling practices. He is active in the Fryeburg New Church Assembly Summer Session where he participates in the lecture program and other areas of camp life. He has served our churches in Fryeburg, Maine, and Royal Oak, Michigan, graduated from the Swedenborg School of Religion, and was



*Continues on page 68*

## Lessons from My Mother

A year ago we said goodbye, or so long, to my mother, Mary Crenshaw. Since then, a multitude of people have expressed the impact she had on their lives. Every one of these expressions is welcome and soothing to the loss on both sides. The common element to each story is the active role my mother played in supporting, directing, and passionately expressing her views on things in her world about which she cared deeply.

Growing up in the church, I was bewildered by the attraction my mother had to performing the mundane tasks of running the church. Although I never said so, too often, in my young opinion, she was down in the church basement working with Dean or Esther to prepare those gelatin molds and Kool-Aid for coffee hour, instead of being upstairs where the real action was taking place. I wanted my mother to be a Mary—not a Martha. Today I see the limitations in my youthful perceptions of important foundations in her spirituality, although it took a long time to really appreciate why.

As a child and teen, I was fortunate to be part of a very active Swedenborgian community, which provided information and the tools for independent study in the doctrine. But as an adult, for whatever reasons, I don't pursue independent study. I rely on others to provide insight, clarification, and spiritual challenges. I tap into the collective brain of the Swedenborgian community.

These others are primarily members of the Swedenborgian clergy. The members of the clergy are people who have decided to serve others by disseminating truth. I cannot think of another profession which benefits me more. All of them were educated at the Swedenborgian House of Studies (SHS), the backbone of our church. And this

is where I turn when I need understanding; to get back on track; to get unstuck.

That lesson of my mother's is still relevant now. Doctrinal study is only enabled by all those laboring to support the church and its missions. After we grew up, my mother took a more active role in the governing structure of the church, including a number of terms on the board of managers at the SHS's previous incarnation as the Swedenborg School of Religion. While she enjoyed and treasured the friendships she cultivated in the church infrastructure, she also took very seriously the work involved and brought her considerable abilities to bear.

Always slow to recognize anything that requires difficult change, I finally saw that the commitment to service my mother embodied in her professional life as a social worker was also a commitment she applied to her activities on Sundays. At home she made sure that we understood that others did not have the advantages we had and that it was our responsibility to help. At church, whether it was baking her renowned pound cake or proposing changes to bylaws, her hand was active in shaping and maintaining the spiritual community that nurtures me and my own children to this day.

When I had the honor of being asked to join the board, I rejoiced. Sharing the community of those dedicated to the church, the opportunity to remain in close proximity to the beating heart of our religion, the precious chance to do what is clearly God's work, and the possibility to model for my own children, as my mother did, service done with the head and hands, are benefits to me which far outweigh anything I can contribute. I am grateful that my mother paved the way for me, a way I may not have otherwise taken.

Here are the facts: study at SHS requires two to three years of dedicated work, \$55,000, and the willingness to be unable to earn a good living afterwards. These students require our financial support. Other activities of SHS benefit our church community on an ongoing basis: maintenance of the library and its numerous precious documents and history; SHS is the intellectual center for worldwide scholars to access Swedenborg's works; Anna Woofenden, a current student, is graduating and being ordained for an extremely interesting vision of ministry; Devin Zuber, a faculty member, was recently granted a prestigious Wabash grant, which is a very nice accomplishment, for his work as a junior scholar working toward tenure; and Jim Lawrence, our dean, travelled last month to Urbana University as the Swedenborg Scholar in Residence for a week.

As one of the newer board members, I am grateful for the opportunity to ask for your support. SHS was unable to appeal for support recently because we were engaged with challenging the erroneous IRS questioning of our non-profit status. With that long-delayed victory behind us, we are pleased to get on with the business of building the future of our school.

I urge each one of you to engage with your spiritual community as fully as you possibly can. If you are able to contribute financially, please do so now. To donate, please go to [www.shs.psr.edu](http://www.shs.psr.edu) and click on the *Donate* button on the left column. Or, send a check to SHS, 1798 Scenic Ave., Berkeley, CA, 94709-1323.

All gifts, we are happy to note, are tax-deductible to the extent provided by the IRS statutes governing our non-profit status.

*Warmly and  
sincerely,  
Terri Crenshaw,  
board member*



## A Fork in the Road

So much has happened in our world and our church. Urbana University has been sold. Another window to the world may have closed. We need a new approach. If our church is to be relevant in the coming years, we need to become proactive in financial matters. Planning for fund raising begins right now. We must be deliberate in our personal giving plans.

Swedenborgians have the tenacity to continue sharing our theology with the world. General Convention cannot fulfill all the requests for financial assistance from our churches and ministers, let alone funding for new ways to reach the world with our message. Funds continue to dwindle. And thus programs continue to be cut instead of being expanded.

We have done it in the past and we can do it again. What is needed are new funds to do the work of the New

Jerusalem. Any amount will be greatly appreciated. Our permanent Augmentation and Missions funds have been receiving few contributions of late. You and I need to change this. You and I can change this. We cannot respond to increased financial demands put upon Convention's existing funds without raising new funds.

One challenge for new funds was answered by the creation of the Tafel Fund, gifted to the denomination with no restrictions on the use of the income, other than promoting and serving new Swedenborgian ministries, outside the box of traditional ministries. This new fund honors the twelve Tafel ministers who have served or are serving our denomination, beginning in 1868 and continuing to the present.

If our faith in the Lord's New Church is to be realized, we need to double our work. So the need for new

denominational funding is as acute as ever. Also, more flexibility in the use of the restricted income is needed. This is happening! Over \$60,000 has been raised for this new fund. Twenty times that amount needs to be raised to create the income needed to become relevant again. We can do this. Our commitment to the Lord and His Church is great. Become a partner.

Now is the time to give to your church. Contributions to any or all of these capital funds are sincerely solicited. Call me at 239.560.6785 or email [RHTafel@yahoo.com](mailto:RHTafel@yahoo.com) to talk about your gift now and planned giving for the future. Together, we can do this! An introduction to planned giving will be presented at the annual convention.

—Dick Tafel  
Capital Funds  
Chair



### Nominees

*Continued from page 66*

ordained in 1979. When asked about serving on the SHS Board of Trustees, Gard reports, "I welcome the opportunity to work more closely with those charged with helping candidates prepare for ministry in the Swedenborgian Church." ☩

### Esterson Receives Award

Rebecca Esterson, the Swedenborgian House of Studies scholar-in-training, received an Outstanding Teaching Fellow Award from the Boston University College of Arts and Sciences. The award honors PhD student-teaching fellows for tireless work to help undergraduates achieve their full academic potential. Rebecca is working toward a PhD in religious studies. ☩

### Urbana-Franklin Merger

*Continued from page 61*

preserve Urbana University's name, traditions, and heritage. Urbana will function as a subsidiary of Franklin University but maintain its own identity. The Urbana Alumni Association, the Johnny Appleseed Museum, and the Interfaith Chaplaincy Program are expected to continue in their present form. The Urbana Board of Trustees will be dissolved, and direction will come from the Franklin Board of Trustees. Urbana recently formed the University Council, which will consist of former trustees, alumni, and other persons committed to Urbana University, which will serve as a liaison and advisory committee for both Urbana and Franklin University.

Demonstrating its commitment to preserving the traditions of Urbana,

Franklin has expressed its intention to maintain a positive relationship with all the constituencies that have traditionally supported Urbana and have an investment in its growth and mission. These constituencies include alumni, the Swedenborgian Church, and the local community. The Franklin website states that Franklin plans to maintain a relationship with the church, and President Decker states, "We value the association and rich history of Urbana University and the Swedenborgian Church, and we are eager to learn more about the church and continue strengthening this 164-year relationship."

As part of its strategy, Franklin has charged Urbana with balancing its budget. This will be accomplished by increasing enrollment, developing new programs, fundraising, and reductions

*Continues next page*



## General Council Spring Meeting

The General Council met by teleconference on April 12, 2014.

Present were Ken Turley, president; Betsy Coffman, vice-president; Susannah Currie, recording secretary; Polly Baxter, treasurer; councilors Randy Laakko, Lon Elmer, Barb Cullen, Carl Helm, David Vigas, Dave Fekete, Debbie Dolley, Tom Neuenfeldt; Renee Hellenbrecht, operations manager; and Kevin Baxter, chair of Council of Ministers. Councilor Kit Billings was absent. The council took the following actions:

- Voted that General Council “extend an offer that Convention would be willing to accept ownership of the Tiffany Angel stained-glass windows for a reduction on the Temenos

[Conference Center] mortgage principal which stands at \$1,589,000.”

- Approved production and distribution of a handbook for support unit chairpersons that was developed by an ad hoc committee in response to a need for more direction for chairpersons.
- Authorized President Ken Turley to proceed with discussions with the Academy of the New Church about publishing information about the school in *the Messenger*. (The Academy of the New Church in Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania, is a small secondary school, serving both boarding and day students, affiliated with the General Church of the New Jerusalem.)
- Designated the Wilkins Fund in-

come go half to the Swedenborgian House of Studies and half to the Education Support Unit.

President Turley asked for guidance in responding to the National Council of Churches USA when they send invitations for faith community representatives to sign letters addressing social, political, and economic issues. A recent letter encourages government to reinstate voting rights for felons who have served their time. It was agreed that he would not take a denominational stand on issues without vote of General Council, but that the issues could be communicated throughout General Convention and to enlist the Communications Support Unit and the Information Management Support Unit for implementation.

General Council will meet next on July 2, preceding the annual convention in St. Louis. ☪

*Continued from preceding page*

in staff and faculty.

I believe that this next year will be one of getting to know each other. Those of us from church and alumni groups, especially those who are close at hand and love Urbana University, can play a vital role in how things develop. I think we can demonstrate what is so special about Urbana and strengthen Franklin's appreciation for the institution they have acquired, which “small but distinct,” is “indeed a star” (Urbana's *alma mater*). My fervent hope and prayer is that it is truly an act of Providence that Franklin showed up at this time and circumstance.

Urbana University has always struggled, and even in the best years has functioned on a narrow financial margin with very little endowment. Franklin's plans to infuse funds into stabilizing the school and upgrading technology and the campus may be part of a greater plan for the transformation of

### About Urbana University

Founded in 1850, Urbana University serves over 1800 students from its 128 acre campus in Urbana, Ohio. Known for innovative academic programs that feature personal attention from faculty, the University offers more than thirty undergraduate programs and several graduate degrees, delivering course work in class and online. Blue Knights athletics includes seventeen intercollegiate sports.

Urbana University was the first college in the state to offer a nontraditional degree completion program and the second college in Ohio to admit women. Founded by Swedenborgians, the campus is home to the Johnny Appleseed Museum. Go to [www.urbana.edu](http://www.urbana.edu) for more information

Urbana University into a strong and vital institution that continues to serve students and support their development as whole persons who graduate with a belief in service to their wider

### About Franklin University

Founded in 1902, Franklin University is one of the leading and most experienced educators of adult students. Annually, nearly 10,000 students attend Franklin, through its Main Campus in downtown Columbus, Ohio, three Central Ohio locations, regional locations in Beavercreek, Ohio and Indianapolis, as well as at five co-locations across Ohio, in addition to online. Franklin offers more than forty undergraduate and graduate programs (including the new Risk Management and Insurance undergraduate major) and graduates more than 1,500 students annually. The University's MBA program is offered internationally through agreements with institutions in Europe and the Middle East. More information at [www.franklin.edu](http://www.franklin.edu).

communities and the world. ☪

The Rev. Betsy Coffman has been an Urbana University trustee since 1991 and is the chaplain at Urbana University and pastor of the Urbana Swedenborgian Church.

## Finding the Church

# Changing Lives: I Am Connecting with this Church and Its Teachings All over Again

BY KATHRYN PRUIETT,  
AS TOLD TO ABIGAIL ECHOLS SMITH

One of my earliest memories is a bust of Swedenborg. People would point to it and say, “Katie, who’s this?” and I would say “That’s the Swedenborgian man.” I was born while my father, the Rev. David Rienstra, was a student at the Swedenborgian School of Religion in Newton, Massachusetts. I was raised in the church—and it has always been an integral part of my life.

As a kid everything was normal. The church was my family. When I was four years old, my father was ordained in the General Convention of the New Jerusalem (Swedenborgian Church), and we moved to Fryeburg, Maine. This community was small, but the church was large and very welcoming; I loved growing up there!

The summer before I started high school, we moved to St. Louis. It was a big change. I missed the closeness of the church I grew up in. St. Louis had a friendly, small congregation—but did not have many young people my age. My high school had three times the population of Fryeburg.

After high school I planned to attend Bryn Athyn College of the New Church in Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania. But life happened instead. My mom was diagnosed with breast cancer when I was in high school, and it returned just before I was about to leave for college. I ended up not going.

I got married and started a family. My mom always wanted to be a grandma, and it was about six weeks after my son was born in 1994 that my mom passed away. It was a difficult combination of intense emotions. I pretty much

just lost everything. That was not the way that life was supposed to be. Here I was, twenty years old, forced to find my way through life, and my mom wasn’t there. It was hard. It was really, really hard. Although I was raised in the New Church and was taught about and read about life after death, I don’t think anything could have prepared me for that loss.

Adding to the difficulty of my mom’s death, it wasn’t long before my father remarried. I always had felt sure that my mom and dad would be together forever. This wasn’t how life was supposed to be. And while my stepmom is a very wonderful person, she’s not my mom. I became angry with God—although I didn’t believe I was at the time. I was confused; I was angry—I didn’t understand what I was feeling. I pretty much lost contact with my father, and I lost contact with the church.

Life kept moving, and in 1999 I was happily pregnant with my daughter. Before my daughter was born, my husband got sick. We are still, twelve years later, trying to figure out what it is that is making him sick. He has ups and downs, but he can’t work, and his illness has brought a lot of hard times and a lot of sadness.

I’m a take-charge person who likes to do it all myself, and that’s what I turn to more than anything at hard times—like when my mom died and my husband got sick. During those years I pushed a lot of things away and said, “I’m going to do this on my own!” which is a very lonely place. Eventually it was all too much, and I realized that I needed God’s help. It wasn’t easy, but it has been very good in the long run. In many ways the church found

me again through all of this.

It was a few years after my husband got sick (and about ten years after my mom died) before I started seeking the church out again. I wanted my son and daughter to go to church—to learn right from wrong. My husband is Catholic and we are a few hours away from St. Louis, so even though we had gone to a few local churches, we didn’t have a church we called home. I got to a point where I felt like I needed the Swedenborgian Church again, felt like I needed God again.

I have to give credit to my dad and his wife Diane. Although there was a long period of time I did not talk to my father, he was always there. He has always supported me. Diane has become a great friend and a wonderful grandma to my children. My father would oftentimes just listen to me rambling and almost be happy when I would be confused—he knew I was searching, he knew I had to find my own way back.

I think the teachings of the Swedenborgian Church were always there in the back of my mind, and when it was the right time, more of the teachings began to make sense for me. And with the internet, I was able to find many different resources. I have no idea how I found an the online “Journey” group; it was quite by accident really. The online group helped bridge the connection between lots of different good people. I started feeling more comfortable with the New Church again.

Going through the online Journey group (we worked through a workbook called *Shift* together) brought up a lot of this stuff that I didn’t realize I was going through. But a lot of it I think

[Continues next page](#)

## Parsonage Tax Exemption Threatened

On November 22, 2013, federal judge Barbara Crabb from the Western District Court of Wisconsin struck down the ministerial housing allowance as an unconstitutional preference for religion. The ruling was in response to a lawsuit brought by the Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) challenging the constitutionality of the housing allowance and the parsonage exclusion. Federal District Court Judge Crabb ruled that the housing allowance is an unconstitutional preference for religion. The Supreme Court has ruled that the tax exemptions that include religious organizations “must have an overarching purpose that equally benefits similarly situated nonreligious organizations.” Judge Crabb ruled that the housing allowance does not meet this criterion.

The decision does not apply to the income tax exemption a pastor receives

when living in a parsonage provided by a church to a minister as compensation for ministerial services. The decision focuses only on homes owned by or rented by the pastor under Section 107(2) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

The decision does not go into effect unless a ruling by a federal appeals court upholds the lower court decision. The US Treasury Department appealed the decision to the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals in Chicago on April 4. A ruling is not expected until late in 2014. For now, the housing allowance remains in effect.

If the appeals court affirms the decision and it is not appealed or the Supreme Court does not accept the appeal, the decision only applies to the three states—Illinois, Indiana and Wisconsin—that the appeals court covers.

MABB Financial Services, the or-

ganization that manages the ministers benefit plan for the Swedenborgian Church, signed onto an *amicus curiae* brief submitted by the Church Alliance, a coalition of the chief executive officers of thirty-eight denominational benefit programs. The brief was filed in the Seventh Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals. You can find a copy of the Church Alliance brief at <http://tinyurl.com/lw7k9ds>.

The Church Alliance brief adds a perspective not duplicated in the government’s brief. It focuses on the jurisprudential history of permitted legislative accommodations of religion. The brief argues that Code §107(2) is a constitutionally permitted accommodation of religion when viewed in the context of Code §107(1), the parsonage exclusion, and Code §119, which excludes employer-provided housing from employees’ incomes in numerous secular circumstances. ☪

*Continued from preceding page*

comes down to the difference between head and heart. I would always do the right thing—not necessarily for the right reasons—but because it was engrained in me from my childhood.

The makeup of the online group was interesting: we had participants from Colorado to the Netherlands. At our last meeting I was looking around the group at people from Pennsylvania (where I have lots of friends), Colorado (where half of my family is from), the Netherlands (where my grandfather was from), and even a family friend, and it felt like this was my family.

Everything is coming full circle. I am connecting with this church and its teachings all over again. I can feel the church in many many ways. It is my family—and always has been, I just needed to find my way back. ☪

## What’s Happening in the Web Community?

Things are happening at the growing online Swedenborgian community. Enjoy our new home page, a simpler menu, new chat times, and multi-media worship options. Visit the website at [www.swedenborgiancommunity.org](http://www.swedenborgiancommunity.org).

### Thursday Chats:

**May 1:** *Divine Providence*, Section 13.

**May 8:** Mini-mini course: “Swedenborg on the Brain”

**May 15:** Chat: “How was Easter for you? What meaning did it have for your spiritual life?”

**May 22:** Conference Chat

This chat will offer two options; you can make use of either or both. Call

the phone number listed here for a conference call chat (you have to pay any long-distance fees for the call) or come into the Chatzy Chat Room as usual for a conversation on the chat board.

The conference dial-in number is 559.726.1000; you will be asked for a participant access code: 180664, then press the number (hash) symbol (#).

**May 29:** tba

### New Chat

We have started New Chat to accommodate more time zones. Its schedule time is 4–5 PM EST.

**May 10:** How is Your Spiritual Life?

**May 24th:** tba. ☪

## SHS Board Meets Amid Changes and Challenges

The Board of Trustees of the Swedenborgian House of Studies (SHS) at Pacific School of Religion (PSR) held its spring meeting April 25–26, 2014.

Discussion focused on changes and challenges resulting from institutional, societal, and cultural forces being felt at every level of seminary and religious education, affecting SHS in numerous ways. One of the big changes SHS has seen since moving to Berkeley is a decline in the number of students able to move to California for their seminary coursework at PSR. SHS has built relationships with a variety of seminaries to accommodate the needs of our geographically diverse student body. Attention has been given to develop online classes and residential intensives for easy access to Swedenborgian classes wherever a student is engaged in their Master of Divinity course work.

After discussing the status of funds held by General Convention for the benefit of SHS, the board voted to propose the formation of a committee comprised of the treasurer of General Convention, the operations manager of Central Office, members of the SHS Board, and the SHS financial manager to further examine fund documentation. The goal is mutual understanding and agreement based on bequest documentation.

The board accepted the budget for academic year 2014–2015, as presented by the financial manager, with minor changes. The budget reflects a deficit of approximately \$44K. The share of income attributed to the endowment is based on the payout set by the Investment Committee.

Dr. Riess Potterfelt, interim president of the Graduate Theological Union (GTU), and Dr. Steve Sterner, interim president of PSR, spoke to the board about the future at PSR. Possi-

bilities include

- Maintaining current programs and strengths, including an increased effort to train personnel for social transformation
- Reaching out to those in the secular world who are engaged in social justice and change and would be interested in spiritual grounding of their work through the Center for Spiritual and Social Transformation
- Making theological education more accessible to people who may not believe they can access it, those who by age or academic, social, or career background do not feel capable of entering the theological world. a shift that will require a new model.

PSR is developing new directions and programs on an ongoing basis. The critical strategic objective is to sustain Christian values in the world.

Member schools of the GTU—including PSR—have been declining in strength and enrollment for twenty years. As the member schools have decreased in size, so has the pool of PhD faculty for the GTU, which continues to put pressure on the member schools. GTU is exploring solutions.

The MDiv at PSR will be restructured under pressure to make it shorter and cheaper. There will be considerable flexibility in any restructuring of the program.

SHS professor Dr. Devin Zuber is completing a book that examines the way Swedenborgian thought shaped the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century ecological movement. He gave a talk on his chapter on personalized spiritualization of nature, focused on writer Sarah Orne Jewett and artist George Inness, linking them with the image and meaning of a white heron.

Anna Woofenden, the SHS student representative, expressed thanks

to the faculty and the Board from the students. The students have different needs: they are at different schools, with the same trajectories. They expressed appreciation for the long-distance learning options, although there are technical issues. The intensives are considered very worthwhile. Students often feel isolated and need more Swedenborgian context. Students desire more clarity and guidance on ordination and academic requirements. Kathy Speas and Anna Woofenden agreed to brainstorm on the idea of mentorship, with a minister in the church supporting a ministerial student through the learning journey.

Board chair Jane Siebert asked the trustees to state something important to SHS. They responded,

- flexibility of location for students
- responsible to changing needs of students
- support for Swedenborgian scholarship; engagement in contemporary dialogue
- commitment to practical ministry for our denomination and in the world
- sense of community, though widely scattered
- interreligious engagement
- engagement in social justice
- support for faculty
- better understanding the events at PSR and getting our needs met
- better understanding of what's happening at the GTU
- the linking of scholarship to practical spirituality
- Swedenborgian contexting, in and out of class
- better student support and empowerment of faculty.

The Board next meets at the corporation meeting on July 3 at the annual convention in St. Louis. ☪

# 190th Session of the General Convention of the New Jerusalem, July 2 - July 6, 2014

Council of Ministers: June 29 - July 1

## 2014 Registration Form

Convention 2014 will be held in St. Louis, MO on the campus of Webster University. To learn more about WU, visit [www.webster.edu](http://www.webster.edu). **To learn more about the 2014 Convention and view a list of Frequently Asked Questions**, please visit [www.swedenborg.org](http://www.swedenborg.org), email [manager@swedenborg.org](mailto:manager@swedenborg.org) or call the Central Office at (617) 969-4240.

**Lodging:** See next page for more details. Rooms will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis, and may fill up before the end of the registration period. **All rooms are doubles.** Rooms include one standard linen and towel pack. If you find that you often need extra towels or blankets, you are advised to bring some with you.

**Roommates:** If you have a specific roommate in mind, please fill in their name in the appropriate space. If not, please fill in the roommate matching section, so we can try to pair you with someone with similar habits and needs.

**Childcare:** The childcare program will run July 2 through July 6, during meetings, for children ages 3-12. **If you will be bringing children, please contact the Central Office to obtain the necessary forms.**

**Teen Program:** The teen program runs from Wednesday, July 2 through Sunday, July 6, and is supervised by Kurt Fekete. If you want your teen (age 13-17) to attend without a parent, please contact the Central Office.

**Internet:** Free guest wireless access is available.

**Parking:** Free. Please check the box below so we know how many cars

will be parking on campus.

**Room & Board Reservations and Payment Deadline:** No new room or meal plan reservations will be available after Friday, June 13 at 5PM EST. Any room and board reservations not fully paid by this date will be subject to a \$50 late fee. Event registrations will be accepted for as long as space permits.

**Cancellations:** Fully refundable prior to Friday, June 13 at 5PM EST. Cancellations must be done by calling the Central Office between 9AM-5PM EST, M-F.

**Arrivals and Departures:** Check-in on arrival day is between 2-5PM at your assigned dorm. Check-out on July 6 is between 9AM-11AM. **Any arrivals or departures outside of this time must be coordinated with the Central Office in advance.**

**Mobility:** We cannot guarantee the availability of mobility aids such as wheelchairs. Please contact the Central Office for more information and help with local arrangements.

**Communications:** Please provide a valid email address below if you have one. In order to facilitate faster communications, and to save money on printing and postage, we strive to provide as much information as possible via email. Please add [manager@swedenborg.org](mailto:manager@swedenborg.org) to your contact list to ensure that you receive all of our email updates.

**Ground Transportation:** From Lambert St. Louis International Airport: <http://tinyurl.com/2014Transport>. Go Best Express Airport Shuttle will service the campus for \$24 one-way, \$44 round-trip. You must book online at <http://tinyurl.com/2014Shuttle> to receive discounted rate. Please see the FAQ or contact the Central Office for more details.

Name		
Name		
<input type="checkbox"/> Please check this box if you will be parking on campus		
Street		Apt. #
City	State/Province	Zip
Home Church	Preferred Email	Day Phone
Names, ages, and genders of children accompanying you		
Please Describe Any Special Dietary Needs and/or Mobility Issues (Not everything can be accommodated)		
Specific Roommate Request		

### Travel Information

<input type="checkbox"/> Please check this box if you will have a car at Convention and would be willing to do a pickup at the airport on your arrival day
<input type="checkbox"/> Please check this box if you will have a car at Convention and would be willing to do a dropoff at the airport on Sunday
<input type="checkbox"/> Please check this box if you will be flying into Lambert International and would like to be added to an email list for you to coordinate sharing a ride on your arrival or departure day.

### Roommate Matching

We will do our best to match you with an appropriate roommate if you have not indicated one above.

Please indicate your gender:  Male  Female

I am (check all that apply):

<input type="checkbox"/> An early riser	<input type="checkbox"/> A night owl
<input type="checkbox"/> A heavy sleeper	<input type="checkbox"/> A light sleeper
<input type="checkbox"/> Fragrance sensitive	<input type="checkbox"/> Fragrance-free
<input type="checkbox"/> A CPAP machine user	<input type="checkbox"/> A snorer

Anything else we should know when matching you?

Next page for fees

**Room and Board Packages (please note that all rooms are double rooms):**

1. **Package A (June 29 - July 6, seven nights):**  
(choose this for Council of Ministers members)  
\$283 per person  
Includes 7 nights of lodging, 7 dinners, 6 lunches, and 7 breakfasts.
2. **Package B (June 29 - July 2, three nights):**  
(available **only** to Council of Ministers members working outside of the denomination who are only able to attend COM meetings)  
\$139 per person  
Includes 3 nights of lodging, 3 dinners, 2 lunches, and 3 breakfasts.
3. **Package C (July 1 - July 6, five nights):**  
(choose this for General Council members or pre-Convention arrival)  
\$231 per person  
Includes 5 nights of lodging, 5 dinners, 4 lunches, and 5 breakfasts.
4. **Package D (July 2 - July 6, four nights):**  
\$185 per person  
Includes 4 nights of lodging, 4 dinners, 3 lunches, and 4 breakfasts.

**Meal Only Packages:** For those staying off-campus who want to buy meals. If you are staying off-campus and do not select a pre-paid meal plan, you will not be able to eat most meals in the dining hall. Only weekday lunch may be paid for at the door.

5. **Package X (June 29 - July 6, meals only):**  
\$172 per person  
7 dinners, 6 lunches, and 7 breakfasts
6. **Package Y (July 1 - July 6, meals only):**  
\$120.50 per person  
5 dinners, 4 lunches, and 5 breakfasts
7. **Package Z (July 2- July 6, meals only):**  
\$94.75 per person  
4 dinners, 3 lunches, and 4 breakfasts

Registration	Cost	# People	Total
Adult	\$110		
Teen (13-17)	\$100		
Child (3-12)	\$50		
Under 3 years old	Free		
*Family maximum	\$330		
One Day Registration	\$40		
Local Volunteer	\$50		
Women's Alliance Luncheon	\$11.75 for those paying for a Room and Board or Meal Only Package; \$20 for everyone else		

\*Family maximum price applies to immediate family members (i.e., parents/guardians and children) only.

Room & Board	Package	#People	Total
Room & Board or Meal Only Package (see package descriptions for rates)			
<b>\$50 Late Fee (assessed on R&amp;B packages paid for after 5PM EST June 13, 2014)</b>			

General Convention Subsidies	#People	Total Discount
Council of Ministers (for ordained Swedenborgian ministers with membership on the Council of Ministers only) - cost of Package A, Package B, or Package X		
General Council (current members of the General Council only) - cost of Package C or Package Y		
SCYL Officers - cost of Package D or Package Z		

<b>Grand Total</b> (from both Registration and Room & Board, less Discounts)	
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**Payment Information**

All prices are in US currency. **If you pay with a Canadian check, please add US\$5 for handling. Please be advised that all prices are listed in US funds and must be converted for payment in other currencies. All room and board reservations not paid in full by 5PM EST on June 13 will be subject to a \$50 late fee.** See "Cancellations" section for refund policy.

**Payment Method**

1. **Credit card by mail (DO NOT email credit card information) - Fill out the following:**

Visa                       MasterCard                       Amex                       Discover

Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Cardholder's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 CCV/Security Code: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Billing Zip Code (if different from mailing address): \_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

2. **Credit card by phone - call (617) 969-4240, Monday through Friday, 9AM-5PM EST**

3. **Credit card or bank payment via PayPal - enter an email address to receive a PayPal invoice to pay your balance below:**

4. **Check: Send checks payable to The Swedenborgian Church to: 50 Quincy St., Cambridge, MA 02138**

## Passages

### Baptisms

**Sydney Emerson Fraser-Swan** and **Reagan Alice Fraser-Swan**, born February 17, 2011, to parents Brian and Jaclyn Fraser-Swan, and grandparents Sharon and Dick Swan, were baptized on April 20, 2014, at the Bridgewater New Jerusalem Church, the Rev. Susannah Currie officiating.

**John Paul Plummer**, born December 25, 1968, to parents Sonja Parker Plummer and Paul Plummer, was baptized August 4, 2013, at the Church of the Holy City in Washington, D.C., the Rev. Michael D. Gladish officiating.

Rev. Gladish noted under "Remarks in the Records" that it was a "Providential event." Why? Earlier, just as Rev. Gladish was wheeling into the church a marble baptismal font originating from the last Baltimore, Maryland, New Church, Paul arrived at the door, carrying in his heart the wish to become baptized into the faith of the New Church and, colliding with Pastor and baptismal font, he was presented with the answer!

### Confirmations

On, February 23, 2014, **Terri Halliwell** was confirmed by the Rev. Betsy Coffman and joyfully welcomed into the life of the Urbana (Ohio) Swedenborgian Church.

### Deaths

**Elizabeth (Betty) Guiu**, East Bridgewater, Massachusetts, daughter of the late Rev. Everett K. Bray and Leonora Hutchins Bray, died April 22, 2014, at age 92. She was born in Sanford, Maine, September 30, 1921. She graduated from Boston University and received her Masters in Library Science from Simmons College. She worked at Amherst Public Library and started

### Convention Choir Singers Wanted!

If you would like to join the convention choir this year, please send an email to Laurie Turley, choir director, [lstwirley@yahoo.com](mailto:lstwirley@yahoo.com), letting me know you would like to be added to the email list. I will keep you updated as anthems are selected and will send you the music in advance so you can prepare for the rehearsals.

We will be singing at the ordination service and also at the large convention service, and there may be opportunities to sing at other services as well. I'll let you know as soon as I know.

Looking forward to making music with you again!

—Laurie Turley

the library at Greenfield Community College before moving on to be head librarian at the New England Baptist Hospital School of Nursing.

Elizabeth is survived by her husband of sixty-nine years, Rafael (Ray) M. J. Guiu, and two daughters, Cristina Wood and Gloria Costello. She was predeceased by her daughter, Cecilia Searle. She is also survived by six grand-



Betty Guiu with her husband Ray.

children and six great-grandchildren.

Betty was involved throughout her long life with the Swedenborgian Church. Her father, the Rev. Everett K. Bray, grew up in nineteenth century rural Florida. An early job of his was breaking wild horses for farm work. He discovered Swedenborg's writings, became a minister, and went on to serving the Church of the New Jeru-

### Letters to the Editor

#### Vision Statement

Thank you, Rev. John Maine, for so beautifully putting into words ideas that could form the basis for further visioning by the church to serve the Lord's people where they are, now, in today's world (April *Messenger*). Unless it's too late. I don't believe it's too late. We have so much to offer as a church to a hurting, disillusioned world. My heartfelt gratitude goes out to those of you who are in the trenches, doing the work, seeing that the bills get paid and the doors stay open. Thank you! Let us look to the future, and not be afraid. Where do we go from here? That's not a rhetorical question!

—Karen Conger, Bishop, CA

salem, first in Saint Paul, Minnesota, and then at the Cambridge, Massachusetts church. Later he became the head of the Swedenborg School of Religion in Cambridge and kept that position, in spite of becoming blind, until he retired in the 1960s.

Betty grew up in that Swedenborgian filled household, going every summer to the Fryeburg New Church Assembly from the age of nine until the age of ninety-one, going to Sunday school, and teaching Sunday school. As an adult, she taught Sunday school in both Cambridge and Fryeburg. She looked forward to attending annual Conventions, the last of which she attended in 2012 at age 90. Her husband Ray was for many years the head of the Swedenborg Library and book rooms in Boston.

A memorial service will be held on May 31, at 11:00 AM at the New Jerusalem Church, in Bridgewater, Massachusetts. Donations in lieu of flowers may be sent to the Fryeburg New Church Assembly, c/o Robert Perry, treasurer, 61 Clark Street, Waltham, MA 02453. ☪

### About the Swedenborgian Church

Emanuel Swedenborg was born January 29, 1688, in Stockholm, Sweden. Although he never intended a church denomination to be founded or named after him, a society was formed in London fifteen years after his death.

American groups eventually founded the General Convention of Swedenborgian Churches. As a result of Swedenborg's spiritual questionings and insights, we as a church exist to encourage that same spirit of inquiry and personal growth, to respect differences in views, and to accept others who may have different traditions.

Swedenborg shared in his theological writings a view of God as infinitely loving and at the very center of our beings, a view of life as a spiritual birthing as we participate in our own creation, and a view of scripture as a story of inner life stages as we learn and grow. Swedenborg said, "All religion relates to life, and the life of religion is to do good." He also felt that the sincerest form of worship is a useful life.

## 190th Annual Convention Gateway to Providence: Being Led By The Lord The Year of Regeneration: the Way of Change

The 2014 Annual Convention of the Swedenborgian Church will be held on the campus of Webster University in St. Louis. The planners are seeking the following:

- Churches and groups to share highlights of what year four in the seven-year cycle has been for them. Contact Rev. Sherrie Connelly ([stillpt@sbcglobal.net](mailto:stillpt@sbcglobal.net)) with anything you would like to share at the convention.
- Anyone interested in singing in the choir should contact Laurie Turley: [lsturley@yahoo.com](mailto:lsturley@yahoo.com). Musicians and singers who would like to offer their talents for worship and chapel services should contact Rev. Kit Billings ([revkitbillings@comcast.net](mailto:revkitbillings@comcast.net)).
- Anyone who would like to offer something at the Friday evening open microphone gathering should contact Paul Deming ([pdeming@sbcglobal.net](mailto:pdeming@sbcglobal.net)).

The convention outing will be on Saturday afternoon and evening following the Convention Communion Service at 3 PM. Conventioneers will travel to downtown St. Louis for the annual Independence Day celebration, a kind of street fair event, with displays, booths, and special events, culminating with the Ralph Butler Band, featuring our own Paul Deming on lead guitar, and a massive fireworks display.

Mornings will offer meditation movement, singing, and chapel services. Evenings will offer the President's Welcome, The Swedenborgian House of Studies Annual Meeting, the ordination service, receptions, open mic gathering, and vespers. The general schedule offers business sessions and mini courses. Good fellowship will be available and plentiful at meals and between events.

**Important! In order to stay on campus or purchase a meal plan, you must register by FRIDAY, JUNE 13, AT 5 PM EST**



**The Cambridge Society is seeking a new Pastor. A call letter will be sent before the annual convention. The search committee will be available at the convention to answer questions.**