

COMPASSIONATE LIVING

new church | **connection**

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How can I respond
to painful things
on the news? p. 14

We are each unique
expressions of love
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6 words
of encouragement
from readers

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New Church Connection explores the connection between religion and life. Every issue features content that highlights the personal nature of spirituality, providing applicable ideas to support your journey with insights from the New Church (Swedenborgian) faith.

in this issue: Compassionate Living

Connecting you with a New Christian spirituality for everyday life

new church connection

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Cover Photo by: istock

Everything in the created universe is a vessel for the divine love and wisdom of the Divine-Human One.

—Divine Love and Wisdom 55

Finding a compassionate response to life's events can be challenging. And yet compassion is a far more transformative response than the more reflexive reactions of fear, worry, denial, and anger. These responses are part of the journey, and yet compassion is waiting for us, hidden behind the shock of it all.

Marianne Williamson describes every moment as either "love or a call to love." When I hold this in my mind, in my heart, my outlook is transformed.

What would it look like for each one of us to respond to other's actions as a call to love? When you or a loved one receives bad news, can you hold others with that same experience in compassion? And maybe even yourself? When you experience a loss, can you show gentleness to your grieving self? The same kindness you would show another in your place? When a loved one is in pain, and you don't know what to say, can you be there anyway? What does it feel like to open to the compassionate presence of the Creator and let that love flow through you? When you see the unbearable woes of others in the news, can you hold them in deep love and compassion and pray for the end of their suffering, and open to the possibilities of how you can help?

"For I the Lord your God will hold your right hand, saying to you 'Fear not; I will help you'." Isaiah 41:13

When despairing events occur, there is a part of me, like many others, who thinks how can a loving God permit this? And yet, I remember that I'm part of the plan too...and my response can be part of God's loving presence in the world.

The content in this issue unpacks these themes, and invites you to step into living compassionately.

On the path with you,

Bronwen Henry, General Church Outreach



Changing Lives

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When *Janice* happened upon a beautiful church building one Sunday, she didn't expect to find a church she could call "home." But she's glad she did!

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Exploring questions about people's suffering, caring and supporting for those we love, and the appearance of anger from God.

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New Church Connection readers were challenged to share a mantra or phrase that helps them through times of struggle, in about 6 words.

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So often we can feel weighed down by horrible events and misfortunes in the world. *Judah Synnestvedt* shares with us ways we can deal with these terrible situations around us.

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Do you know why you were created? *Ethan McCardell* points out that we are each an articulation of God's love, and implores us to treat each other as such.

Small Group

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Gather a group together to explore this 5-week study that looks at a variety of topics seen in a series by the Swedenborg Foundation on YouTube.

He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.
—Revelation 21:4

What's Next?
Inviting God into Your Life
Loneliness
Jesus Is God
Death and Dying
Submit your topic ideas online.

A Left Turn That Changed Everything

By Janice Shihadeh, as told to Chelsea Odhner



photo by ALISON COLE

Janice stumbled upon a New Church building one Sunday and began attending services. Then she found community she'd been lacking, through joining small groups, and found a church home for herself and her family.



photo by ANITA HALTERMAN

The Bryn Athyn Cathedral in Northeast Philadelphia.

Janice Shihadeh comes from a Catholic upbringing. She is the mother of a blended family of ten, six girls and four boys currently ranging in age from eighteen to thirty-five. Growing up, they would attend services at a local Catholic church on holidays mostly, and Janice would talk to her children about God, believing there was a higher 'something' in the world but not knowing exactly what. She did not feel satisfied by the idea of God presented to her in church and during her formative years in Catholic schools. Her dissatisfaction was compounded by the lack of community she felt in the local church.

Her youngest felt these deficiencies as well and would not be content. "Really it was [my daughter] Jackie, she's the prompt. She's the one that really wanted to find some place. It's because of her that we found the church." In response to her daughter's urging and in support of her determination, Janice would take Jackie, then sixteen, and "every Sunday, we would go out and look for a church; maybe go and spend a week or two at a congregation, looking for a place."

It was on one of these Sunday church-hunts that their path would take an unexpected turn—literally. On route to their church of choice for that week,

The teachings make sense to her and are an affirmation of what she's inwardly felt to be true all along.

they all of a sudden found themselves in the center of a high-intensity police car chase. "We could not break away." There were, "something like seventeen police cars, three townships, and I could not get away. The van [the police were chasing] was in front of me and I was petrified." Finally they had an opportunity to make a left-hand turn, onto Huntingdon Pike. Now no longer on course to the church they had planned to attend, they followed the road up through Huntingdon Valley into Bryn Athyn. They went with their first impressions, passing by several churches, until they came upon the Bryn Athyn Cathedral. "We saw the Cathedral and we were like, 'That's beautiful!'"



photos by ANITA HALTERMAN

Making another left-turn, they decided to check it out, if only for nothing more than using the restroom and having a

Janice has found the small groups to fill a wide scope of spiritual needs, intellectual and emotional.

moment to recover from the very upsetting last half hour. The service had ended, but there were still people gathered in the great hall. "We started to talk to people and they were really nice. They said, 'Why don't you come next week?' And they gave us a little hand-out."

They did come back the next week, and the week after that, and several weeks following. And it was through the people they met at these church services that Jackie found out about and decid-

She has a clear path to follow now in her life—a life committed to meaningful service.

ed to attend the Academy of the New Church Secondary Schools. She would come home and fill her mother in on everything she was learning. Janice would ask her questions, "I don't understand this. What does this mean?" They studied *Heaven and Hell* in tenth grade. "It was really neat."

They began attending services at New Church Live. They discovered small groups and the Journey program. Being a little shy, Janice felt wary of joining a small group, "But I wanted to learn more about the religion itself and I figured this would be a conduit to that." She decided to join a group for that year's Journey program. That first year laid the foundation for what would become a deep appreciation and belief in the power of small groups.

Janice has found the small groups to fill a wide scope of spiritual needs, intellectual and emotional. She can bring her theological questions to the group, and people there who are well versed in Swedenborg's works can help her understand. The group has become a strong community of support for spiritual growth that for her is invaluable. "Over a year they get to know you, good and bad, and they still like you and they

still want you to be there. They're still trying to support you and hold you in prayer when you need it." She finds it so powerful "to be able to trust people enough with your soul, with your flaws, that they're not going to judge you."

Every time she goes to church she feels the message is relevant to her life, but it's the small group that "gives you a structure in order to be able to work on yourself. Without that structure, I

But I wanted to learn more about the religion itself.

don't know that I would be doing the work. I truly love that about the small groups."

Although she was hesitant at first, she is really glad she made the investment. "I was intimidated the first time. I was a little scared. I didn't know what I was going to be asked to do. But once you get there, you feel the love and support of everyone else. You feel really safe." ●

What Is Your Story?
How has your life been impacted by living New Christian spirituality?
Send us your story.
newchurchconnection
@newchurch.org

On God rests
my salvation and my glory;
my mighty rock,
my refuge is God.

—Psalm 62:7

Life is full of QUESTIONS



photo by KAT GATTI

When we come across hardships in our lives or in the lives of those we love, we quite often question God's role in difficult times.

Q WHY DOES IT SEEM SOME PEOPLE SUFFER MORE THAN OTHERS?

a Life is not fair. Some people get dealt a more challenging hand than others. When I consider this reality in the world, I ask myself two questions: *How can I transform my personal suffering?* and *How can I help alleviate suffering?* I am comforted when I remember that the Lord's love is equally

present and available to us all no matter our external circumstances.

"He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous."
—Matthew 5:45

"Every created thing is by nature a recipient of God."

—Divine Love and Wisdom 56

Response by Bronwen Mayer Henry,
New Church Connection Editor

Q HOW CAN I HELP OTHERS THROUGH A DIFFICULT POINT IN THEIR LIFE?

a One way to help them is through the skill of showing empathy. Having empathy is one thing. Showing it is another. Showing it takes listening as well as speaking in ways that ensure that the other person feels understood.

"Comfort, comfort my people, says your God"

—Isaiah 40:1

Response by Nathan Gladish, Pastor at Sunrise Chapel in Tucson, AZ

Q SOMEONE I CARE ABOUT IS REALLY STUCK IN A RUT. HOW CAN I HELP THEM?

a It's the friend who complains about his job, yet never sends out his resume. It's the parent obsessed with her health issues who won't see a doctor. It's the woman who stays with an abusive partner. These are people who we love, yet who seem to be stuck in a rut. How can we convince them to simply listen to us for a change? Maybe it's time for us to change our question. Maybe instead of asking how we can change them, we need to ask ourselves, *How can I break free from the desire to control this person?*

Response by Sasha Silverman, Content Developer of New Church Journey Programs

Q HOW IS GOD'S ANGER DIFFERENT THAN OURS?

a There's a great conflict in the Bible between statements that the Almighty is the "God of Love," and images of an angry God smiting disobedient people. But this isn't actual anger, it just looks like anger to us, "Hence it is that the zeal of the Lord, which in itself is love and compassion, appears to them as anger" (*Secrets of Heaven* 8875). It's similar to a parent's love for her child. If the child were to run into the street, she would likely shout and appear angry but is really trying to protect him. What is perceived as anger is really just the Lord bursting with love for us and sad that we are choosing a path that leads further from Him. It is zeal, which comes from love, not anger like the emotion we finite beings experience.

Response by Michelle Chapin, Assistant Editor of New Church Connection

SHARE YOUR QUESTIONS ABOUT LIFE.

Email questions@newchurch.org
Mention "New Church Connection".

How Does Divine Providence Work?

Divine providence is over all, that is, it is present within the smallest details of all, and that people in the stream of providence are being carried along constantly towards happier things, whatever appearance the means may present. Those in the stream of providence are people who trust in the Divine and ascribe everything to Him. But those not in the stream of providence are people who trust in themselves alone and attribute everything to themselves. Theirs is a contrary outlook, for they take providence away from the Divine and claim it as their own. It should be recognized also that to the extent that you are in the stream of providence you are in a state of peace; and to the extent that you are in a state of peace by virtue of the good of faith, you are in Divine providence. These alone know and believe that the Lord's Divine providence resides within every single thing, indeed within the smallest details of all, as well as that Divine providence has what is eternal in view.

—*Secrets of Heaven* 8478:4

Love Anyway.

A poem by Bronwen Henry.

You are afraid.
Love anyway.

You are alone.
Love anyway.

You don't know how things will turn out.
Love anyway.

There is no burden: financial, health,
future or past so great that you can't
Love anyway.

There is no burden lightened
by your fear or worry.
Love anyway.

There is no relationship healed by anger,
resentment, withdrawal.
Love anyway.

You are not sure what to do or say.
Love anyway.

Even here-in this place of distress.
Even now-in this time of uncertainty.

You, my friend, you...are being called to
Love anyway.

(LOVE ANYWAY.)

How could I see
this differently?
-Sasha Silverman

Lord, let me
focus on you.
-Midje Kerr

Share
your Mantra
on our Facebook page!
[Facebook.com/New-
ChurchConnection](https://www.facebook.com/NewChurchConnection)

Lord, forgive
me for I have
sinned, please
make the evil
spirits go away.
-Garret Horigan

The Lord
has a plan.
-Karen Jorgenson
Cooper

Forgive anyway.
Love anyway.
Hope anyway.
-Bronwen Henry

Lord, Thy Will
(not mine) be
done.
-Doris Delaney

Lord, I can not,
do thou.
-Sandra Abele

Dealing with Overwhelm in about 6 Words

On Facebook, readers of *New Church Connection* were asked "What mantra or phrase of about 6 words helps you navigate through difficult times?"

Here's what they came up with.

"For I have over-
come the world."
-John 16:33
-Nancy Horigan

Thy will be
done.
-Brian David

This is Temporary.
But God isn't.
-Michelle Chapin

Help me, Lord,
Sustain me, Lord.
-Nancy A. Ferguson

GOD is GOD.
-Peter Oboko

Believe in God,
He will provide.
-Kristina Boyesen

Nothing takes
the Lord by
surprise.
-Chara Daum

"I will be with
you always."
-Matthew 28:20
-Mac Frazier

Peace. Patience.
Purpose. Planning.
Persistence. Passing.
-Matthew Kinsey

"Do not be
afraid, only
believe."
-Mark 5:36
-Ethan McCardell

"Be still and know
that He is God."
-Psalm 46:10
-Joralyn Echols

Believe in God,
He will provide.
-Nancy Wyncoll

"Fear not, I will
help you."
-Isaiah 41:13
-Chelsea Rose Odhner

"Lord I believe,
help my unbelief."
-Mark 9:24
-Rachel Buss, Louise
Loria Hanel

"I take refuge in
you Lord."
-Psalm 5:11
-Michael P. Gaughan

Is It All in God's Hands?

“Each time I turn on the news, it’s full of stories of awful things happening to people, and it’s really hard to handle. How can I be compassionate to those suffering without feeling overwhelmed myself?”

by Judah Synnestvedt

Whether it’s a local kidnapping, financial hardship, or a refugee crisis in the Middle East, our fellow human beings are suffering all the time. To avoid feeling overwhelmed,

some people ignore suffering. Others become cynical, their pessimism allowing them to be right when bad things happen. Others decide to stop caring at all. For people who do care, though, the feeling

of helplessness can be overpowering. The most effective way I’ve found of remaining compassionate without feeling overwhelmed is exploring this question, “What is my role in Divine providence?”

One way people respond to tragedies and human evil is to invoke Divine providence with the phrase, “It’s all in God’s hands.” After all, religious people throughout history have believed that God influences human events. It can be comforting to know that even when chaos reigns, God is watching out for us. And I believe it’s true. But I’m not entirely comfortable with people seeing evil and saying, “It’s all in God’s hands.” I want to challenge this response, not because I think God is absent, but because there often seems to be missing a crucial piece: you.

When people say, “it’s all in God’s hands,” I wonder if they’re really saying, “Bad things just happen, and I can’t do anything about it.” Not all people who cite



photo by CAROLINE KLINE



photo by SUSAN ROTH

providence are being cynical, of course, but let’s make sure we don’t use God as an excuse for throwing up our hands or throwing in the towel. Leaving problems to God in this world may be akin to believing that our deeds have no relation to our life in the next world: if we can’t do anything to counter the force of evil, then how can God fairly expect us to do anything at all? In the movie *Gladiator*, the hero Maximus says, “What we do in life echoes in eternity!” This is a central theme of many faiths and a key principle for the New Church: “Everyone knows that religion consists in doing good, and that every one will be judged according to his deeds” (*Doctrine of Life* 31). What we do makes a difference.

But none of us is Superman—we can’t fix everything! Consider an especially overwhelming current event: the massive refugee crisis in the Middle East. You may or may not be aware that hundreds of thousands of Syrians have fled their country with little hope of return. Pause for a moment to consider the terrible impact on ordinary people—people like you and me, “How can I do anything about that?” you might

It is all in God's hands, but those Divine hands are guiding human ones.



Photo by ISTOCK

wonder. And it’s true, we may have no ability to directly help those refugees from Syria. Instead, the Lord asks us to do what we can with what we have, as the parable of the talents demonstrates: “And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability” (Matt. 25.15). The Lord gives skills;

it’s up to us to use them as we see fit. But which of the world’s problems should we address? To find our role in Divine providence, we need to look inward.

The Lord provides a simple action model: since everything good is from Him, all we need to do is remove what is hateful, and then His love will fill the extra room in our hearts. Far from fixing the world’s problems by Himself, the Lord empowers us to conquer evil from the inside out, “Every person by nature is such that he can shun evils, as of himself,



photo by CAROLINE KLINE

from the Lord's power, if he implores it; and what he does after this, is good from the Lord" (Doctrine of Life 31). Feeling overwhelmed by the troubles



photo by CAROLINE KLINE

of the world? First stop being part of the problem: take a look at yourself and cooperate with the Lord in removing destructive habits that sneak into your own life.

And then be part of the solution. It

might be small—just doing your existing work with integrity will have a ripple effect on tragedies across the globe. Or, your skills and passion might take you further afield, maybe even into a refugee camp. Either way, as we turn away from the darkness inside ourselves we will invite the hands of God to guide us. It is all in God's hands, but those Divine hands are guiding human ones. Let us pray that over time more and more people will respond to the Lord's call, will embrace His handiwork. Whether or not we answer the call is up to us. This is a key part of Divine providence—the Lord inspires us to clean up our own acts so that we can be of use to each other. We will still grieve when we see suffering, but let's use that sorrow to discover what strand of the Lord's love we especially resonate with. Let's peel back the layers to discover the talents He's given us, first by removing the

barriers that hell throws up in our way, and then by completing that truth, that it's all in God's hands—by being part of them. •

Just doing your existing work with integrity will have a ripple effect on tragedies across the globe.



photo by CAROLINE KLINE



Judah Synnestvedt is training to become a minister for the New Church. He is married with two children and lives in Bryn Athyn, PA.

Unique Expressions of God's Love



photo by NORA WOODFORD

photo by CARLOS MIGUEL

Adapted from a talk by Ethan McCardell

Have you ever been so appreciative of a quality in another person that you had to tell them immediately because you felt you might burst otherwise? Or have you ever participated in an group exercise of naming characteristics you love in each other? I recently led an exercise in a church service where I called on someone in the room, and everyone else in the room spoke of the positive qualities they saw in that person. It was

a powerful, even sacred experience. These are amazing experiences, because something holy happens in those moments of expressing love. Something changes as we focus our love for one another and speak it aloud.

One of the things that has been striking me profoundly in the last couple years is what the New Church tells us about love. A beautiful teaching is that love, by its very definition can't keep itself to

itself, it has to be shared.

“The essence of love is loving others than oneself, wishing to be one with them and devoting oneself to their happiness.... The third essential of God’s love, to devote Himself to the happiness of others, is to be recognized in everlasting life, which is blessedness, bliss and happiness without end, which He gives to those who receive His love into themselves. For God, just as He is Love itself, is also blessedness itself. For every love breathes out an aura of joy from itself, and the Divine Love breathes out the very height of blessedness, bliss and happiness forever” (*True Christianity* 43).

Love cannot exist unless there is something that it loves; it needs a receptacle.

“The hallmark of love is not loving ourselves but loving others and being united to them through love. The hallmark of love is also being loved by others because this is how we are united. Truly, the essence of all love is to be found in union, in the life of love that we call joy, delight, pleasure, sweetness, blessedness, contentment, and happiness. The essence of love is that what is ours should belong to someone else. Feeling the joy of someone else as joy within ourselves—that is loving” (*Divine Love and Wisdom* 47).

God is love, and His love is the reason we were created. So you were breathed into existence out of God’s love, for the purpose of God’s love. That is the

reason you exist, so that God can love you. What an amazing thought! And if any of us were not here, there would be some unique expression of God’s love which we are each an instrument of in someone else’s life that would be missing from their life and from the world. That is an incredible thing to think about. Each of our lives is meant to be an instrument of that love which would be missing in other people’s lives without us.

It is up to us to share that love, share that expression of the Lord that we were created for, with others. We need to carry that same conviction into our interactions with all the people in our lives so that when we use the words “God is Love,” and when we talk about how the Lord loves all His children, everyone we come in contact with will come to really believe it. We need to make sure people feel and trust that our love for them is coming from a heartfelt conviction and that we care more about them than we do about

Personal Challenge

Think of someone you love, feel neutral about, or are in conflict with. Speak/write the positive qualities you see in them. Hold them in a loving place in your heart. Observe any shifts that occur within you as you do this.

what’s comfortable for us. Not just for our friends, but everyone around us, on both an individual and a global scale.

The Lord has called each of us by name and is lifting us up to new lives. This is where all hope comes from. ●

But now, O Jacob, listen to the Lord who created you. O Israel, the one who formed you says,

“Do not be afraid, for I have ransomed you. I have called you by name; you are mine. When you go through deep waters, I will be with you. When you go through rivers of difficulty, you will not drown. When you walk through the fire of oppression, you will not be burned up; the flames will not consume you. For I am the Lord, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior. I gave Egypt as a ransom for your freedom; I gave Ethiopia and Seba in your place. Others were given in exchange for you. I traded their lives for yours because you are precious to me. You are honored, and I love you. “Do not be afraid, for I am with you. I will gather you and your children from east and west. I will say to the north and south, ‘Bring my sons and daughters back to Israel from the distant corners of the earth. Bring all who claim me as their God, for I have made them for my glory. It was I who created them.’”

-Isaiah 43:1-7(NLT)



page 19 photos by RANDY VAN ZYVERDEN



Ethan McCardell is the pastor at the Light for Life New Church in Seattle, WA. Visit www.lightforlifewest.org for more information

Have You Ever Thought About...

Use these 5 videos to guide a small group discussion about questions we often have.

Videos were developed by the Swedenborg Foundation and are found on [YouTube.com/OffTheLeftEye](https://www.youtube.com/OffTheLeftEye)

Visit us online for the full version and links to these videos!
www.newchurchconnection.org



Week One How Do I Choose the Right Thoughts?

VIDEO Watch “Your Brain is Spamming You” (bit.ly/BrainSpam)

READINGS “If everything we think is flowing in from others, it does seem as though the blame rests on those others as the source. However, the real blame rests on us who accept what is flowing in, since we accept it as our own.” (*Divine Providence* 294)

DISCUSSION How can we choose to honor the useful thoughts and reject the harmful ones? Describe a time you had a thought “pop” into your head that really helped you through a situation.

TASK What is a recurring negative thought you often have about yourself or another person? Each time you have that thought, recite the Lord’s Prayer, a quotation from scripture, or this phrase, “I choose not to listen to this thought.”



Week Two How Can I Help Make a Better World?

VIDEO Watch “What if life is actually...” (bit.ly/WhatIfLife)

READINGS “Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God.” (Matthew 5:5-7)

DISCUSSION What if love was the constant focus of everyone in the world? What if there’s no such thing as death?
TASK Think of a virtue you’d like to work on having. When you’re frustrated or find yourself in a difficult situation, ask yourself “What if I were more _____ right now?”



Week Three What Is True Happiness?

VIDEO Watch “The Wrong Question to Ask” (bit.ly/AskingWrongQuestion)

READINGS “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” (Matthew 6:19-21)

DISCUSSION God loves us and wants us each to be happy. Then why aren’t we all automatically happy? What is a talent you have that brings you joy?

TASK Often when we pray, we are asking God for something. Instead of asking, take time to thank Him for things in your life.



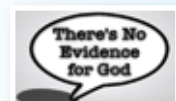
Week Four Is There Really a God?

VIDEO Watch “Evidence of God? What’s that on your head?” (bit.ly/EvidenceOf-God)

READINGS “The notion that there is one God flows into our souls from God because everything that is divine, as a whole and in every detail, is God. And because everything that is divine is integrated into a unity, it cannot help but inspire in us the idea of one God.” (*True Christianity* 8.2)

DISCUSSION When was a time you felt evidence of the presence of the Lord in your life? What are some ideas about God that you struggle with?

TASK During the week, notice moments when you really feel God, and times when you feel the lack of Him. How do these moments strengthen or weaken your belief in God?



Week Five What Can I Contribute to Humanity?

VIDEO Watch “You Are the Lungs” (bit.ly/YouAreLungs)

READINGS “As there is a correspondence of all things of the body with all things of the mind in a person, there is primarily a correspondence with the heart and lungs. This correspondence is universal, because the heart reigns throughout the body and also the lungs... for as the heart corresponds to the love or will, so the breath or spirit of the lungs, which is the respiration, corresponds to the understanding.” (*Divine Wisdom* 6)

DISCUSSION What does it mean to be human?

TASK Take 5 minutes each day for a breathing meditation. Clear your mind and focus on your breathing. Listen to the sound of it, notice the feel of it. When a thought enter your mind, let it go. Allowing ourselves to be quiet gives God the chance to communicate with us.



Congregations around the world

The New Church is a new Christianity that provides a clear path to eternal happiness and addresses many questions about God, love, and life after death. The teachings are immediately practical and deeply spiritual. The New Church is based on the teachings of the Bible as illuminated in the Writings of Emanuel Swedenborg.

The New Church (General Church of the New Jerusalem) has congregations around the world. All people are welcome to join in worship and participate in the life and community of the church.

photo by CALVIN ODHNER



photo by CALVIN ODHNER



FOCUS ON THE NEW CHURCH IN Atlanta, Georgia, USA

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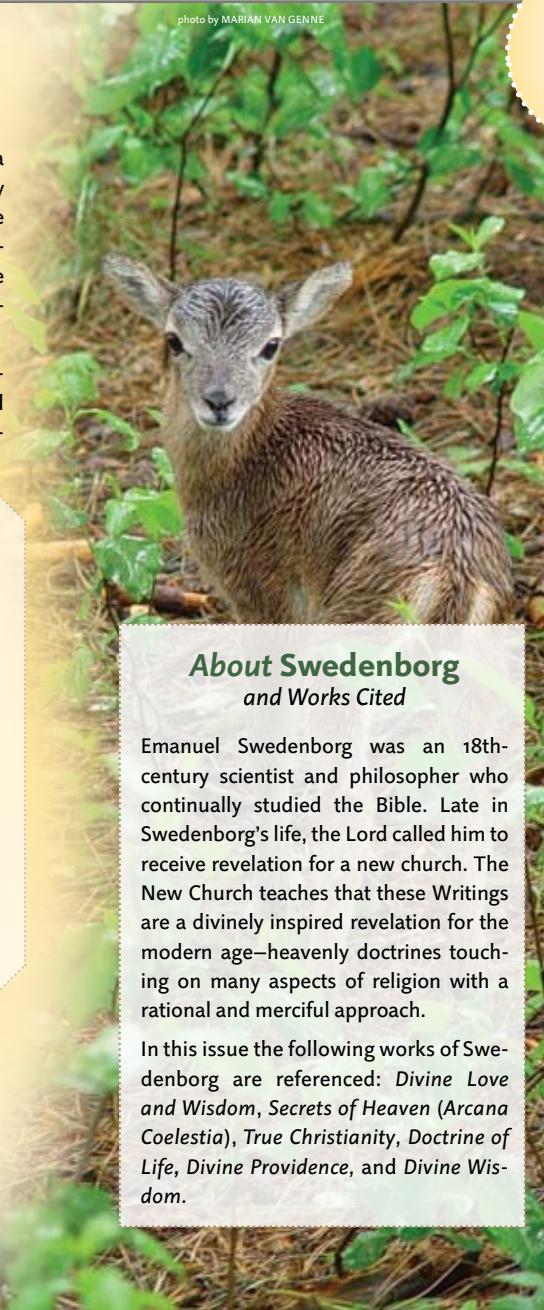
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photo by MARIAN VAN GENNE



New Church TEACHINGS

The perspectives in this magazine are based on the teachings of the New Church found in the Old and New Testaments and the Theological Writings of Emanuel Swedenborg.

Core teachings of the New Church:

- There is one loving, personal God, and He is the Lord Jesus Christ. His providence is powerful and unending. God guides each person's spiritual path, from the smallest things up to the biggest things, and His angels are with us every moment.
- The Old and New Testaments have a deeper meaning, revealed in the Writings of Emanuel Swedenborg, which help people lead happy and useful lives to eternity.
- Spiritual growth is a process. Through recognizing our sins, praying, shunning evils, and living a new life, we are transformed and united more closely with God.
- All religions have goodness in them. People of every faith are saved if they live sincerely according to their religion.
- Each of us continues life as a complete person immediately after the death of the body.
- While people are free to choose to live in hell, God wants everyone to live with Him in heaven to eternity.
- Marriage can last forever, for God blesses people with a special love in marriage that goes on after death, even to eternity.

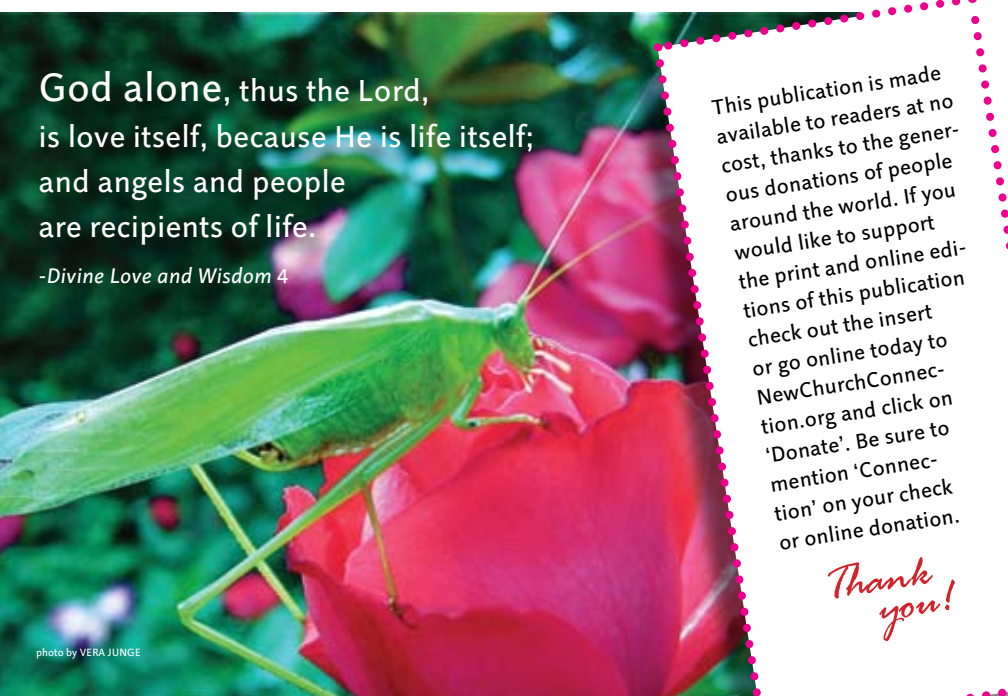
About Swedenborg and Works Cited

Emanuel Swedenborg was an 18th-century scientist and philosopher who continually studied the Bible. Late in Swedenborg's life, the Lord called him to receive revelation for a new church. The New Church teaches that these Writings are a divinely inspired revelation for the modern age—heavenly doctrines touching on many aspects of religion with a rational and merciful approach.

In this issue the following works of Swedenborg are referenced: *Divine Love and Wisdom*, *Secrets of Heaven (Arcana Coelestia)*, *True Christianity*, *Doctrine of Life*, *Divine Providence*, and *Divine Wisdom*.

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God alone, thus the Lord,
is love itself, because He is life itself;
and angels and people
are recipients of life.

-Divine Love and Wisdom 4

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