



SCYL Teens Join Brit Teens for International Summer Camp in England

BY KURT FEKETE, HOLLY BAUER,
AND CATHERINE LAUBER

Crazy! Taking fourteen teenagers on a one week trip to England? A red-eye Chicago to Heathrow flight and then spending an entire day with fourteen teens touring London? So many people said, “You’re crazy! Then, you’re going to work with forty teens at a summer camp for a week? That’s crazy!” And, yes, some of it was crazy. But most of it was absolutely spectacular.

As tired as we were, our tour of London was fantastic. We traversed London by train, Underground (Tube), Thames River taxi, classic red double decker bus, and often, Shanks’ Pony (which is walking, one of the many British idioms we learned on our trip). We soaked up as many sights and as much culture as we could during our



The Swedenborgian International Summer Camp (ISC) Teens

brief but intensive London visit. The London Dungeon succeeded in scaring the wits out of us while teaching us a good deal of history about this

epic city. Open-air Borough Market was a sensorial delight with its many sizzlingly pungent food booths,

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SCYL teens gather at the gate to board our flight to London.



SCYL teens on the banks of the Thames, with the Big Ben tower and Westminster Hall in the background

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International Summer Camp!

Our lead article in this issue is an account of the Swedenborg Church Youth League's (SCYL) second voyage to England to join with teens from the British General Conference of the Swedenborgian Church at their retreat center (centre) in Purley Chase, England (page 121). The Swedenborgian Church youth director, Kurt Fekete, as in 2011, shepherded a large group of Swedenborgian teens on this rewarding journey—for many of them it was their first time out of the U.S. In 2011, Kurt took SCYL teens on the same journey. Many of the adults remained the same for this trip, but the teens from 2011 have grown up, and the teens on this trip were very young at that time.

Many young people say they are spiritual but not religious. They miss out on the communal experiences that a religious organization offers. Not only

do the SCYL teens experience a loving community at their home churches and church camps, but they get to participate in several weekend retreats throughout the year, annual conventions, and, on occasion, this fabulous trip to a Swedenborgian community in England, all the way across the ocean.

This International Summer Camp is reported in two parts. In this issue of the Messenger, Kurt details the experience from beginning to end, and next month, you can read the accounts and reflections on the trip from many of the SCYL teens. Their lives were enriched by this trip, and yours will be enriched by reading about it.

The Year of the Lord

We have come round to the first year of the Swedenborgian Church's recurring seven-year cycle of annual themes; year one is "The Year of the Lord—the Primacy of Spirit." In this issue of *the Messenger*, Rev. Dr. Jim Lawrence dives deep into the history of the statement of belief found in the *Book of Worship*, and its place and use in our history and in our churches in place of a denominational credal statement (page 127). It is a fascinating read about something many of us recite every

Sunday but give no thought to its origins.

A Time for Everything . . .

Approaching the completion of twelve years as editor of *the Messenger* and approaching the later years of my life, I have asked President Jane Siebert to begin a search for a new *Messenger* editor. I will remain until a new editor can start and I will assist in the transition with training and support as needed. For more information see page 131. If you and the position fit, I hope you will look into it.

—Herb Ziegler

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Church Calendar

- **November 8–9:** General Council Fall Meeting, Cenacle Retreat Center, Chicago
- **December 27–30:** SCYL (ages 13–18) Winter Retreat, Almont New Church Assembly, Almont, MI
- **March, 2020:** Palestine and Israel Trip, CSS January term
- **August 28–31, 2020:** Gathering Leaves, Purley Chase, England

the Messenger

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Letter from the President



The Year of the Lord: 2019–20
—The Primacy of Spirit

Dear Friends of the Swedenborgian Church,

My seven-year-old grandson confided in me as we were playing with Legos in his room, “Grandma, I don’t really believe all this Jesus stuff.”

I paused a moment to collect my thoughts on this bold comment from such a little guy. “What bothers you?”

“How could Jesus die and be buried and then come alive? It doesn’t make sense.” He was very sincere.

“That’s a big question, a question that has been asked for 2000 years.” I could have given him a response that makes sense for me, but that would have been my answer, and I knew he needed to find his own answers as he grew and matured in his walk with “That Which is Beyond Full Knowing.” I thought about my own questioning at a young age that had been put down with, “You just need to have faith. You ask too many questions.”

I took a different approach. “Questions are good, Levi. We can talk about what I think, but I want to assure you questioning is important and the main thing is to not close your mind, thinking that because it doesn’t make sense, it is not true. Keep asking and searching. Our answers grow as we grow.”

I was reminded of this conversation today when I read a quote by Rabbi Heschel: “We are closer to God when we are asking questions than when we think we have the answers.”

Back in January 2013, I wrote the following for the local paper:

While working as a hospital chaplain, I was sitting with a woman whose husband was dying in the hospital bed next to us. We were watching his respirations slow and his blood pressure drop on the monitors. We were strangers prior to this night where my job as hospital chaplain and her love and dedication as a wife brought us together. As we waited for death to release her husband from his earthly struggles, conversation moved into that rarified space that sometimes opens at such moments.

She asked, “What are we going to do in heaven? Will I be with my first husband or this one who is dying? Why are we here?” We brought our own ideas about the answers to these questions into this dimly lit hospital room and shared them as she patted and comforted her unresponsive husband. We talked about the changes that his death would mean in her life and she turned to me and softly said, “I have such a weak faith. All I seem to have are questions.”

I thought back to a time in my own life growing up in a church that did not honor questions. I remember being told as a youth that I had too many questions. I was to have the faith of a young child and just trust . . . just believe . . . just have faith. I tried to live into this response to my questions, but it just didn’t work for me. The questions rose up again and again, and I chastised myself for not having enough “faith.” I turned away from religion for a while, and then God showed me that questions do not mean lack of faith. We must keep an open line of communication with God, asking and receiving.

“Your questions do not mean that your faith is weak. Your questions mean that you are growing and reaching out to know God better. You are journeying past the answers that had previously satisfied you. During times of crisis and life changing events such as death our questioning goes very, very deep. This is OK. In fact, it is good, not easy but good.”

She looked at me with tired, tear-rimmed eyes

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SCYL Summer Camp in England

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“shoppes,” and beehive bustle. Stately Buckingham Palace did not disappoint with its majestic gates and statues, always under the royal Queen’s Guards’ ever-watchful eye.

Finally, as evening approached, we sleepily dragged our exhausted legs aboard the Euston train to Atherstone. A ninety-minute nap later we arrived at rain-soaked Atherstone station where we were met by Rev. Jack, who helped us negotiate the remaining three miles of our journey by car through the darkened, damp English countryside to Purley Chase Centre.

After a sound and solid twelve-hour sleep, we awoke to a bright, sunny Sunday, marking the start of the International Summer Camp (ISC).

Sunday evening began with the obligatory reading of the rules and an entertaining icebreaker to help us meet our new friends. Our ISC theme for the week was the book of Revelation. Each morning we heard presenters cover different chapters and stories from this incredible, visionary last book of the Bible. The presenters brought the Revelation imagery to life for the teens and young adults with contemplative artwork, skit and game creation, original costuming, traditional lecture-discussions, small group breakouts, and exploratory situational questions. This included Jenny’s overall review of the paintings of Revelation, Rev. Catherine’s skits of the letters to the seven angels (Rev. 2, 3), Chris’s presentation and small group game creation related to the woman and the red dragon (Rev. 12), Jack’s and Callum’s “What would you do?” scenarios



Connie makes a great lion creature of the throne from Revelation 4.

(Rev. 21, 22), and my presentation of the four horsemen (Rev. 6) and faces, wings, and eyes of the creatures of the Throne (Rev. 4). The six presenters brought their individual skills and style to their session which made each spiritual gathering unique, engaging, and enlightening.

However, ISC was not just about learning about Revelation. It was also about activities, games, and exploration. Purley Chase itself was an amaz-



“Olympic” relay races on the beautiful lawns of Purley Chase

ing retreat center, with its two conservatories (yes, two!), varied meeting rooms, chapel, comfortable accommodations, open green space and gardens, and delicious meals.

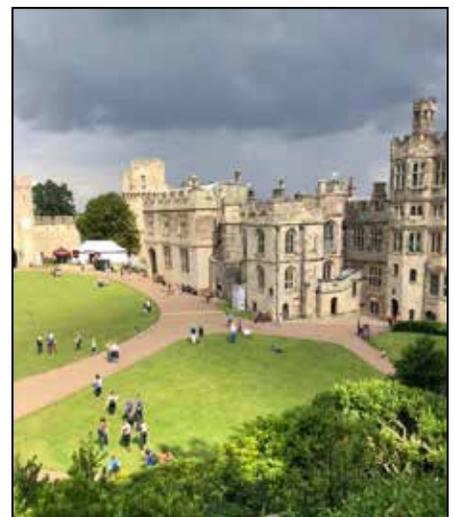
The teens loved exploring Purley, playing hide and seek games like Sardines. In the afternoon, lawn games abounded with Frisbee, Olympics, football (soccer), rounders, and, on Friday evening, lost potato (a capture-the-flag-type game involving finding and delivering potatoes that Steve and Jenny created). They also loved hanging out in the game room, playing ping-pong or just lounging. Cards, poker, board games, and Werewolf were popular in the evening. Callum led an entertaining Quiz Night on Monday night (I really need to work on my meme knowledge), and who can forget Josh’s pterodactyl game or the cereal box game?

We enjoyed a Tuesday morning wooded walk to the nearby town



The teens stroll alongside Coventry Canal on their outing to the nearby village of Atherstone.

of Atherstone for swimming, snacks, and shopping. The trip included a brief romp at a playground and a stroll along Coventry Canal, with its arched stone bridges and colorful barges and narrow-boats. Rob took the campers on a Crystal Maze adventure on Wednesday afternoon with obstacles and challenges to conquer. This was followed by an evening after dark campfire where Rev. Jack and Rev. Catherine led the



Overlooking Warwick Castle and the Princess Tower

campers (and an owl joining in with frequent calls and hoots) in worship and communion under the stars.

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The highlight of the ISC week was our Thursday outing. We took a chartered bus to Warwick where we enjoyed a beautiful afternoon at Warwick Castle. The castle was originally the site where William the Conqueror established a motte and bailey fort in 1068. The existing stone castle has endured sieges, fires, and rebellions and has undergone many restoration projects. It now is the home to wonderful exhibits, displays, and activities, including two highlights: the War of the Roses, which depicted the famous 1455 conflict between the House of Lancaster and the House of York with jousting, stunt horse riding, and sword fighting; and the Falconer's Quest, which included a display of numerous birds



Picnic lunch on the grounds of Warwick Castle

of prey swooping and soaring above and around us. Our group had ample time to explore the castle grounds and enjoy a picnic lunch. Some teens visited the castle dungeon. Holly had a go at archery, and Holly, Jenny, and I all "sneaked" into the princess tower to hear an interactive princess story with



ISC ladies at the Gala Dinner

some of our youngest campers. What a wonderful day we had at Warwick Castle! However, the day was far from over.

We returned to Purley and immediately began setting up for the Gala meal. We decorated the dining room proper fancy with table clothes, centerpieces, and balloons. The ISC leaders then served the campers a delightful three-course gala tea (dinner) complete with relaxing music and mood lighting. And, as if this wasn't enough, when the gala meal was finished, the staff cleared the room of tables and chairs and set up for a barn dance! Everyone stomped and hollered as we swung, dosey-dosed, and circled around the room with partners. This phenomenal day ended with a group picture, with everyone in their best outfit, under the enormous Purley conifer ([page 121](#)).

Friday afternoon was spent relaxing and frolicking around the grounds of Purley. Friday evening was the big Social (skit night/talent show) hosted by Frasier. Wow, what talented teens!

As just a sampling, I enjoyed a silly infomercial music skit (Jack, Josh, and Molly), beautiful dancing (Danielle), incredible singing (Rachel), Steve and Rob's shoppe skit, and embarrassingly enough, the shockingly disturbing, Steve, Rob, and I dancing in drag to Beyoncé's "Single Ladies."

Each morning after breakfast we gathered together for matins. Each evening before bed we gathered together for vespers. These brief worship services were led by the teens. It was fun to

learn the beloved songs from different camps. Also, it was nice to share our favorite graces at mealtime. The spiritual side of the ISC was present throughout the day and the commonality of our faith was integral to the success and joyfulness of the camp.

But, incredible as all of this was, it wasn't Purley, the Revelation sessions, the quaint English countryside, the cute village of Atherstone, or the Olympic Games, Crystal Maze, or Lost Potato that made ISC so incredibly special. It wasn't even London, Warwick Castle, or the grand gala meal. Sure, all of this contributed to making the ISC so extraordinary. But what really moved me were the people. It was the staff of Jenny, Steve, Rev. Jack, Rev. Catherine, Rob, Callum, Holly, Chris, and Andy putting everything they had into every activity. And they did it all with such love and care, always with a smile and a twinkle of magic. It was Rachel, Purley Chase manager, and her fine kitchen crew generously and graciously preparing three meals each day,



Three "Single Ladies" perform at the talent show: Steve, Rob, and Kurt

always friendly, and always with fresh hot coffee at the wake-up bell. It was drinking that coffee before breakfast with Holly in the conservatory. It was Rev. Jack's silly Scottish jokes (especially the ones I couldn't understand!), Jenny's solid, capable leadership, Steve's stories and creative ingenuity, Callum's intelligent perspective and beautiful closing prayer, Rev. Catherine's gentle thoughtfulness, Rob's steady level-headedness, and Chris' wisdom. Then there's Holly. It's difficult to imagine any of this taking place without Holly, my #1. Holly's planning, guidance, advice, and project management, made everything

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possible. Holly worked so diligently before, during, and after ISC.

But most of all, it was the teenagers and the young adults who stirred me to truly appreciate the ISC. When I look back, I see dining room tables



The fearless ISC staff (l to r back): Steve, Rob, Jack, Kurt, Callum, (front): Jenny, Catherine, Holly, Chris

filled with campers from different countries mixing and talking together. There were teens prancing about the lawn playing and laughing. I remember small teams building, learning, growing, debating, and pondering. I'll never forget Harriet's tough, effective leadership, Shauna's "good morning gorgeous" (or was it Shannon or Sharmaine? :-)), Asha's smile and crazy campfire attire, Rebecca's kindness, Dac's and Josh's cereal box determination, Rachel's capable care, Danielle's bubbly enthusiasm, Liv's thought-provoking comments and questions. I could go on and on, but there are too many significant moments to list everybody and everything.

Regardless, to all of the teens and young adults, you have a place in my memory, and I emerge from ISC a different person. You have changed me. I am a better person because of you. And isn't becoming a better person what these camps, retreats, and gatherings are all about? I certainly think so and I

hope you do, too. For all of this I thank each and every one of you. You've all made a little nest in my heart, and I am extremely grateful for the gift of being able to spend time with you at ISC. Until next time.

—Kurt Fekete,

Swedenborgian Church youth director

I have always loved to travel. I love experiencing different cultures, learning different histories, and most of all, meeting people of different backgrounds. The International Summer Camp 2019 was so special for me because I got to share my love of travel with many people I

care about. We saw London icons like the Eye and Buckingham Palace and learned history in a fun way during our visit to London Dungeon and our trip to Warwick Castle. My favorite moments were playing Werewolf, the Lost Potato, and Ghost Blitz, laughing at language differences, and sitting in awe of the birds of prey flying overhead. I love



Holly and Kurt enjoying the celebration tea

travel because even when we live in a world that highlights our differences constantly, spending just a few days with people from other cultures allows us to see the ways we are all alike—our competitiveness, love of dancing, and fascination with the night sky.

This was my third time attending an English New Church event. During my first experience in 2011, I was president of SCYL. We went to their annual Easter Rally, and I made many friends among the English teens. In 2015, while studying in France, I decided to return to Easter Rally, which allowed me to reconnect with friends from Purley Chase and meet new ones. This

time, my role changed to staffer. I've known many of the American teens since they were four years old, and helping them travel to England for a week to spend time with English teens was an honor. I hope they formed friendships that can withstand the passage of time and the distance between them they now face. I know from experience that it can be difficult but also that determination and social media make it easier. As I've grown up, I've made it a priority to reconnect with these friends regularly, visiting them in England or hosting them when they come to visit the U.S. Even when we don't see each other for years, small but frequent virtual reconnections, like Snapchats and comments on Instagram posts, allow us to feel like nothing has changed when we do see each other again.

As I lay in the damp grass on the back lawn on the last night after playing a rousing game of The Lost Potato, slowly freezing as the temperature dropped, waiting desperately to see a shooting star, I thought about the past week. I honestly loved it all—having a morning coffee in the conservatory, teaching people to make owl calls, learning about the book of Revelation, pretending to understand the game of Rounders—but mostly I loved getting to know these people.

It is the little moments I'll always remember—Shauna's face as she tried to figure out whether or not I was a wolf, Harriet throwing a Frisbee despite her probably broken nose, Wyatt freaking out about the nice cars in London, Sebi's amazing soccer footwork, Kizzy's laugh, and Jack's illegible and unknown Famous People. I'll never forget Alex or Scout playing "Bohemian Rhapsody" and everyone joining in song as we walked to Atherstone, or sat by the campfire or in the Common Olive. The most meaningful moments for me were when we joined in each other's traditions—when some of the English

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teens absorbed the American ways or when the Americans sang “Witchabella” to send off their new friends. This week was perfect from beginning to end—even if I was practically the only one not to see a shooting star.

—Holly Bauer

It's always a delight to be at Purley Chase Retreat Centre, and this year's International Youth Camp was no exception. We came together from different parts of the world and joined as one community for a week of learning, sharing worship, enjoying the amazing food, and having fun in every moment. We were hosted by the amazing staff at Purley Chase in the cozy retreat centre within beautiful surroundings. I left the retreat feeling spiritually fulfilled and grateful for the experience, having met new friends and reconnecting with friends from the past.

I really enjoyed the session on the Letters to the Angels of the Seven Churches, not because it was my session, but because of the powerful impact of the teens' one-act plays. Each of the groups presented a one-act play to show the message that was given to one of the churches. The plays were insightful, clever, relevant, and unforgettable. My own understanding of the messages to the churches has been deepened through this experience. Thank you all for doing such a wonderful job!

My absolute favourite moment occurred following our final vespers service. When it was suggested that we plan a visit to the U.S. for everyone, the unreserved expressions of joy gave me goose bumps. The room filled with a palpable energy of excitement at the prospect and hope for a reunion. Whether in the U.S., in England, or somewhere new, I look forward to meeting again.

—Rev. Catherine Lauber

The Year of the Lord

How Our Adoramus Came to Be

BY JIM LAWRENCE

The Adoramus: Our Faith in the Glorified Lord

(The rubric used in our two current *Books of Worship*, 1950 and 1982)

“We worship the One God, the Lord, the Savior Jesus Christ; in whom is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; whose humanity is Divine: who for our salvation, did come into the world and take our nature upon Him. He endured temptation, even to the passion of the cross. He overcame the hells, and so delivered man. He glorified his humanity, uniting it with the Divinity of which it was begotten. Without this no mortal could have been saved, and they are saved who believe in Him and keep the commandments of his Word. This is his commandment: that we love one another, as He hath loved us. Amen.”

Sometimes it is said that General Convention is not a creedal church. This is true technically and in practice today around our denomination. However, many of us remember a time when nearly every Convention congregation stood in worship to repeat in unison the Adoramus and, in so doing, appearing to an outside observer as the same devotional gesture that would be observed in creedal denominations. There's a backstory on the rise and development of the Adoramus that goes to the heart of the theology supporting “The Year of the Lord.”

Way back in 1830, when Convention, as a denomination, was only thirteen years old, and long before there was going to be the Adoramus, a short article in *New Jerusalem Magazine* (Dec. 1830, p. 150) broached a concern and a hope to help the new faith communicate the essentials of the church,

something like a catechism as other churches had. Shouldn't the Church develop such materials teaching not only young people but also new members and the outside world “a summary explanation” of the fundamental doctrines?

By 1835, a proposal had been developed and published in Ohio. Penned by an energetic layperson, Josiah M. Espy. “The Contrast; From certain Doctrines of the Protestant Churches, compared with the Doctrines of the New Jerusalem Church” began circulating. This pamphlet not only summarized the major teachings of the new faith but also made very clear how they contrasted with orthodox Christian theology. He went on to publish a “Manual” for the instruction in the New Church, especially for youth, but it also became popular with adults.

These efforts proved enormously useful, and their popularity raised questions about a greater emphasis on the basics in the way the church tried to engage the world. Ultimately the conversation turned toward a very elemental statement in worship, and during the 1870s a voice began arising in Convention for an explicit Swedenborgian creed. Many members wanted a crisp and concise statement of the New Church faith. What used to be called the Adoramus (now there are numerous “Affirmations of Faith” in use in Convention) first appeared in Convention's *Book of Worship* (BOW) in the 1881 edition under the rubric, “The Faith of the New Church.” At that point this faith statement functioned as one of several anthems that could be chosen that Sunday as a sung chant. Several subsequent editions of

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The Power of Including Employees' Faith in the Workplace

BY RICH TAFEL

Allowing employees to share their deepest, faith-based purpose at work creates a work environment that allows them to come to work as their whole selves.

This benefits the workplace by allowing for great diversity and removes fear.

As an ordained minister who also has provided coaching to hundreds of business entrepreneurs, I've discovered that American business has created a nice big closet for people of faith. I know something about closets as I've also been a leader in the battle for equality for gay Americans in the 1990s.

The workplace has made huge strides for LGBT employees but is increasingly making people of faith believe they need to go into a closet when it comes to sharing their faith.

It doesn't have to be this way.

I understand why businesses get nervous allowing faith-based language into the workplaces. As numerous business leaders have shared with me, "I'm afraid when you open up the whole religion thing, my employees will start evangelizing people. Will they condemn people of other faiths or no faith?" They have mostly concluded that the smartest thing to do was keep a wall of separation between work and faith by warning employees to leave their beliefs at home.

Diversity training programs have followed this path as well. If a person wants to come out as gay or speak about their ethnic heritage, that should be embraced. However, employees are often told not to hang a cross or star



of David or the crescent moon in their offices, because it could offend other employees traumatized by their interaction with religion.

This isn't easy work, but true diversity work means creating spaces for people with different

world views who still respect others. It doesn't mean favoring one viewpoint over others.

I work at a firm where I lead practice in social impact investing. A few years back, Tom Raffa, the CEO of the firm, Raffa Marcum, was asked if the firm would host a discussion where employees spoke about their faith and the role it played in their work life. Tom Raffa, who isn't traditionally religious, also made it his mission to have the most diverse firm possible. And he and his wife were successful in creating the largest accounting firm in America that is majority women owned, with over forty languages spoken among his employees. An early champion on welcoming gays in the workplace, he was also proud to do the accounting for prominent Catholic, Jewish, and other faith organizations.

Rather than play it safe and react to fear, he asked how he could make it happen. Knowing that I was a minister, he asked me to help in the planning. Once it was clear to all involved that this was not an event to proselytize, we planned a luncheon.

The turnout was much larger than expected. A human resources leader facilitated the lunch by asking people to share their own faith path and how it impacted their work. What happened next was one of the most beautiful

couple of hours I've experienced in the business.

Employees shared how their faith was the driving force behind their life, family, and work. They noted that this luncheon gave them permission to bring all of themselves to work. The diversity of the group represented the firm's beautiful diversity. A Latter-Day Saint member shared, as did a Hindu employee. We soon learned that most attendees were "non-denominational." This title meant different things to different employees.

The common theme was that people of different faiths chose this particular firm to work at because it did social good.

Another theme mentioned in follow up discussions over lunch was how many times people of faith feel they need to remain in the spiritual "closet" at work. They cannot share that which drives their life.

This luncheon, sanctioned by the firm, provided a space for them to be themselves. The conversation was so lively at lunch that I never got a word in edgewise, which, for a preacher, says a lot. The high point of that discussion came from a woman in the firm who shared a beautiful story. She announced that each day when she started work, she picked ten photographs on the website of employees to pray for. She also prayed for safety and success for the firm. I'm still touched today by her words. When I shared this story with Tom Raffa, he was meaningfully touched.

Creating a more inclusive work environment for people of faith isn't just good for creating happy employees. We discovered it actually helps with sales.

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Letter from the President

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and nodded her head. She said nothing, but I could sense that she had been struggling with this issue for some time. While her shoulders were still slumped with the sadness she was bearing, it was as if part of the weight had been lifted and she could go on and face tomorrow.

When we are not allowed to question, our questions don't go away; they remain hidden questions and they block our growth. But when we are encouraged to question, we have the freedom to seek the meaning structures that can begin to address our questions—and then move toward our next question.

From the Gospel of Matthew, we are told to “ask and it will be given to you; seek and you shall find; knock and the door will be opened.” We often

Faith in the Workplace

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Our team discovered that when potential clients learn that I'm a minister, the energy in the room changes. Very often the clients explain in deeply personal detail their own deeply spiritual catalyst for starting their business or nonprofit. They, too, can come out.

Meeting someone who can understand that motivation rather than mock or laugh at it can build a far deeper connection with clients.

Our rising secular workplace culture is making it difficult for people of faith to come to work as their whole selves. By providing a space that respects all diversity, including diversity of faith, businesses can tap into a deep reservoir of goodwill that benefits everyone. ☩

Rev. Rich Tafel is Pastor of Church of the Holy City in Washington, DC, and a director at Marcum Raffa Social Impact Advisors.

Palestine-Israel Trip

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Trip Costs

The cost of the trip, including airfare, food and lodging, guides, transportation, and entrance fees, will be

think of this verse as asking for things. My request is for an open mind, ever ready to let God teach me. I believe God wants us to know. God does not want to keep us in the dark. God wants us to ask and seek and knock. The wisdom is there for us to find, and this search draws us near to God because the answers are given through God's revelation when we are open to receive. The verse goes on, “For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.” That is blessed assurance. It sounds pretty easy, doesn't it? Ask, seek, knock. But you and I know that it is not always easy, and the answers sometimes seem a long time in coming.

Do you see the difference here with the woman whose husband was dying in the hospital? She thought that she had to have faith and understanding first. She thought that her questions meant that she didn't have enough faith, and that saddened and discouraged her. But in these words of Jesus as recorded in Matthew, he says ask (with the heart), seek (with the understanding), and knock (with an open heart and mind), allowing God to enter and answer. Questioning will strengthen our faith. We can go ahead and question, believing that God will answer, maybe not in the way we expect, but an answer will come that helps us on our journey. The key is to stay open to hear God and not get stuck in someone else's answers.

Questioning will always be a big part of my spiritual journey and I am so thankful I found a church that honors and encourages questions.

—Rev. Jane Siebert, president

over \$4,000 per person. Our goal is to be able to offer scholarships to students and ordination-track candidates as needed so that they can take advantage of this unique learning opportunity.

Featured Stops

We will start the day early with a tour of the Old City's Jewish, Christian, and Muslim holy sites. We will visit the Temple Mount/Haram al Sharif and see the Dome of the Rock and al Aqsa Mosque. This will be followed by a tour of the Western Wall and Jewish Quarter, along with City of David and Hezekiah's Tunnel. We will meet local residents of Silwan (Siloam) to hear different views about the site and to discuss archaeology and national identity. The day will also include a visit to the Armenian and Christian Quarters, with stops at the Tomb of Mary and the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. We will end with a time of reflection at the Garden Tomb.

On the Judean Desert we will visit Jericho, one of the oldest inhabited cities in the world, and also one of its lowest. We will also visit Qumran, the site where the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered in the twentieth century, and discuss theories about why they were there, and who lived at the site. We will enjoy a float in the nearby Dead Sea and stop for a time of reflection at the Jordan River site where pilgrims mark the baptism of Jesus as well as the crossing of the ancient Israelites into Canaan.

The Galilee: On Saturday, we will visit the Mount of Beatitudes church, just outside our guesthouse, and tour Capernaum, a hub for Jesus' ministry in the Galilee. We will spend the remainder of the day in the Golan Heights, hear about the Druze communities there and about the history of the Golan, and enjoy a hike to the waterfall at Baniyas.

Make your plans as soon as possible; space is limited. ☩

Transforming Why into How

BY TASSY FARWELL

“**G**o do something extraordinary.” That was Rev. Jim Lawrence’s message to us one Sunday at the El Cerrito Church. Scoop Niscar, broadcaster at the former incarnation of radio station KFOG, used to end his editorials with, “If you don’t like the news, go out and make some of your own.” Do something extraordinary.

Several years ago, I listened to a TED Talk featuring Elizabeth Gilbert, the author of *Eat, Pray, Love*. In describing writer’s block, she told us that ancient Greeks relied on the Muses to provide creative impulses. If one manifested a marvelous or provocative idea, it was really a Muse at work. Conversely, and I like this aspect, if one experienced writer’s block or artistic constipation, blame the Muse. Madam Muse was not performing. It’s comforting how one can cavalierly dismiss personal responsibility. I’m not lazy, it’s my Muse taking a break. Sorry, no extraordinary thoughts or actions today.

Now, for as much as I might like to take credit for the infrequent semi-extraordinary thing I might do, I know the credit for that spark of good work belongs with God and my guardian angels, who I am certain are consistently with me. They are aware of my multiple deficiencies. I’m not particularly prone to extraordinary action, but I don’t blame God for this personal fault. I’m more likely to perform extraordinary actions like mopping the floor or scrubbing grout—actually scrubbing grout would be extraordinary, since it takes time, elbow grease, and patience—the dreaded “P” word—a virtue I have referenced several times at this podium, my stated goal in my regenerative path.



I have prayed for patience and have noted times when I could have displayed more patience, so the P word remains a goal for my inward and outward growth. And as you may have experienced, we need to be careful what we wish for, because we may just get it.

Thus, the Lord has answered my prayer in providing me the concentrated potential to generate patience. Tomorrow, I return to San Luis Obispo, where I will help my mother in her transition from a care facility to her home. Since the beginning of April, Mom has been recuperating to regain mobility after a fall that caused multiple inoperable fractures in her pelvis, this injury following her slight stroke in September.

A common response to this double indemnity would be to ask the Lord *why* this had to happen. Where were her guardian angels? Her mobility Muses? When this happened, I was just preparing to leave for China. Why did this accident have to happen at such an inconvenient time? Since she was in the hospital and receiving good care, there really wasn’t much I could do to speed her recovery except provide some moral support, so I continued on to China but did experience a little guilt that while I was off to Shenzhen, she was off her feet. But still, my mom is a gentle, church-going, faith-abiding soul. She does her best to follow the Ten Commandments, gives charitably, and remembers birthdays for just about every person she has ever met in her entire life. Why target Joyce? It’s easy and fairly normal for us to ask these “why” questions, but when we do, what sort of answers do we receive?

As I was sitting at San Francisco Airport, waiting for my flight, I began Chapter 10 of Laura Story’s book, *When God Doesn’t Fix It*. In my haste to quickly grab a library book several days prior, I snatched this one, knowing nothing about it but finding the title compelling, since this message topic had been brewing in my brain. As happens in my life, I believe the angels were guiding me. In this chapter, Ms. Story recommends that we transform our “why” questions for God into “how” questions. Rather than asking in anger, frustration, or confusion why my mother had to fall, why the man was born blind, why a child had to die, or why so many were left without homes in the fires, we can transform our questions using *how*, as in “Lord, how can you use me to assist the families of those who have lost their precious one?” How can you use what talents I have to help those who now have no home?” Or in my case, “Dear Lord, how can you use what few inadequate talents I have to help my mother, since she really wants to return to her house? Are you giving me this opportunity to care for her so I can be useful, thereby demonstrating my devotion to you, while honoring my mother’s desires and, as an extra, added, simultaneous bonus, practice daily patience?”

Psalms 118 reminds us that “The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief corner stone.” I’m not saying my patience will grow to be my dominant virtue, but I know I need to be intentional in exercising this aspect of my character as I stay with my mother. Because of the freedom the Lord has provided us, I can choose to ignore my minimal capacity for patience and the Lord’s positioning of this regenerative proposition in my path. However, in dismissing this

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Transforming Why into How

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chance, I would dishonor our Lord, my mother, and, ultimately, myself.

Bruce Henderson in *Why Does God Let It Happen*, writes,

Everything that we see as fate, coincidence, serendipity, good fortune, or bad luck falls under God's providence. If we could see what God sees, we would understand that everything that happens to us—good and bad—is an example of how he is always with us, and of the loving order that permeates everything of his creation. This is the ultimate prescription for peace.¹

As Swedenborg writes, "Peace holds within itself trust in the Lord, the trust that he governs all things and provides all things, and that he leads toward an end that is good" (*Secrets of Heaven* §8445; trans. Lisa Hyatt Cooper).

From Henderson again:

Swedenborg shows how there is spiritual order to God's creation as well, underlying all of the aberrations we witness and wonder about, with those eternal spiritual ramifications that we can never perceive in this life. That doesn't completely answer the question of why. And it doesn't take away the pain. But being given a glimpse into what God sees can help us to understand that even in the midst of the chaos and tragedy we witness, he really does have a plan. He loves us enough to let us be free to make our mistakes, to suffer pain, and even to inflict pain. And his providence is always watching over every aspect of our spiritual lives—which is where life really matters.²

To sum up a bit, if the Lord allowed no evils to exist—and by evils I mean unfortunate events, whether accidental or intentional—if these were not

Thursdays in Black

Hello, dear friends,

I was deeply moved by a recent letter by Jim Winkler, president and general secretary of the National Council of Churches:

Thursdays in Black grew out of the World Council of Churches Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women (1988 – 1998), in which the stories of rape as a weapon of war, gender injustice, abuse, violence, and many tragedies that grow outward from such violence, became all the more visible. The campaign was inspired by the "Mothers of the Disappeared" in Argentina, who on Thursdays protested against the disappearance of their children during the years when a violent dictatorship gripped the country, as well as by the Women in Black in Israel and Palestine, who continue to protest war and violence.

allowed to be present, we would have little reason to act to effect a better outcome. We would have little cause to respond in a way allowing us the choice to grow spiritually. The Lord has provided us the freedom to choose how to respond. Of course, there is a preference that we select a path that leads us toward spiritual growth, but it's ultimately our choice—our freedom and our rationality.

How can the Lord use our strengths and weaknesses to better our situation? The Lord knows our talents and skills, what we are capable of and how we can be of use. Listen and be extraordinary with his works. ☩

Rev. Kathy "Tassy" Farwell was a career high school teacher and current continuing education instructor for adults. At the 2019 Annual Convention she was consecrated as a licensed pastor at Hillside Community Church, in El Cerrito, California, working with Rev. Thom Muller. This message was delivered on May 5, 2019, at Hillside.

I have resolved, whenever possible, to dress in black on Thursdays while prayerfully considering the implications of the violence delineated. As a church, we are committed to the way of peace with justice in the name of our lord and savior Jesus Christ. I invite you to join me in showing our solidarity with our brothers and sisters around the world who daily are subjected to, or in danger of, violence by participating in Thursdays in Black.

—Karen Conger

Seeking a New Editor for the Messenger

After twelve years of great work, Herb Ziegler has decided that it is time to lay down the camera and pen and retire as editor of *the Messenger*. While we know we can never replace him, it is an opportunity for the Swedenborgian Church to start a new chapter of *the Messenger*.

The editor of *the Messenger* plays a critical role in the life of the Swedenborgian Church. Not only does *the Messenger* inform members and organizations of what's happening, it is the publication of record for historians. It is one of the best ways an individual can share the message of the Church with members and throughout the world.

The position requires a motivated self-starter who can work from home and is able to cultivate articles and photographs, edit them, and arrange them into a newsletter that is published ten times a year.

The position is part-time as an employee of the denomination. For more information, contact Karen Conger, secretary@swedenborg.org. ☩

¹ Henderson, B. (2010). *Why Does God Let It Happen?* West Chester, Pennsylvania: Swedenborg Foundation Press.

² *Ibid.*

A Brief History of DEADSU

BY ROBERT MCCLUSKEY

A few days after the convention in San Francisco (July 7, 1995), Lon Elmer, Paul Martin, and Robert McCluskey found themselves standing in front of 710 Ashbury Street. The curious link between



Emanuel Swedenborg and the Grateful Dead (the Dead) suddenly became crystal clear, and just as quickly morphed into a dynamic kaleidoscope of unformed possibilities. There was a brief exchange, not recorded, and then DEADSU was born: the “Do Everything And Dance Support Unit”—the only unauthorized, unbudgeted, and underground support unit in the General Convention. Membership requirements for DEADSU were determined: one must be 1) a member of the Swedenborgian Church, and 2) have attended at least one Dead show OR can name at least two Dead songs. (These requirements are currently under review.) About a month later, Jerry Garcia died. And for the next year, three souls nurtured a particular vision.

From its beginning, it was clear that DEADSU was not a support unit of Convention but a support unit for and to Convention. Its functions were not precisely defined but were encouraged to emerge as life determined: order from chaos.

At the following year’s convention in Urbana, Ohio, founding co-chair Paul Martin was inspired. Without quite knowing why, he went to the microphone during announcements at the end of the day’s session, and simply said, “DEADSU will be having a meeting tonight at the Hub, and everyone is invited.” Well, just about everyone showed up. Someone had a boom box and someone had some CDs of live shows, and it was just loud enough to

dance and low enough to talk, and a splendid time was had by all.

Later that year, Lon forwarded to the other founding co-chairs a copy of a document he had discovered; an obscure passage from Swedenborg’s *Spiritual Diary*, Vol. §9, affectionately referred to as “SD §9.”

Exactly what happened in Hutchinson, Kansas, (1997) and Leesburg, Florida, (1998) is a bit of blur, and no minutes survive. During this period, a casual formality began to develop, as meetings were generally opened with a reading of *SD §9* and review of previous efforts. Meetings were held on a regular basis, providing a blend of inspiration and renewal for many weary conventioners. Also during this time, several related themes developed around the still unarticulated purpose of DEADSU: the search for the Lost Word, Tibetan Buddhism, and the red and the white.

What happened in Malibu, California, (1999) is not a blur at all. A very comfortable and large meeting space afforded many opportunities for well attended meetings. (DEADSU was becoming well-known, and several irregulars began showing up. When someone asked Lee Woofenden where he was from, he said “SPYSU”!) At this convention, Andy Stinson offered a riveting graduation speech that was actually a covert tribute to his experience with DEADSU.

At one of these meetings, we heard the saga of Amy and Joe.

Amy Reichardt hailed from a conservative Texas town. In the late 90s, she found herself in Florida, finishing a master’s degree in symphonic percussion. She’s also interested in spirituality, and finds Swedenborg on the web.

More clicks lead her to the Rev. Dr. William Ross Woofenden in Sharon, Massachusetts. They begin a dialogue, and he invites her to visit Massachusetts and meet some other Swedenborgians. She accepts. While staying in the Boston area, she meets Joe Tucker, her future husband. His thing? Playing lead guitar in a Dead cover band! She had not listened to the Dead before and, of course, found their percussive adventures “pleasing.” She decides to stay in Boston and, at the invitation of who-knows-who, now finds herself at a DEADSU meeting in Malibu.

This was the real beginning of the band The Participants, a ministry of DEADSU. Over the next year, the following band members were put in place. Joe Tucker, guitar; Robert McCluskey, guitar; Ken Turley, bass; Laurie Turley, keyboards; Lon Elmer, drums; Amy Reichardt, percussion.

The Participants debuted in Urbana (2000), at the Hub, one long set with an encore. The set list is included so you don’t have to wonder: “Sugaree,” “My Sisters and Brothers,” “Loose Side” (K. Turley), “Promised Land,” “Althea,” “I Know You Rider,” “Good Lovin’,” “GDTRFB,” “Eyes of the World,” “Tomorrow is Forever,” “One More Saturday Night,” “Bird Song,” and “Waiting for a Miracle.” Encore: “I Shall be Released.”

At this point, DEADSU had become firmly implanted in the consciousness of General Convention. We continued to hold meetings at annual conventions, and The Participants performed a total of four shows as follows:

- 2000: Urbana, Baptism by Fire Tour
- 2001: St. Paul, Minnesota, Seat of our Pants Tour
- 2002: Gorham, Maine, Hard Day’s Night Tour

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- 2003: Geneva, New York, Better Late than Never Tour

At Geneva in 2003, DEADSU was gifted by the Youth League (SCYL) with an outstanding tour shirt. The shirt is available for viewing at all conventions.

In 2004 DEADSU left the bright light of glorious day for the twilight of dusk and the approach of night, in which all things sleep. For a few years afterward, spontaneous open-mic nights began popping up, with Ken, Laurie and Robert joined by Paul Deming, Stan and Karen Conger, David Fekete, and others filling the bill. But soon Joe and Amy had twins, Robert disappeared for a time, and Ken went into politics. Lon and Paul did their best to maintain the spirit and life of DEADSU, but their story is yet to be told.

But as we know, the sun also rises! In 2016, the first official meeting was held after several years. The numbers were small but the energy was huge. As part of his graduation address, Terry Schnarr played “Good Shepherd” by Jefferson Airplane, complete with dance and air guitar before his wife, Kathlyn, made him sit down! In 2017, that energy continued and launched a kind of revival. Some noteworthy items from the minutes:

- While discussing the work of Rev. Christopher Brown (General Church) in his efforts to locate the Lost Word in Greater Tartary, Kathlyn Schnarr volunteered that she and Rev. Brown were cousins.
- We also learned that Thom and Ellie Mueller have been Deadheads for as long as they can remember (whenever that is).
- McCluskey reported that he had delivered a brief, impromptu eulogy on the floor of the convention for the Rev. Ernest (“Erni”) O. Martin,

citing him as a valued member of DEADSU who would be deeply missed.

Fare thee well, fare thee well,
[We] love you more than words can tell

Listen to the river sing sweet songs,
To rock [your] soul.

- McCluskey joined the outing to Bryn Athyn, where he visited the Pitcairn Museum. In a room featuring Greco-Roman art, he came across a vase, beneath which was the following explanation:

Dionysos, God Of The Vine

Dionysus was the god of wine-drinking. The Greeks believed that when they drank wine at Dionysian festivals, they merged with the god. This experiencing of Dionysus was powerful. When immersed in Dionysian revelry, the participants lost a sense of personal identity, but gained connection with Dionysus and each other.

On the vase, Dionysus appears surrounded by his followers. Grape vines and symbols of Dionysus, wind their way up between the figures. (Here we recall that when Mickey Hart invited Joseph Campbell to a Dead show, the latter later remarked that it was “absolutely Dionysian!”)

And this, from *Skeleton Key: A Dictionary for Deadheads*, by David Shenk and Steve Silberman:

Group Mind: The collective identity or gestalt created in the big room at Dead shows. “During the concert experience,” writes theology student Shan Sutton in his analysis of the community of Deadheads as a grass roots religion, “Deadheads are no longer the unique individuals that exist in the everyday social structure. Instead, they become fellow parts of a brightly colored organic entity, with thousands of tie-dyed shirts swirling together. . . . A Deadhead relates that ‘the participation in each dance enables my spirit to transcend my body and mingle and rejoice and become one with the spirits of all the other participants.’”

And this corroboration from an unlikely, but likable, source:

Her theatrical voice rose and fell as her eyes flashed or became measured while she explained both Tantra—the union of the Hindu god and goddess Shiva and Shakti—and dance as an emblem for life’s transient nature, we saw different characters enacted and vanish in the dance, and we were reminded that all the roles we play here are transient—how we all come forth from the primordial sound (the Hindu sacred texts were heard and written as poetry), the Word, how through meditation, dance and yoga we find the true life force that is transcendent—lines between self and other and dancer dissolve, and we are united in the joy and bliss of the dance. The God Shiva is depicted in the form of a dancer; dance is the highest form of worship in that it unites the physical, emotional, psychical, and metaphysical. The dancer performs the highest sacrifice when she yields totally to the dance and sacrifices the ego—all this will be in the dance we are about to witness. I was exhausted before the dance began.

While I was listening and watching, I was learning that approaching world religions is not only a matter of thinking about doctrines. It is also a matter of participation

The Chinese world view consists of a balance between heaven and earth, individual and society, and among differing psychological tendencies such that one kind of emotion doesn’t become too strong. In their system, all happiness takes place in a context and is relational. Happiness is always with others, with the earth and Nature, and with heaven. Without others, without the earth, and without heaven there can be no happiness.

—Rev. David J. Fekete, Ph.D., “The 2018 Parliament of the World’s Religions” (*the Messenger*, Jan. 2018)

To conclude, we lift up what appears to be a precursor or prophecy of

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The Adoramus

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the *Book of Worship* through 1912 offer the choice of either saying “The Faith” (it’s abbreviated rubric) or singing it as an anthem.

Some voices, however, resisted an aspect of this growing trend in terms of wishing to steer clear of something that felt like a creed. An editorial by a prominent professor of theology at the New Church Theological School, Theodore F. Wright, addressed the controversy in an editorial titled “Creeds and Creed-Recital” in 1900 (*New-Church Review*, April issue p. 259–65). He reflects on various aspects regarding the growing use of recitations of doctrinal statements in church worship and refers especially to the statement of faith that was by then becoming very widespread.

Wright believes the statement of faith functions like a creed for many, and he notes that its evolution of becoming more dominant in worship has evolved over time. For example, in 1884 when statistics of liturgical usage were gathered by the Ministers’ Conference from sixty-two societies, only eight were reciting “The Faith” as a part of the regular Sunday service. He also reflects on the history of creeds,

especially after the Reformation, with all its eventual schisms, as an exercise to keep people from heresies. He then proceeds to agree with an 1892 article that argues “The Faith” recitation or sung chant is regarded primarily as helpful in letting visitors know what the church is about. In the end Wright says he’s not taking a stand either way on its usefulness but is merely writing to consider various aspects in response to a letter from a congregation that is not happy with the use of the statement of faith in the liturgy. The fact that he wrote an editorial gives evidence that there were conversations and disagreements going on as to whether the practice was functioning as a de facto creed.

In a fascinating development, delegates at the 1903 Annual Convention passed a resolution instructing The New Church Board of Publication to issue multiple versions of the *Book of Worship* to reflect regional liturgical preferences. This mandate came to fruition in 1906 with three BOW publications: two full versions that were nicknamed the “Boston Liturgy” and the “New York Liturgy,” with some subtle differences, and a third, more slender volume titled *Morning and Evening Services* and subtitled “For Use in the New Church from the *Book of Worship* of the General Convention,” containing a significant number of additional morning and evening services. For the primary “Morning Service,” we see included for the very first time our beloved affirmation of faith as a recitation in the main liturgy. In the Boston and New York regional editions, “The Faith” continued to be published in a section of doctrinal and scriptural statements, a collection of services to be either sung or recited. Here is the original wording:

We worship the One God, the Lord, the Savior Jesus Christ; in whom is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; whose humanity

is Divine: who for our salvation, did come into the world and take our nature upon Him. He endured temptation, even to the passion of the cross. He overcame the hells, and so delivered man. He glorified his humanity by uniting it with the Divinity of which it was begotten. So He became the Redeemer of the world, without whom no mortal can be saved. And they are saved who believe in Him and keep the commandments of his Word. This is his commandment: that we love one another, as He hath loved us. Amen.

The one change for what we have recited for nearly a century is an edit of the penultimate sentence, “So He became the Redeemer of the world, without whom no mortal can be saved,” and the version in the 1950 and 1982 BOWs reads simply, “Without this no mortal could have been saved.”

Delegates at the 1912 convention praised a subsequent new revision draft of the *Book of Worship*, presented for comment at that convention, and the assembly resolved to return to a single *Book of Worship* for use everywhere in General Convention, passing a motion that “recommends its use by the Societies connected with the Convention.” The main Sunday liturgy (what later would be called “The First Order”) in the 1912 BOW duly includes the recitation of “The Faith.” So 1912 is the year when its use in nearly its current form became ubiquitous throughout the church. In later editions, it gained the rubric “The Adoramus—Our Faith in the Glorified Lord,” and for many long years was referenced easily anywhere in General Convention as “The Adoramus,” and everyone knew the topic. In this, the Year of the Lord, we can celebrate the careful formulation of a doctrinal statement on the Lord that became so beloved by so many. ☩

Rev. Dr. Jim Lawrence is the dean of and a professor at the Center for Swedenborgian Studies at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, California.

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things to come all the way back from 1990: “As we were singing last night, I became aware that I have known Steve Pults and Bob McCluskey and Lon Elmer for years, but never have we joined together as we did that evening. Our gift to the group was nothing like their gift to me.” (from “New Eyes and New Ears,” convention sermon, 1990, by Rev. Jerry Poole). ☩

Rev. Robert McCluskey performs weddings and other rites at Wayfarers Chapel.

Passages

Deaths

Robert Irving McCallum, known as Irv, transitioned to the spiritual world peacefully with his wife, Pearl, and daughter Peggy at his side, on the morning of September 7, 2019. Pearl had been up all night checking on him as angels kept reminding her to be with him. Irv is survived by Pearl, children Terry and Peggy, two grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren. Rev. Dr. Jonathan Mitchell conducted the memorial service on September 15.

Irv was born in Rhode Island on May 9, 1916, and was named for Irving Berlin. His mother began attending the local Swedenborgian Church before Irv was born when her father, Irv's grandfather, was a bartender, and as she was being teased about his "less-than-angelic" profession, she thought she had better go to church!

Irv's family moved to Los Angeles when Irv was seven, and they attended the Los Angeles Swedenborgian Church; Irv was a member of the Los Angeles Society for many years. Irv's work life started with a paper route, as a boy, to help support his family through the Great Depression. Later, he had a long and productive career; he was a riveter at Lockheed during the

war and did time-study work at Cannon Electric. After returning to school and getting a degree in counseling, he spent his career as a counselor and hypnotist. Passionate about tennis, Irv drove weekly to a local club where he played right up until he was nearly 100 years old! He also loved to drive to visit National Parks and take photographs of nature.

Irv was involved in the founding of Wayfarers Chapel and served on the board, for a time as its chair. Active in the Split Mountain Camp at the start, Irv's camp name was "Rip" (Rip Van Winkle) because he liked to sleep

so much. Irv's kids also went to Split Mountain Camp. When they moved to La Jolla, near San Diego, in the seventies, Irv became active in the San Diego Society, serving for a time as its president. Irv loved the Swedenborgian church and its teachings. He was always extremely generous with his time and resources and wanted nothing more than to help whoever he could.

As he became increasingly confined to his house, Irv would often express a readiness to depart from this life and into the Spiritual World. We will all miss his passion and service. Heaven has gained a true angel. ☩

"Live and Learn" with Professor George Dole

For spiritually curious and questing people, the Center for Swedenborgian Studies (CSS) offers an opportunity to participate in an online, real-time video-conference class with Prof. Dole called "Live and Learn"

Dates: Seven weeks starting mid-October, including one 90-minute "live" online video-conference session each week. Final days and times are negotiated between those who sign up and the instructor.

No Cost: This is a CSS outreach offering to the church and the world.

If interested, reply to the CSS dean, Jim Lawrence, at jlawrence@psr.edu.

Description: Not all circles are vicious. There's a most benevolent one involving living and learning. The doctrines teach us how to live, and living by them is most definitely instructive. Swedenborg begins "The Doctrine of Life" by telling us that "If we lead a good life, we think good things not only about God but also about the neighbor, which is not the case if we lead an evil life." It may explain why Swedenborg titled his first theological overview *The New Jerusalem and its Heavenly Teachings* (NJHT) and why he devotes most of the little book to what it means to be human and how to become more so, before he concludes with a chapter on the Lord. This semester's online seminar is designed to follow that strategy, taking doctrinal principles in the order they appear in NJHT and introducing each one with a "story" that embodies it. Participants will also be asked to bring to each session something they have observed in themselves or in their lives that they have found particularly instructive.

Questions? Please email us at info@css.gtu.edu

Free* Hosanna Hymnals

Does your church, camp, or retreat center need more *Hosanna* hymnals? Central Office has a surplus (400) of the beloved hymnal at its remote storage facility, Iron Mountain. Contact Samantha Johanson at Central Office, manager@swedenborg.org, or phone: 617-969-4240.

* You will receive an invoice for the cost of shipping and handling. Central Office will pay for the cost of retrieving the boxes from Iron Mountain.

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 questioning and insights, we as a church exist to encourage that same spirit of inquiry and personal growth, to respect differences in views, and to accept others who may have different traditions.

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

CSS Israel and Palestine Trip

The Center for Swedenborgian Studies (CSS) is planning an immersion trip to Israel and Palestine for this spring. We are raising money to offer financial assistance to CSS students and those on the ordination track with the Swedenborgian Church. This is a once in a lifetime opportunity for those on a learning journey with CSS, providing them with impactful encounters that will inform their work going forward. Please consider supporting this effort. You can give in two ways:

Online contribution: Go to <https://css.gtu.edu/>, scroll way down to the *donate* button. Enter your credit or debit card information and email address. **Important:** in the field for "purpose", enter "Holy Land Scholarship" then click on the *Complete Payment* button on the lower right corner. Once the payment is completed, you will receive an acknowledgement by email. Note that we do not retain credit card information, and that our website is secure.

Donate by paper check sent by postal mail: Make your check payable to Center for Swedenborgian Studies and, in the memo section, write, "Holy Land Scholarship." Mail it to:

Center for Swedenborgian Studies
1798 Scenic Ave.
Berkeley, CA 94709

Contact

If you have questions or need more information, call 510.849.8228.

About the Tour

The tour is designed to be both educational and experiential, focusing on the history of the region from the perspectives of the people who live there. We will have the opportunity to connect with both Palestinians and Israelis and hear their stories first hand. We will also visit important sites of Christian pilgrimage and make time for reflection, prayer, and meditation in the tradition of Swedenborgian spirituality in the many sacred sites of Jerusalem, Galilee, and the Judean desert.

The tour is also open to non-students; those interested in learning more can visit <https://www.mejditours.com/css/>.

We have contracted with Mejdī Tours for this trip, who have developed a "two-guide model." We will be guided, for some of the trip, by one Palestinian and one Israeli, who will share their unique perspectives with us, side-by-side. Mejdī Tours is used by National Geographic, and has been featured recently by the *Smithsonian Magazine*. An excerpt of the article is available online: <https://tinyurl.com/y5try5s6>.

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