



ILLINOIS FREE WILL BAPTIST

JULY 2021

# NEWSLETTER

A monthly publication for Illinois Free Will Baptist families



## JONATHAN PAYNE ORDAINED TO THE MINISTRY

Jonathan Payne (left) is shown receiving his Ordination Credentials from Brother David Mishler, a member of the Rend Lake District Ordination Committee. Brother Payne recently graduated from Welch College in Gallatin, Tennessee.

Ordination services were conducted at the Ina Church May 30<sup>th</sup> with Brother Brad Ryan hosting and moderating the meeting. Congratulations and God's blessing to Brother Payne and his wife, Destinee, as they begin their ministry for the Lord.

## MEXICO MISSION

A group from Illinois traveled to Del Rio, Texas to build the garage in which they are standing includes Ross Bunton, Tim Pierce, Jason Janus, Daniel Pierce, John Lewis, Randy Bernard, Bryant Harris and Amado Gonzalez. They also worked across the border in Mexico. Working with the Bridge Builders for the Cross, they also delivered a van donated by the Hazel Dell Church and a handicap accessible van donated by Rod and Kathy Hutchins. God bless the work of these dedicated workers!



## THE WNAC BOARD IS ASKING FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE

The WNAC board has not been satisfied with the results of the application process for the director search. Therefore, the board has taken a proactive approach to seek potential candidates. The salary package is being adjusted and the director's role transformed to fulfill the vision of Free Will Baptist women's ministry. If you know a dedicated Christian lady who desires to serve and meets the necessary criteria for nomination, please complete the form found at [wnac.org](http://wnac.org) under "Director Search." Or feel free to contact any WNAC Board member with your nomination. We would appreciate your prompt response. Thank you for your participation and prayers for WNAC. - Lee Ann Wilfong Search Committee Member

## JCITY CHURCH

**Pastor: Keith Fletcher**

We are so thankful for God's blessings on our community outreach ministries. Lunch Bunch (our summer meals program) began May 24 and continues through August 6. God continues to multiply our "loaves and the fishes" as other ministries donate food to keep the pantry and freezers full. We provide meals for over 100 kids and several elderly in the community every day. Our wonderful crew of volunteers from our church and other congregations in town prepare, package, deliver, and hand out both delicious meals and Bible lessons and activities each week day and include weekend breakfast foods on Fridays. On Saturday evenings, we also serve a free drive-thru meal for the community from 5:30 to 6:00. This is during the time we serve supper for participants in Celebrate Recovery, which meets at our church 6:00-8:00 every Saturday.

Momentum for our newest ministry, JCity Center for Hope and Renewal, is starting to build. Beginning in September, we will offer support for those with addictions through a sister nonprofit organization, Take Action Today. This organization has secured generous grants for startup costs and three full-time peer-level addiction counselor/coaches for the first year. Our goal is to work with volunteers and other agencies to connect individuals, families, and children with mentors, counselors, and resources that can help them with emotional/mental health, relationship issues, addictions, financial problems, and inadequate housing.

We are planning a grand opening event on a Saturday in October.

Our pastor's brother, Larry Milligan, passed away unexpectedly May 14. He was 76 and died of an apparent heart attack. Please pray for the family.

## RESCUE CHURCH

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

Hello from Rescue Church! There are no words to express the importance of Memorial Day every May. We are thankful for all the parades and remembrances of the Veterans who gave so much to their country. Help us also to remember the paralyzed Veterans.

Our condolences to the family of Walter Freeman who passed away May 3<sup>rd</sup>. He was pastor of the Oak Grove Church for several years and later attended our church, filling in for Brother Bryant when he needed help. Our prayers go to his wife Karen, son Carl and daughters Kacie and Caitlyn.

Also, our condolences to the family of Susan Heater who passed away May 16<sup>th</sup>. She retired from teaching at Ewing School and will be well remembered. She is the mother of Teddy Heater. Our prayers for Teddy and wife Leigh, and daughter Payton.

We also send our condolences to the family of John Langly who passed away in June. Blessings and prayers to his wife Donna, to Terold and Deborah Kniffen, and grandsons Garrett and Cody.

*"What an awesome God we serve."*

## WALTONVILLE CHURCH

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

Hello from Waltonville Free Will Baptist Church. We have had a number of birthday parties for our little ones that are growing up so fast. We have at least two of our church kids (Brylee Kuhner and Kayman Klamm) playing ball this year and been able to go see them play a few times already. We had a cook out at our house the 30th of May and the whole church was invited and we had a great time. We have a new family starting to come as well. All the mothers received gifts on Mother's Day and everyone was glad to receive the gifts. Going to the camp on Tuesday's to fry hamburgers for everyone. They tell me that the Waltonville Freewill Baptist Church has been doing this for around 30 years. We are looking forward to seeing everyone there.

We are seeing families taking off on vacations and I wish them well. Everyone needs to get away from time to time. I encourage everybody to go and not feel bad for being gone. Even Peter said I'm going fishing, that's in the Bible!!

## **HARMONY CHURCH**

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

Hello from Harmony, On May 9<sup>th</sup> we had to cancel services due to not having any water at the church, we did give our Mother's flowers the next Sunday to celebrate Mother's Day since we missed out. We held our Annual Church in the Park on June 6<sup>th</sup>, we had a total of 110 people show up and we want to thank everyone that helped out and Brother Dick Cremer for frying the fish for our potluck afterwards. Please be in prayer for our upcoming VBS that will be held on July 11<sup>th</sup> – July 16<sup>th</sup>, 6:15 – 8:30 pm nightly. We are planning a kick-off party the Sunday before where we are going to have food, games, and fun. If you are in our neighborhood come out and join us while we adventure on Rocky Railway!

*"This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you." - John 15:12*

## **HAZEL DELL CHURCH**

**Pastor: Curtis Smth Reporter: Diana Kirk**

Greetings from the folks at Hazel Dell.

Our Ladies' Tea Party at Café Bloom on June 4<sup>th</sup> was a success. There were around 30 in attendance. Guest speaker, Malinda Edgell delivered a wonderful devotion. Sister Emilee and her sister, Jewlee Meadows performed skits and little Miss Lydia Smith sang a song for us. Games were played and prizes were won. It was a fun night for all the ladies. Thank you to Sister Emilee for organizing this very special event.

The summer lunch program is up and running in Sesser/Valier. Hazel Dell folks passed out lunches to children the first two weeks of June.

Brother Jim LeVault was recognized on Sunday, June 13<sup>th</sup> for his 51 years of service as a deacon. Many family members were present for this special occasion. Thank you, Brother Jim for your dedication and service.

We are planning to have VBS the week of August 2-6. As always, we will need willing workers.

We would ask that you remember Brother Brian Lewis and family in your prayers.

*"And I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty."*

*- 2 Corinthians 6:18*

## **PITTSBURG CHURCH**

**Pastor: Eddie Donelson Pastor: Keith McDannel Reporter: Heather Phillips**

"Livin' All for the SON in 2021"

July is such a great time of year! Okay, well, everything except the heat! The kiddos are in the middle of summer break. Families are spending more time at the ball fields and summer vacations are underway. July is when we take time to celebrate our national freedoms and the birth of this great country, the greatest country in the world. We are incredibly blessed to live where we live.

We know when it warms up outside, that must mean Vacation Bible School is quickly approaching! We are getting ready to open the doors for as many as the Father would send our way. PFWBC VBS is set for July 19-23. This year our youth will be leading our VBS and we are excited and expecting a high energy, fast-paced week. We are asking God to change lives this week. We know that it all begins with God working and drawing hearts to him.

August will be here before we know it and the kids will be heading back to school. We are praying for the lives that will be touched because of the blessing God has bestowed upon us to share with the community. Every Sunday evening, at 5pm, we host a community prayer meeting in our Chapel. As a family of believers, we join and lift up the needs in the church and around the world, our nation and for lost souls. We believe that God is going to move in mighty ways!

We pray everyone has a great month of July!

## **BLUE POINT CHURCH**

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

Brother Ernie was able to attend “Boot Camp” for pastors held by North American Ministries. Suzanne Lewis and Cindy Walker thoroughly enjoyed the Illinois State Women’s Fellowship meeting held in Effingham. The Junior High Sunday school class used some of their offerings to purchase items for the Missionary Provision Closet in Nashville, Tennessee.

Brother Ernie moderated the Bible categories at the recent CTS competition. Suzanne judged Bible, drama, and puppets. We appreciate the Ina Church for hosting this event. We recently combined our birthday and anniversary fellowship with a baby shower for Bryce and Grace Henry. The Henrys are expecting their first baby, a boy, at the end of May. A funeral dinner for Isabelle Taylor, mother of Ernie Taylor, was held at the Link. Calvary and Blue Point worked together to provide the food and serve.

We would like to congratulate all our graduates. Harrison Walker finished at Olney Central College and will be heading to Eastern Illinois University. Colin Waller graduated from SIU Carbondale and will be attending medical school. Noah Conard completed the Doctor of Pharmacy program at SIU Edwardsville. Our high school graduates are Maddie Bowen, Lauren Grace Conard, and Whitney Simmons. Our 8th grade graduates include Ryan Atwood, Cooper Bowen, Kayden Dagg, Myra Dunahee, Hannah Fickas, Carter Gorley, Elissa Harrison, Alex Paul, and Hadley Walker.

We enjoyed a wonderful week of Vacation Bible School with the theme of “God’s Wonder Lab”. We had a great crowd of youth and lots of adult and teenage volunteers. We held a picnic on Saturday with delicious food and inflatables. The commencement program was held on Sunday morning.

Brother Ernie and Suzanne attended the ordination service for Jonathan Payne. Brother Ernie gave the Prayer of Consecration. He also continues to serve as general director of Camp Hope. He also directed the Junior-Senior Week of camp. Hope Walker helped with registration and several jobs at the beginning of the week. On Wednesday of that week our ladies provided cookies for camp desserts and sent six ladies to work in the kitchen for the day.

We welcomed two new babies to our church family: Owen Brooks, son of Bryce and Grace Henry, and Brett Lloyd, son of Hayden and Amelia Byars, and little brother to Brock. There has also been a baby shower for Mitchell and Marissa Levi who are expecting a baby girl in July. We also hosted a wedding shower for Jordan Hosick and Julia Konopasek who will be married in September. We recently heard from Emily Petty during a Sunday morning service. She shared about her two-year internship with the HopeAlive Church in Tokorozawa, Japan. We offer our sympathy to the family of Amanda Hutchcraft. Amanda’s father, Dale Troyer, passed away suddenly. A meal for the family was held at the Link and the Blue Point ladies helped provide the food.

## **FIRST CHURCH – BENTON**

**Pastor: Phillip Kennedy**

We are now into the summer months! Back in May we had a wonderful Mother's Day service! We continued to have new visitors through the month of May. We also had a wonderful Memorial Day service at the end of May!

At the beginning of June we began serving free lunches to the kids with the ministerial Alliance here in Benton. We serve on Tuesdays but they offer free lunches to kids Monday through Fridays from 11 to noon. Anyone age 18 and under can come get a free lunch.

We had our homecoming service on June 13th! This was our 50th celebration! We were privileged to have Pastor Gene Norris come back and preach for us. He is the one who started our church. We were also very privileged to have several come back and celebrate with us. We had close to a hundred.

The Wanda Mountain boys were supposed to be with us but due to deaths and their families they were unable to attend. Please pray for them. Instead we had the Clyatt family and Mike Thomas sing. We also had Richard Browning sing for us accompanied by Arlene Davis. (A former song leader and pianist of our church) we also had testimony from former Pastors Kent Dunford and Larry Clyatt. Gene Norris did an amazing job sharing the word with us and walking us through some wonderful memories! After the service we enjoyed a wonderful time of Fellowship! Please pray for the children and teens and workers at Camp Hope!

## **ARNOLD VIEW CHURCH**

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

Greetings from Arnold View! Average Sunday School attendance during May was 77. Shawn Bolley shared his testimony on May 16. Shawn has been elected as our Youth Leader and Coordinator. The Teen Group enjoyed a scavenger hunt. Our Men's Group met at Justin Settles' Barn on May 22. Congratulations to our 2021 Graduates! Pre-K: Henry Stokes; Kindergarten: Leah Loyd; 5th Grade: Emma Damron, Sydnee Loyd; 8th Grade: Lana Orrill, Skye Mausey; High School: Jeremiah Warner; College: Jaydn Lannom (Nursing School, RN) Our 5th Sunday Evening Song Service on May 30 was a blessing.

*"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 thy paths." - Proverbs 3:5-6*

## **WELCH COLLEGE CONFERS DEGREES ON CLASSES OF 2020 and 2021**

Welch College conferred degrees on 68 graduates for the class of 2021 and recognized 26 recipients of degrees from the class of 2020 on Friday, May 7, according to Provost Matthew McAfee.

The college held two commencement ceremonies in the Student Activities Center. Attendees for both ceremonies were scaled back owing to COVID-19 social distancing protocols. Both ceremonies accommodated additional guests with overflow seating for livestream coverage in Celorio Auditorium.

The following Illinois graduates are:

### **Class of 2020**

Bachelor of Science Degree:

\*Emma Guthrie (Hartford, Illinois)-Psychology

Bachelor of Arts Degree:

\*Sarah Pierce (Mount Vernon, Illinois) – Intercultural Studies

Master of Arts Degree: Christine Lewis (Chicago, Illinois) – Special Education

### **Class of 2021**

Bachelor of Science Degree:

\*\*\*Adam Brown (Eldorado, Illinois) – Theological Studies

\*\*\*Destinee Payne (Ina, Illinois) – Child Development and Learning

\*\*\*Jonathan Payne (Ina, Illinois) – Theological Studies

\*\*\*Kendal Ryan (Ina, Illinois) – English and Secondary Studies

\*\*\* Summa Cum Laude - 3.75

\*\* Magna Cum Laude - 3.50

\* Cum Laude - 3.25

### **NOTE:**

This fall, Welch College will launch Welch Divinity School. Our first academic program will be the Master of Divinity (M.Div.) degree. Our new M.Div. program is designed for two types of students: 1. current Welch students who desire to enroll in an accelerated program, providing them a jumpstart into full-time ministry upon graduation, and 2. students who have graduated from other colleges who want to complete an M.Div. with an Arminian theological perspective.

For more details, please email our Program Coordinator, Dr. Barry Raper, at [braper@welch.edu](mailto:braper@welch.edu), or Dr. Martin Sheldon, Divinity School Director of Administration ([msheldon@welch.edu](mailto:msheldon@welch.edu)).

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July 2021

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Illinois State Association of Free Will Baptists  
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OR CURRENT RESIDENT

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

*This Independence Day  
celebrate your freedom and*

PRAY FOR AMERICA 

*“Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD;  
and the people whom He hath chosen  
for His own inheritance.”*

*- Psalm 33:12*