



ILLINOIS FREE WILL BAPTIST

DECEMBER 2022

# NEWSLETTER

A monthly publication for Illinois Free Will Baptist families



## BROTHER JESSE ALLEN WITH THE LORD

Brother Jesse Allen went to be with the Lord on November 12, 2022. His preaching ministry began in 1957. He pastored several churches in southern Illinois until his retirement. For 17 years he worked at Vernois Furnace Company, then worked as a mechanic at Orient #6 coal mine until 1997 so that he could serve smaller churches, many times without any compensation. After retirement, he served his church in other areas of ministry the rest of his life.

Born in 1934, he married Bonnie Presley in 1951 and she served with him until her death in 2004. He is survived by one son, Leon and wife Melana and one daughter, Kathie McCowen and husband David, three grandsons, four great-grandchildren and three great-great grandchildren.

Funeral services were held at First Free Will Baptist Church in Mount Vernon on November 19<sup>th</sup>. Please remember his family as you pray.

## PITTSBURG CHURCH

**Pastors: Eddie Donelson, Keith McDannel and Josh Colson Reporter: Heather Phillips**

December is already here. November flew by and **2023** is just around the corner!!

On Thursday night, November 10, we resumed our monthly Skate Night at Emery Brothers Skating Rink in Marion. We were so grateful to be able to come together (young and young at heart) and enjoy some good ole' fashion skating again. Everyone enjoyed a wonderful time of fellowship both on and off the rink. Our next Skate Night will be held on Thursday, December 8. Everyone is invited to join us for an evening of roller-skating fun and admission is FREE!

As this is being written, we are preparing for our bi-annual Church Closet Giveaway. Please join us in praying for the hundreds of souls that may walk through the doors of God's house; that they would feel His presence and desire to come back and worship with us.

We pray everyone has a safe and healthy December, all while remembering the reason for this joyous time of the year...the birth of our Savior, Jesus!! Thank you, Lord for coming to earth as a baby, bringing life and hope to us all. Lord, we surrender to you. May each day be a celebration of who you are in our lives.

*"The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" (which means 'God with us').*

*- Matthew 1:23*



## **MOUNT VERNON CHURCH**

**Pastor: Craig Smith   Reporter: Linda Polston**

After our revival in October, our church had several events to report. The people of the church sponsored a “Trunk or Treat” for the young people of the area which was very well attended and it gave us many opportunities to share God’s Word and His love to many of our community.

We suffered a great loss when a brother beloved, Donald Cole, went to be with his Lord. He was a very happy, smiling, lovable individual who loved his wife, his family and his church. He was a loyal supporter of the church. We provided a meal for the family to have time to visit and enjoy themselves before they had to return to their homes. Please pray for his wife, Linda and their children and their families.

On November 4<sup>th</sup>, we enjoyed a concert by Daryl Mosley, formerly of Farm Hands Gospel group. Then, on November 8<sup>th</sup>, everyone was invited to a 9:00 am “Coffee, Donuts and Conversation” with our pastor.

Several of our folks spent several hours at the church sorting toys and other items and packing them into shoeboxes for “Operation Christmas Child”. We had 105 shoeboxes this year to send to the children.

One of our dear ministers, Brother Jesse Allen, went to be with his Lord on November 12<sup>th</sup>. He not only pastored several churches during his long ministry, he retired and came to our church and helped us in many ways. He supported us with his stable faith in Christ as well as the work he did at the church. He helped us spiritually, physically and financially. Please pray for his children, Leon and Kathie, their children and the entire family. *(Brother Jesse’s obituary is on Page 1 of this Newsletter)*

The church family gathered for a Thanksgiving meal on Sunday, November 20<sup>th</sup> and thanked God for His blessings on our nation. We are thankful to live in a free country and to worship God as we please.

Another saint from our church went to be with the Lord on November 20<sup>th</sup>. Sister Shirley Pettit was a committed believer with a heart of gold. We will miss her and her positive attitude toward life. Pray for her daughters, Christy and Caryll Sue and their husbands, her grandchildren and the rest of her family. She was always thankful for “pennies from heaven” and loved people.

We are planning a Candlelight New Year’s Eve watch service. You are invited to be with us!

As you pray for the many things the Lord lays on your heart: our churches, our nation, our families, if you find time, please pray for this reporter and her husband. At the time of this report, we are both shut in with Covid, but as the Bible says, we have confidence in God!

*“According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:  
In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him”. – Ephesians 3:11-12*

## **HARMONY CHURCH**

**Interim Pastor: Kent Dunford   Reporter: Cody Alstat**

Greetings from Harmony; what fantastic weather we have had the past few weeks. The leaves are beginning to turn and fall to the ground. It has been a busy couple of months for us here at Harmony. On August 14<sup>th</sup> our church had a Youth Rally as a back-to-school bash to prepare the kids for their upcoming school year. We invited several churches, which was an excellent turnout; we want to thank all the churches that participated. We got invited to Hazel Dell on August 21<sup>st</sup> to kick off their revival with Brother Tim York, the service was amazing. During our services, we collected money for the International Missions Offering on August 28<sup>th</sup>. The youth skating outing started back up again on October 3<sup>rd</sup>, and we had a total of 16 skaters attend. We kicked off Pastor’s Appreciation month with a church outing at West Frankfort Park for service and a potluck. Our church decorated cups for the pastor and his wife and Brother Dick built a display for them. We want to thank Brother Dick for providing the fish and cooking it, and everyone that made the day successful.

*“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your understanding;  
in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.”- Proverbs 3:5-6*

*Note: When submitting articles for the Illinois Newsletter, please remember to try to get them in by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month, and send your emails to the new address: <davidshores37@gmail.com>*

## **ARNOLD VIEW**

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

Greetings from Arnold View! Average Sunday School Attendance during October was 76. We observed The Lord's Supper and Feet Washing Ordinances on October 2. George Kirkpatrick, 75, passed away on September 29. Condolences to the family. The Good News Club continues to be an effective ministry at Crab Orchard School. The High Teens Class have been taking orders for homemade pies. All proceeds will go to the Youth Fund. Our Fifth Sunday Song Service was a blessing.

*"Thy faithfulness is unto all generations: thou hast established the earth, and it abideth." - Psalm 119:90*

## **BENTON CHURCH**

**Pastor: Phillip Kennedy**

By the time this Newsletter comes out Thanksgiving will be over and we will be in the Christmas season. Hoping everyone has had a blessed start to the holidays.

We had some to attend the Mount Vernon FWB Church revival each night they had it! We also had some to attend the South Central Illinois Quarterly Meeting. On October 29 we hosted a drive through "trick or treat" for our community.

On October 30 we had our A Day B Day fellowship meal celebration. On November 4th we hosted an Open Gym Night for all in the community. We had a Harvest Sunday Celebration with a big Thanksgiving style meal on November 13th. Several from our church participated in some way. Some with testimonies or songs and we even had a reader's theater. We also recognized all the veterans of our church.

We have continued to participate with Good News Club on Tuesdays after school. We have had several Student Hangouts where students age 5- 18 are welcome to come and play some games and have a Bible study followed by snacks. This has gone well. We started small but we keep getting new teens. Please pray for this ministry.

Our Children's church (led by Jackie Kennedy) has been teaching about several of our International mission fields, about their culture, beliefs, and our ministry. They have also faithfully prayed for our missionaries.

On December 2nd we will have our next Open Gym night from 6p.m.to 8p.m. Everyone is welcome to come check it out.

We are praying your Churches are doing well and having a fruitful ministry. Please pray for us as well.

## **RESCUE CHURCH**

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

Rescue church is so proud of Brother Ryan Payne and all the care with his biblical studies that he is doing with his youth group. Brother Ryan is now an ordained minister. Now, in October, we have two pastors to be grateful for. Brother David Shores wrote quite a scripture on doing God's will. I think he could write all that easy since he has always lived it and always had sister Pat beside him. What a legacy! He has lived for Christ. I thank you for all the many times that you have been a help to me.

Sunday was a special Sunday, Brother Steve and Denise Gray and Hanna and her husband came to Rescue. That was great, they spent a lot of time with us. The boys like to fish and they had a baptism here with dinner afterwards when Steve was our pastor years ago.

September evening service was at Camp Hope. September was youth camp, adult camp, Master Men's retreat and last, but not least, Brother Ryan had the laser tag outings September the 18th.

Happy Birthday to our Pastor! Brother Bryant's cake was enjoyed after service to celebrate with him. September 20th was first day of Tuesday School. September 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24th was Ladies Retreat. September 24th was the men's dinner at Hazel Dell, and the 25th was special night church cookout.

Leaders for Junior and Senior camp was Hadleigh Sweet, Zane Harmon, Lane McCollum. I hope everyone is enjoying autumn, then we can enjoy all the trees and all the beautiful colors. Maybe that will make us stop and count all our blessings. How thankful we are and *"What an awesome God we serve!"*

# NEWSLETTER

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## HAZEL DELL CHURCH

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

We've had a busy fall here at Hazel Dell. It has been exciting to see God move amongst us. We've witnessed a rededication and two salvation experiences. On Sunday, November 13, Brother Curtis baptized Brother Mike Miller, Serenity Myers and Lucas Myers. What a blessing it was! A great day to be in the House of the Lord!

October 16-19 Brother Curtis was in revival at Mt. Vernon FWBC. We dismissed our services on the evening of the 16<sup>th</sup> so we could attend their opening night of revival.

We held our annual Harvest Party on October 30<sup>th</sup>. Due to inclement weather, we were unable to have our cookout and hayride. We still were able to have devotion time, food and fellowship. Sister Jennifer LeVault provided games for the kids. Brother Mike Sample led the devotion time.

We participated in the S/V Ministerial Alliance Trunk or Treat on October 31<sup>st</sup>.

Senior meals were prepared and delivered on November 8<sup>th</sup>.

The Master's Men met on Sunday, November 13<sup>th</sup> for breakfast and devotion. There were 8 in attendance. Brother Justin Miller led. Our Peppy Calebs met at the Anchor Grille in Sesser for lunch on Tuesday, November 15<sup>th</sup>. There were 14 in attendance for food and fellowship.

Congratulations to Kaleb Miller and Kaylee Meadows who were united in marriage on October 1<sup>st</sup>. Brother Kaleb is the son of Brother Rusty and Siter. LeAnn Miller. Kaylee is the daughter of Charlie and Sue Meadows and is the sister of Sister Emilee Smith.

Congratulations to Emily Bulla and Chasten Lindenberg who were united in marriage on October 7<sup>th</sup>. Emily is the daughter of Brother Tony and Sister Sherry Bulla. The new couple is serving in the National Guard 1844<sup>th</sup> Transportation Company in Texas at this time. If anyone would like to send a card or letter you may do so as follows:

Homewood Suites c/o Emily Bulla Rm. 313 98 Calle Dell Norte Laredo, Texas 78041