



ILLINOIS FREE WILL BAPTIST

FEBRUARY 2021

# NEWSLETTER

A monthly publication for Illinois Free Will Baptist families



**Pastor Adam Brown with wife, Amanda and daughter, Ella Kate**

## ARNOLD VIEW CHURCH

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

Arnold View Church has a new pastor. After serving as Assistant Pastor for a couple of years, the church voted to call this young man to serve as the leader of their congregation. The church invites you to attend the ordination service for Brother Adam on January 24<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 pm at the Arnold View Church. Brother Adam is married to Amanda, and is the father of Ella Kate. We pray for God's blessings upon their ministry. Average Sunday School attendance during December was 93. Brother Ivan Ryan brought his last message as our Pastor on December 27. Several people participated in a video thanking Brother Ivan and Sister Diane for their several years of service to our church and community.

Brother Ivan served as our Pastor 1975-1983 and 1997-2020. We wish you the best in your retirement. Well done, my friend!! We didn't have in-person services the first two weeks of 2021, due to COVID-19 concerns.

## BLUE POINT CHURCH

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

Due to Covid our Junior Church workers had to be very innovative in presenting a Christmas Program for the church. By videotaping the various children doing their individual parts, they were able to present a delightful program entitled "The ABC's of Christmas". After the service that morning our ushers passed out treat bags to those in attendance. We also delivered them to several people who are choosing to watch our services online. That evening we hosted our Annual Candlelight Service with a good crowd in attendance.

Missionary Josh Bennett from Tifton, Georgia was in our services over the holidays and gave a report of the Awaken Church plant there. They have been doing well with regular services and are planning a major outreach in the coming months involving a food truck to feed the community.

Brother Ernie and Suzanne were able to attend the East Central District quarterly meeting held at the Crossroads Church in Effingham. On Sunday evenings Brother Ernie is preaching a series of messages dealing with the church covenant.

## PRAY FOR THE 2021 ILLINOIS STATE ASSOCIATION OF FREE WILL BAPTISTS

MARCH 18-20, 2021

HAZEL DELL FREE WILL BAPTIST CHURCH – SESSER, ILLINOIS

*Details concerning the meeting will be announced in next month's Illinois Newsletter*

## **WALTONVILLE CHURCH**

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

It has been two or three months since we shared with the newsletter. Waltonville has had a few things happen. We had a float in the Waltonville Veterans Parade, and may I say it was the best one! On November the 11th we also had a bake sale. There was a very good turn out and we had a lot of fun. The Bake sale did very well also.

We had no church services the last week of November and the first week of December due to covid. There were about ten or twelve of us that tested positive. Hoping and praying that's all of that. We were able to send out a number of shoe boxes this year as well. We were also able to get some gifts for some kids that were on the angel tree.

God has blessed us this past year despite all that we went through. Tammy and I have started our second year here as pastor. We desire all of your prayers as we continue to move forward. We have had our awning that is over the front doors repaired right here at the end of the year. If you take a look at what God has done at our church this last year with no services and starting an online church with facebook, that might not have happened if not for the covid. May God Richly Bless us all in the New Year!

## **HARMONY CHURCH**

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

Greetings from Harmony, we pray that everyone is doing well and staying safe. We forgot to mention earlier last year that Sister Irma Jean Stone passed away on November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020 at the nursing center she was staying at. Please continue to keep in your prayers her family and her husband. Our Pastor's sister, Angela Hill, was baptized back around Thanksgiving weekend when she was down to visit for the holidays. On January 12<sup>th</sup> we started our Masters of Men and Sister of Strength meetings back up on Tuesday evenings, this is a great fellowship! We held during our last service of 2020 a communion service. We are still recording messages for Facebook and have installed a radio remote broadcast for the ones that are not able to make it to church. We pray everyone has a safe 2021!

*"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.*

*It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.*

*Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth!" - 1 Corinthians 13:4-6*

## **HAZEL DELL CHURCH**

**Pastor: Curtis Smith   Reepporter: Diana Kirk**

Happy New Year to all. Looking forward to God's blessings in 2021.

Our night of Christmas caroling was a success. The weather cooperated as we visited 10 homes to share Christmas joy. What a blessing for us and them!

Our children performed a Christmas play for us on December 20<sup>th</sup>, under the direction of Sister Diana Harrison. They did an awesome job! Special music was performed by Sister Sydney Lewis and Brother Kaleb Miller as they shared, "Mary, Did You Know". Sister Diana Harrison also sang a solo. We are so thankful for these people who share their special talents with us.

We have begun our Senior Meals again. So thankful for those who plan, prepare and deliver these meals. We usually serve 25-30 people each time.

Plans are being made for a youth outing to Mt. Vernon for laser tag and there is a Valentine's banquet being planned.

God's blessings to you all. Stay safe. Best wishes for a blessed new year.

*"And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith." - Luke 17:5*

## JCITY CHURCH

**Pastor: Keith Fletcher**

JCity Church Reviews God's Blessings in 2020

The four Sundays before Christmas, we celebrated Christ's first coming focused on the theme "The Weary World Rejoices." Several guests from the community joined us in person and online for a candlelit communion service Christmas Eve. The last Sunday of 2020, Pastor Keith prepared an online "Celebration of God's Faithfulness." This streaming video included the quote, "THE CHURCH NEVER CLOSED. WE ADAPTED... We found new ways to worship and new ways to serve a broken world." We'd like to share a few of the year's highlights with Illinois Newsletter readers.

In March, we didn't close but moved services online during the statewide shut-down. Most Sundays, our pastor and praise team met at church to provide a live feed on Facebook. Three Sundays we met on the parking lot. One outdoor service was held at Arrowhead Campground where we met a new family who now regularly attends. After restrictions eased somewhat, we resumed in-person services (with social distancing). We continue providing both online and limited in-person opportunities. Sunday morning services are available live online on Facebook, YouTube, and jcitychurch.com beginning at 10:30 am each week. We still provide conference call prayer meetings and a radio signal in the parking lot during our services.

Our church became well-versed in serving "outside the box." We offered community drive-thru meals at the start of the pandemic until our summer meals program began in May. Our 11th summer of Lunch Bunch was like no other. Counting drive-through meals, we served about 20,000 meals. During Lunch Bunch, 10,700 "to-go" meals were delivered by bus, volunteers' vehicles, or picked up by parents through mid-August. Since Lunch Bunch usually includes activities, we provided children printed Bible lessons and crafts each day. Volunteers kept the church copier humming. God amazingly and abundantly provided food and funds needed to keep this ministry going in spite of shortages and shut-downs. Grants and reimbursements covered extra equipment, and God led even more of our members to get involved serving our community.

We mostly avoided COVID in spite of ongoing ministries bringing us mask-to-mask with many people. Our congregation has largely been spared. God protected our two oldest members in care facilities (Reba Ritter and Lucille Johnson) and most others with underlying health problems. Unrelated to the pandemic, faithful church member Donnie Phillips ended a 3-year battle with pancreatic cancer and is now rejoicing without pain in heaven.

A final blessing in 2020, we moved toward the fulfillment of an 8-year old vision of our church launching a non-profit community center. December 30, we signed a contract to purchase the former First Christian Church parsonage (next door to our parking lot on Broadway) which will house "JCity Center for Hope and Renewal." In God's perfect timing, He opened a door for us to launch Saturday night Celebrate Recovery meetings January 9. These will complement counseling, coaching, mentoring, and support groups that, God willing, will begin this year at the Center for Hope and Renewal. A timely grant from Arby's Foundation provided funds to raze the old Happy Time Day Care building and create a Lunch Bunch play area adjacent to the church and new property.

We know people the world over experienced trials (and blessings) in 2020. But we chose to see problems as opportunities for God to display His faithfulness and grace. We can't wait to see what He has in store for us in 2021.

*"It is of the LORD's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness." - Lamentations 3:22-23*

## RESCUE CHURCH

**Pastor: Bryant Harris Reporter: Donna Harmon**

Hello from Rescue. All of our thoughts and blessings go to those dealing with Covid, and all that have so many worries with it. Gathering knowledge and using prevention makes good practice for protecting our health and we know that God is with us all. This week we lost Tom and Ted's brother, Max Harmon, due to Covid. Our condolences go to all the Harmon families. Tom Harmon had surgery this week, and is now back home. "Help us, Father, in 2021 with our personalities, lifestyles and our journey with You"...

*What an awesome God we serve!*

Illinois Free Will Baptist February 2021

# NEWSLETTER

Illinois State Association of Free Will Baptists  
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*The deadline for news articles for publication in the March issue of the Newsletter is February 15.  
Please address all correspondence to [davids@mffreewillbaptist.org](mailto:davids@mffreewillbaptist.org)*



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