

ILLINOIS FREE WILL BAPTIST

JANUARY 2023

NEWSLETTER

A monthly publication for Illinois Free Will Baptist families

ARNOLD VIEW CHURCH

Pastor: Adam Brown

Happy New Year from Arnold View! The last month has been a busy one for us, and we're sure it has been busy for you as well.

On November 13th, we enjoyed our congregational Thanksgiving Dinner. It was a great time for the members of our church, both new and established, to share food with one another and celebrate God's blessing that is our church family. However, on Nov. 16th, our church hosted a community Thanksgiving service. It was a great time in which many of our community churches were invited to join us for a time of worship and fellowship. The service consisted of hymns and specials provided by the members of other churches and a devotional message. It was followed by a time of fellowship where everyone was invited to the gym/fellowship area for coffee and dessert. It was a great time when those from our community who we rarely, if ever, get to worship alongside joined together in a unifying way to reflect on the blessings God has provided us all.

Of course, Thanksgiving came and went, and ushered in the officially unofficial Christmas season. During the first couple weeks of December, we seen God working His wonders.

Our church continued to have a presence in the Crab Orchard Elementary School in "The Good News Club". Although our time for this year ended on December 7th, we were able to spend one afternoon per week for six weeks with a wonderful group of children. They learned of God's grace and mercy through the Gospel in the stories of the Bible. The best part- one child was saved! It made all our time and efforts worthwhile and so incredibly gratifying. Our church also seen one other salvation over the past month. On November 21th, Haileigh Goddard submitted her life to Christ and acknowledged Him as her Lord and Savior. She was baptized on December 11th in the presence of many witnesses that included her family and church family. We are all so very proud of Haileigh and this young man from the GNC. Please pray that God would continue to embolden them in their witness for Christ.

At the time of this writing, our Reporter, Tilden (Buddy) Parks is in the hospital. He is fighting an infection and will undergo neck surgery soon. Please pray for him and the many that are fighting various illnesses in our churches this time of year. I apologize for the lengthy nature of this report, but as you know, we Pastors always have so much to say, and so little time to say it! Remember, you have likely sung it many times over the last month, but "let every heart prepare Him room" is not just a neat line in a song meant only for December. May your heart be full of Christ today and every day of the year. God Bless you all.

RESCUE CHURCH

Pastor Bryant Harris Reporter Donna Harmon

Thanks to all our veterans, to the life you have allowed us to have. Brother Ryan worked hard for our "Hay Day" to make a fun day for all the kids and adults. Ted took care of the hay rides, Brother Ryan had inflatables, outdoor games, bonfire, chili, hot dogs, cider, and desserts. Everyone had a great time. Attendance was over a hundred. As we moved into December Ms Melinda had her Tuesday school Christmas program. She puts her heart and soul into all her works. December 11th was holiday meal following the morning service. December 25th Christmas service 10:00 a.m. no Sunday School. Happy New Year! May we all walk in a path that will be pleasing to our Father in 2023.

"What an awesome God we serve."

BENTON CHURCH

Pastor: Phillip Kennedy

I hope everyone's having a wonderful holiday season! We had a wonderful Thanksgiving and are looking forward to Christmas and New Year!

We have continued having our "Student Hang Out" on certain Thursdays. We usually have two a month. Starting in January we will have student hang out the second and third Thursdays of each month. We will have open gym nights for the whole family on the first Friday of every month. So, January 6th from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. will be our next open gym night.

We have also finished up our Good News Club at the Benton grade school for this semester. Continue to pray for the students that attended.

On November 27th, after the morning worship, service several stuck around to help decorate the church for Christmas! It's wonderful how festive everything looks. On December 2nd we had our open gym night and had 20 plus from the community, several of which had never been to our church.

James Kennedy shared a devotion during the morning worship service on December 4th. David Shores preached on December 11th. We are looking forward to the Christmas holiday and all the events that we have coming up which we will tell about in the next newsletter.

BLUE POINT CHURCH

Pastor: Ernie Lewis Reporter: Suzanne Lewis

We have a couple of new babies in our congregation. Congratulations to Hayden and Amelia Byars on the birth of their son, Bowen Jake. He is welcomed at home by brothers Brock and Brett.

We also congratulate Caleb and Madison Barnard on the birth of their first child, Benjamin Wyatt.

We recently had Tyler, Kellie, Millie, and Madden Penn for a morning service. Tyler shared about his ministry with international students at the University of Illinois.

Brother Ernie and Suzanne attended the Leadership Conference held at the Airport Sonesta in Nashville, Tennessee. The keynote speaker was Robby Gallaty.

Several men set up our nativity scene at the Cisne Park. The church and the Link are all beautifully decorated for the holidays. We recently hosted a grocery giveaway for the Tri-State Food Bank. We also held a Red Cross Blood Drive in the Link. Several gathered to help prepare a Christmas mailing for Shane and Joy Davison of France. We are serving as the headquarters for the North Wayne Ministerial Alliance Christmas food basket drive. Many area churches and schools have donated food items.

Congratulations to Darlene Smith who recently celebrated her eightieth birthday with a party at the Link hosted by her family. We also congratulate Avery Smith for being selected as the Cisne High School Homecoming queen.

Harmony Church

Interim Pastor: Kent Dunford Reporter: Cody Alstat

Greetings from Harmony,

We hope everyone had a wonderful Christmas and want to wish everyone a Happy New Year! Sister Phyllis Swann went to be Jesus on November 22nd at her residence. We want to thank Union FWB and everyone that helped the family. Please keep the family in your prayers during these next few months.

On December 3rd we had an Adult Christmas Party and there were 22 in attendance. Thank you to Sister Kay for coming up with the games that were played during our party. We held a party for our Sunday School youth classes on December 11th and had 5 kids in attendance. We went down to Whiteash Church for a joint church service and the service was amazing. Brother Dave Nelson did an outstanding job on his message and made you think, are you just a fan of Jesus, or are you a follower? Our youth presented their Christmas play on December 18th.

"The Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel." – Isaiah 7:14

NEW HOPE CHURCH

Interim Pastor: Larry Cook Reporters: Jackie Capps and Kaitlyn Catron

Our special singers for homecoming service were The Roller Family. Mrs. Roller wrote some of the songs they sang. On Mother's Day our young people sang two songs about mom's and passed out potted flowers to all the mothers. If you see Bro. Larry ask him about his "Taco Socks"! They were given to him as a special gift for Father's Day. The youth passed out bags of gift cards, cookies and peanuts for the dads. They also sang two songs about dads and done a reading in which each letter told something about a father.

June 29th was our day to serve at Camp Hope. Eight ladies helped; they were Barbra Richardson, Linda Cook, Jackie Capps, Rhonda McLearn, Kaitlyn Catron, McClain Lea, Jordana Fowler. New Hope's campers this year were Emmy Catron and Jersey Lea.

Joyce Brown, Linda Cook and Jackie Capps attended the meeting at Mt. Vernon First for Joy Davison.

We held VBS in July and had a great turn out!

In August we had our Sunday School picnic. All our kids started back to school also and we prayed over them during our services.

In October, a harvest party was scheduled at the Old School House by the church. We fellowshiped together and Brother Wayne Fowler gave a hayride to anyone who wanted to go!

A dinner was given in honor of Brother Larry and Sister Linda for "Pastor Appreciation Month". We showered them with gift cards to their favorite places to eat! Brother Larry also received another unusual gift. It was a bow-tie and handkerchief set! On Father's Day when he was gifted the Taco Socks, he said he would wear anything he received as a gift at least once! Well as they say, do as you say! We won't tell who ran took that statement to heart and ran with it, but Brother Larry sure did look great in a bow tie the next Sunday! We sure have had a great time thinking up gifts!

The Saturday before Thanksgiving an event was held at our fellowship hall for Maxine Story. It was a celebration for her 98th birthday! Kinfolk came from out of state along with church friends and neighbors. She is New Hope's oldest member.

In December, the WAC held their annual Christmas party and dinner. The youth played, "Silent Night" and "Away in a Manger" with the hand bells. The youngest one will be three in January! McClain Lea directed the Christmas program. Psalms 33:12

*"Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord;
and the people whom He hat chosen for His own inheritance" – Psalm 33:12*

OAK VALLEY CHURCH

Interim Pastor: Victor Akerson Reporter: Marie Rutger

Our church is glad to welcome you to all our services. We pray that you had a nice holiday season and that you are enjoying a great New Year, 2023.

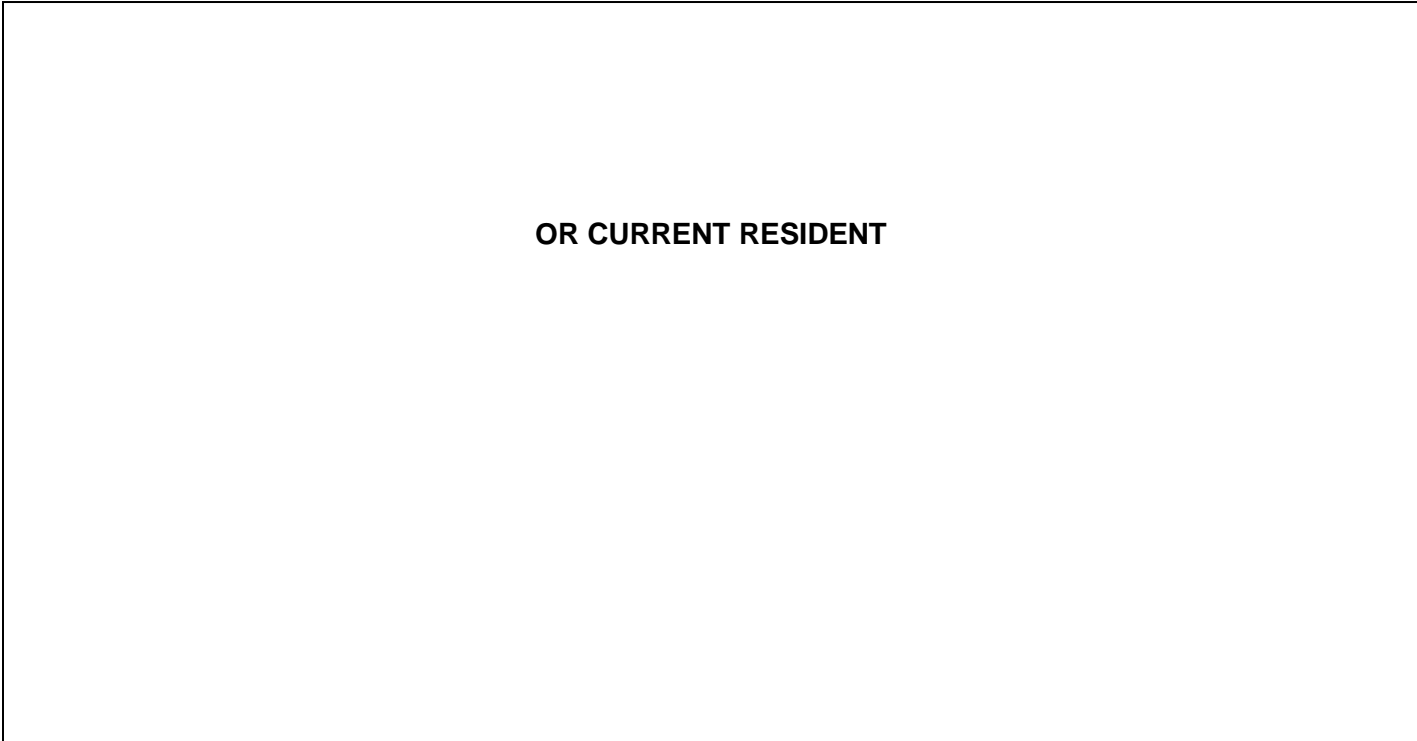
We are in need of your prayers as we miss our former pastor, Brother Richard Brown a lot, but Brother Victor and Sister Linda are helping us along and we pray for great help from the Lord as we continue to carry on.

Valentine's Day is coming, so follow your heart and may all of us, as believers, work for the Lord and His Kingdom.

*"I would seek unto God, and unto God would I commit my cause:
Which doeth great things and unsearchable; marvellous things without number;" – Job 5:8-9*

*Reporters: Please send all correspondence for the Illinois Newsletter to www.davidshores37@gmail.com
The deadline for articles for publication in the next Newsletter is January 15th*

Happy New Year and God's Blessings throughout 2023!



OR CURRENT RESIDENT

BEAR POINT CHURCH

Pastor: Gowdy Cannon Reporter: Mona Lappin

Happy Holidays from Bear Point.

December was jam-packed with activities that come with the season of giving. The church sponsored around 20 foster children with individuals fulfilling a child’s toy wish list. Money was also donated to the SV CAP program to help with Christmas gifts for our local kids.

The halls were decked out thanks to Sister Jane Eubanks and daughters Tracey and Chrissy. The church looked lovely, thanks to these lovely ladies. Sister Marj and daughter Virginia took on a small project of adding some new outdoor urns which they are changing to go with the seasons. It’s a family affair here at Bear Point!

Our Christmas plays were presented on December 11th in the evening service with the toddlers through the teens each doing their part. Sister Chrissy was the master of ceremonies and helped the teens with another original play which they wrote themselves. We are blessed to have such talent! A “full blown” potluck was enjoyed after the service...which was code for a full meal versus just cookies.

Christmas songs were a big part of our services in December as Brother Gowdy and Kayla carefully chose songs to go with his sermon series, “*Christmas Begins the Gospel.*” Since we love singing, plans were made to go caroling to the widows on the 14th.

The Cannons traveled to South Carolina to spend time with family, and we all worshiped with our church family on Christmas Day.

As of this writing the Mandrell’s are in the hospital awaiting the birth of their son. Will share details next month!

*“And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,
Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men in whom he is well pleased.”*

-Luke 2: 13, 14 (ASV)