

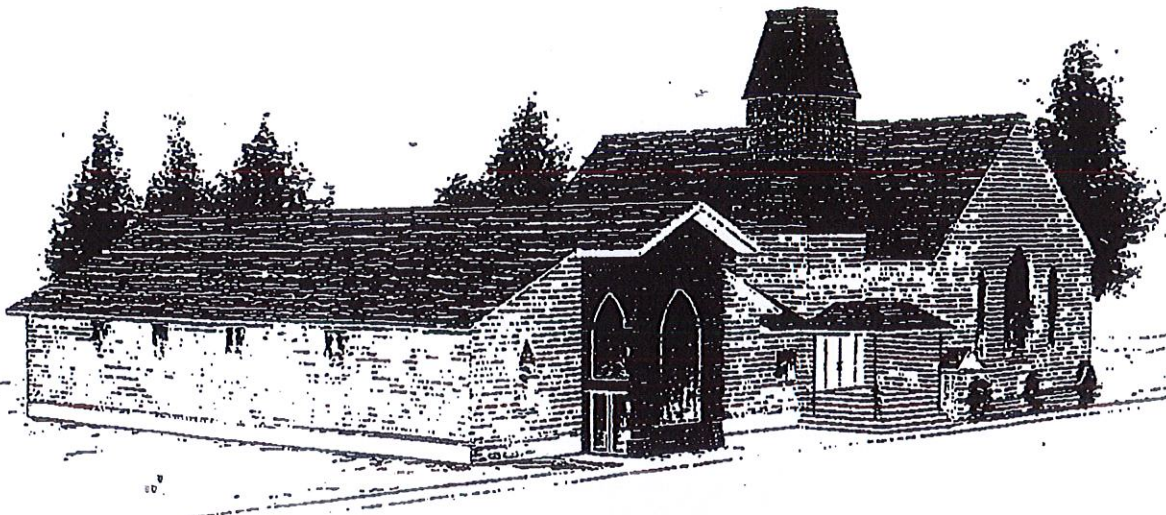
Seward Congregational Church  
Box 104, 3029 S. Pecatonica Road  
Seward, IL 61077-0104  
(815)247-8612  
<https://sewardcongregational.com>

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*The  
Chimes*

*January Church News*



SEWARD CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH  
SEWARD, ILLINOIS

First of all, I want to thank my church family for the cards and gifts that you generously gave to me and my family! May God bless you richly for your generosity and love towards us in this Christmas season. You have made a difference in our lives!

I was trying to think of what I could say about going into this New Year, and then I saw this that my daughter reposted on Facebook and it's too good not to share.

**NEVER THOUGHT ABOUT THIS BEFORE!**

I have always thought that Noah was safe inside the Ark because he built it according to God's specifications. I thought that perhaps it was the strength of the gopher wood and the soundness of the architecture that ensured that the waters of the flood would not come into the Ark. But today I encountered a verse that shifted this whole paradigm. Let's read what Gen 7:16 says " The animals going in were male and female of every living thing as God had commanded Noah..

**THEN GOD SHUT HIM IN....**

Don't miss this...even after Noah had built the Ark, it was God Himself who shut him in, in order to shut out the waters of the flood. In other translations this verse says "The Lord sealed them inside."

May the Almighty God seal us inside His Ark of protection through this New year of 2023 and the Years that follow.

It is not the fact that you have locked your house that keeps you safe at night, it is not your good driving skills that keeps you safe on the road, neither is it your healthy eating habits that keep you healthy - Only God can shut you in and shut out the devil that is seeking to devour you.

Father, we pray that in this last week of 2022 and the Years that follow as we walk into the streets and as we drive on the roads, Oh God shut us in. Father, we pray for our children that in the midst of dangers and molesters, You will shut them in, keep out the flood waters of abuse, murder, accidents, diseases, and untimely death. Oh God shut us in, shut us in your Ark of protection , into your Ark of compassion.

Amen

**MAY GOD SHUT US IN HIS ARK OF PROTECTION AS WE OBEY HIM,  
CONTINUE WITH HIS GREAT COMMISSION AND TRUST IN HIS WORD.**

**AMEN!** Pastor Alfred Nizeyimana

**HAPPY NEW YEAR 2023!** From Pastor Joel

Current wordage is in Black type; Added changes are in Red

## ARTICLE IV. FAITH, AND COVENANT

### ARTICLE IV. FAITH, COVENANT/MISSION, AND VISION

1. FAITH: This Church acknowledges as its sole head, Jesus Christ, the son of God and the savior of humankind. It acknowledges as brothers and sisters in Christ all who share in this confession. It looks to the Word of God in the Scriptures, and to the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, to prosper its creative and redemptive work in the world. It claims as its own the faith of the historic church expressed in the ancient creeds and reclaimed in the basic insights of the Protestant Reformers. It affirms the responsibility of the church in each generation to make this faith its own, in accordance with the teaching of our Lord and the practice prevailing among Evangelical Christians. It recognizes two Sacraments: Baptism, and the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion.

We believe that God creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God (Gen 1:26-26)

We believe that the term "marriage" has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture. (Gen. 2:18-25) We believe that God *intends* sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other. (1 Cor. 6:38; 7:2-5; Heb. 13:4.)

We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. (Acts 3:19-21; Rom. 10:9-10; 1 Cor. 6:9-11)

This statement of faith does not exhaust the extent of our beliefs. The Bible itself as the inspired and infallible Word of God that speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality, and the proper conduct of mankind, is the sole and final source of all that we believe. For purposes of this church's faith, doctrine, practice, policy, and discipline, our pastor, and diaconate are this Church's final interpretive authority on the Bible's meaning and application.

2. COVENANT/MISSION: We covenant with one another to seek and respond to the word and the will of God. We propose to walk together in the ways of the Lord, made known and to be made known to us. We hold to be the mission of the church to witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ in all the world, while worshipping God, and striving for truth, justice and peace. As did our forbearers, we depend on the Holy Spirit to lead and empower us. We pray for the coming of the Kingdom of God, and we look with faith toward the triumph of righteousness and eternal life.

3. VISION: We are committed to helping every person know and believe in Jesus, belong to and have the support of extended family, and become a disciple to build His kingdom.

We had to change membership wording in our constitution because many church members on our membership roll do not attend church, and since many of our current active members went south for the winter, we were having a difficult time attaining our 10% of active membership requirement for voting at our annual meeting

## Article V. Membership (Clarification)

Current words

4. A member whose address has long been unknown or who for a period of two years has not attended the church's worship, contributed to its support, or otherwise received spiritual care, may, by recommendation and vote of the Diaconate, be removed from the membership roll and placed on a conditional list. If after the expiration of a year, the relationship remains unchanged, the name may be dropped from the conditional roll by further vote of the Diaconate.

\*\*\*\*\*

This is the original letter sent to inactive members:

*We realize that many of you have fond memories of our church and do not want to relinquish your membership, therefore we offer this compromise. If you want to retain your membership, but cannot be an active member, you will be placed on an inactive membership list, which simply means that you will not have voting privileges until you again, become an active member. This will enable us to continue conducting business, and keep you as a member. However, if we have not heard from you one way or another by Dec. 31, 2019 your name will be dropped from the membership roll. We continue to pray that your life will be blessed with the grace of God.*

How does one become an active member again?

Add 5

**5. Members who have requested to be added to the Inactive Rolls will retain membership, but cannot be an active member with voting privileges until they become active members again according to Article 4, Paragraph 2 of this Constitution. The Diaconate shall decide if these conditions are met and the member is again eligible for membership**

*(This is what the constitution says an active member would be "a member who shall pledge themselves to 1) attend the regular worship of the church and the celebration of the Lord's Supper; 2) live the Christian life; 3) share in the life and work of the church; 4) contribute to its support, as God enables you, and 5) contribute to the welfare of the membership and the community) Add above red words*

Current wording is in black. Proposed additions are in red.

## Article VI. Governing Body

1. The governing body of this church shall be the membership assembled in church meeting. The vote of a majority of members present at the meeting shall be the action of this church. A quorum shall consist of 10% of the members.

Add: **There shall be no limit on consecutive terms to various offices, such as Diaconate or Trustee officers and the vice moderator can be a trustee, or diaconate member.**

### Section 3 The Vice Moderator

A. The Vice Moderator shall be elected at each Annual Meeting to serve for one year and/or until a successor is elected. The Vice Moderator should be elected from the congregation at large, and should not be a Deacon, Trustee, or presiding officer.

A. The Vice Moderator shall be elected at each Annual Meeting to serve for one year and/or until a successor is elected. **The Vice Moderator should be elected from the the congregation at large. (Second part of sentence will be dropped. It says *The Vice Moderator should not be Deacon, Trustee or presiding officer.*)**

Seward Congregational Church  
Board of Trustees Meeting  
November 16, 2022

**Present:** Pastor Joel, Peggy Whitney, Matt Cowman, Brenda Van Hauen, and Dick Remer, Effie Hoppe.

**Absent:** Maury Daubs

**The meeting** was called to order by Peggy at 6:34pm and Joel also led us in prayer.

**Minutes:** The minutes from the October's meeting were read by Matt. Motion to approve October minutes made by Effie, seconded by Brenda.

**Financial Report** was given by Brenda and Effie. Motion to approve by Dick, seconded by Matt.

**Pastor's Report:** See October report submitted by Pastor Joel.

**Old Business:**

**Dryer-** the dryer has been replaced.

**Insurance-**discussed different insurance options, will follow up at next meeting.

**Walk-through-**Need to do an annual walk-through at the parsonage. Date TBD. Peggy will follow up.

**New Business:**

**Budget-**review for annual meeting

**Snow Removal-**Matt and family will continue to take care of snow removal/shoveling.

**Salt-**Matt will deliver a pallet of salt from Farm and Fleet.

**Church Spending-**Dick Remer made the motion that in the process of completing a project, if further expenses arise and a spur of the moment decision is required, the project coordinator will be given the discretion to spend up to \$1000 to complete the project without further trustee approval.

**Other:**

**None**

**Next meeting** will be on December 21, 2022 at 6:30pm

**Motion to adjourn** was made by Matt, and seconded by Dick. The meeting was adjourned at 8:40pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Matt Cowman

Seward Congregational Church  
Board of Trustees Meeting  
December 4, 2022  
**Special Meeting**

**Present:** Pastor Joel, Peggy Whitney, Matt Cowman, Brenda Van Hauen, Maury Daubs and Effie Hoppe.  
**Absent:** Dick Remer

**The meeting** was called to order by Peggy at 11:45am.

**Public Attendees:** Bev Weerda, Karleen Merchant, Jean Mennenga, Barb Daubs, Jennifer Lloyd, Ella Rose

**Insurance Proposal:**

**Current Provider-**Guide One is the current provider, and it will cost roughly \$16,000 for insurance for 2023 for 100% coverage. Guide One will submit a new bid to try and compete by the regular December meeting.

**Prospective Provider-**Church Mutual has submitted a bid for roughly \$7,176, but for only 80% coverage.

Motion to approve the Church Mutual bid, contingent on the bid from Guide One, was made by Effie and seconded by Brenda. All voting members agreed. Motion approved.

**Financial Discussion/Mentions:**

Jennifer Lloyd is asking for a budget for the Sunday School program to be added to the Annual Meeting. The Scott Fund was brought up. Need future discussion on what this money should be used for.

Investments were brought up to implement a plan to fund Sunday School.

Peggy brought up advertising in The Gazette for the Christmas Service, since there are no other churches in the area open on Christmas Morning. Ella Rose volunteered to pay for the advertising in The Gazette.

Bank Accounts-the church has 43 accounts at the bank, and only 12 are currently active. Need future discussion on updating/eliminating accounts.

**Annual Meeting** will be held on Sunday, January 22, 2023.

**Next meeting** will be on December 21, 2022 at 6:30pm

**Motion to adjourn** was made by Maury, and seconded by Matt. The meeting was adjourned at 12:16pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Matt Cowman

## Announcements

**CONSTITUTION CHANGES:** Please read the constitution changes included in the chimes that are going to be voted on at the Annual Meeting.

**DIACONATE:** TBA

**TRUSTEE'S:** Will meet on January 18, at 6:30 p.m. We will meet in the Rose Room

**ANNUAL MEETING:** Reports are due to Theresa by January 13, 2023. The Annual meeting will be on Sunday January 22

**SUNDAY SCHOOL:** Will resume on January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2023

**UNDECK THE HALLS:** We will be un-decking the halls on January 8 following the worship service.

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

### MONTHLY SUMMARY

#### November

General Fund	Income	\$6,554.00
	Expense	\$ 5,355.34

### Monthly Budget \$6,932.75

#### January-November

\$56,624.56
\$74,779.88

### JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

6—Don King  
7- Brenda VanHauen  
8—Ken Asche  
11- Delores Poppen  
12-Mike Weerda  
27-Wendell Poppen  
28-Ron Craven



# January 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 No Sunday School	2	3	4	5	6	7
8 Un-Deck the Halls Sunday School Resumes	9	10	11	12	13 Reports are Due in Theresa's office	14
15	16	17	18  Trustee's 6:30 p.m.	19	20	21
22 Annual Meeting	23	24	25	26	27	28
29 Communion	30	31				