

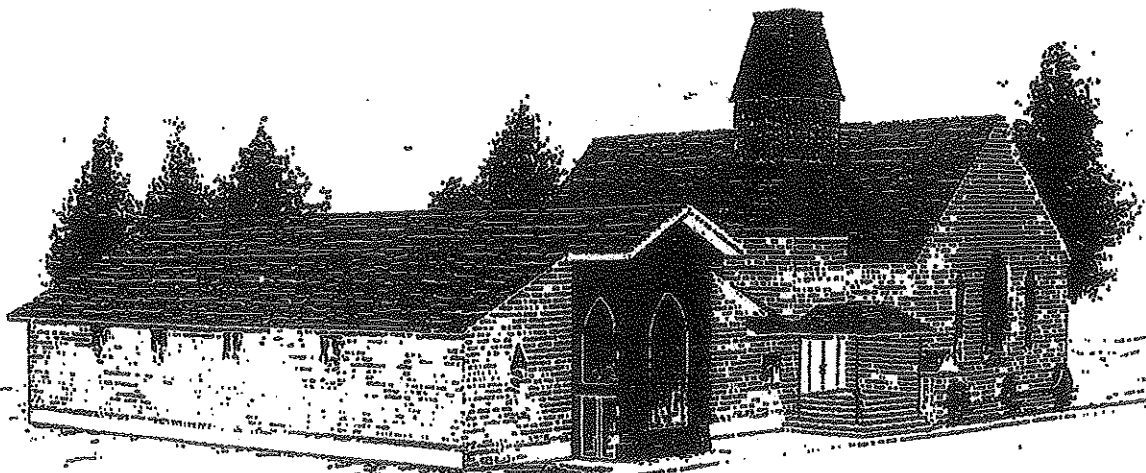
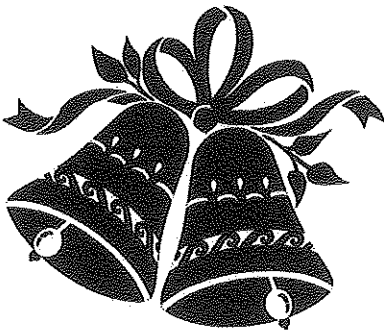
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*The
Chimes*

February Church News



SEWARD CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
SEWARD, ILLINOIS

Possible Origin of Valentine's Day

Valentine's Day is the pagan holiday Lupercalia. Occurring for centuries in the middle of February, the earliest possible origin story of the holiday celebrates fertility. Men would strip naked and sacrifice a goat and dog. Young boys would then take strips of hide from the sacrificed animals and use it to whip young women, to promote fertility.

Lupercalia was popular and one of the few pagan holidays still celebrated 150 years after Christianity was legalized in the Roman Empire.

When Pope Gelasius came to power in the late fifth century he put an end to Lupercalia. Soon after, the Catholic church declared February 14 to be a day of feasts to celebrate the martyred Saint Valentine.

Oruch suggests that Chaucer might have linked Valentine's Day to romance more or less by chance—Valentine's Day is approximately the time when European birds start mating. Later poets, including Shakespeare, followed Chaucer's lead and helped create the romantic connotations we have today.

By some estimations there are over 10,800 saints, of which there are more than 30 Valentines and even a few Valentinas. Two Valentines stand out as likely candidates for the namesake saint, but neither dealt with matters of the heart.

The two Valentines share many similarities, leading some researchers to wonder whether they were the same man. Both Valentines were martyrs, put to death by the Roman Emperor Claudius in the third century. Both men were also said to have died on February 14, although years apart.

The first Valentine was a priest who was arrested during the Roman persecutions of Christians. When brought before the emperor, Valentine refused to renounce his faith and as punishment was placed under house arrest. The head of the house holding Valentine challenged the priest to show the true power of God. Soon, Valentine restored sight to a young blind girl and the whole house converted. Once word of the miracle and conversion reached the Emperor, Valentine was executed.

The second priest, the Bishop Valentine of Terni, was also a miracle worker. Known for his ability to heal physical disabilities, a scholar sent for the bishop to heal his only son, who could not speak or straighten his body. After a night of prayer, the bishop healed the boy—and the family, along with visiting scholars, converted to Christianity. Shortly after the bishop was arrested for his miracles and, after refusing to convert to paganism, beheaded.

What does the Bible say about Valentine's Day? Really nothing since this was not recognized or celebrated until several centuries later. This is what the Bible says about love. 1 Corinthians 13:

13 If I could speak all the languages of earth and of angels, but didn't love others, I would only be a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. ² If I had the gift of prophecy, and if I understood all of God's secret plans and possessed all knowledge, and if I had such faith that I could move mountains, but didn't love others, I would be nothing. ³ If I gave everything I have to the poor and even sacrificed my body, I could boast about it; ^[a] but if I didn't love others, I would have gained nothing.

⁴ Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud ⁵ or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. ⁶ It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. ⁷ Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance.

⁸ Prophecy and speaking in unknown languages ^[b] and special knowledge will become useless. But love will last forever! ⁹ Now our knowledge is partial and incomplete, and even the gift of prophecy reveals only part of the whole picture! ¹⁰ But when the time of perfection comes, these partial things will become useless. ¹¹ When I was a child, I spoke and thought and reasoned as a child. But when I grew up, I put away childish things. ¹² Now we see things imperfectly, like puzzling reflections in a mirror, but then we will see everything with perfect clarity. ^[c] All that I know now is partial and incomplete, but then I will know everything completely, just as God now knows me completely.

¹³ Three things will last forever—faith, hope, and love—and the greatest of these is love.

Diaconate Meeting
January 12, 2023
Seward Congregational Church

Present were Karleen Merchant, Char Remer, Bev Weerda, Jacki Cunningham, Shirley Myers, Jennifer Lloyd, and Pastor Joel Hicke. Absent was Jean Mennenga.

The Meeting was called to order at 9:00 am by8 Karleen.

Char led us in prayer

The minutes from the November meeting were read by Karleen. Motion to accept the report was made by Bev, seconded by Shirley and it carried.

Bev gave the treasurer's report: there is \$484.30 in the Diaconate fund. Motion to accept was made by Jennifer, seconded by Char, and it carried.

Pastor Joel gave his report of visits made. The suggestion was made to him to become more acquainted with more people in town. He also reported that he had been to Freeport to pick up the baby bottles so that we could raise money for Lifeline Coalition, formerly Freeport Pregnancy Center, to help with their work in helping moms choose life for their unborn babies. Pastor Joel will contact them to have a speaker come on the 19th of February.

Old Business

There was discussion about the Thanksgiving Eve service, the Christmas program, the Christmas Eve service, and undocking the church. General consensus was that all went well. And, there was discussion about Sunday School, that we have some new families this year, and that the teachers for the kids are doing a great job.

New Business

The Annual Meeting will be on January 22nd with a potluck lunch. One item to be discussed will be the changes to the Church's Constitution.

The new Diaconate may have a short meeting following the Annual Meeting to vote on officers for the 2023 year—depending on the number of people from the Diaconate in attendance. Karleen mentioned that she will not continue as the Head Deacon.

Ash Wednesday, the beginning of the Lent season, is February 22. Easter is April 9. The question was asked if there will be community services as in the past. Pastor Joel will contact Gary Brown to get the information on what was decided. If the services are hosted by the different churches, we may have a soup supper here in Seward when it's our turn.

Char will be going off the Diaconate this year; Delores Poppen will be coming on after the Annual Meeting. Karleen presented her Annual report for us to look over and all agreed that it was fine.

Adjournment

The motion to adjourn was made by Jacki, seconded by Jennifer, and approved by all. The meeting was adjourned at 9:46 am. The next meeting TBD.

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

Seward Congregational Church
Board of Trustees Meeting
December 21, 2022

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

The meeting was called to order by Peggy Whitney at 6:37 p.m.

Minutes from October and from the special meeting on December 4th were read by Peggy Whitney. A motion to accept the minutes was made by Effie, seconded by Dick, and approved. **Finance** reports were given by Effie and Brenda. A motion to accept was made by Dick, seconded by Peggy, and approved.

Old Business

\$63 Menard's rebate: Dick will use this to purchase the lights that we need.

Willwood plots

Additions to the constitution have been submitted for a vote at the Annual Meeting on January 22, 2023.

Church Mutual insurance was purchased for \$7,176 annually.

Sunday School: Tari made a presentation concerning the Sunday School program and budget. The theme for the current year is F.R.O.G. (Fully Rely On God), and several items were purchased to upgrade the Sunday School. Tari presented two things from an article that she read: to help us build our Sunday School it would help if we 1) Develop a Mission Statement, and 2) Fund the Sunday School. After some discussion about the Sunday School, Dick made a motion to add \$1600 to the Annual Budget for Sunday School, and any amount that is needed over that needs approval from the Trustees. Brenda seconded the motion, and it was approved.

Flooring updates on the rental property. The original bid on the sheet vinyl flooring for this property was \$2600 for the kitchen and hallway. The board decided to include the small bathroom and the kitchenette, and will get a new bid from Floor to Ceiling in Freeport for the whole project.

New Business

Organ repair: it was suggested we set aside money to pay for new "leathers."

Next meeting: January 11, 2023; time TBD.

Church camp: Pastor Joel will check on Pilgrim Park.

Confirmation: Pastor Joel will talk to potential confirmands.

Motion to Adjourn was made by Dick, seconded by Peggy, and approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Pastor Joel for Matt Cowman

Announcements

DIACONATE: TBA

TRUSTEE'S: Will meet on February 15, at 10 a.m. We will meet in the Rose Room

ASH WEDNESDAY: TBA

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

MONTHLY SUMMARY

December

General Fund	Income	\$7,526.72
	Expense	\$ 8,365.11

Monthly Budget \$6,932.75

January-December

\$63,769.28
\$83,853.33

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES



Birthdays

3-Kaitlin Asche, Roger Hilton
8—Lois Ascher
9—Betty Kendell
15-Mary Jane Zipse, Bev Weerda
17-Carrie Vaught (Remer)
18-Joel Hicke
25- Stephanie Cannon

Anniversaries

13-Matt & Jessica Cowman
14-Jim & Karleen Merchant
15-Dennis & Sandy Freedlund
22- Richard & Judy Beuth

February 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13		15 Trustee's 10 a.m.	16	17	18
19		21	22 Ash Wednesday	23	24	25
26 Communion	27	28				