



ILLINOIS FREE WILL BAPTIST

NOVEMBER 2021

# NEWSLETTER

A monthly publication for Illinois Free Will Baptist families

## ILLINI INITIATIVE / BRIDGE CHURCH

**Campus Leader: Tyler Penn**

It has been an exciting time around here in Champaign-Urbana this fall. There are several things that I am pleased to share with you concerning our ministry here. These are items that just this spring were of big concern to us, but God has provided.

First the Bridge Church here in Champaign has a new Pastor. Pastor Ed Goode and his wife Rachel will be with us at the end of October. This is such an answer to prayer. There was much concern as to what would happen to the Bridge Church if no one would come to be the next Pastor. Thankfully we don't have to worry about that now. Ed and Rachel have such a big heart for the church and seeing it be used for God to reach the Nations.

Next our international student ministry has had quite the rebound. This summer we began in person meetings again for the first time in over a year and we had one student show up. Fast forward to September 11th and we had 50 international students at our home for a cookout. There are some areas that are still going through the rebuild process but we are super excited that the international students are coming to the English Corner.

The Bible Study is an area of prayer. We have

had some inconsistent attendance so far this semester. One person to really pray for is a Russian lady who is really opening up to the scriptures. She just told me this last week after missing several weeks due to a scheduling conflict that she really misses it and we will be finding a time that works best for her. Please join me in prayer for her and God's pursuit of her heart.

Finally our kids have been an area of concern for us going into this new school year. They all were starting a new school. It has been a big relief to hear all of them share about how they really enjoy their time at school and the friendships they are making.

With the coming of Pastor Ed I will now be heading out to travel on Sundays to raise some support for our ministry. I am super thankful for all of you who continue to support our reaching out to the international students at the University of Illinois. It was so encouraging to hear from pastors that their church were using creative ways to help out our ministry, like V.B.S.

I am truly thankful for all who have lifted us up in prayer to keep the Bridge Church going. Your prayers with ours have been answered. I am truly excited to see what God will do with this ministry here patterning with our outreach to the students.

## CLOSING SERVICE FOR OAK GROVE CHURCH

On Saturday, November 13th Oak Grove FWB Church will be holding its 107th and final Homecoming. It is holds many wonderful memories along with some sad.

For this celebration of 107 years we are inviting our Free Will Baptist family to join us on Saturday November, 13th at 5 PM. Supper will be served, memories shared, and singing by the Gospel Messengers.

If you cannot attend and would like to share a memory please call Debbie at 618-218-3328 or send an email at [dkash\\_5@hotmail.com](mailto:dkash_5@hotmail.com).

## HARMONY CHURCH

**Pastor: Bruce Thurman Reporter: Cody Alstat**

Greetings from Harmony we hope everyone is doing great! The leaves are starting to change their colors and that can mean only one thing!

Christmas is right around the corner. If you know me, Christmas is my favorite holiday. When I submitted this newsletter just to let you know there is only 68 days until Christmas. On September 26<sup>th</sup> we held our Quarterly Birthday & Anniversary Meal after evening worship, it was wonderful to be able to have the great fellowship and awesome cooking from our ladies of the church.

Emily Petty, an International Missions Intern provided us a little information about her upcoming ministry in Japan on October 3<sup>rd</sup>. The men of the church cooked Breakfast on October 3<sup>rd</sup> to kick off Pastor's Appreciation Month.

On October 9<sup>th</sup> we had a Fish Fry at the church and there was around 70 in attendance. Thank you to Brother Dick for cooking and providing the fish and to everyone that prepared a dish that night. Please keep our church in your prayers, On Sunday October 17<sup>th</sup>, during our morning worship, Brother Bruce Thurman announced that he will be leaving our church on October 31<sup>st</sup>. Please keep them in your prayers during their transition and also our church for the search for our new pastor.

*"The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit."- Psalm 34:18*

## ARNOLD VIEW CHURCH

**Pastor: Adam Brown Reporter: Buddy Parks**

Greetings from Arnold View! Average Sunday School Attendance during September was 74. The Women Active For Christ Meeting was held on September 15. A group from our church attended the SIU-Dayton Football Game on September 18, which was Faith & Family Night. The Salukis downed the Flyers 55-3. Kelly Kennedy, 49, passed away on September 18. Condolences to her family. We viewed the film "I Still Believe" on September 19. Cornhole Tournament and Competition Cookoff were held on September 26. William Earl Parks was on a recent Honor Flight to Washington, DC. Thank you for your service, William Earl. The WAC Ladies Tea and the Youth-Led Service were held on October 3.

*"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart;  
and lean not unto thine own understanding.  
In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct  
paths." – Proverbs 3:5-6*

## WALTONVILLE CHURCH

**Pastor: Mark Wells Reporter: Chris Kuhner**

This last month we were at church more than we were at home! Tina and Marly Fairchild spent more time with us than most of the church and we had a great time too. We helped set up for a bake sale and a clothes give away at church for the Fall City Wide Yard Sale. We had at least two truckloads of clothes that we set out and had to give away or you could give donations to our food pantry.

On the 24<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup>, the Lord blessed us over and beyond. We even had three of our little ones set up a lemonade stand and made \$15.00 dollars also.

Our homecoming was great, Brother Bruce Thurman brought the message and we had a lunch fit for a king! The quartet, Riven sang in the afternoon. They were a very good group if you need a singing group. On the 29<sup>th</sup> we had our food pantry open again and we were able to give out food to 12 or 13 families of 40 plus people. God keeps blessing us over and over again.

We are planning another bake sale on the 11<sup>th</sup> of November and having a float in the parade that day, so come on over to Waltonville as we celebrate Veterans Day together.

## PITTSBURG CHURCH

**Pastors: Eddie Donelson and Keith McDannel**

**Reporter: Heather Phillips**

*"Livin' All for the SON in 2021"*

Can you believe October is already over?! October is always a busy month at PFWBC. On October 3, we had a great time celebrating our 114<sup>th</sup> Homecoming with a wonderful service featuring music by Endless Highway. Then to top it off after the service we had an amazing fish fry meal with more sides and desserts than the eye could see! We appreciate all of the people who put forth effort to prepare for a meal of this size; it is not an easy task!

Our monthly "HE KEEPS ME SINGING" was held Tuesday, October 12. This month's theme was "Are You Ready?" We had lots of good music, lots of terrific scriptures from God's Word, and a special speaker who brought a devotion. The next "HE KEEPS ME SINGING" will be on November 9, in the PFWBC Chapel, at 6:30pm. If you have not joined us yet for one of these meetings, we hope you will join us this month. From all the reviews from last month's program, you will be happy you made the effort to be here!

Christmas is approaching quickly and we all know the needs that come with the holiday season.

*(Continued on Page 3)*

(Pittsburg Church continued from Page 2)

We are preparing to fill and send in shoeboxes through Operation Christmas Child this month. Each year our congregation fills multiple shoeboxes that are given to children across the world. The mission of Operation Christmas Child is to demonstrate God's love in a tangible way to children in need around the world. Through this project, Samaritan's Purse partners with the local church worldwide to share the Good News of Jesus Christ and make disciples of the nations. The amazing journey of a shoebox gift begins with US and results in evangelism, discipleship, and multiplication. Mark 10:14 says, *"Let the children come to Me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God."* It is an amazing outreach and we are so excited to be able to participate!

We are praying everyone has a great November and a Happy Thanksgiving! Let us remember and celebrate our blessings of 2021. Our Heavenly Father is so good to us, and we need to praise and thank Him daily!

*"I will give thanks to you, Lord, with all my heart; I will tell of all your wonderful deeds."- Psalm 1:9*

## HAZEL DELL CHURCH

**Pastor: Curtis Smith Reporter: Diana Kirk**

Happy Fall, everyone! I always look forward to this beautiful season that God blesses us with.

We held "Church in the Park" on Sunday, September 19<sup>th</sup> at the Sesser Miner's Park. Good worship, food and fellowship was enjoyed by all. Thank you to Brother Mike Sample for grilling the hamburgers and hot dogs for the noon meal.

Our Homecoming services were October 9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> as we celebrated 107 years of ministry. Preaching and singing was by Brother Jim McComas, Director of Free Will Baptist Family Ministries. Also, Sister Diana Harrison, Molly and Zach sang a special. We were unable to have our noon "feast" this year due to the fact that we are having church services in our fellowship hall while the auditorium is under remodeling. Also, work has begun for our new parking lot on the north side of the church.

We have restarted our Senior Meals, twice monthly. If you know of anyone who would enjoy having a meal delivered to them, contact Brother Curtis and he can give you the dates for these meals.

*"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." Proverbs 3:5-6*

## BEAR POINT CHURCH

**Pastor: Gowdy Cannon Reporter: Mona Lappin**

The Cannons were in Florida this past weekend to celebrate Hunter (Sister Kayla's brother) and Presley's wedding. It was a beautiful occasion and they report everyone had a great time. Congratulations to Hunter and Presley and may God richly bless your marriage. While Pastor Gowdy was away Brother Johnny Hollis filled in by bringing the morning message. His topic was "Anger: Reasons and Effects", with his key verse being Psalm 103:8. Justin led the singing and Jennifer played the piano. Gowdy said it wasn't the B - Team, they are all The A-Team, but Jessica and I decided they were the J-Team...and no one left angry after the service!

The youth fried pies on their day off from school on October 11th. 22 showed up to help and they fried 550 pies! They fried the traditional apple, cherry, and peach, and experimented with a couple of new ones-custard and pumpkin. Sister Chrissy is planning to take the youth to The Judgement House in Harrisburg at the end of the month. Chrissy will also be collecting candy to be passed out at the Ministerial Alliance Trunk or Treat at the park on October 30th.

Bear Point is CELEBRATING 150 years! The church was established in 1871, with the current church being built in 1961. Homecoming service was held on October 24th at 10:30. Former Pastor, Brother Larry Cook, who pastored here for 36 years- nearly a quarter of the church's history brought the message. Music was provided by The Peyton Sisters, and an afternoon meal followed the service.

We also want to CELEBRATE GOD'S GOODNESS with the good news of little Liam's MRI. His 5th MRI showed his brain mass is shrinking! Praise God! If it shrinks again they will rule it out as a tumor. They were nearly a 100% sure it was a tumor just a year ago. This little guy whose walking was slightly delayed...is now running and dancing at weddings! (FB video) Hallelujah!

*"However, God has listened; He has paid attention to the sound of my prayer, May GOD BE PRAISED! He has not turned away my prayer or turned His faithful love from me." - Psalm 66:19-20*



***Give Thanks to GOD!***

## **BLUE POINT CHURCH**

**Pastor: Ernie Lewis Reporter: Suzanne Lewis**

Brother Ernie was able to attend part of the Master's Men Retreat and hear speaker Eric Martin. Suzanne was able to attend the Saturday session of the Ladies Fellowship and enjoyed hearing speaker Diana Bryant.

Brother Ernie was also able to attend a Pastor's Breakfast held at the Bonnie Café at the Mt. Vernon Airport. Both were able to attend the East Central District meeting at the Oak Valley Church. Brother Ernie gave the devotion and the missions report and Harlen Johnson was our speaker.

Several of our students took part at the 'See You at the Pole' at the Cisne High School by either praying or reading scripture. Blue Point provided donuts and drinks for all in attendance. Our teens also enjoyed a wiener roast and hayride at the home of Steve and Rachel Paul. A great group of teens and adult chaperones attended.

The Wayne County chapter of Quilts of Valor spent a full day sewing at the Link. A group of about twenty-five ladies are currently working on quilts for Korean War Veterans. We recently held our Annual Chili and Chowder. Due to the drizzly weather, the delicious soups were cooked under our large carport and everyone ate in the Link.

We recently celebrated our 124th Anniversary with special Homecoming Services. "The Redemptions" was the special singing group for the day. Our own Vicki Gifford, Caleb Barnard, Connie McGrew, Beth Hilliard, Jessica Pennington, Bryce Henry, and Kim Cook harmonized on a beautiful special. Former pastor David Shores spoke in the morning service. A delicious potluck lunch was enjoyed on beautifully decorated tables in the Link.

We offer our congratulations to Jordan and Julia Hosick. They were married in September in a beautiful outdoor wedding ceremony.

---

We welcomed the Wanda Mountain Boys to our church on Sunday evening, September 26<sup>th</sup>. They presented a great concert of praise to the Lord which was appreciated by all who attended. Brother David, Brother Craig and Brother Tommy Stief attended the East Central District at Oak Valley Church.

Brother David also spoke at the Blue Point Church for their 124<sup>th</sup> annual Homecoming. The Master's Men hosted a Fish Fry on Saturday evening, October 16<sup>th</sup>. Brother Ed Ferguson and Brother Randy Bernard cooked fish they had caught down in Kentucky. The food was delicious and the fellowship was wonderful.

Please pray for our church as they select a new pastor. Brother David will be stepping down from that position at the close of the year.

## **FIRST CHURCH – BENTON**

**Pastor: Phillip Kennedy**

Greetings brothers and sisters in Christ! We are so thankful for this fall weather!

The Adult Camp meeting went really well! Dr. Eddie Moody did a fantastic job! Pastor Phillip also enjoyed the Tuesday Pastor's breakfast with other church leaders at Ina Free Will Baptist Church. That week was such a full week! Thursday, Friday and Saturday of that same week was the Masters Men Retreat. It was a blessing to be with other men of God and hear from the Lord at Camp Hope! Mike Thomas' BBQ is always a hit!

The following weekend (September 24 & 25) was the W.A.C. Retreat. Some of the ladies from our church enjoyed attending! They had a lot of great food, lessons and fellowship.

Pastor Phillip Kennedy also attended the Pastor's boot Camp in Nashville TN put on by North American Ministries (N.A.M.), while there He also got to visit Welch College during Chapel and visit with several of our students there from Illinois.

On October 3rd we had our Annual Church Picnic! We had it on the church grounds. It was so nice to worship the Lord together outside and the weather for it was fantastic! We also have had several first time guests with us on Sunday mornings! Pray that they will return and keep coming.

Pray with us for those that have been sick. As we are praying for your Churches as well!



## **FIRST CHURCH - MOUNT VERNON**

**Pastor: David Shores Associate Pastor: Craig Smith**

Our hearts were saddened last month when our brother, John Bumpus passed away. He had been in our church about two years and was active in Master's Men, Sunday School and other activities in the church. Also, Brother Craig's father, Donald Smith passed away. Amanda Crider's sister, Susan, also went to be with the Lord. We send our condolences to these families.

**AN OPEN LETTER TO ILLINOIS from Roger Bennett, Regional Representative for Welch College**  
(Comments written about the 2021 Master's Men Retreat)

I always enjoy being with God's people in Illinois. They just live for Jesus – easily and openly. They share their Christianity by caring for one another. The young people, small young kids, were well behaved. They did not disturb any of the services they were attending or the activities which were going on. They were never in the way. They had no trouble eating what was prepared for the adults. I was impressed with the kids!

I could not participate in the shooting this year. It was like the country song, "This nine pound hammer was a little too heavy for my size." I had not fired a gun since I had lost weight. I am glad I had a helper there to catch me!

The folks enjoyed the information about Welch College and I was glad to do it. We have a wonderful college, the alumni are reaching people around the world with the Word of God. Jesus is blessing people because of Welch College: be a part of it, reach outside yourself, "for tomorrow the LORD will do wonders among you." – Joshua 3:5

I love the Master's Men Retreat and all the campers. God bless you – Roger



**BITS and PIECES of NEWS ABOUT CHURCHES and PASTORS**

A "Welcome to Illinois!" to Brother **Ed Goode** and his wife, **Rachel**.

They are now in Illinois and will serve the Bridge Church in Champaign.

...and we say, Good bye and God bless you to the pastor at the Harmony Church in West Frankfort, Brother **Bruce Thurman** and wife, **Pat**.

Brother **Jeff Pope** will soon be moving to Illinois from Indiana and will become the pastor at the Crossroads Church in Effingham.

Brother **Gilbert Craig** is now serving as Interim Pastor at the Bakerville Church

New Hope Church and Heritage Church are seeking a pastor.

Pastor **John Hollis** and Pastor **David Shores** have resigned their churches at the end of the year.

**5 BLOCKS  
OF  
WORKSHOPS**

Pastors: Plan to attend the  
**LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE**

December 6 – 7, 2021  
"Equipped for HIS Work"  
Speaker: Dr. Thom Rainer  
Registration closes Friday, November 19

**QUESTION  
AND  
ANSWER  
PANELS**

*Happy Thanksgiving!*



Illinois Free Will Baptist November 2021

# NEWSLETTER

Illinois State Association of Free Will Baptists  
P.O. Box 1 Bonnie, Illinois 62816-0001

U. S. Postage Paid  
Non-Profit Org.  
Bonnie, Illinois  
Permit Number 1

OR CURRENT RESIDENT

*The deadline for news articles for publication in the December issue of the Newsletter is November 15.  
Please address all correspondence to [davids@myfreewillbaptist.org](mailto:davids@myfreewillbaptist.org)*

