

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*

*June Church News*



June 1<sup>st</sup> is the first day of LGBTQ+ month according to the calendar. I, personally, am saddened that our country has even made this a thing to celebrate. While I disagree with all that the community of LGBTQ+ has become and done to the values of this world, I am reminded that God loves every one of those whom He created. I also believe that God is saddened by the actions and attitudes of those who repeatedly reject Him. This reminds me of the stories in God's Word of the times that He was disappointed in the way that His people that He chose had chosen to disregard those Ten Commandments that He had given to them through Moses. Even while Moses was on the mountaintop receiving those commands, the people grew tired of waiting and built an idol of the golden calf, saying that this was the god who rescued them from Egypt.

Is it that we, collectively in this land, are tired of waiting on God that we have allowed the enemy of our souls to feed us with the things that have poisoned our hearts against the God of the Universe? Are we so afraid of what people will say about us that we do not speak out against those ideologies that are contrary to the Word of God? What does God say about loving people and praying for others?

Jesus told us that we should love others the way the He loves us. That means regardless of political interest, ideology that they embrace, race, or creed, we need to love others—simply because they are human. We do not have to agree with them to love them; love them we must if we are followers of Jesus. He also told us in the Beatitudes section of the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5 that we should pray for those who persecute us or say false things about us.

There should be no fear of persecution because we disagree—from either side of the issue. I have read stories of Christians, in this country, who have treated others as less than they are simply because those folks do not agree. There have been stories of outright hatred (Westboro Baptist Church) from Christians because of lifestyle differences. Is there any wonder that those who call themselves Followers of Christ have been shunned and have made false statements made about us?

Folks, if we are going to see God's Church grow and see new people won to Christ, then we are going to have to love people into the Kingdom. John 15:18-21 says: *<sup>18</sup> "If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. <sup>19</sup> If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. <sup>20</sup> Remember what I told you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also. <sup>21</sup> They will treat you this way because of my name, for they do not know the one who sent me. And John 16:33 says: <sup>33</sup> "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."*

I have a picture of Jesus on my phone that says, "**Focus on Me, not the storm.**" I also have a poster that says, "Don't tell God how big the storm is, tell the storm how BIG your God is."

Musings from the desk of Pastor Joel

## Announcements

**VBS:** June 10-14 from 9:30 a.m.-11 am. Ages 3 through 5<sup>th</sup> grade (just completed).

**TRUSTEE'S:** Will meet on June 19, at 6:30 p.m. We will meet in the Rose Room

**DIACONTE: TBA.**

**SUMMER SCHEDULE:** Mark your calendars for **June 2nd**. We will kickoff our summer schedule by starting with a pancake and sausage breakfast from 7:30-8:45 am, followed by worship. All are welcome at no charge. Freewill donations accepted.

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

### MONTHLY SUMMARY

#### April

General Fund	Income	\$8,528.00
	Expense	\$ 6,030.25

**Monthly Budget \$6,731.92**

#### January -April

\$24,163.00
\$34,327.26

### JUNE BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

#### Birthdays

3—Mary Lou Speracino,  
Nancy Kirby  
8- Joshua Cowman  
12-Ryan Viel  
16-Jessica Cowman  
20- Jacob Hilton  
27- Alena Asche  
29- Aaron Ackerman

#### Anniversaries

5- Allen & Mary Asche  
19-Dick & Char Remer  
30- Maury and Barb Daubs

## April 28<sup>th</sup> Diaconate Meeting

Meeting called to order at 8:31am by Jennifer Lloyd. Present were Jennifer, Julie Glasior, Karleen Merchant, Bev Hilton, Barb Daubs, Delores Poppen and Bev Weerda.

Jennifer opened with prayer.

She welcomed the new Diaconate members; Julie Glasior, Bev Hilton and Barb Daubs.

Bev W. gave Treasurers report, with a balance in checking account of 629.23.

Karleen made motion to approve. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Julie. Motion carried.

Details were given about the National Day of Prayer on Thursday, May 2<sup>nd</sup>. There will be an event in Rockford at First Covenant Church and an event in Freeport at Stephenson County Farm Bureau. All are welcome to attend.

We have gifts for Mother's Day, to be given out to mothers on Sunday, May 12<sup>th</sup>.

Sunday, May 19<sup>th</sup> will be promotion Sunday. It was noted that this is also Pentecost. This will be the last day of Sunday School until the Fall. The Sunday School children/youth will take part in the service that day.

Our summer schedule will start on Sunday, June 2<sup>nd</sup>. We will kick that off with a pancake/sausage breakfast. Serving will be 7:30-8:45am, followed by worship at 9:00am.

We will be hosting Vacation Bible School from Monday, June 10<sup>th</sup>-Friday, June 14<sup>th</sup>. Time will be from 9:30am-11am. Helpers/teachers and kitchen help is needed.

Praise hymns were discussed. We agreed that we would like to see the Praise hymns in the form of videos, with words, scenes and the music performed.

A motion was made by Karleen, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Jennifer to send a donation of \$25.00 to Daily Bread. Motion carried. Our church receives copies every month, without charge, but donations are appreciated.

Respectfully submitted,

Karleen Merchant  
Secretary

Board of Trustees Meeting  
March 21, 2024  
Seward Congregational Church

**The meeting** was called to order at 6:28 pm by Peggy Whitney.

**Present** were Effie Hoppe, Brenda Van Hauen, Matt Cowman, Nancy Kirby, Peggy Whitney, Char Remer, and Pastor Joel Hicke. **Absent** was Maury Daubs.

**Opening prayer** was offered by Pastor Joel.

**The minutes** from the February 2024 meeting were read; Brenda made a motion to approve the minutes as read; Matt seconded; the motion was approved.

**Finance** reports were given by Effie and Brenda. The Sunday School report from Tari and the investment report from Maury were discussed. Char made a motion to approve all reports; Matt seconded; the reports were approved.

**Pastor's** report was given showing the visits he made since the last meeting.

**Old Business**

Discussion about the sound system was tabled until Maury could be here.

**New Business**

There was a discussion about having Sharon Cowman mowing the lawns. Effie made a motion to charge her \$100 less per month during the months that she would be mowing and taking care of some landscaping. Matt seconded the motion; and the motion was approved.

Cleanup day around the church was discussed. Some mulch needs to be added; seeding the lawn on the north side of the parsonage needs to be taken care of. We decided to put river rock in the planter in front of the church.

Organ repair was discussed. We have two bids and we need to decide which bid to accept. It was decided to take this to the church on Sunday, March 24, for a vote following the church service.

After much discussion about the repair of the deck on the south side of the parsonage, Effie made a motion to accept the bid from Don Miller to do this work; Matt seconded the motion; and it was approved.

**April 17, 2024** will be the next trustee meeting.

**Effie** made a motion to adjourn the meeting; Matt seconded; and the motion was approved.

**Meeting** adjourned at 7:48 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Joel Hicke

Board of Trustees Meeting  
April 12, 2024  
Seward Congregational Church

The meeting was called to order at 10:02 am. The purpose of the meeting was to decide who we want to do the work on the organ.

Present were Peggy Whitney, Effie Hoppe, Brenda Van Hauen, Nancy Kirby, Char Remer, Pastor Joel, and Karleen Merchant.

Peggy Whitney opened the meeting with prayer.

After much discussion and comparing the two bids that we received, a motion was made by Char to have Fabry Organs do all three parts of the repairs that are needed at a cost of \$15,563.00. Effie seconded the motion, and the motion was approved.

The decision was made to send letters to church members and friends to ask if anyone would like to make a donation to the fund to do the necessary repairs. Karleen volunteered to hand-deliver a letter to German American Bank in Pecatonica to Mr. Warren Laube.

There was a discussion about starting a Community Outreach Fund. Char made a motion to start this fund following the Ladies' Tea on the 20<sup>th</sup> of April. Nancy seconded the motion and it was approved.

We discussed whether to accept Matt's offer to build the deck with other volunteer help since it would be late fall now or early spring before Don Miller could build the deck.

Char made a motion to adjourn. Brenda seconded, and the motion was approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Joel Hicke

## June 20243

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2 7:30-8:45 Pancake breakfast 9 am worship service	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10  <b>VBS</b> 9:30 -11 a.m.	11  <b>VBS</b> 9:30 -11 a.m.	12  <b>VBS</b> 9:30 -11 a.m.	13  <b>VBS</b> 9:30 -11 a.m.	14  <b>VBS</b> 9:30 -11 a.m.	15
16	17	18	19  Trustee's 6:30 p.m.	20	21	22
23  30	24  31	25	26	27	28	29