



ILLINOIS FREE WILL BAPTIST

JANUARY 2022

# NEWSLETTER

A monthly publication for Illinois Free Will Baptist families

May this New Year **2022** be blessed by God

and may we use the opportunities He gives us to bring others to Christ!

## **MOUNT VERNON CHURCH**

**Pastor: Craig Smith**

Our church has a new pastor, Brother Craig Smith. He and his wife, Marcella, have been serving our church as Associate Pastor for the past two years. Following Brother David's announcement to resign his position at the end of the year, the church voted December 12 to call Brother Smith and he will assume full responsibilities this month.

We packed and delivered 92 shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child in November and provided funds and baked goods for the Solid Rock Soup Kitchen during the year.

The church has suspended Wednesday night Prayer and Bible Study until Daylight Saving Time begins in March. Meanwhile, a group meets for prayer on Thursday morning at 10 o'clock.

On December 11, the church hosted an Open House for Brother David and Sister Pat to commemorate their retirement. It was greatly appreciated by the Shores family.

The windows were darkened down on Sunday morning, December 19 for a Candlelight Communion Service.

Songs by the children, poems, scripture reading and congregational singing of Christmas songs added to the beautiful atmosphere of the lighted candles. Communion was served, and the service closed with "Silent Night".

The church presented a gift to the pastors and Diane Allen presented Brother David and Brother Craig matching ties, and read a poem she had written about, "The ties that bind."

Please pray for our church and our pastor as he begins his new ministry in Mount Vernon and in the New Year – 2022!

## **BLUE POINT CHURCH**

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

Brother Ernie and Suzanne were able to attend the church leaders' breakfast at the Bonnie Café at the Mt. Vernon Airport. The pastors, church leaders, and wives there were able to meet and fellowship with Ed and Rachel Goode, new church planters at the Bridge Church in Champaign.

Brother Ernie and Suzanne traveled to Nashville for the Annual Leadership Conference. There were main sessions and seminars for the two days. Afterward, Brother Ernie stayed for the meeting of the Executive

Committee where he served as clerk. Suzanne visited family and friends in the Nashville area.

Brother Ernie recently held a new converts class for three of the young people who have been recently saved at our church. At the conclusion of the classes, they were baptized on a Sunday morning.

A group of ladies gathered to decorate the church for Christmas, placing trees in several different spots. The Kingdom Builders Sunday school class celebrated the season with an early Sunday morning breakfast. Our church has served as the headquarters for the Christmas food drive for needy families. Once all the groceries were collected, our "Connect" group of teens sorted the groceries, a group of adult volunteers boxed them up for many area families, and a couple of men from the church delivered them.

Congratulations to David and Pat Shores and John and Vickie Hollis on their retirement from the ministry. We also congratulate Whitney Pogue and Brandon Nixon who were recently married.

## ARNOLD VIEW CHURCH

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

Greetings from Arnold View! Average Sunday School Attendance during November was 82. Our Veterans Remembrance Service was held on November 7. Brother Ivan Ryan brought the Evening Worship Message on November 14. Anna Jane Sanders, 74, passed away on November 18. Joan Gray, 88, passed away on December 5. She was a sister to Ivan Ryan. Condolences to these families.

We collected 105 gift-filled boxes for Operation Christmas Child. We had a clothing drive for winter clothes of any size. Proceeds were donated to The Promise in Marion. Emily Petty shared about her ministry in Japan on November 21. Brother Shawn Bolley brought the Morning Worship Message on November 28. Our Youth Christmas Program was held on December 12. "Christmas Showcase" was a combination of festive songs and skits.

*"They are new every morning, great is thy faithfulness." - Lamentations 3:23*

## OAK VALLEY CHURCH

**Pastor: Richard Brown Reporter: Marie Rutger**

We greet everyone from our church - HAPPY THANKSGIVING, MERRY CHRISTMAS - HAPPY NEW YEAR.

May God Bless you all.

We have Brother Harry Thompson filling in for us while Brother Richard recovers from hip surgery. Please pray for Brother Richard and Sister Valerie to have a speedy recovery.

Covid 19 is hitting us along with falls and sickness but we thank the Lord, and Brother Harry's help, we are hanging in there with about 30 most Sundays.

Geff Hope Ministry helps many families each month. A bake sale at Wal Mart the 13th is to help them get a needed fork lift.

We gathered boxes for Samaritan's Purse which were sent November 15th.

Pray for a revival to bring in many souls in our church and land. Always pray to have eyes that see the best in people. A heart that forgives the worst. A mind that forgets the bad, and a soul that never loses faith in God. *"Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you."* – Jeremiah 29:12

Winter is Here!



## WALTONVILLE CHURCH

**Pastor: Mark Wells Reporter: Chad Kuhner**

We have had some new visitors come to our services, which we always like to see. Matthew UHls came to share his testimony how god brought him through his ordeal with covid. It was powerful to hear and see the pictures that he showed us of god's healing hand on him.

Our thanksgiving food pantry handed food out to 26 families. God has blessed us with a great amount of food that it took two trucks twice filled up and a 16 foot trailer. We had to go buy two new shelves and a big freezer.

God has blessed us so that we were able to finish replacing all of the other windows in the basement and fellowship hall.

Tammy and I have started our third year here at Waltonville and time is flying by. We can't say thank you enough to the church and all of you who have and are praying for us. We still desire your prayers as we start this next year to see what God has in store for us here.

Our church had a float in the Veteran's Day parade and there was a great turnout. God took care of the rain that day for us, too.

We at Waltonville want to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you all!

## HARMONY CHURCH

**Reporter: Cody Alstat**

Greetings from Harmony, we hope everyone had a wonderful Christmas and a Happy New Year! On November 11<sup>th</sup> we had all of our Veterans who were in attendance stand up to be recognized for their service. Our youth went out to Emery Brothers on December 6<sup>th</sup> for their monthly outing, there was a total of 20 skaters. On December 14<sup>th</sup> our Master's Men and Sisters of Strength met for their monthly meeting at Bonnie Café in West Frankfort. We had a total of 31 in attendance and we had a great fellowship. We are planning for the adult classes to have their yearly party on December 18<sup>th</sup>. Please keep our church in your prayers still as we are in the search for our new pastor. We want to continue to thank Brother Kent and Sister Tedra for filling in during the transition. *"The days are coming, declares the Lord, "when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, a King who reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land. In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. This is the name by which he will be called: The LORD Our Righteous Savior."*

*Jeremiah 23:5-6*

## PITTSBURG CHURCH

**Pastors: Eddie Donelson and Keith McDannel**  
**Reporter: Heather Phillips**

Greetings from PFWBC! We hope everyone had a wonderful Christmas season and were able to take a moment to reflect on all of your blessings since last Christmas!

Looking back in December... "He Keeps Me Singing" met on December 12. The evening's theme was "See the Prophecy Unfold." We had scriptures given of the Old Testament prophesying about the birth of Jesus, and then related to scriptures in the New Testament revealing their fulfillment. We had a very special speaker and lots of good singing, along with our newly formed choir! We have new people that joined our Music Team. There was lots of Christmas joy and excitement!! . The next "HE KEEPS ME SINGING" will be on January 11, 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!

As this is being written, we are preparing for the PFWBC Kids Christmas program. The kids range in age from birth-5<sup>th</sup> grade who will participate and show off their talents through song, instrument solos, choir singing, and scripture readings! This is always a favorite service of many! In addition, we are giving away Christmas Dinner baskets for those in our community. The baskets are filled with everything they need for their Christmas dinner, from the ham to the dessert. We are looking forward to serving our community. I will have an update on that event next month!

As we think about the New Year, it is important to remember that God has the power to take us into 2022 with a fresh and new start. He is God Almighty, our Comforter, our Closest Companion, and our FRIEND! Sometimes the people and things around us shift or change, our Heavenly Father stays the same. *"For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."* (Romans 8:38-39)

The calendar tends to slow down after the New Year at PFWBC, but we are looking forward to planning for 2022!

## BEAR POINT CHURCH

**Pastor: Gowdy Cannon Reporter: Mona Lappin**  
*Seasons Greetings from Bear Point!*

November was a sad month for our church with the passing of two long time members...Jim Price and David Zimmerman. Brother Jim was at different times a teacher, and song leader but he was always faithful...praise God, his wheelchair is *no longer needed*. Brother David served as Assistant Sunday School Superintendent for years, faithfully serving alongside his wife Sister Linda in the office every Sunday. You could always count on a handshake from David and a peppermint from Sister Linda. Both men will be greatly missed. Please keep their wives Sisters Joyce and Linda in your prayers.

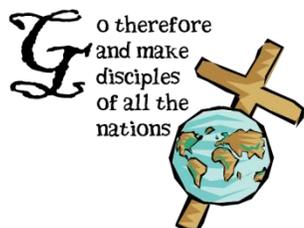
We did enjoy fellowship with our sister churches during the Community Thanksgiving Service which was held at the First Baptist Church in Valier. Each pastor in the Ministerial Alliance had a part and it was great to worship with the different churches in our community.

As always December is filled with HOPE, JOY, and the busyness of the season. The church had a decorating party on the 3rd with Sisters Virginia and Myra seeing to it that our church was decorated beautifully. The WAC had a party on the 6th at the parsonage. The youth put on a wonderful Christmas Play the evening of the 12th, entitled *Casting call: Live Nativity Scene*, which the youth wrote themselves and showcased their talent and individuality with their performances. Sister Chrissy is always willing to let the kids "shine" in their own ways. The little ones of the church were also included, playing the parts of the stable animals...it was quite moooving.

The church went Christmas Caroling for the widows of our church on the 15th...the ladies are always seem to enjoy this.

Pastor Gowdy is planning a sermon series for 2022 entitled *The Gospel Is Everything*, in which every sermon will be about the gospel, with *Isaiah 62:1* being the focus verse...*Because I love Zion, I will not keep still. Because my heart yearns for Jerusalem, I cannot remain silent. I will not stop praying for her until her righteousness shines like the dawn, and her salvation blazes like a burning torch.* (NLT)

Brother Gowdy is encouraging us to make our Jerusalem-Sesser...what is your Jerusalem?



*REMEMBER TO PRAY FOR OUR MISSIONARIES*

## BENTON CHURCH

**Pastor: Phillip Kennedy**

Hope everyone had a wonderful Thanksgiving!  
We are now looking forward to Christmas!

Pastor Phillip Kennedy and family were on  
Vacation on November 14th. It was great to have  
Brother David Mischler as the fill in preacher . Also  
thankful for Marty Leffler filling in as Sunday school  
Teacher in our Adult Sunday school class.

The Sunday just before Thanksgiving we  
celebrated Communion. On November 28th we  
decorated the church for Christmas...after the  
morning worship.

We had our monthly business meeting on  
December 1st. The first 2 Wednesdays in  
December we studied about Elijah. The first 2  
Sundays in December we look at some  
names/titles of Jesus in the morning message. We  
are looking forward to our Christmas festivities and  
the New year!

We also want to wish a happy retirement to Brother  
David Shores and Rev. John Hollis. Praying for our  
Churches as we minister to our communities this  
Christmas season and in the coming year!

## HAZEL DELL CHURCH

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

Season's Greetings to all. Trusting that  
everyone enjoyed the true blessings of the  
Christmas season. As we enter into the new year  
may God bless each and everyone with his  
overwhelming love and care.

We are finally moving back into our newly  
renovated auditorium. Much time and labor has  
been put into this project and it certainly is  
evident. Thank you to those who have spent  
countless hours making this a reality. The outcome  
is beautiful.

Sunday, December 12<sup>th</sup>. was Christmas Sweater  
Day. Most people were willing to participate, both  
young and old.

We had a great group of participants for the  
evening of Christmas caroling on Wednesday,  
December 15<sup>th</sup>. We visited several homes to share  
singing and Christmas blessings with. It was a  
blessing to see several of our young children  
participating. What good memories for them.

*"Be still, and know that I am God:  
will be exalted among the heathen,  
I will be exalted in the earth.."- Psalm 46:10*



## CALENDAR 2022

### East Central District

January 8 – Pleasant View Church  
April 9 – Blue Point Church  
July 9 – Calvary Church  
October 8 – Crossroads Church

### South Central District

January 22 - Alexander Church  
April 23 - Arnold View Church  
July 23 - Benton Church  
October 22 - Harmony Church

**Illinois State Association:** March 17-18  
Calvary Church

**CTS Competition** – Ina – April 29-30

### Youth Camp Dates

Leadership Camp- June 1-3  
Junior/Senior Camp – June 5-15  
Freshman/Sophomore Camp: June 12-17  
Junior Camp: June 19-24  
Primary camp: June 26-30  
Junior High Camp: July 3-8

**National Association** – July 24-27  
Birmingham, Alabama

**Camp Meeting:** September 11-14

**Master's Men Retreat:** September 15-17

# Free Will Baptist HISTORY

Free Will Baptists in America have a rich history. We appreciate your desire to learn about who we are and how God has used our movement.

Today, the National Association of Free Will Baptists is a fellowship of evangelical believers united in extending the witness of Christ and the building of His Church throughout the world. The rise of Free Will Baptists can be traced to the influence of Baptists of Arminian persuasion who settled in the colonies from England.

Free Will Baptists sprang up on two fronts in Colonial America. The southern line, or Palmer movement, traces its beginnings to the year 1727 when Paul Palmer organized a church at Chowan, North Carolina.

The northern line, or Randall movement, had its beginnings with a congregation organized by Benjamin Randall June 30, 1780, in New Durham, New Hampshire. Both lines of Free Will Baptists taught the doctrines of free grace, free salvation, and free will, although from Randall June 30, 1780, in New Durham, New Hampshire. Both lines of Free Will Baptists taught the doctrines of free grace, free salvation, and free will, although from the first there was no organizational connection between them.

## WHO WE ARE

The Free Will Baptist denomination is a fellowship of evangelical churches that adhere to the Bible as the foundation of faith and practice. The denomination began in 1727, and for nearly 300 years has contributed to the moral and spiritual fiber of the nation. Bound by common beliefs, common worship, and a common mission, nearly 300,000 individuals from 2,500 congregations across 40 states have come together voluntarily to extend their impact throughout the world

## WHAT WE BELIEVE

Free Will Baptists are *fundamental* in doctrine, that is, they share the historic Christian Faith with all other genuine Christians. They are, as the name indicates, *Baptist* in doctrine, teaching that immersion—not sprinkling or pouring—is the correct method of baptism. Finally, Free Will Baptists are *free will* in doctrine. Some Christian groups believe God predetermined who would be saved and lost, that Jesus died only for certain “elect” individuals, and the rest have no opportunity to be saved.

In contrast, Free Will Baptists believe God desires salvation for all and sent Jesus to die for everyone. Still, He has given man the freedom of choice to accept or reject Christ’s sacrifice. Those who put faith in Christ’s work are saved.

Free Will Baptist churches are self-governing, own their own property, and call their own pastors. Yet these independent churches have chosen to work together to carry out various enterprises and programs beyond the scope of the local church. These efforts include several colleges and missions efforts both at home and abroad. The denomination supports missionaries in 20 international locations as well as the United States, Canada, Mexico, the Virgin Islands, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico. Free Will Baptists enjoy an extensive publishing ministry headed by Randall House Publications.

*Read more about Free Will Baptist history, doctrine, and beliefs at the National Association of Free Will Baptists Historical Commission. The Free Will Baptist Historical Commission exists to preserve Free Will Baptist historical materials & to educate Free Will Baptists regarding their heritage*

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Illinois State Association of Free Will Baptists  
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OR CURRENT RESIDENT

*Happy New Year!*

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

## IN THE NEW YEAR...

- + Who will you **REACH** with the gospel? (Acts 1:8)
- + Who will you **DISCIPLE** in the faith? (Matthew 28:19-20)
- + What will you **GIVE** to the Lord of your time, talent & treasure? (Matthew 25)

3 FOR 30  
NAFWB