



The Swedenborg Chapel Newsletter

A Ministry of the Swedenborgian Church in Cleveland

"Where we take the Broad View of Faith and Life"



MARCH-APRIL 2011

DATES TO REMEMBER

- Mar 27** - Rev. Todd Beiswenger, of the General Church, will lead Worship Service.
- Mar 30, Wed, 7-8:30**— Men's Grp, Pause4God
- Apr 3** - Worship Service
- Apr 10 - SPECIAL SERVICE-**
Rev. Ron will lead worship at the Bestor's residence, West Lake Village Retirement Center
- Apr 13, Wed, 7-8:30**— Men's Grp, Pause4God
- April 16-17**, Rev. Turley will be meeting us to talk about the future.
- Apr 17— Palm Sunday**, Rev. Ken Turley to lead us in a meeting & worship
- Apr 24—Easter Sunday**
- Apr 27, Wed, 7-8:30**— Men's Grp, Pause4God
- May 1**—Worship Service
- May 8**—Worship Service
- May 11, Wed, 7-8:30**— Men's Grp, Pause4God
- May 29** - A Minister (TBD) of the General Church, will lead Worship.
- June 29-July 3** —Annual Convention, Cincinnati

TO THE WONDERFUL PEOPLE OF SWEDENBORG CHAPEL

I regret having to inform you that effective April 1, 2011 I will no longer be serving as pastor of Swedenborg Chapel. This step is a result of the deteriorating condition of my spine, which is causing increased pain and discomfort. The surgeon has made it clear that this is a permanent condition, and that surgery will only offer temporary relief. I simply cannot continue to work.

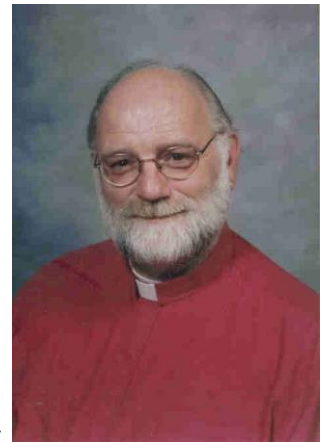
I have greatly enjoyed serving here – especially in light of the fact that this was my first pastorate some 33 years ago. I have come to love and care for all of you dearly. I pray that the Lord will continue to be with you and this ministry.

Our Church Council is working hard to plan for the future. Worship services, the Heaven and Hell Discussion Group, the Pause for God Men's Group, and our other programs will continue. We are arranging for a meet-

ing as soon as possible with Convention's President, Rev. Ken Turley, to make plans for arranging for visiting ministers and to conduct a search for a new minister.

Thank you all for your presence during these past 16 months. And please, please, continue to support this ministry.

May God Be With You All,
Rev. Ron



ARE WE OPEN TO NEW IDEAS?

The following article appeared in *The Plains Banner* of February 2011, the newsletter of the Kansas Association and was written by Rev. Alison Lane Olson

I recently saw a short video on CNN's Web-page that I found so fascinating I'm still thinking about it. It was a video clip (taken from an airplane) of a virtually uncontacted tribe in Brazil. The person with the video camera focused in on a small group of men that can be seen through the trees; they are standing in front of a hut, looking upward at the plane. At least one is in red tribal paint, another holds at bow, a younger man holds a machete.

As of this moment, some believe there are about 100 such uncontacted tribes that remain worldwide....many of them living in remote areas of the Amazon rainforest. Though some groups have worked hard to help them

remain uncontacted...they are sharing this information now because they are afraid that illegal logging is putting many of these tribes, which appear to be healthy and thriving for the moment, at risk.

People still living on planet in tribes that remain virtually unaware of the rest of the world? What would this be like? It is so far removed from my experience that I can hardly begin to imagine it, and I just feel filled with questions. For instance. . .do they have any idea that we live on a sphere that is spinning so fast in space we can't even feel it? Do they know why it rains? What do they think of planes? Could they imagine a thing like the internet? What is their religion

like? Would you want to know more about the world, if you were among them?

And what about us, living in a technologically advanced part of the world. . .we might think we see reality, but what if other life forms are looking at our planet right now, thinking "...should we contact them? Maybe not." ☺

My husband, Adam, has been teaching a Philosophy course at our community college. For fun, I've been trying to keep up with the reading in their textbook; in doing so, I was reminded of Plato's famous Allegory of the Cave. The scene of the allegory is this: human beings have been living in an underground den, chained so they can only see in one direction (toward the cave's back wall). They cannot see that a contained fire is burning behind them, nor the passageway leading up to the sunlight. They see only the shadows on the wall in front of them, but do not understand what they see. Then one prisoner breaks free - he turns around, and heads out of the cave. He sees the fire and understands shadows; he makes the adjustment to sunlight, and grows more enlightened about reality. And then, he returns to try to share his new knowledge with those still in the cave. In essence, the allegory reminds us of the possibility that reality

may be entirely different than our taken-for-granted assumptions suppose it to be.

I can't help but hold onto the thought that all of us are in one way or another, still in the cave, still living unaware of a larger reality. My thoughts turn for a moment to Scripture, where God is constantly in a process of revealing Himself and a larger reality... I'm reminded too, of our church's doctrine of Appearances...the idea that we each only have an appearance of a larger reality; we each only have our incomplete versions of Truth. Or as I once heard it, we each have our truth with a "little t." We can never be sure exactly, of just how much of the bigger picture we are missing, and how much is being protected for us and from us. We know our job is simply to best manage the truth we do have, and to be open to the possibility of new ideas and understandings.

It is a good task, I think! And a humbling one for me to remember.

Rev. Alison Lane-Olson



The photos were taken by Brazil's National Indian Foundation and were given to Survival International, it said.

WELCOME TO ZINZINNATI!

2011 ANNUAL CONVENTION: JUNE 29 - JULY 3

Come this summer to Convention 2011 and help us celebrate the 200th anniversary of the First New Jerusalem Society of Cincinnati (now known as the New Church of Montgomery), the oldest surviving Swedenborgian church in the Western Hemisphere. You're invited

to visit us here in the Queen City, home of Cincinnati Chili, the Reds and Bengals, and the world famous Cincinnati Symphony and Pops Orchestras, for the deliberations and fellowship of the Swedenborgian Church at its 187th Session.

Dates are Wednesday (evening), June

IN OUR THOUGHTS

William B. Alden, 90, husband of Jean Alden and father of Shirley King and Lauren Hach-Wilkins, passed away March 8th from old age. The funeral was held in the Glenview New Church on Sunday, March 13th. Please keep Bill's family and friends in your thoughts and prayers.



Rev. Judith Dennis, who has been a part of our church family for many years, will soon be leaving us as she moves to Connecticut. Judith has led many worship services for us over the years and has most recently served as president of our Church Council. We wish her well in the future.



Pat Dennis, Judith's mother, will be moving to West Lake Village Retirement Center, after recuperating from a recent surgery. We also wish Pat all the best in her new home.

GENERAL CHURCH MINISTERS VISITS FOR 2011

March 27 - Todd Beiswenger
 May 29 - To Be Determined

29, through Sunday (noon), July 3. Ministers will be meeting Monday, June 27, for their Council of Ministers meetings.

The annual convention will be held at the University of Cincinnati, Ohio's premier urban research university, which traces its origins to 1819. Plan to fly into the Greater Cincinnati-Northern Kentucky Airport (CVG), which is actually located across the river in Kentucky, but still only about twenty minutes from the University of Cincinnati campus.

The 2011 Convention theme "Behold, I Make All Things New!" is a bridge from the old and the past to the new and the future. It is a celebration of transformation, which echoes our local church's current transition, honoring its 200-year history and leaping forward into a new and as yet unknown path of ministry. We have exciting things planned for the convention.

Our beloved Tiffany Angel Windows will have returned home for a temporary stay at the Taft Museum. The Taft has included an exhibit of Swedenborgian historic memorabilia and art carved furniture from the Cincinnati Church (razed in 1968).

You will have the opportunity to tour this exhibit as well as their permanent collection.

On Saturday evening a treat is in store for us—a concert performed by MUSE Cincinnati Women's Choir (<http://www.musechoir.org/>). Muse is an amazing musical experience; you won't want to miss it.

The Saturday evening reception is planned to be a special event also, angelic perhaps. Stay tuned.

A business meeting may be just a business meeting (and there are some of us who love them) but we're hoping to find ways to make at least a part of them more enjoyable.

So, come join us in worship, community, music,

growth, celebration, and remembrance, as we go about the work of our church.

Then stay awhile after and visit our great city. Visit one of the top ranked zoos in the nation—the Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Garden, a national historic landmark and second oldest zoo in the US. Visit the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center.

It brings to life the importance—and relevance—of struggles for freedom around the world and throughout history and today. Explore how Cincinnati's location put it at the crossroads of the Freedom Trail. At the Cincinnati Museum Center at Union Terminal, stand in wonder under the art deco dome while visiting five great museums in one historic location. Then visit the Cincinnati Art Museum and Contemporary Arts Center. Just in case you have more eclectic taste, stop by the Sign Museum or the Cincinnati Fire Museum. (Cincinnati had the nation's first professional fire department.) There are many beautiful churches and cathedrals to see as well as other historic and natural sites. And for the thrill seekers in the crowd there is Kings Island theme park, just a half hour north, with their newly opened ride—the 301-foot drop tower Windseeker.

(<http://www.cincinnatiusa.com/VisitorInfo/Reasons.asp>)

See you in Cincinnati.

By Gloria Toot



Seven Windows, Louis Comfort Tiffany, about 1902, leaded stained glass. Exhibition organized by In Company with Angels. Photography by Douglas A. Lockard

TWO SPECIAL COMING EVENTS ANNOUNCEMENT

APRIL 10TH AT THE BESTOR'S

APRIL 17 PRESIDENTIAL VISIT

April 10th

We will be holding our worship service at Norman and Jean Bestor's residence at the West Lake Village Retirement Center. Their address is 28520 West Lake Village Drive, Apartment B 225. Phone: 440-871-5545.

Take Clague Road exit off 480 west and go North on Clague to Center Ridge. Left onto Center Ridge (west) to 28520 West Lake Village Drive (probably 10 lights or so). The service will begin at 11am. The Sacrament of Communion will be shared.

Refreshments would be appreciated!

There is lots of parking. Enter the front doors and ask at the desk for directions to the Bestor's apartment.

We hope to see you there!
Ron

April 16 & 17

Rev. Ken Turley, President of Convention, will be coming to Cleveland to meet with our congregation and lead us in a church meeting to vision for the future followed by our **Palm Sunday** worship.

Everyone's participation at this meeting will be appreciated and well worthwhile.

Please make this on your calendar!

HELEN KELLER EDITOR TO SPEAK AT URBANA

This year's Swedenborg lecturer, Dr. Ray Silverman, will be on campus from Monday, March 21 through noon on Friday, March 25. Silverman is an Assistant Professor of Religion and the Chaplain at Bryn Athyn College in Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania. He is the editor/reviser of Helen Keller's *Light in My Darkness*, due out in April. He also has published numerous articles including articles on James Joyce and Henry James.

His public presentation entitled "How I Would Help the World" is about Helen Keller. It will be on Tuesday, March 22, at 7:00. That afternoon he will speak at LoCI.

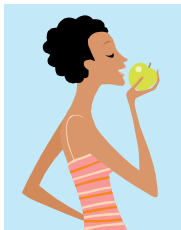
On Monday at noon, we'll have a Brown Bag luncheon. The topic is "I'm Not Religious, I'm Spiritual: The Inner World of Today's College Student."

Cheryl A. Fenno, Ph.D.
Dean

College of Arts and Sciences
Urbana University
579 College Way,
Urbana , OH 43078
800-7URBANA
www.urbana.edu



WOMEN'S RETREAT AT ALMONT, APRIL 15TH-16TH



(Don't worry about the title – you either are or you want to be so all women qualify)

Fri., Apr. 15 to Sat., Apr. 16. Almont New Church Assembly and Retreat

Center

Arrive for supper on Friday (7:00 p.m.). Spend the evening playing games and/or joining in on some music. Saturday breakfast at 8:30 and lunch can be a group effort by chopping veggies for soup or stir fry. We are hoping for nice weather for a walk and an afternoon gathering for a group chat with Rev.

Renee and Rev. Jenn.

Cost: \$35 per person, (Other costs being underwritten by A.N.C.A. and Michigan Association)

R.S.V.P : B.J. Neuenfeldt:

Home ph. 989-875-3127

Cell ph. 989-763-1080

E-mail - neuenfeldt@chartermi.net



CALLING ALL MEN

On Wednesday evenings, our Men's Group has been studying a meaningful and worthwhile journey through the Spiritual Growth Campaign called "Pause, Make Space for God." The program, which consists of seven sessions, has been held at the church every two weeks (remaining dates are March 16th and 30th, April 13th and 27th, and May 11th). Sessions begin promptly at 7:00pm and end at 8:30pm. Those who

want can arrive at 6:00pm and bring their own supper. Refreshments are served after each session.

A workbook, to use in the classes and at



A Prayer for Easter Morning

O Lord Jesus Christ, who upon this day did conquer death and rise from the dead, and who are alive for ever more, help us never to forget your Risen Presence forever with us.

Help us to remember,

That you are with us in every time of perplexity to guide and to direct;

That you are with us in every time of sorrow to comfort and console;

That you are with us in every time of temptation to strengthen and to inspire;

That you are with us in every time of loneliness to cheer and befriend;

That you are with us even in death to bring us to the glory of your side.

Make us to be certain that there is nothing in time or in eternity which can separate us from you, so that in your presence we may meet life with gallantry and death without fear.

You turn our darkness into light, in your light we shall see light.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer. Christ the Lord is risen today!
ALLELUIA

-- Adapted from ThisIsChurch.co



home, is available and can be downloaded from our website. The weekly lessons include scripture, our Swedenborgian teachings, and other background materials, as well as questions for you to reflect upon. Our session time has been spent in discussing the

materials, sharing about our spiritual lives, and re-connecting with God.

This is the first time that a group from Swedenborg Chapel will take part in this program. I can assure you that it will add a new and important dimension to the life of our church.

SPRING TEEN RETREAT, EASTER RALLY IN UK!

In the Spring of 2011, a teen retreat will be hosted in the UK! The retreat, which is called the Easter Rally, will be held at the [Purley-Chase retreat center](#) near Birmingham, England and will run Sunday, April 17 - Thursday, April 21 (which is the week of spring break for many schools out here in the East). Many teens have expressed interest in attending! The tentative plan is to depart from the US and Canada on the afternoon of Friday, April 15, arrive in London early Saturday morning, tour London all day then take the train up to the retreat center Saturday evening. The Swedenborgian Church and the SCYL worked hard to get funding to assist as many teens as possible from the U.S. and Canada to go. Registration deadline was March 21. Scholarships were awarded for up to 6 teens who

could raise \$600 of their own money. Bon Voyage & God's speed!

YOUTH DIRECTOR: Kurt Fekete: 802-345-0169; kfekete@hotmail.com

Visit the SCYL (Swedenborgian Church Youth League): www.youthleague.blogspot.com



AN EMPTY STAGE OR AN EMPTY TOMB?

SCRIPTURE: LUKE 24:1-12 PSALM 118:1-2, 14-24

Good Morning Everyone, and to each and every one of you, Happy Easter! Allow me to start this Easter message by asking you a question. Just what is the celebration of Easter morning all about? I want to begin forming an answer to this question by sharing a true story with you.

In his book, *THERE I GO AGAIN*, Steven Moseley tells about a woman named Anna Pavlova, who was a Russian ballet superstar of the early 1900s. Ms. Pavlova has been acclaimed as having been the greatest ballerina of all time. Her most memorable performance, however, took place after her death.

You see, Anna was to play the role

she made famous, the Dying Swan, at the Apollo Theatre in London. But tragically, she succumbed to pneumonia and died two days before the event.

Even so, on the appointed night, a crowd of her fans packed the Apollo Theatre. The orchestra began playing, the curtain rose, a spotlight flashed through the dark, and the entire audience rose to its feet. They all stood gazing at a pool of light wandering around the stage, accompanied by the orchestral theme. As the light danced and the orchestra played, they remembered Anna Pavlova. In their hearts they could see her on stage, dressed in white with flashing dark eyes. And when the music stopped at last, they gave the vanished

In our imaginations we believe that love is apart from us. Actually there is nothing but love, once we are ready to accept it. When you truly find love, you find yourself.

- Deepak Chopra

Practicing mindfulness enables us to become a real person. When we are real people, we see real people around us, and life is present in all its richness.

-Thich Nhat Hanh

Kindness is an inner desire that makes us want to do good things even if we do not get anything in return. It is the joy of our life to do them. When we do good things from this inner desire, there is kindness in everything we think, say, want and do.

-Emanuel Swedenborg

Be who you are, and say what you feel, because those that mind don't matter and those that matter don't mind.

- Dr. Seuss

Anna a thunderous ovation that echoed on and on in the night. Yes, that assembled crowd celebrated something that they had seen – an empty stage illuminated only by a moving spotlight that made them believe that Anna was still alive.

And having shared this story with you, now let me ask you again, just what are we here to celebrate today? Indeed, I suppose that it can be said that for some Christians, that light on the empty stage could be the reason for our Easter observance. The Lord was crucified, he died as all of us will one day die, and he was laid in a borrowed tomb. But in the hearts of his disciples, and within the hearts of many followers yet today, we want to believe that the light of his presence will shine forever. Yes, some long to celebrate an empty stage.

But I must share something with all of you. This desire does not represent the testimony of the New Testament. Yes, our Lord was crucified. Yes, Jesus did die upon that cross. And yes, his body was laid in a borrowed tomb, and when the women and later his disciples came to visit his tomb on the third day, the stone had been rolled away. But that borrowed tomb was empty, except for the burial cloths that had been wound around his blood-stained body. They were neatly folded and laid to the side. And what does this teach us? He was not there! He was alive! And later we learn of the times prior to the ascension that he met with them, dined with them, reassured them – not as a mere memory dancing in a spotlight, but as a real person. Friends, this is the Easter story! And knowing this, believing in this, we do not gather here today to celebrate an empty stage. Instead, we gather to celebrate an empty tomb!

Is this distinction important? You bet it is. Ultimately, you and I have a choice to make. It is the most important choice we will ever face. It is whether to accept the empty stage or to accept the empty tomb. It all boils down to this. Is our Lord really alive today just as you and I are alive? And, will we experience eternal life in the same way? The way we

answer that question lies at the core of our faith.

Woody Allen was once asked if he hoped that his films would help him achieve immortality. He paused for a moment and then responded, "I don't want to achieve immortality through my work. I want to achieve immortality by not dying."

Easter morning provides us with an opportunity to ponder the same question. After all, which is it? Are we immortal because there are some who will remember and cherish the fact that once we walked this stage of earthly life or are we immortal because God has given us a life that is without end? Again, are we here to celebrate an empty stage or empty tomb?

Although the following two words are seldom proclaimed from a Swedenborgian pulpit, I am going to share them with you today. I believe. Yes, I believe that we are gathered here today to celebrate the fact, the solid, undeniable truth that there was an empty tomb. And I say this without hesitation or reluctance or uneasiness. And I can do so because I relate directly with a proclamation made by our great Seer, Emanuel Swedenborg as he over and over again testified to the



Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough, and more. It turns denial into acceptance, chaos to order, confusion to clarity. It can turn a meal into a feast, a house into a home, a stranger into a friend. Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today and creates a vision for tomorrow.

-Melody Beattie

reality of that empty tomb and the fact that eternal life is real – as real as real gets. And he did so through those words that are familiar to us in this church. “I have heard. I have seen. I have felt!” And like him, I can say the same things.

Two experiences come to my mind.

The first was when following my grandfather’s death, my grandmother wrote and asked if I might stop by to see her on my next trip home. I did as she asked, and as I sat beside her chair, I listened as she told me that she felt grandpa with her. I smiled as I listened, and mentioned that of course she could feel him – after all, they had been married for over 67 years and that his spirit still lived. “That’s not what I mean,” she said. “I feel him touch my hand as though he is sitting right there in that chair.” And with those words I smiled even more. My grandmother did not lie, you see. She always spoke the truth. And she went on to explain to me that she had told several members of the family of those experiences, and that she knew that they thought she was going senile. She asked me what I thought. And I looked at her, held her hand, and said that she was experiencing proof of eternal life.



The second proof that I accept was given when after Val’s father’s death, her mother, who was dying, was under the care of hospice workers. One nurse gave us a suggestion that we play some of her favorite music. And so, for what seemed like endless hours, the house was filled with the music of the Mills Brothers. One night I sat by her side as those crooners made their way down the old mill stream. Above her bed hung a large portrait of the two of them in earlier, happy times. And as I sat there looking at it, an amazing thing happened. Val’s father’s lips started to move as he

sang along. He was there by her side. And so real was that presence that it was undeniable. And I speak with complete conviction when I say to you that I believe. Yes, I too have heard and seen and felt. And this leads me here today to celebrate that empty tomb. Death has been overcome. Life is eternal.

That’s what Easter is all about. Pardon the grammar, but it is taking what we are and making that what we was. It is about giving us new life ” today and forever.

Anna Pavlova danced in the hearts of the people who loved her and admired her. The resurrection of Jesus was something more. He is alive. Let us celebrate that reality. And let us never forget, that more than an empty stage, his was an empty tomb. Through remembering this glorious truth, may the joy of Easter be real to you all, Amen.

O God of new Life, new growth, and new beginnings, today we come before you, asking that each of us come to see our lives as holy ground, soil in which your love and goodness can be planted, take root and grow.

And knowing this, help us to view even our thoughts and actions as seeds that you tend. For you are the Gardener of Life, and you want to nurture within each of us the seeds of love and caring. So this day, help us to be open to you, reaching out to you for the warmth and light and truth that will help us become all that you intent for us to be.

SWEDENBORG CHAPEL

4815 Broadview Road
Cleveland, OH 44109

Phone: 216-351-8093

Email: swedenborgchapel@att.net

Website: www.swedenborgchapelcleveland.org

Editor: Val Brugler



A MINISTRY OF THE
SWEDENBORGIAN CHURCH

Even the smallest moment of our lives involves a series of consequences extending to eternity. Each moment is like a new beginning to those that follow.

-Emanuel Swedenborg

UPCOMING SERMON THEMES

Mar 6.....Worship Service led by Rev. Ronald Brugler

"When the Clouds Spoke" This morning as we observe "Transfiguration Sunday" we will be reminded of the event behind this day, the impact it had upon the Lord's identity, and how the Lord is yet today working to change each of us in remarkable ways

Mar 13.....Worship Service led by Rev. Ronald Brugler

"And When You Pray" One goal of the Lenten Season is that we each set aside time to draw nearer to God in times of reflection and prayer. But this is not always an easy thing to do. In fact, the disciples themselves had to ask Jesus to teach them how to pray! Today we will learn what insights he offered them in response.

Mar 20.....Worship Service led by Rev. Ronald Brugler

"Born Again and Again and Again" Nicodemus went to Jesus and asked what he needed to do in order to be "born again." Jesus' answer seemed to trouble him. What do we believe about this basic Christian doctrine and how do we apply it to our spiritual growth?

Mar 27.....Worship Service led by Rev. Todd Beiswenger

Apr 3.....Worship Service

"Judging Appearances" We make many judgments about people in various ways - by their actions, their beliefs, and even the way they appear to us. Today we will use an event from Israel's history to explore what criteria the Lord prefers for us to use.

Apr 10Worship Service led by Rev. Ronald Brugler At the West Lake Village Retirement Center

"Experiencing the Miracle" The experience of Ezekiel in the Valley of Dry Bones holds an important message for us to ponder during the Lenten Season. What is this message? Join us for today's sermon and find out!!!

Apr 17Worship Service led by Rev. Ken Turley

Palm Sunday—Rev. Ken Turley will lead us in a church meeting to vision for the future followed by worship .

Apr 24Worship Service Easter

May 1Worship Service

"Behind Locked Doors" Exploring the themes of fear and doubt that Thomas elicits.

May 8Worship Service

"The Walk and the Talk" What the Road to Emmaus teaches us about trusting despite feelings of anxiety and fear.

May 29Worship Service led by General Church Minister

Discussion Group: 10 am ♦ Worship Service: 11 am ♦ Board Meeting: 9 am once a month