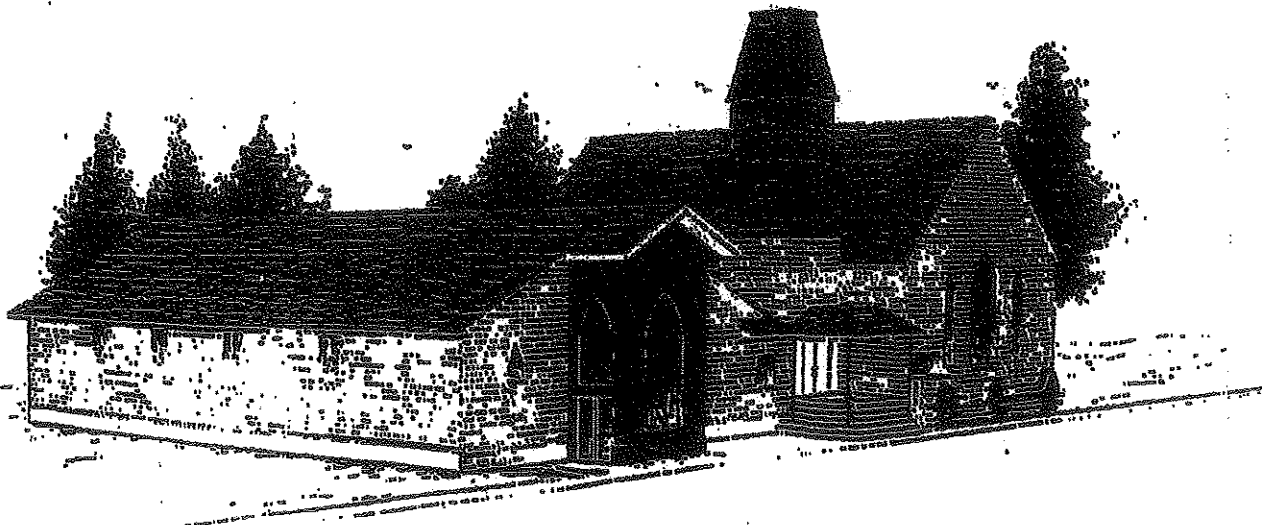
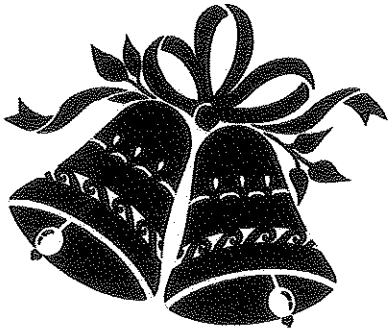


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*The
Chimes*

November Church News



SEWARD CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
SEWARD, ILLINOIS

To Celebrate or Not to Celebrate

There has been a lot of speculation about whether Christians should celebrate Halloween, and how we should do that if we choose to celebrate. The Bible does not say anything specifically about Halloween since there was no such holiday during the time when Scripture was written by those whom God inspired to write.

There are those who say it is a pagan holiday and that the Church started a tradition to combat the evil holiday we call Halloween. November 1st is, on the church calendar, All Saints Day which was started by the Roman Catholic church. "Hallow" (which means holy person) refers to that day, and "een" refers to the eve of All Saints Day.

Why black and orange? One author that I read says that to the Celtic people in Ireland, black signified the death (or end of) summer; and orange was the color that represented harvest in the fall of the year.

The tradition of wearing costumes started because some folks in Ireland—the Celts and the Druids, among others—thought the from sundown on the 31st of October until sundown on the next day was a time that people from the other world could visit the earth once again. So, people began wearing costumes so that the spirits would not think they were humans. However, the Roman Catholic Church began suggesting that the costumes reflect the character of the saints—either Biblical or the recognized saints of the church.

The decorations that people put up for Halloween were to ward off evil spirits so that no harm would come to the people living in those houses. Candy or sweets were left outside to appease those spirits also. The practice of trick or treating has its roots in Scotland and Ireland from at least in the 16th century. The people dressed up in costumes would perform for people and then would be treated with food or some kind of treat. In our country, this is a time to have fun, for people to dress up, and is primarily for the children. I remember in the 60s and 70s when people were finding razor blades in apples or needles/straight pins in candy bars that were given out on Halloween and having to take the candy/treats to have them X-rayed to make sure they were safe. This has gotten way out of hand so that people have to be careful where their children go trick or treating. That's why churches and other organizations have started trunk or treat; and why some communities have limited the time for this activity. Some have even changed the date of these activities.

Anton LaVey, founder of the church of Satan, said, *"I am glad that Christian parents let their children worship the devil at least one night out of the year. Welcome to Halloween."* In other words, according to the church of Satan, participating in Halloween is celebrating Satan and evil. (*Christianity.com*). Since we lived in Colorado Springs for five years and had a neighbor who was a priestess in the Satan-worship, I have been very careful about how I view this seemingly harmless day. Our neighbor told us that on Halloween is when Satan worshippers hold their rituals, offer sacrifices (sometimes animals, sometimes humans), and other ceremonies. We were told by our pastor that Ellen was hidden that night every year so that her former "friends" from the cult could not find her. They wanted her dead so that she could not divulge any information about their practices. Also, all the evangelical, Christian churches would pray for rain or snow that night so that it would be hard or even impossible for the Satanists to hold their rituals.

Since the Bible does not say anything about how we celebrate this day, Christians should follow their conscience about how we celebrate Halloween. Use your best sense of how God would want us to celebrate so that we glorify our Lord and stay away from practices that would imply otherwise. *When you enter the land the Lord your God is giving you, do not learn to imitate the detestable ways of the nations there. Let no one be found among you who sacrifices their son or daughter in the fire, who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead. Anyone who does these things is detestable to the Lord; because of these same detestable practices the Lord your God will drive out those nations before you. You must be blameless before the Lord your God (Deuteronomy 18:9-13). "Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise--the fruit of lips that openly profess his name" (Hebrews 13:15).*

---Musings from Pastor Joel's desk

Announcements

DIACONATE: Will meet on November 7 at 9 a.m.

TRUSTEE'S: Will meet on November 15, at 6:30 p.m. We will meet in the Rose Room

Women's Fellowship: Women's Fellowship will meet on Tuesday, Nov 14th at 9am in Fellowship Hall. We will be doing shut in bags please bring 2 doz cookies. All women are invited to join us.

COMMUNION: Will be on November 26.

CHRISTMAS DECORATING: Sunday, 11/26 after church we will be doing Advent/Christmas decorating. There will be no meal served, just our usual coffee hour. Anyone who can help, it would be greatly appreciated.

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-September

September

General Fund Income \$472958.11
Expense \$ 58,193.53

4,754.00
4,524.30

NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

BIRTHDAYS

ANNIVERSARY

14- Mary Asche

7- Cletus & Effie Hoppe

18-Ella Rose

16-Pastor Joel & Cathy Hicke

22-Jill Viel

30- Robb Klinger

Seward Congregational Church
Board of Trustees Meeting
September 20, 2023

The meeting was called to order at 6:28 pm.

The opening prayer was offered by Pastor Joel Hicke.

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

Finance reports were given by Effie, Brenda, and Maury. **A motion** was made to use the CD that would mature on October 5, 2023, to pay for the repairs to the sewer at the parsonage, and the rest would go into the General Fund to help cover expenses for the church. Brenda seconded the motion, and it carried. Dick made a motion to accept all finance reports, Peggy seconded, and it carried.

Pastor Joel gave a report about the prayer seminar that we attended in Freeport and gave some highlights from that seminar.

Old Business: Don Miller will be at the parsonage by Friday to give us a bid for rebuilding the outside deck. The repair for the sewer system at the parsonage is still being worked out.

New Business: Church policy notebook

Effie made a motion to accept the Safety and Building policy that is in the new notebook. Dick seconded the motion and it carried.

Brenda made a motion to accept the Job Description for Financial Manager, with a couple of corrections in the job requirements section. This will read "the person or persons must have a **general** knowledge of current investment strategies and the ability to work with **professional financial** investment agents to fulfill the investment goals as defined by the general population of the congregation."

The Diaconate will be in charge of Trunk or Treat on October 29, 2023.

The next meeting will be October 18, 2023.

There was a motion to adjourn made by Brenda; seconded by Dick; and the motion carried.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:34 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Joel Hicke

Diaconate Meeting
September 24, 2023

The meeting was called to order at 8:17 by Jennifer Lloyd, chairperson.

Members present: Jennifer Lloyd, Karleen Merchant, Bev Weerda, Delores Poppen, and Jean Mennenga.

May minutes were read. One correction was made. Summer church service started June 4th at 9:00 A.M. Instead of May 28th. Motion to accept the minutes as corrected by Karleen, seconded by Bev. Motion carried.

Bev gave the treasurer's report: there is a balance of \$954.98 in the Diaconate fund. Motion to accept was made by Jean, and Jennifer seconded. Motion carried. (Noted that the bulletin should print that a Diaconate offering basket is available on Communion Sunday.)

OLD BUSINESS:

- VBS went very well. Twenty five children attended throughout the week. Next year we need to plan and set a date earlier.

NEW BUSINESS:

- On September 9th seven church members attended the Seminar: A Culture of Believing Prayer and intercession led by Rev. Ray Delaurier, our Regional Pastor. We should make more prayer time. Also when we have visitors in church, each of us should greet and make them feel welcome.
- Saturday October 21st we will be having a Community Outreach Breakfast. Pancakes and Eickman's sausage will be served. Fliers were given to each household in Seward about the breakfast. People outside of Seward should invite a neighbor or friend. If you have any questions, contact Maury Daubs.
- Sunday School children can wear friendly costumes on October 29th. After Sunday School there will be treats for the children. The congregation can bring treats for this to be in the fellowship hall.
- November 26th after church we will decorate the church. (Normal fellowship)

Next meeting will be November 7, 2023 at 9:00 A.M.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:13 A.M. Karleen made a motion and Jennifer second.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jean Mennenga

November 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7 Diaconate 9 a.m.	8	9	10	11
12	13	14 Women's fellowship 9 a.m. bring 2 dozen cookies	15 Trustees 6:30 p.m.	16	17	18
19	20 Seward Historical Society 7 p.m.	21	22 Decorate for Advent	23	24	25
26 Communion Decorate for Advent	27	28	29	30		