

ZOOM: Friday, April 4, 6 PM Central
The Many Returns of Asgard: Swedenborgian Interpretation of Norse Mythology / Dell Rose, Swedenborg Library

In the late 19th century, there was a fiery passion for all things Norse. William Morris, of Arts and Crafts fame, wrote a translation of *Njal's Saga* (1861), and there was an explosion of interest in Icelandic culture and traditions. Followers of esoteric movements, like Theosophy, were also keen on discovering the spiritual lessons from Norse mythology and its symbolism, and Swedenborgians were also engaged in this pursuit. James J.G. Wilkinson's book *The Book Of Edda Called Voluspa: A Study In Its Scriptural And Spiritual Correspondences* (1897), delivered one of the most ingenious interpretations of the Norse tradition and is a powerful example of the Swedenborgian approach to comparative religion. Delivered from Iceland.

Zoom Info: Meeting Room 558 403 3057 / Password: Swedenborg
Time: 6 PM Central, Friday, April 4, 2025

Dell Rose serves as the Program Director at the Swedenborg Library in Chicago. He holds the position of Swedenborg Doctoral Fellow with the Swedenborg Society in the United Kingdom, and is a doctoral candidate at the Centre for the History of Hermetic Philosophy and Related Currents at the Universitet van Amsterdam.



ZOOM: Thursday, April 17, 6 PM Central
Tenrikyo: The Japanese Religion of World Renewal with Rev. Kuni Fumioka

Yonaoshi movements, meaning religions of "world renewal" were exceptionally important in Japanese religions from the 17th century to today. One of the most important, and largest, is the religion of Tenrikyo.

Tenrikyo, founded by Miki Nakayama, emphasizes joyful living, the importance of helping others, and the belief in a single, all-encompassing God known as Tenri-O-no-Mikoto. Through heartfelt devotion and acts of kindness, followers aim to cultivate a world of harmony and compassion. In this program, we'll explore Tenrikyo's rich history, core beliefs, and unique practices, offering insight into how its teachings inspire millions around the world to lead lives of purpose and positivity. Join Rev. Kuni Fumioka and the Swedenborg library Chicago on this enlightening journey into the heart of Tenrikyo!

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Time: 6 PM Central, Friday, April 17, 2025



Rev. Kuni Fumioka is the senior minister of the Tenrikyo Church Midwest in Des Plaines, Illinois. He is actively engaged in cross-cultural dialogue and expanding awareness about Japanese religious culture and spirituality.

Zoom: Thursday April 24, 6 PM Central
Paul Amongst The Gentiles: Strategies of Legitimization in the Work of Paul of Tarsus / with Dell Rose

Accounting for more than half of the New Testament, the letters of Paul remain some of the most influential writings ever. Yet their familiarity also masks their strangeness.

In this program we will discuss Paul and his rhetorical strategies, examining their context in the first century world, focusing especially on other Hellenic groups who were likewise seeking validation and converts.

We will examine Paul's relationship with the mystery religions of the ancient world, the influence of monotheistic practitioners of Greek and Roman religions, and his relation to the literature of oracles. Much of Paul's theology shares a common ancestry with other Hellenic groups, yet due to the prevalence of Christianity in Western history, this has mostly been forgotten.

As Christianity's most important articulator, we must seek to understand both Paul's motivations and the reasons for his lasting success. (Suggested reading: Matthew Sharp. *Divination and Philosophy in the Letters of Saint Paul*. 2024)

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Time: 6 PM Central, Thursday, April 24

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ZOOM: Saturday, April 26, 6 PM Central
Zoom and in-person in the Swedenborg Library

The Missouri Platonist—Thomas Moore Johnson with special guest Dr. Vadim Putzu, Missouri State University

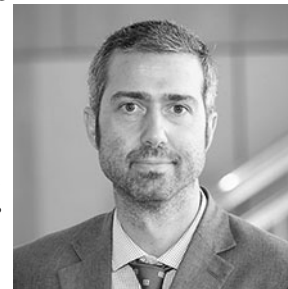
"The Missouri Platonist," Thomas Moore Johnson amassed one of the largest philosophical libraries in the Midwest, the Bibliotheca Platonica, in Osceola Missouri and was a major thinker in the transmission of hermetic philosophy in America and around the world. Johnson had extensive correspondence with members of the Theosophical Society, and with members of the Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor, which connected his small community with the wider intellectual world of the 19th century. Johnson was also an interesting node in the distribution of Swedenborg's works throughout the central United States. Professor Putzu will help us navigate these fascinating intellectual waters. Join us in the Library, or via Zoom:

Zoom Info: Meeting Room 558 403 3057

Password: Swedenborg

Time: 6 PM Central, Saturday, April 26

Dr. Vadim Putzu is Associate Professor in the Languages, Cultures, and Religions Department of Missouri State University.



Zoom: Wednesday, May 7, 6 PM Central
A New Swedenborg: Deguchi Onisaburo, Swedenborg and the Quest for a New Kingdom in Manchuria with Dell Rose, Via Zoom, and in the Swedenborg Library

"Emanuel Swedenborg was the greatest theologian of all time," wrote Deguchi Saburo, the flamboyant co-founder of the Omoto faith and one of the most significant figures in modern Japanese history. Onisaburo was a promoter of a form of 'Shinto Universalism,' and he sought to inform the world of the realm of the gods. When he began to read Swedenborg in the late 1890s, Onisaburo



found a kindred spirit in the Swedish seer, and utilized many of Swedenborg's concepts in defining his own cosmology. However, calling Swedenborg the "greatest theologian" was far from a vague intellectual appreciation, but rather the grounds for political action. Deguchi used Swedenborg's depictions of Tartary, as the bases for an attempted theocratic coup in 20th century Manchuria. This tale is stranger than fiction! This lecture is one of the first to be inspired by Dell Rose's book project: *The Meiji Swedenborg*.

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Time: 6 PM Central, Wednesday, May 7, 2025

or join us in the Swedenborg Library at this time.

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Zoom: Thursday, May 15, 6 PM Central
The Language of Angels: Japanese Engagement with Swedenborg in the Quest for a Universal Language with Dr. Avery Morrow, Ph.D.

Dr. Avery Morrow, a Japanologist specializing in Japanese esotericism, will introduce us to the role that Swedenborg had within 20th century Japanese occult discourse, especially that relating to the origin of language. The notion of a "language of the gods" had fascinated Japanese intellectuals for centuries, and the concept gained exceptional prominence in the nationalist culture of the Meiji-period and continued into the Showa. In the search for this universal language, several major Japanese occultists found inspiration in Swedenborg's notion of the languages of angels, and sought to wed these theories to their own nationalist and occult projects. Linguistics, after chemistry, might rightly be called the first esoteric science and Japan gives us another testament to this strange attempt to get to the center of communication. Join us in the Library, or via Zoom:

Meeting Room 558 403 3057 / Password: Swedenborg

Time: 6 PM Central, Thursday, May 15, 2025

Dr. Avery Morrow is a Japanologist and scholar of religion, with interests in Japanese esotericism, 'gishi' or 'alternate history,' and its role in directing Japanese culture. He is author of "The Sacred Science of Ancient Japan: Lost Chronicle of the Age of the Gods," which introduced readers to the genre of parahistory, providing many salient comparisons with European esoteric traditions.



Join us for a two-part series on *Understanding the Christ Event*

ZOOM: Thursday, March 20, 6 PM Central

Part 1: Understanding the Christ Event: On the Lord

with Rev. Robert McCluskey

The first lecture, on March 20, will examine Swedenborg’s revelation through his 1763 work *On the Lord*. Before the council of Nicea and the authoritative vision of Paul of Tarsus, new believers in the Jesus movement struggled to understand just what had taken place, ontologically, with the appearance of Jesus of Nazareth. Although it is never mentioned in the Bible, the concept of “the Trinity” has become a central tenet of traditional Christianity. It has also been a source of controversy and confusion as people struggle with the question: Is God one or three?

We will look briefly at the origin of this “mysterious” doctrine as it was formulated by the Eastern Orthodox churches in the early centuries of the church. Rooted in the monotheism of Judaism, what was the church to do with a “Son” of God, who then states that He and the Father are “one?” Was this another God, a lesser God? Given Jesus’ various statements, was he subordinate or equal to God? And what of the Holy Spirit? How are we to understand what “one essence in three persons” means?

Turning a Swedenborgian lens on Scripture, we will then explore an alternate understanding of the one God in whom is the Divine Trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Not a trinity of persons, but a trinity of “person.”

ZOOM: Thursday, March 27, 6 PM Central

Part 2: Understanding the Christ Event: Christus Victor

with Rev. Robert McCluskey

Soteriology is described as the study of salvation in different theological systems. Swedenborg was emphatic that substitutionary atonement, the dominant theory at work in most schools of Protestantism, was morally wrong and completely transfigured the character of the Lord. Instead, he promoted a version of the Christus Victor theory, which emphasized the Lord’s victory over the power of death and the influence of the Hells.

Rev. Robert McCluskey will help us to understand the special viewpoint of New Christian Christology. The lecture will examine the importance of understanding the true nature of the Lord for New Christians, and especially exemplify our unique view of the Trinity.

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Part I Time: 6 PM Central Time, Thursday, March 20

Part II Time: 6 PM Central Time, Thursday, March 27

Rev. Robert McCluskey holds a B.A. and M.A. in philosophy, with a focus on Greek philosophy, modern idealism, existentialism, and hermeneutics. He has pastored churches in Portland ME and NYC, and served as a representative to the National Council of Churches for 18 years. Recently, he administered rites and sacraments at Wayfarers Chapel in Rancho Palos Verdes.



More Programs In the Swedenborg Library

Sunday, April 20, 3-6 PM: Easter Celebration

Celebrate the victory of the Lord over death and the powers of hell. Liturgy and Eucharist will be celebrated, with supper to follow.

Saturday, April 26, 3 PM. Bi-Annual Meeting of the Illinois Association of Swedenborgian Churches and Centers

The Illinois Association of the Swedenborg Churches and their members are invited to attend the Biannual Meeting of the Illinois Association, in the Swedenborg Library Chicago on Saturday, April 26 at 3 PM. The meeting will be followed by dinner, and a special lecture on the “Missouri Platonist,” Thomas Moore Johnson, by Dr. Vadim Putzu of Missouri State University. (see Zoom info on opposite side.) Contact IA president Karen Feil at Info@SwedLib.org for more info on the agenda, travel, and lodging.



Wednesday, April 30, 2–6 PM: Saint Walpurga’s Night Celebration

St. Walpurga’s Night (Walpurgisnacht in German), celebrated on April 30th, is a magical night that bridges the transition from winter’s lingering shadows to the vibrancy of spring. Rooted in European folklore and traditions, it is often associated with warding off malevolent spirits and celebrating the triumph of light over darkness. Bonfires are lit across hilltops to dispel the forces of the night, symbolizing renewal and protection. This festival also honors Saint Walpurga, a figure tied to safeguarding against witchcraft and evil. Today, Walpurgisnacht blends historical, spiritual, and seasonal elements, embracing the renewal of life and the victory of warmth and light over the cold.

Founded in Chicago in 1877, the Swedenborg Library offers programs on spiritual topics and has on loan the works of 18th Century Swedish scientist and theologian Emanuel Swedenborg. Unlike the Christianity of his day, Swedenborg’s theology emphasized an ecumenical, i.e. inclusive view of heaven.

All are welcomed to the Library’s programs, discussion groups and workshops.

The Swedenborg Library is open Wednesdays and Fridays from 1-5 p.m., and by appointment.

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Swedenborg LIBRARY

SPRING PROGRAMS 2025 CALENDAR

THURSDAY, MARCH 20

TIME: 6 PM Central: Zoom: *Understanding the Christ Event, Part I* with Rev. Robert McCluskey

THURSDAY, MARCH 27

TIME: 6 PM Central: Zoom: *Understanding the Christ Event, Part II*, with Rev. Robert McCluskey

FRIDAY, APRIL 4

TIME 6 PM Central: Zoom: *The Many Returns of Asgard: Swedenborgian Interpretations of Norse Mythology* with Dell Rose, Swedenborg Library

THURSDAY, APRIL 17

TIME: 6 PM Central: Zoom: *Tenrikyo: The Japanese Religion of World Renewal*, with Rev. Kuni Fumioka, in the Swedenborg Library

SUNDAY, APRIL 20

Time: 3 PM Central: Zoom: *Easter Celebration* in the Swedenborg Library, followed by a meal.

THURSDAY, APRIL 24

Time: 6 PM Central: Zoom: *Paul Amongst the Gentiles* with Dell Rose.

SATURDAY, APRIL 26

Time: 3 PM Biannual meeting of the Illinois Association, in the Library

Time: 6 PM Central: Zoom: *Thomas Moore Johnson, The Missouri Platonist* with Dr. Vadim Putzu, Missouri State University In the Library, and via Zoom.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 30

TIME: 2–6 PM Walpurgisnacht Celebration in the Library.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 7

TIME 6 PM Central: Zoom: *Deguchi Onisaburo, Swedenborg, & the Quest for a New Kingdom in Manchuria*, with Dell Rose.

THURSDAY, MAY 15

TIME: 6 PM Central: Zoom: *The Language of Angels: Japanese Engagement with Swedenborg in the Quest for a Universal Language* with Japanologist Dr. Avery Morrow