

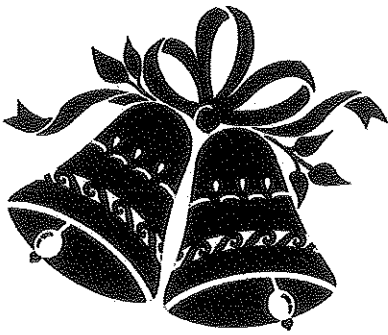
Seward Congregational Church
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*The
Chimes*

December Church News



SEWARD CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
SEWARD, ILLINOIS

Advent—Season of Preparation

Advent is the season of preparation leading up to the birth of Jesus, and also preparing for the second coming of Christ. While the people of ancient times were looking for the promised Messiah foretold in the prophets of old, we today are anticipating the time when our Lord returns to call His bride—the Church—home to be with him.

In the days of old, the people were waiting for Messiah to bring hope, peace, joy, and love to their world, thinking the Messiah would come as their conquering Hero. The One Who would save the world, restore the kingdom of Israel and defeat the Romans once and for all. He was rejected by many because He did not come in the way they thought. He was a lowly, ordinary-looking, man whose strength came from within—something they could not, or would not, understand. How often do we expect something to happen, only to be disappointed because things did not progress as we thought they should? Yet, in the long run, looking back, we see that God's plan was best?

If we have been paying attention at all these days to what is happening in our world, we have certain expectations about how things should be done and what the outcome will be when all is said and done. However, we have the teachings of Jesus Who came to fulfill all those prophecies, and what He showed us is a better way even though we don't think so.

Just the other night, I watched a program on TBN about what has been happening in Israel the last few weeks, and what our response to these events should be—according to scripture. The folks that spoke on this program reminded me that Jesus loves all people equally. That is, He desires that none should perish because of the sin that has entered this world. He knew, though, that there will be those who reject Him and His salvation. He even told us in His Word that if we follow Him, we will be despised and persecuted; and that we should pray for those who treat us in this way. The ones who spoke—Jews and Gentiles alike—prayed not only for the Israelites who have suffered so much, but also for their enemies, that they would know and experience the love of Jesus in their lives.

While we wait, in this season, for the second coming of our Lord, let us remember to be diligent in our walk with Him and to remember that teaching of Jesus that says that we must pray for those who disagree with us, or don't understand us. God's love reaches to all people so for all who claim to be His followers, while we are anticipating our Lord's return with hope, let us extend that hope to all people.

Seward Congregational Church
Board of Trustees Meeting
October 18, 2023

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm.

Present were Peggy Whitney, Effie Hoppe, Brenda Van Hauen, Dick Remer, Matt Cowman, Maury Daubs, and Pastor Joel Hicke.

Opening prayer was offered by Pastor Joel.

The minutes from the September meeting were read by Pastor Joel; Effie made a motion to accept the minutes; the motion was seconded by Matt; the motion carried.

Finance reports were given by Effie, Brenda, and Maury. Matt made a motion to accept all the finance reports; Dick seconded the motion; the motion carried. A CD that matured on 10-5-23 was redeemed. \$15,000 was to be taken from the Franklin Fund to be invested in CD's at 5.5 %. Options were discussed for three CDs at 6, 12, and 18 months. It was suggested that the investment report be given once a quarter.

Pastor's report was given. The suggestion was made that we have someone come out and check out our sound system and streaming system to see if we needed to make any upgrades, including a new computer. Since the beginning of summer, attendance has been down. Visits were asked about; Pastor reported visits to Sandy Freedlund, Ron and Alice Craven; and it was suggested that he see Mary Jane Zipse and Doris Spielman.

Old Business

Labor on the deck at the parsonage will be about \$3000. This was tabled until February or March. We will have a community breakfast on Oct 21 that will be pancakes and sausage. If there are donations at the breakfast, the proposed use is for summer church camps for our SS students. The Pecatonica paper ran stories about our collecting hats and mittens for the Indian Mission in Crandon, WI. To date Maury has received \$325 in outside donations and we have collected at least 175 pieces. We will end this mid-November.

New Business

We looked over the Job Title and description for the Pastor. There was some discussion about the budget for the new year, and will be further discussion at the next meeting.

The next meeting will be November 15, 2023. Matt made a motion to adjourn; Effie seconded, and the motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 8:24 pm.

Respectfully submitted, Joel Hicke

Diaconate Meeting
November 7, 2023

The meeting was called to order at 9:05 A.M. By Jennifer Lloyd, chairperson. Pastor Joel led us in prayer.

Members present: Jennifer Lloyd, Karleen Merchant, Bev Weerda, Delores Poppen, Jackie Cunningham, Shirley Myers, Pastor Joel, and Jean Mennenga.

The September minutes were read. Karleen made a motion to accept and Delores second. Motion carried.

Bev gave the treasurer's report: there is a balance of \$411.98. Shirley made a motion to accept and Jackie second it. Motion carried.

Pastor Joel gave the Pastor report. He handed out papers listing his visits from June through October. He asked about our church hosting a singspiration. After a discussion it was tabled for a later date since March 31 st is Easter Sunday. (Singspiration are usually held the 5th Sunday of a month).

OLD BUSINESS:

- Community outreach breakfast: great event but hopefully next time the date would be set earlier with less conflicts so we would have a bigger turnout.
- Trunk or Treat: discussed about possibly participating at the Pecatonica Harvest Festival next year. We could make bags with candy and include information about Sunday School program and other events.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Thanksgiving Eve worship will be November 22nd at 7:00 P.M. Pastor Joel will invite other churches to our service.
- Advent readers will start on December 3rd. Pastor Joel will give readers material ahead of time. Anyone can volunteer for a Sunday.
- Women's Choir will sing on November 19th.
- December 17th will be the Sunday School Program.
- Christmas Eve Service will be at 9:00 A.M. (there is no Sunday School) and 7:00 P.M.
- Hoppe Memorial Service Saturday November 11th at 11:00 A.M.
- Undeck the Halls on January 7th, 2024 after worship service.
- Annual Meeting will be February 4th after a Pot Luck dinner.

A short meeting will be held after the Annual Meeting on February 4th.

Karleen made a motion to adjourn at 10:25 A.M. Bev 2nd the motion. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jean Mennenga

December 2023

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

Announcements

TRUSTEE'S: Will meet on December 20, at 6:30 p.m. We will meet in the Rose Room

CHRISTMAS PROGRAM: Sunday December 17 will be the children's Christmas Program during the worship service. There will not be any Sunday School on December 24 or December 31.

WORSHIP SERVICE: Our December 24 worship service will be at 9 a.m.

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE: We will have our Christmas Eve service on Sunday December 24 at 7 p.m.

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

MONTHLY SUMMARY

Monthly Budget \$7,026.50

January-October

September

General Fund Income \$53,846.15
 Expense \$ 65,199.71

5,888.04
7,006.18

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

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