

Garden Chapel / Church of the Open Word



As told by Paul Deming, Board President and Music Director:
On January 26th at our annual congregational meeting I asked the congregation to play a word association game. I stated a word or phrase and members offered a quick reflection on milestones for the Garden Chapel. The following scenario ensued:



1. Building Facelift - As soon as I mentioned this several members thanked Marion McCarthy who left the church over \$15,000 in her passing last Spring. One of the benefits of this bequest was the painting of the church exterior, giving us a much-needed facelift.

Marion McCarthy was a blessed soul who made every effort to attend Sunday morning services well into her 90's. Marion was as determined to honor God in her passing as she did in her life on this earth. Marion was born on New Year's Eve Day, 1914 and entered the spiritual world on Palm Sunday, 2013. We miss her.



As a sideline, the memorial service was a special blessing to Marion's family when they came to the Garden Chapel.



It was not planned, but a miraculous event occurred. Marion's family donated enough money for the church to purchase and install a beautiful stone bench in her memory to place in our church garden. When we sat in the very pew and spot where Marion sat every Sunday, there was a direct line of sight out of the closest chancel window to the Marion McCarthy Memorial Bench installed in her honor. Every member of her family made it a point to sit in her spot after the service so they could see the bench out the chancel window and offer their special prayer.

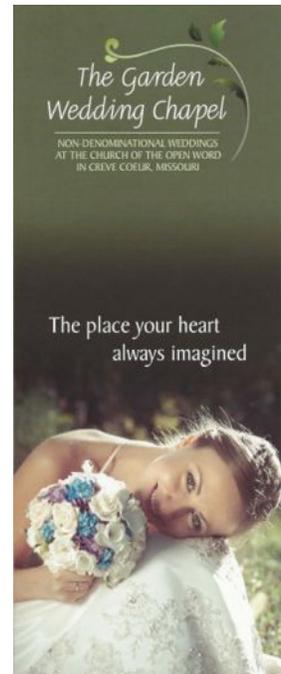
The congregation agreed that this was a special event for a special soul. The church has gotten a beautiful facelift with a professionally painted exterior as one of Marion's blessings to us all.

2. **New Wedding Coordinator** - Everyone applauded when it was mentioned that in October, **Suzy Holper** joined our ranks as the new Wedding Coordinator for the Garden Wedding Chapel. Suzy has had a long relationship with the Garden, sharing her talents as an alto singer during our Easter and Christmas Choral Concerts and also served as a wedding assistant when the late Nada Bradshaw was handling weddings. Suzy has booked over 18 weddings so far and it looks like she's only getting started. Suzy can be reached at 314-810-2014.



3. **The New Garden Wedding Chapel Web Site** - Duane Beougher, long-time treasurer and general fix-it guy, pointed out that past-president Paul Maring helped create the web-site that is currently leading to over a dozen wedding inquiries a week. If you have not yet seen the site, visit **GardenWeddingChapel.org** and give us your feedback. We are quite thrilled with the results so far!

4. **The New Wedding Brochure** - Everyone agreed that this brochure is the most professional looking document ever produced for the Garden Chapel. It boasts the Garden Wedding Chapel as "The place your heart always imagined!" Again, Duane pointed out that thanks to Paul Maring, the entire brochure, photos, copy, and production of 1,000 was donated. Suzy is making good use of the wedding brochures.



5. **Reverend Paul Johnson** Paul has been providing part time pastoral care thanks to the generous help of the Illinois Association. Paul holds a masters degree in divinity and has served as hospital chaplain for St. John's hospital, Unity Health Hospice, and Dubuis Hospitals in Missouri, and is currently Director for Medical Spiritual Wellness at Prevention and Healing, a wholistic medical center run by Dr. Simon Yu. Paul has conducted seminars on grief and end of life services and is well regarded in the chaplaincy community. Last fall Paul was introduced to Ken Turley, our denomination president who asked Paul to consider providing workshop instruction for the upcoming Convention in St. Louis.



6. **Rainbow Village Outreach** The congregation at Garden Chapel is supplemented by several friends from Rainbow Village most Sunday mornings. James, Bob, Dwight, Steve, Ginny, Janet, Patty, and until this past year Deborah, each has enjoyed our services and coffee-hours after. Deborah passed away July 3rd and her friends and family asked if Garden Chapel could provide a memorial service. So on July 17th, Garden Chapel held a memorial service for Deborah Asher where Emily Harris, Joan McNair O'Neal and yours truly (Paul Deming) played, sang, and shared memories of Deborah.

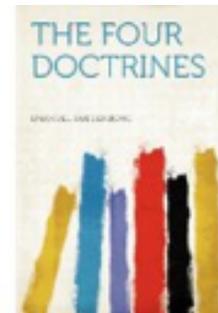


I also provided a reading from New Church teachings called "The Resurrection of the Spirit." The family and community of Rainbow Village expressed their deepest appreciation. We are grateful to the staff and community of Rainbow Village for attending and considering us friends!

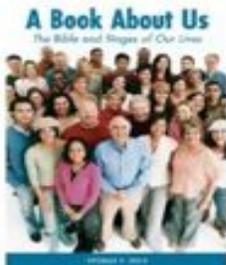
7. **Big Time Plumbing Repairs!** Ask anyone who has had to have trenches dug and big pieces of clay pipe replaced, there is no easy, economic way to resolve infrastructure issues. Yet, ignoring them means sewer backups and cancelled services. Fortunately the Garden has had two helping hands getting us past this major hurdle. First, the Building Fund Committee of General Convention made a loan available to us for half of the cost of the repairs, the other half came from donations (matching funds) mostly from members of the Illinois Association. We are blessed to be affiliated through the **Illinois Association** to the **General Convention** of the New Jerusalem (Swedenborg Church of North America).

8. **Orange you glad I said Green?!** For years the color of the chancel trim-work was bright orange. This created a challenge for wedding coordinators everywhere! Thanks to the paint donation of Suzy Holper and extra efforts at no charge to the painter who did our exterior, the orange was eliminated and replaced with a beautiful Garden Green, which was approved by our architectural committee.

9. **Sunday Morning Discussion Group.** We've reinstated a familiar and favorite routine for Garden Chapel members! Enjoying a Sunday Morning discussion group before service was always a highlight at Garden Chapel. Thanks to facilitators Reverend Dave Rienstra and to our newest member Cory Bradford-Watts, the discussion group is back in operation and enjoying a good turnout.



10. **Monday Night Book Study with George Dole!** In the old days (just a few years ago) all we could do was join a conference call! Now, between six and eight Garden Chapel members have been gathering on Monday nights to join an online video/audio "skype-type" conference with Karen Feil and several members of the Swedenborg Library conducted by George Dole! We enjoyed three book studies so far: "Person to Person" by Paul Vickers (A study of the book of Matthew), "12 Miracles of Spiritual Growth," E. Kent Rogers and "A Book About Us" by George Dole. We are anxious to join in another study this spring.



11. **Second Sunday Concert Series** There was wide applause when this was mentioned. For the last four plus years we've been providing cost-free entertainment for our community on the Second Sunday of every month featuring some of the best local talent in St. Louis. Last spring our own Emily Harris and her friend Jill entertained in a coffee-house type setting. It was well attended and turned into a sing-along of some of our favorite tunes!



Our most recent event was an All Beatles Concert commemorating 50 years since the Beatles first appeared on the Ed Sullivan Show and literally changed the course of music history in America! The event was well attended in spite of the winter weather and featured Ralph Butler, Rocky Mantia (a New York performer returning to St. Louis!), Chris Watrous, Gerry Liebman, and yours truly on guitar!). A splendid time was guaranteed for all!



12. **The Eve of Christmas Eve Candlelight Service.**



Everyone agreed, there is nothing like our candlelight service. Each year on the eve of Christmas eve, we gather and enjoy the sounds of the Garden Chapel Singers, while holiday anthems and Christmas Carols are enjoyed by all. Of course, there is no substitute for the candlelight singing of Silent Night. This year our choral director was Bruce Walker.

13. **St. Louis chosen as the 2014 Convention Site!**

We are honored that General Council has approved St. Louis as the site for the 2014 Convention during the first week of July. Convention will be held on the beautiful campus of Webster University. The theme approved by the Convention Committee is **Gateway to Providence** : Being Led by the Lord!



14. **Three New Members join the Garden Chapel!**



Another round of applause occurred when I welcomed, once again, three new members of our congregation: Joan McNair O'Neal who graciously provided piano accompaniment to our hymns and lovely postlude pieces following each service, Rachel Burrows, who is completing her studies in nursing care, and Cory Bradford-Watts who has helped in leading our worship singing and is currently facilitating our Sunday Morning Discussion Groups before service.

All three officially joined the Church of the Open Word on January 26, 2014.

15. Finally, **the best part of Garden Chapel is our people!**

No one can argue that it's the people who make up the church and in our case,



Lynette LaHay, Marty Mason

many of those people continue to serve without notice or recognition, but not without thanks! We especially honored our unsung heroes like Marty Mason whose undaunted service has kept things running



Judy Ogle, Joan McNair O'Neal

for longer than she would care to admit, board members like Duane Beougher, Debbie O'Reilly, David Currall, Reverend Dave Rienstra, Reverend Paul Johnson, faithful servants like Emily Harris, Bob Porter, Joan McNair O'Neal, Carolyn Bower, Lynette LaHay, Dave Baumgartner, Ann Graber, Becky Maring and so many others who deserve their own milestone for their continued service and faith! We love you!



Bob Porter



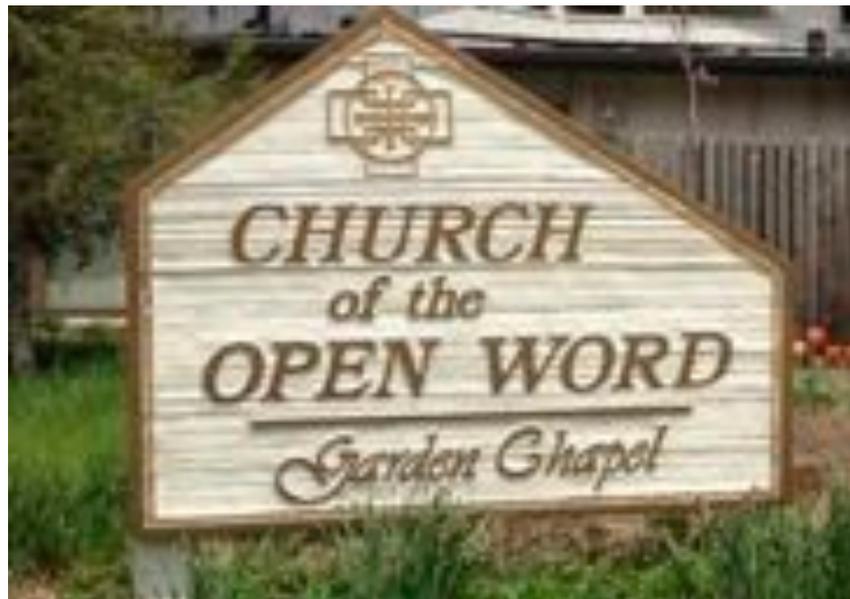
Ann Graber and Diane Rienstra



Emily Harris and Carolyn Bower

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Sunday Morning worship services begin at 11:00 a.m. every week.
A Discussion Group begins at 10:00 a.m. An informal coffee-hour, with refreshments, is offered after every service.



GardenWeddingChapel.org

OpenWordChurch.com

314-872-7124