


# Illinois Free Will Baptist December 2016 **Newsletter**

 **Merry Christmas  
and a very  
Happy New Year** 

## **HERITAGE CHURCH – Springfield**

Heritage has been busy as usual with Sunday morning Adult Bible Study, our morning service, Sunday evening service and Wednesday evening service.

Our youth have their Sunday School and join the adults for church service where they sing during Children's Moment and have Wednesday evening CTS training.

Our street, Free Will Baptist Drive, will get an upgrade with putting C Pak 6 gravel put down.

Saturday, November 5, the Ministerial Alliance enjoyed breakfast at the Warren Building, then had their meeting.

Sunday, November 20, the Ministerial Alliance had a Thanksgiving Service at Heritage Church.

Thought for the day: "I've been driven to a good attitude by being hit over the head by self-will."

*"And the world is passing away, and the lust of it: but he who does the will of God abides forever." – I John 2:17*

**Pastor: Marcellus Leonard**

**Reporter: Marilyn Guthrie**

## **RESCUE CHURCH – Rural Whittington**

Blessings to you from Rescue Church! In August, our WAC had a Sunday dessert fundraiser with all proceeds going to missions. Then, we had a business meeting after church on Sunday evening. We have Bible Study for our youth group every Wednesday at 6:30 pm.

In September, we had a special offering to help with improvements for the caretaker's home and the girl's dorm at Camp Hope. The girls will love the extra work being done on the dorm.

Traci Kelly had a cake at church one Sunday to celebrate her Aunt Venita Kern's 91<sup>st</sup> birthday! Everyone in the church was happy to be a part of this celebration for a truly great lady.

Our hearts were saddened by the death of Huck Lea, son of Robert and McClain Lea. McClain is so dedicated to her church and has also helped us here at Rescue Church with our landscaping and when our pianist needed help, she filled in for us. Our condolences seem so small, but we deeply love and care for this family.

Thanks to all who came and helped celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Tom and Jane Harmon. There was a great turnout, and thanks to Ginger for her extra help in decorating the tables. Tom and Jane's devotion to our church has been a big part of their life. Jane has served as pianist for 50 years and the call, "Hey, Tom" is a familiar sound when things in the church don't work, leak, stopped up or just need attention. He's always on the job. Our thanks to both of them!

We recently had a Sunday evening at our new church property on Ewing Road. After the service we had a cookout!

On the Saturday before Halloween, the cars and trucks made their yearly trip to Ewing Grade School. People were all dressed up to treat the kids.

Even though this is a little late: *"Thank you to Veteran's that have served, and those now serving on our military." It is a blessing to honor our Veterans. Let us be thankful for the freedom with which God has blessed our country.*

Merry Christmas from Rescue Church...please remember these dates: December 11<sup>th</sup>: Christmas dinner and a visit from you know who, December 13<sup>th</sup>: Tuesday School Christmas Program at 6:00 pm and December 18<sup>th</sup>: Christmas Program during the Morning Service.

*What an awesome God we serve!*

**Pastor: Bryant Harris**

**Reporter: Donna Harmon**

## **BEAR POINT CHURCH – Rural Sesser**

Merry Christmas! May we remember the true meaning of Christmas as we celebrate with family and friends and enjoy the holidays. For pastor appreciation month the church presented Larry and I with a love gift. We very much appreciate our church family and all they do for us.

Our sympathy and prayers are extended to the family of Jim Cox. Brother Jim passed away on October 19. He was our Sunday School superintendent for many years.

We celebrated our homecoming on October 23. Brother Larry Clyatt brought an inspiring message and Glad Heart shared the message in song. A group went to the Judgment House in Harrisburg on October 27. Our church participated in truck or treat at Memorial Park on October 28.

We enjoyed having Jamie Lee and his family with us on October 30 as he shared his burden for planting the work at the Bridge Church in Champaign. Pray for them as they travel and raise their support. The WAC Country Store was on November 5. We did really well and thank all who came to shop and eat. Proceeds will help with the mission projects. On Sunday November 13 we honored our veterans. We are thankful to all those who have served and are serving our country. May God bless each one and our country. Also thankful to those who gave their lives for the freedoms we enjoy today. Our Christmas program will be held on Sunday night December 18 at 6pm.

**Pastor: Larry Cook**

**Reporter: Linda Cook**

## **ARNOLD VIEW CHURCH – Rural Creal Springs**

Average Sunday School attendance during October was 94. We began a Winter Coat Drive. A very successful Teen Lock-In was enjoyed on a recent weekend. It started with a bowling outing at Herrin Bowl, and ended with breakfast around a campfire as the sun was rising. The Women Active for Christ meeting was held on October 12. The Fall Festival was held on October 15 at the home of Steve and Robbie Dwyer. Brother Jamie Lee shared about The Bridge Church on October 16. Brooklyn Jennings was saved that day. A surprise birthday party for Lana Mitchell was held at our church on October 21.

Arnold View's delegates to the South Central District Meeting at Harmony on October 22 were Karen Jones, Joyce Owens and Diane Ryan. Mya Dwyer was baptized on October 23, as Josh Colson performed his first baptism. The Lord's Supper was observed that day. Lorine Bell, 97, passed away on October 23. Bob Jones, 80, died on October 24. Charles Faulkner, 88, passed away on November 4. Condolences to these families.

Trunk or Treat was held on October 29. Keith Orr was part of a medical team that traveled to Haiti and treated hundreds of needy patients. Our 5th Sunday Song Service was a blessing. Christian Skate Night was held on November 7 at Emery Brothers in Marion.

*"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." (John 1:14)*

**Pastor: Ivan Ryan**

**Reporter: Buddy Parks**

## **BLUE POINT CHURCH – Rural Cisne**

Brother Ernie and Suzanne made the trip to Herrin High School to see Welch College play against Morthland College in volleyball. They also made the trip to Champaign on the Ina FWB Church bus to tour the area where Jamie and Heather Lee will establish "The Bridge Church".

The annual Flora Halloween Parade was held on a Saturday evening with beautiful weather. Numerous youth from our church marched in the bands, either from Flora or Cisne schools. The next night we hosted our annual Trunk or Treat at Blue Point. Bill and Christal Lewis, our Junior Church directors, started the evening with a special Children's Program. Then numerous trunks were set up in the parking and a large crowd of young people went through. (A record-setting crowd attended this year.) Bill and Christal, with the help of our teenagers, also held glow-in-the-dark games in "The Link" (our new gym).

On Wednesday evenings leading up the election there have been community prayer services. Blue Point hosted one Wednesday service and our praise team provided the music. Several of our church people have attended each service.

We hosted a benefit dinner for Sonny Smith, one of our men who is battling cancer. Almost 600 people were served and over \$25,000 was raised for their expenses.

Bristol Pennington, newborn daughter of Andrew and Jessica Pennington, made her first appearance at church recently. We have four recently engaged couples. Matthew Byars and Meghan Halley, Kyle Hilliard and Renae Peter, Dale Cailteux and JoAnn Atwood, and Sean Anderson and Angel Davis are all planning to be married.

**Pastor: Ernie Lewis**

**Reporter: Suzanne Lewis**

## **OAK VALLEY CHURCH – Rural Geff**

Greetings from Oak Valley Church

We are finishing the study course "Lord is it warfare? Teach me to Stand" by Kay Arthur and lead by Sister Peggy Barnard. It has been a really good, intense study of Ephesians.

We are participating in a prayer vigil with other churches in the Cisne area praying for our country.

On October 22th we had a CPR class for those desiring to be certified.

The 26th of October, we went to the Brookstone Estates to have worship service with the residents there and we went to the Cisne rehabilitation center for services on November 6th.

We observed Pastor Appreciation Sunday, October 30th, A basket dinner followed morning worship. We are thankful for all Brother and Sister Brown do.

On November 1st several from the church traveled to Bald Knob in Southern Illinois for an outing adventure.

We had a Harvest Blessing Meal on November 19<sup>th</sup> and our Christmas program is set for December 18th. We are looking forward to celebrating Christ's Birth on Christmas Day in our morning service.

As we have had an election and changes, we must remember to pray for our leaders.

*"If my people who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and heal their land." - II Chronicles 7:14*

Be thankful at Thanksgiving, keep Christ in Christmas and have a blessed New Year 2017.

**Pastor: Richard Brown**

**Reporter: Marie Rutger**

## **THE BRIDGE CHURCH - Champaign**

Greetings! We are so blessed to be partnering with the State of Illinois. All the churches have embraced the vision and have contributed to our account. Thank you for your generosity.

On October 29th we had the privilege of taking about 20 people to Champaign to show them the area. Many of them said, "The pictures don't do this area justice. We see the vision!" It was a great day for sure. We left Mt. Vernon around 9 AM and got to Champaign around 11:15. We ate lunch in which the Illinois of Missions provided for all of us. Then we went all the apartment complexes and spent some time in prayer.

We have raised half of our monthly commitment! That is exciting and we praise God for that! We are so thankful for what God has done and continues to do - we are so thankful all of the State of Illinois churches!

**To Him Be The Glory, The Lee Family**

## **HAZEL DELL CHURCH - Rural Sesser**

Blessings to you as we enter this wonderful time of year.

Praise the Lord! We have a pastor. Brother Larry Clyatt was unanimously received as our Pastor on October 23<sup>rd</sup>. We are so blessed to have Brother Larry and Sister Peggy to minister to us.

Brother Brian Gibson spoke during the Morning Worship on October 23<sup>rd</sup> while Brother Larry spoke at Bear Point for their Homecoming service. Thank you Brian for your willingness to fill in when needed.

The Sesser-Valier Ministerial Alliance held their annual Trunk or Treat at the Sesser City Park on October 28<sup>th</sup>.

Brother Clyatt was presented with a monetary gift for Pastor Appreciation. A Pastor/Wife Appreciation Fellowship was held on the evening of October 30<sup>th</sup>. Good food and fellowship was enjoyed by all.

The Men's Prayer Breakfast group met for their monthly meeting on November 6<sup>th</sup>.

We are once again participating in the Operation Christmas Child project. Filled boxes were to be completed by November 21<sup>st</sup>. We also are participating in the Student Assistance Project to purchase clothing and shoes for disadvantaged students at Christmastime. We are so appreciative of those who are willing to participate in these worthwhile projects.

We held a Revival/Bible Conference November 11-13 with Brother Gowdy Cannon as the guest speaker. He is the son-in-law of Brother Mike and Sister Pat Sample. It was a blessing to have Brother Gowdy and Kayla here to minister during this time. Brother Gowdy is Pastor at Northwest Community FWB Church in Chicago.

Brother Rusty and Sister LeeAnn Miller hosted a youth outing at their home on November 13<sup>th</sup>. Thank you to them for working with our youth.

*"O give thanks unto the Lord; call upon his name: make known his deeds among the people." Psalm 105: 1*

**Pastor: Larry Clyatt**

**Reporter: Diana Kirk**

## **FIRST CHURCH - Benton**

News from First Free Will Baptist Church in Benton,  
Praise God from whom all Blessings Flow! The Election is over and maybe everyone you know wasn't happy, we will learn to live with the decision that was made. A lot of prayers went up here and in Israel, so we must recognize God is in control.

Pastor and Tedra Dunford and Gail and Barbara Spencer attended the South Central Quarterly meeting held at Harmony Church. It was a great day for all. We all ate too much, I'm sure. On November 6, we celebrated Fall Days with the Victory Boys Quartet. It was a delightful day with visitors and former members. The turkey and dressing with all the trimmings was delicious. Thanks to Janice Page and Mary Bauer who organized it. The Sunday before had been Pastor Appreciation. Gifts were given to Brother and Sister Dunford and that evening they shared with those who had birthdays or Anniversaries in October in celebrating.

Operation Christmas Child boxes are packed and ready to be delivered. Those who helped Mrs. Marci were three special helpers this year, the Riley Twins and Jaxon Page and occasional help from visitors. The generous benefactor who is underwriting the shipping this year is much appreciated. In a few months, they will learn where their boxes went. The Veterans were recognized in services on November 13. We ask for prayers for our Country, Our New President, especially with the turmoil taking place, Praises to our God who is in control and prayers for healing for all those on our sick list as well as those on each of our Sister Churches.

**Pastor: Kent Dunford**

**Reporter: Barbara Spencer**

## **HARMONY CHURCH – Rural West Frankfort**

As we prepare for this Thanksgiving season, may we fall humbly to our knees in thankfulness, may we lift our voices in praise and worship to the Savior who gave everything for us so that we may be free in Christ.

October 15th Harmony held their annual Harvest Festival. It was a wonderful evening of fellowship with hayride for the children and the adults. It is truly a blessing to be able to come together as a family of God in unity and fun!

October 22nd Harmony hosted the South Central Quarterly Meeting with speaker Brother Tim York. Thank you to all who helped prepare for this event! That evening the teens attended a Big Daddy Weave concert at Marion Civic Center, it was a fun time for the teens (and the chaperones!).

October 30th was Pink Out Sunday at Harmony Church! It was a special day to honor those in our lives who have cancer and to honor the memory of those who have passed on and those who have overcome.

November 1st the SOS and Masters Men held their monthly meeting. Please continue to pray for both of these ministries, that God will use them in a mighty way for His glory!

November 6th The Chosen Ones brought the morning worship service. They had a powerful message to share through praise and testimony! Also, November 6th -13th Harmony Church set up a display in the foyer to honor our Veterans and the sacrifices they have made for our freedom! Thank you to all Veterans for your service, sacrifice, and dedication!

November 13th The Ezra Drama Team performed during the morning service. They performed several skits and each one delivered a powerful message. It is an incredible blessing to see these gifted young people with a heart for the Lord and a strong desire to serve Him and shine their light into this dark world! We are so thankful for Sister Emilee Smith, for her passion and dedication to serving the Lord and boldly shining her light.

*"Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name.*

*For the LORD is good; His mercy is everlasting and His truth endures to all generations." - Psalm 100:4-5*

**Pastor: Curtis Smith**

**Reporter: Jennifer Cook**

## **The Illini Initiative/Penn Family International Missions**

In a season of ever changing scenery I am reminded of the faithfulness of our Heavenly Father. It reminds me of our students. The students are always changing, each and every semester the group looks different. There is a constant ebb and flow to this ministry because of the ever-changing roll of students. There is a faithful constant that remains through this occurrence, and that is that each student who comes has the same need of Jesus. They may come from different nations, speak different languages, and study different majors, but they all need the hope of Christ in their life. We enjoy the process of meeting students and at times it can be tiresome of the constant turnover, but we never get tired of sharing the gospel with those who have never heard.

This semester I started a conversation group on understanding the Bible and Christianity. It has been a great time of sharing with students the truths of the scriptures. *(Continued on Page 5)*

(Continued from Page 4) It reminds me how blessed I am that I was taught the teachings of the Bible as a child. We start at the very basics with these students on how to understand the bible. My goal is to try to give them enough tools to be able to read and have some understanding of the scriptures on their own.

We are excited for the holidays to come. This is a great time of hospitality for our family. We get to have students into our home for Thanksgiving and Christmas traditions. We pray that these times with these students give us a closer connection with these students.

We thank you for your prayer and support of our ministry. We are tasked with the challenge of raising \$3000 a month in the year 2017. We are so thankful for all of the Illinois FWB churches that give to our account. We are looking forward to sharing updates of our ministry. – **Tyler Penn**

### **BAKERVILLE CHURCH – Rural Bonnie**

During this wonderful time of the fall as we reflect over the year, it seems that within this last month we have had several church group outings, happenings, and visitors. Each year our Pastor David Mishler picks out a bible verse for our congregation that we label our year's verse. We recite it together before each of our church services. This year verse is Proverbs 3:5-6: *"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And he shall direct your paths."* There is one thing with having a yearly verse, I find myself saying it not only when in church, but every day.

We took an offering for Camp Hope's building projects/updates and sent a nice offering to help with the projects.

A group of about a dozen people from the church got together and took a trip down to Kentucky to Patti's 1880 Settlement, had some lunch, shopping, and made a day of it.

One of our members Kenzie Rankin gave us a report and showed pictures from her mission trip to Jdioara, Romania. Kenzie has been on this mission trip three times with Speranta Romania Missions, Inc. (Speranta means Hope). This mission group of about 20 people went to the Beraca Orphanage (Beraca means Blessings) and helped with various projects like: painting, cleaning, fixing items, cooking, and chopping wood. Also this time, they helped build an indoor laundry and a drying room in the attic. One of the main things Kenzie said about mission trips is they are definitely eye opening and a great experience. She has a special place in her heart for Beraca, and did not expect for those little kids to have such a huge impact on her, but sure was glad they do!

Tyler Penn stopped by for one of our services to update us on what has been happening with Illini Initiative. Lots of great things happening up there at U of I and we are glad we can help support him and his family's mission.

We also celebrated Pastor Appreciation at the end of October - we are VERY THANKFUL to have Pastor David and Mrs. Cheryl in our church family.

**Pastor: David Mishler**

**Reporter: Tammy Hendricks**

### **PITTSBURG CHURCH – Pittsburg**

Can not believe it is December already!! Time has flown! The holiday season is upon us and the extra time spent with family and friends is here! Buckle up, 2017 is just around the corner!!

November flew by and seems to be coming a distant memory. Our Church Closet was held on Saturday, November 5<sup>th</sup>. The vast majority of the clothing, household, toys and more were gone by the end of the day. It is such a privilege to be able to provide this blessing to the surrounding community. Praising the Father for His goodness!

On Sunday evening November 13<sup>th</sup> we held a Deacon Ordination service for Brother Travis Felty and Brother Doug Parks. There were many family and friends as well as church body that were in attendance to witness this acceptance of the responsibility that a deacon agrees to. Both men were examined and through their proven character were approved by the Father to hold these positions in our church. We are so blessed to have them and thankful for their service. Welcome to the Fish Bowl guys!

Operation Christmas Child boxes are filled, dropped off and on their way to a child somewhere around the world. Such a great way to reach children and their families with the Gospel of Christ. Building treasures for heaven one shoebox at a time ☺ Our Journey AWANA group helped fill the boxes on Wednesday night, November 16<sup>th</sup> during class time as a service project. They enjoyed their time getting to help and be a part of something bigger than themselves. Thankful we can give them that opportunity.

Our building project is progressing quickly. The shell of the sanctuary is complete and the metal siding is on. The steeple has been moved and the roof is close to being put on. It is rapidly coming together. The crew is working hard to beat the winter weather that is close to arriving. It won't be long now and we will be holding services in the new building! Drive by and take a peek!

Praying for blessings for you, your family, and your church for the rest of this year and the year to come. May God be glorified in all we do!

**Pastor: Eddie Donelson**

**Pastor: Keith McDannel**

**Recorder: Christina Wilcox**

# Illinois Free Will Baptist December 2016 Newsletter

Illinois State Association of Free Will Baptists  
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Bonnie, Illinois 62816-0001

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## FIRST CHURCH - Johnston City

Thanks to a sizable donation in memory of one of our former members and the faithfulness of our current members, we were able to purchase a handicap-accessible bus. It's a like-new 2012 model that seats 17 passengers plus 2 wheelchairs or 19 passengers and 1 wheelchair. We had a special dedication service for the bus, November 6. We concluded the service by surrounding the bus with a circle of prayer. After the prayer, we enjoyed lunch together, and after lunch, those who wanted to ride around town on the bus had the opportunity to do so. The first ministry voyage for the bus was Wednesday night, November 9, when we took our student mini

to the home of Bob and Dinah Dobbs for a wiener roast. We plan to use the bus to pick up students for our Wednesday night youth programs beginning November 30. Our adults also are looking forward to taking some field trips just for fellowship in the near future. And of course, next summer, the bus will pick up children for JC Kids' Lunch Bunch, our summer meals program in June and July.

Tyler Penn and his family were with us November 13. We enjoyed hearing about his ministry to international students at the University of Illinois. At the conclusion of the service, our pastor baptized Hunter Clark. Hunter has been attending our church for a few weeks and has been meeting with our pastor for discipleship. We are thrilled that God has brought this young man into our ministry.

A lot has happened at our church since our last report to the Illinois Newsletter. Our summer meals program fed 50-75 kids each day in June and July. In August, some of our teens went to Chicago for a weekend to help Daniel Mann and his family at the Living Hope Free Will Baptist Church in Skokie. Last month, three of our teens and four of our leaders attended the Grounded youth conference in Nashville. They were privileged to hear Christian apologist Josh McDowell and his son Sean.

Reba Ritter, our former church reporter, had to miss church 14 Sundays in a row due to illness. God blessed her with renewed strength, and she came back to church October 30 and hasn't missed a Sunday since then.

**Pastor: Keith Fletcher**



2017

*from*

*David and Pat Shores*