

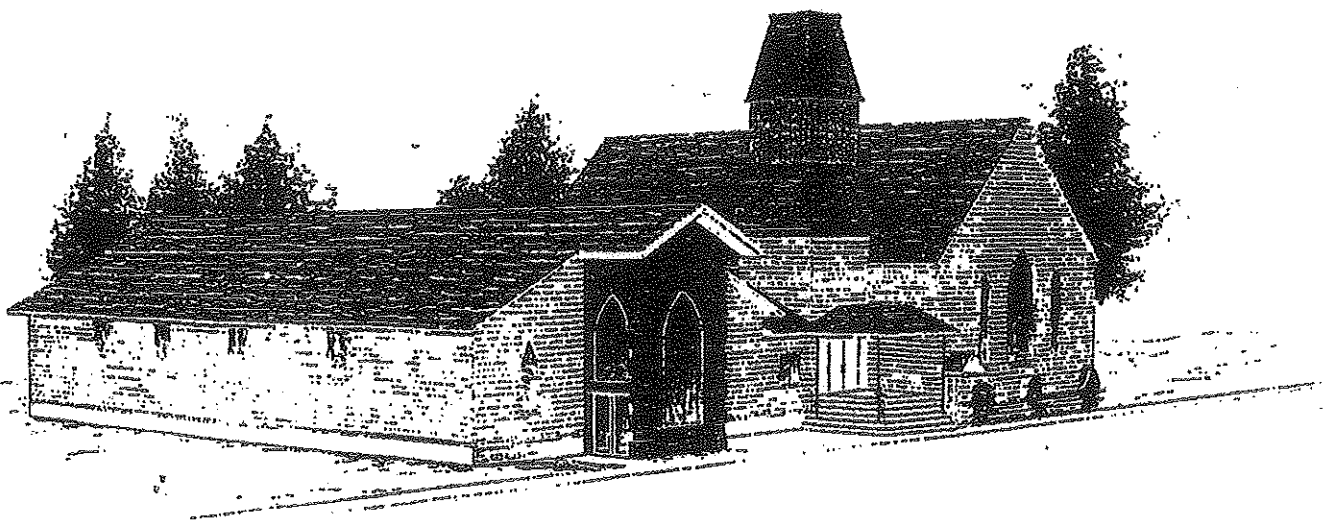
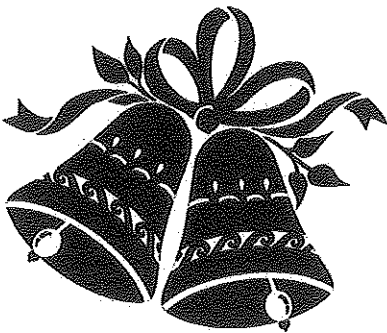
Seward Congregational Church
Box 104, 3029 S. Pecatonica Road
Seward, IL 61077-0104
(815)247-8612
<https://sewardcongregational.com>

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*The
Chimes*

December Church News



SEWARD CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
SEWARD, ILLINOIS

I have been thinking about, and wondering, when the words “Holy Day” were combined to make the compound word, “holiday” and if that transition has transformed our thinking of “Holy Days” such as Christmas and Easter. In looking at the etymology of “holiday” I learned that this comes from the Old English word, *hāligdæg*, which is a compound word—*hālig* and *dæg*—meaning “Holy Day.” This word referred to the Holy Days in the church year which meant a day set aside to remember and reflect on what that particular day meant, and also a day that was a day of rest and time off from work. In England, “holiday” is what we call “vacation” in this country.

While in Bible College, in one class we were to write about the secularization of Christmas, and what our thoughts on it all were. Over the years since, I have come to realize that, more and more, Christmas has become more secularized than ever. Sometimes I would like to ask people what the real reason is for celebrating Christmas, just to see what their answers would be. It seems that many retailers rely on this time of year to make their biggest sales to carry them through the rest of the year so that they can stay in business. And, I fear that this thinking has infiltrated the church to some degree. While I am not opposed to giving gifts at Christmas, I think that we need to remember the reason that we give those gifts.

The greatest gift of all was given to us humans by God Himself when He sent His Son, Jesus, to this earth. This baby was the promised Messiah, though people did not recognize Him as such. The reason that we know the importance of the gift of God’s Son is because we have the Holy Word of God that spells it out for us. Yet many people still do not know or have simply relegated this most Holy Day to just another day that we can have parties, give gifts (maybe to try and buy someone’s love), and have another paid day off from the work that we do.

Could we make a difference in someone’s life this year by saying “Merry Christmas” instead of the politically correct “Happy Holidays?” For the gift of Jesus to the world is the Reason for the Season this time of year. What could we Christians do to bless someone this year as we celebrate our Lord, God’s Son, the Savior of the world?

Just some thoughts on how and why we celebrate Christmas in our hearts and in our homes. Have a blessed Christmas with your families--and remember “Jesus is the Reason for the Season!!”

---Musings From the desk of Pastor Joel

Announcements

DIACONATE: TBA

TRUSTEE'S: Will meet on December 16, at 6:30 p.m. We will meet in the Rose Room

CHILRENS PROGRAM: The Sunday school program will be on December 11 during the 10:30 worship service

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE: The Christmas Eve service will be on December 24 at 7 p.m. with communion.

SUNDAY SCHOOL: There will not be any Sunday school on December 18, December 25 or January 1, 2023. It will resume on January 8th, 2023

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

I wanted to send my appreciation for the kindness and generosity of the members of the Seward Congregational Church. Hurricane Ian has devastated Southwest Florida and changed the lives of so many in its path. There will be a tremendous amount of need for months, if not years to come. We have many employees of FGCU who are now homeless and living in temporary accommodations. Many employees have lost everything they owned. In addition, we have a large population of students that are now homeless and/or unemployed. Jewell has two friends whose jobs were destroyed in the flood waters. Access to good food is necessary for people to rebuild, and there is a long road ahead. While people are dealing with insurance companies, FEMA, and trying to find safe housing for their families, there is a comfort knowing that there is a resource for food to help themselves and their families. It is kind and generous people like you that help my new community feel that we are not alone, that people care.

Thank you to my family at Seward Congregational Church. Heather MacQueen

MONTHLY SUMMARY

October

General Fund Income \$5,113.01
Expense \$ 5,440.8124,

Monthly Budget \$6,932.75

January-October

\$49,688.56
\$68,480.82

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

Birthdays

1 Kirsten Kendell
2—Abigale Cowman, Nathaniel Cowman
4— Alice Craven
5— Jeffrey Merchant
8—Chuck Ackerman
21-Doris Spielman
26- Colin Cannon
27- Cailie Cannon, Jerry VanHauen
28-Chris Green

November 22, 2022 Diaconate Meeting

Chairperson Karleen Merchant called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. She read a message written by Billy Graham on Thanksgiving and open with prayer.

Members present: Jacki Cunningham, Karleen Merchant, Char Remer, Bev Weerda, Shirley Myers, Jennifer Lloyd, Jean Mennenga, and Pastor Joel.

Jean read the minutes of the October 4, 2022 meeting. Char made a motion to accept the minutes. Shirley seconded the motion. The motion was approved. Bev presented the treasurer's report showing a balance of \$529.30. Jean made a motion to accept the report. Seconded by Char. Motion carried.

PASTOR'S REPORT:

- Pastor passed out his visit log for the month of October and reviewed it.

OLD BUSINESS:

- Rosie Rust will be in charge of an event for the Youth Group and NOT be in charge of the Youth Group. (Sorry for the confusion). Pastor Joel will plan a roller skating event in the future for the Youth Group. However, we are looking for others to volunteer to do one Youth Group event.
- No adverse comments on using oyster crackers instead of wafers for communion.
- Thanks to everyone who helped decorate the church for the Advent season.
- We still need Advent readers/candle lighting.
- Hilton and Lovett families greatly appreciated all our church did for them during their bereavement.

NEW BUSINESS:

- We have more new Sunday School students. Praise the Lord.
- Thanksgiving Eve Service 7:00 p.m. Pastor invited several other churches to our service.
- Christmas program will be Dec. 11th during the worship service.
- Christmas Eve service 7:00 p.m. With communion being served.
- January 8th we will undeck the Halls
- We were given handouts about changes to the constitution. We discussed the changes and made comments for the committee. The committee will be presenting the changes to the congregation to be voted on at the Annual Meeting.

The motion for adjournment was made at 10:40 a.m. By Jackie. Seconded by Shirley.

Our next meeting will be announced at a later date.

Respectfully submitted,

Jean Mennenga

Seward Congregational Church
Board of Trustees Meeting
October 19, 2022

Meeting Called to Order by Peggy Whitney at 6:30 pm

Members Present: P. Whitney, E. Hoppe, Brenda VanHauen, D. Remer, and M. Daubs.

Meeting minutes were read and approved. Dick approved, Effie Seconded
The Financial Secretary Minutes were read and approved by Dick, Second by Maury
Treasurer's report was read and approved by along with the Financial Secretary report.
The church investments were reviewed and discussed. Maury was instructed to purchase another
"Brokered" CD for the next meeting.

Old Business:

The two cemetery lots at Willwood were discussed. No final decision was reached, but selling them was preferred.

Screen repair in the parsonage was discussed. Maury to attempt to get them by next meeting.

Installation of the new light pole was discussed with a date approved.

A new dryer was approved for the Parsonage. Both gas and electric would be considered.

New Business:

Two new members will need to be added for next year. Theresa to add to bulletin.

The church budget for 2023 was initiated and items discussed. Further discussion is planned for next month to finalize the budget.

A new quote from Church Mutual is expecting before the next meeting.

Aurand house needs to be reviewed for need repair items and safety equipment.

Next Meeting: November 16, 2022.

Meeting Adjourned: 9:04 PM by Dick and Approved by Brenda

Submitted By: Maury Daubs

December 2022

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