

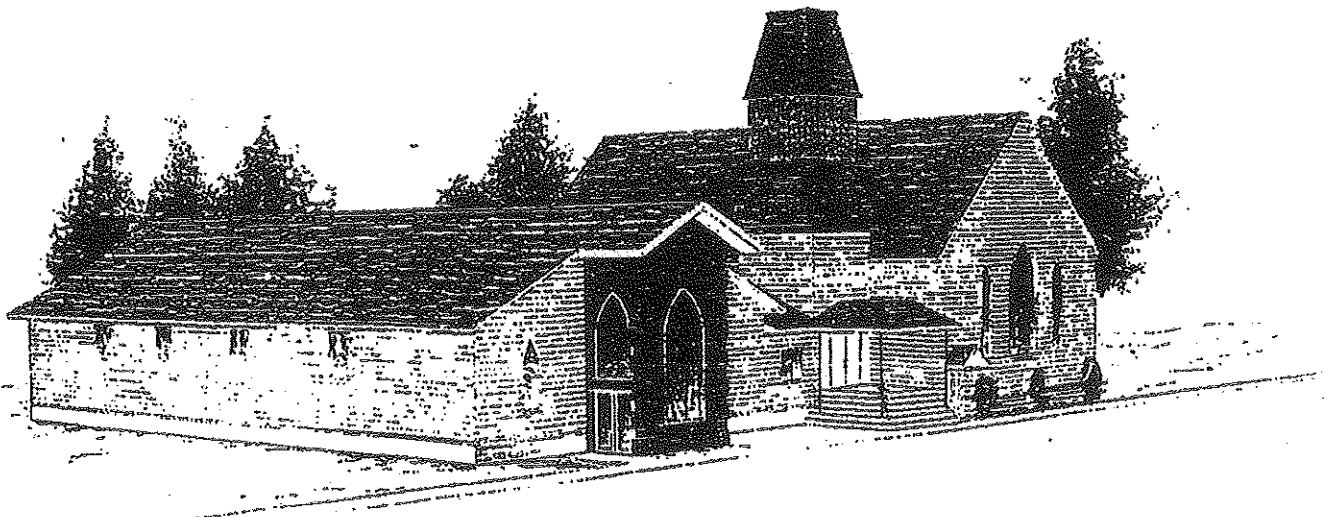
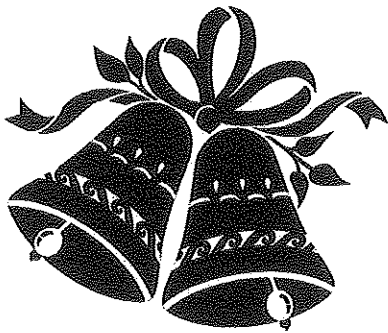
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*The
Chimes*

December Church News



SEWARD CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
SEWARD, ILLINOIS

Jesus Is the Reason for the Season

We have entered the season of Christmas, where it seems that the only thing people think about is getting the best bargains on Black Friday or Cyber Monday. Except Black Friday is now two weeks long and Cyber Monday is still going two days later! When did Friday ever last for two weeks—except maybe it felt like that at a job you really didn't like! Or when did Monday become three days long?

Have we lost sight of the real reason that we celebrate this holiday? What has happened to not only our society, but the church as well? Do we in the church set the best example to others in our celebration of this most wonderful Holy Day? Are we afraid to say to others, "Merry Christmas," and instead use the politically correct phrase, "Happy Holidays?"

I realize there are others who celebrate other holidays around this time of year, and that is great by me. So why can't we learn to address others with an appropriate greeting for whatever it is they are celebrating and recognize those days for what they are—no matter their faith or religious creed?

In this world of recognizing the diversity, why do we try to cram all of those religious days into one generic greeting? Why don't we acknowledge that diversity without segregating ourselves into our own little communities, thereby shunning all around us who are different from us? Certainly, we could—and should—reach out to those around us with the love of Jesus and love people for who they are, not who we want them to be.

Jesus came as a baby in a manger to redeem and reconcile His people, but not His Chosen people alone. John 3:16 says, "God loved the world so much that He gave His only Son. God gave his Son so that *whoever* believes in Him will not be lost, but have eternal life."—International Children's Bible. Though many of His people did not receive Him or believe in Him, God loves them anyway. We live in a world today that is beginning to totally reject not us, but the God that we serve. Still, we should love as Jesus loves, and treat others as we think we deserve to be treated.

We all have holiday traditions—and those are well and good. As long as they do not usurp the real reason that we celebrate this Christmas season. Remember, *Jesus is the Reason for the Season*. Let's be Jesus to those around us and celebrate His redemptive birth this year. Let all other things become secondary in our celebrations!!

Musings from the desk of Pastor Joel

Announcements

DIACONATE: Will not meet in December.

TRUSTEE'S: Will meet on December 22, at 6:30 p.m. We will meet in fellowship hall with social distancing.

SUNDAY SCHOOL: Our Sunday School program will be during the worship service on Sunday, Dec. 12 Join us for The Friendly Beasts. We will have Sunday School on **December 19**. On **December 26** there **will not** be any Sunday School

Volunteers are needed for Advent readings on Dec. 12th and Dec. 19th during the worship service. Contact Pastor Joel if you are willing to participate in this.

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE: Will be on December 24, 2021 at 8 p.m. with communion

COMMUNION: Will be December 24 at the 8 p.m. Christmas Eve Service

PECATONICA FOOD PANTRY: We are collecting items for each day in December, for the Pec Food Pantry, to distribute to a family in need. There is a box in the narthex with an item for each day. Pick an item and deposit it in the box and then check off that day. Let's fill up the whole calendar.

REMINDER: All contributions for the CHIMES newsletter are due to the Office by the 3rd Friday of every month.

MONTHLY SUMMARY

Monthly Budget \$6,821.50

	October	January-October
General Fund	Income \$5,225.00	\$52,613.05
	Expense \$ 4,609.99	\$61,528.48

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

Birthdays

- 1 Kirsten Kendell
- 2—Abigale Cowman, Nathaniel Cowman
- 4— Alice Craven
- 5— Jeffrey Merchant
- 8—Chuck Ackerman
- 10-Ted Long
- 21-Doris Spielman
- 24- Terry Spielman
- 26- Colin Cannon
- 27- Cailie Cannon, Jerry VanHauen

November 9, 2021 Diaconate Meeting

Chairman Karleen Merchant called the meeting to order at 9:00 A.M.

Members present were Jackie Cunningham, Bev Weerda, Char Remer, Karleen Merchant, Jean Mennenga, Barb Daubs, and Pastor Joel Hicke. Pastor Joel led us in prayer.

Barb read the minutes of the September 14, 2021 meeting. Bev made the motion to accept the minutes as read, seconded by Jackie. The motion was approved. Bev presented the treasurer's report showing a balance of \$764.88. Jean made the motion to accept the report as read, seconded by Barb. The motion was approved.

Pastor Joel's report included 19 home visits, 6 text and phone calls, and additional contacts. He is also doing some external counseling sessions. Pastor Joel will not be in the office on November 17, and Cathy will be our speaker on Sunday, November 21. He will have a medical procedure on November 23 and medical appointment on November 30. On November 28 he will speak at Pinecrest.

OLD BUSINESS:

We need substitute helper volunteers for Sunday School. If Joel is not available for Sunday School, his class should go to Char's class. The Team Spirit Sunday was quite successful. We discussed other possible ways to help others in need.

NEW BUSINESS:

Our congregation needs to do a better job welcoming and following up with those who have visited our church, whether online or in person. The Mark Poppen memorial celebration will be from 10:00 A.M. to 2:00 P.M. in Fellowship Hall on November 27. Members are asked to bring cookies, and we will assist the family with the food. Communion will be offered on November 28 and during the 8:00 P.M. Christmas Eve service. Advent decorating in the sanctuary and hallways will be completed after the worship service on November 21. Have some chili with us immediately afterward. The fellowship hall will be decorated the following weekend. The Sundays of Advent are November 28, and December 5, 12, and 19. Pastor Joel will contact Advent readers. We will take the Christmas decorations down following the worship service on January 9. Have some vegetable soup with us immediately afterward. The Christmas program will be on December 12, but Sunday School will continue on December 19. Following the holidays, Sunday School will begin again on January 9. We discussed activities for youth participation, and Pastor Joel will look into some possibilities.

The motion for adjournment was made at 10:10 A.M. by Barb, seconded by Jean.

Our next meeting will be on January 11, 2022 at 9:00 A.M.

Respectfully submitted, Barb Daubs

Board of Trustees Meeting
October 20, 2021

The meeting was called to order at 6:31 pm by Tari, and she opened with prayer.

Tari read the minutes from the last meeting. Effie made the motion to accept the report, seconded by Scott.

Pastor Joel gave his report. He averaged 33 hours per week last month; had 19 contacts. Jack was out twice to look at the furnace. He had to order an inducer the first time he was out, but the furnace still didn't work. He came out the second time and bypassed that part until we get the part in.

Old Business

The downspouts have been taken care per Scott.

Pastor Joel will contact Aaron Fulrath about the internet to see if he can help us out.

The financial update from Maury has been tabled.

The check list for the fire code for the trustees has been tabled.

New Business

The air conditioner installation at the Aurand house is complete.

There was a discussion about the US Flag at the house. Scott said that he would take care of getting a new one.

There have been no comments on the cleaning of the church.

For fall/winter prep: there are still cobwebs by the north door, and Tari said she will work on cleaning that up as much as she can. We plan to get bids from Matt Cowman and Brian Mennenga for the plowing and shoveling this winter; we want the same person to do both.

We need to be thinking about our church budget and how the price of natural gas and electricity will impact our church because of the expected rise in the cost of those items.

There was a motion to adjourn; seconded by Dick. Meeting was adjourned at 7:02 pm.

Next meeting is scheduled for November 17, 2021 @ 6:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Joel Hicke

December 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7 Diaconate 6:30 p.m.	8	9	10	11
12 Children's Christmas Program	13	14	15 Trustee's 6:30 p.m.	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24 Christmas Eve Service with communion	25
26 No Sunday School	27	28	29	30	31	