



Newsletter

ILLINI INITIATIVE

Campus Missionary: Tyler Penn

It has been a great start to the new semester for us. The first two English Corner sessions this year were the highest attended English Corner events for a spring semester. We have changed locations and our seeing if it is a better fit for the students. My family and I hosted about a dozen students to watch the Super Bowl with us. It was a great night and a great way to meet some new students to begin the new semester. This was the first time in four years that the students watched the whole game and didn't get bored by halftime. I did a lot of explaining of the rules that night. Our conversation groups have all started off well. The big questions of life conversation group has already led to sharing the gospel of Jesus with a couple of Buddhist. One of them started coming to the Bible Study group. The Bible study has been the biggest highlight so far. We have 7 studying this semester 4 of them are carried over from last semester. We have a couple from Spain who just started coming and are eager to learn about the Bible.

I thank you so much for your continued support in prayer and resources. We are excited for this year at the English Corner and excited to see the start of the Bridge FWB Church here with the Lee family. There has been some positive movement in the area of the Bridge Church this month and our looking forward to a great year.

BRIDGE CHURCH

Church Planter: Jamie Lee

Greetings! It is a new year and we have new updates. First, let me begin by where we are currently. The last part of 2017 we began to have a Bible study in our home. We have met 5 times as the winter flu bug has been a hindrance on a few occasions; however, it has gone extremely well. It has allowed us to gauge the future and most importantly, grow spiritually with one another.

Back in November, I was playing basketball at the YMCA and a guy came over to see if I would play 1 on 1. I said, "Sure." I instantly recognized something different about him. Long story short, he and his wife just moved to the area and haven't found a church home. We began a friendship that day, in January they committed to joining us. They are an amazing family!

On January 27, we held our vision gathering. This night our family and friends gathered together and we shared our vision with them. We had about 50 adults and 10 kids. Out of the 50, we had about 35 people there for support and to help with the night. To be honest, as far as technology goes - nothing went right, not to mention I had been fighting a head cold all week - so physically I wasn't up to par. However, as the worship team began to sing, you could sense the presence of God and it will be a feeling I will never forget. The worship team closed their set with How Great Thou Art - and at the end there was applause! This event was a night of celebration to begin our public work with getting the church moving.

Once a month in February and March we will begin meeting as a team once a month to talk strategy, additionally we will have what we are calling gatherings at our apartment. Our gatherings will be used as an opportunity to invite people we meet into our home. We will be having an Easter service April 1. From April to August we will be meeting once a month until our Grand Opening - September 16. We currently have reached a verbal agreement to rent the AMC Theater!

EMILY MALONE DISTRICT: WOMEN ACTIVE FOR CHRIST

Reporter: Suzanne Lewis

The Emily Malone District of Illinois Women Active for Christ will hold their spring meeting on Saturday, March 24th at the Pleasant View Church in Walnut Hill. The meeting will begin at 10:00am. The special speaker is Sarah Fletcher of the Johnston City Church.

The theme is "Keep Your Heart with All Vigilance". Lunch will be provided. We invite all ladies to attend.



JOHNSTON CITY CHURCH

Pastor: Keith Fletcher Reporter: Reba Ritter

Randy Carney, missionary to Japan, and his family were our guests, February 4. I (Reba) was not able to hear much of what Rusty said, but I could tell by his smiles and laughter that he was very happy about it. I did understand that a man was saved right before they left Japan. The Carney's children are very sweet. Grace (age 11) sung a song accompanied by a video of the people they work with in Japan. She did a wonderful job. Rusty's wife Brenda and his mother Rhonda sat with Kelton and Katherine during the service.

Resurrection Road will be the theme for our 3-day community VBS during spring break (March 26-28). Volunteers various churches in our community will help us with this Bible School (Monday-Wednesday, 5:30-8:30 pm). If you'd like to help, please let us know.

It was icy again February 11 and we canceled Sunday school, but went on with morning and evening worship and choir practice. Over 30 braved the weather and made to morning worship and almost 100 watched it on Facebook (@jcitychurch).

We hosted Johnston City's "Fifth" Sunday Night Community Sing, January 28. About 105 folks enjoyed a variety of music from several different churches and refreshments afterward in our fellowship hall.

Hopefully you had a happy Valentine's Day and your loved ones remembered you with chocolate (and you didn't eat so much to get a belly ache!).

*"Indeed, You have made my days as handbreadths, And my age is as nothing before You;
Certainly every man at his best state is but vapor"- Psalm 39:5*

BENTON CHURCH

Pastor: Kent Dunford Reporter: Barbara Spencer

Like so many places, our church family has had a lot of sickness. We had so many out at one with with other problems too. Don Zimmerman had surgery on his knee and is doing fine. Three had heart Conditions - Jean Warren, who passed away during this time, Barb Combs is battling problems and Alice Couch had open heart surgery. Please keep the Warren family in your prayers, especially Curt who is having problems of his own now. Gary Cook is spending the cold weather in Florida with his son and family. Sister Mary is at Helia Care in Benton and her condition worsens and her family needs your prayers. Sister Edith Taylor is also at Helia Care.

Christmas was beautiful as usual with the greenery and poinsettias. The youth are very musical and entertained us at Christmas also. Children Church sent 72 boxes to Operation Christmas Child and found out they went to Tanzania and Barbados. The South Central Quarterly met at our church and we had a good attendance. The Missions Committee with Brother Sam Ramdahl's help are planning a missionary emphasis time.

Our pastor, Kent Dunford, turned in his resignation and his final Sunday will be February 25. There will be a pot luck lunch after morning services and anyone who wants to wish him well is invited to attend.

With all the ice we've had and silly weather along with the sickness, we are all ready for spring to be here. The Loyal Workers District WAC will meet at Johnston City Church on March 10. Remember our church in your prayers as we search for a new pastor. God knows who and what we need!

CONNECT CHURCH, South Roxana, IL

Pastor Dan Smith Reporter: Shirley Brown

Greetings from Connect Church! January flew by so quickly, but the last three messages from Pastor Dan were thought-provoking and many responded to the altar call – and I'm talking about members seeking forgiveness for how we have wasted precious time on things that are not of eternal value – things that in themselves are not sinful (such as watching TV and/or reading fiction) but could be used in eternal pursuits (visiting the sick, praying for the lost, witnessing, etc.). Anyway, those messages hit home with all of us. And he was quick to say that he was preaching to himself as well.

Now we are into February and it promises to be gone just as quickly as January. Of course, it is the LOVE month, and Pastor has already given us two wonderful messages – the first was on describing and defining God's love for mankind; the second on the knowledge of God's love. I'm so thankful that the Holy Spirit leads Pastor Dan in feeding the congregation such nourishing "food"! There are lots of things going on this month, as usual. On the 7th we began our Wednesday night small group studies, and the first week's classes were very well attended. There is a Men's class, a Women's class, a class for 18-30 year olds and two general classes besides the Connect Kids group. The Connect 2 Missions group met on the second Tuesday, and the cookbooks have arrived from the printer's; the Connect 2 Missions group will be busy selling them - all 800 of them! All proceeds will go for foreign and domestic mission work. Also this month we will be holding fish fry lunch/dinner each Friday and the proceeds from that effort will go to our Outreach programs to reach the folks of South Roxana. Fish Fry will run for six weeks, ending on March 23rd. We have a new baby coming this year, and the Big Reveal took place on February 11th. This family has three boys, and they WILL have a girl this time around!! Mom, Dad and the brothers are so happy and excited. Mom says this is definitely the last one.

March will be very exciting, and I can't wait to report on it – lots of wonderful things are about to happen at Connect Church! More next time. Until then, God bless and keep us all. We do, indeed, serve a Great and Loving God.

HARMONY CHURCH

Pastor: Curtis Smith Reporter: Jennifer Cook

The chill of winter is still in the air and even though the trees and the ground lie dormant and still, I know God is preparing the trees and the soil to receive new life, new growth at the appointed time. Just as He does for His children! Praise the Lord! Lydia SueAnn Smith was born to Sister Emilee and Brother Curtis Smith on January 5, 2018. Harmony can't wait to meet this precious gift from God! Congratulations Sister Emilee and Brother Curtis, we love you and your growing family!

Congratulations also to Brother Dave and Sister Jennifer Meacham. They recently welcomed a long awaited arrival to their family. They are the proud grandparents of Kyson Matthew Veatch born December 11th to Matt and Lindy Veatch! Congratulations!

Harmony recently received two new members into its church family, James and Charla Krike. We are thankful for all they do in service to the Lord and the church! On December 14th, Brother Curtis began a new Bible Study on Thursday nights, Crazy Love by Francis Chan. This is a very powerful study and we pray hearts and minds will be drawn closer to God through this study.

Harmony's teens put on a Christmas play December 16th at 7pm and December 17th at 6pm. They worked very hard to make this play possible. We are thankful for these young adults who love to serve the Lord! Also, thank you to Sister Buffy for her hard work and service to the Lord! On Christmas Eve, our Youth Christmas Program was held during the morning worship service. Please continue to pray for our youth that God will continue to strengthen them in their walk with the Lord! Harmony had to cancel its New Year's Eve Watch Service due to inclement weather.

On February 6th, our Sisters of Strength and Masters Men held their monthly meeting and on February 10th, Harmony held its annual Valentines Banquet. Harmony's music ministry continues to grow! We are truly blessed by this opportunity, every practice session is a wonderful time of fellowship with the Lord and one another. Please pray that God will continue to strengthen and grow this ministry so that His name will be glorified and our hearts will draw even closer to Him.

On March 3rd the annual Sisters in Spirit Ladies Seminar will be held at Grange Hall FWBC. Also on March 18th, the Victory Boys will be with us during our morning worship service. In April, Harmony FWBC will be hosting the quarterly meeting. Please join us in praying for these upcoming events that God will open hearts and minds throughout our communities and draw His people closer to Him!

"In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him." - 1 John 4:9

BLUE POINT CHURCH

Pastor: Ernie Lewis Reporter: Suzanne Lewis

Due to some of the snowy and icy weather, we have had to cancel a couple of Wednesday evening services and one Sunday morning service. The schools have been out several days as well.

Brother Ernie and Suzanne took the teens to Salem on the annual bowling trip. We always do this following the Sunday evening service on the night before Martin Luther King's birthday. One Sunday morning we hosted TEAM Sunday for the Cisne High School basketball team and their cheerleaders. Team members, cheerleaders, and coaches were introduced during the morning service. Head Coach Kevin Bowen shared a few words. After the service our ladies provided a pizza, salad and dessert luncheon for the teams and their families.

On Super Bowl Sunday several gathered in the Link to watch the big game projected on the 'big screen', breaking for the evening service. Cisne High School basketball players and their families used the Link to celebrate after their Senior Night ballgame.

Todd Parrish of Welch College shared about the school and preached our morning message on a recent Sunday. He also set up a table of various promotional materials. Todd's wife, Merinda, spoke about the "Pave the Way" project to purchase memorial bricks with an inscription for the college's "Building on the Legacy" campaign. The next night, Suzanne Lewis represented Blue Point at the planning meeting for the Ignite the Flame Dinner. This was held at Ryan's Steakhouse in Mt. Vernon.

We recently held a shower for Lance and Lindsey Endsley who are expecting twin girls in April. Although we had cancelled the morning service due to ice, by the evening we were able to have our service and this shower. They were aided in opening their presents by their two older daughters, Kate and Parker.

Brother Ernie and Suzanne Lewis went to Champaign on January 27th for The Bridge Church's "Vision Gathering". Over fifty people gathered at the Orpheum Children's Museum to hear about the church plant and take volunteers to help with their launch. We pray for Jamie and Heather Lee and Tyler and Kellie Penn as they gather more workers.

PITTSBURG CHURCH

Pastors: Eddie Donnelson and Keith Mc Dannel Reporter: Hollie Utley

Hello March! Looking forward to sunny days ahead!

A recap from February; we had planned our Love Banquet/Sweet Tooth Auction for February 11, but the weather had other plans. Due to the ice we had, we ended up having to cancel services that day. We did however have the opportunity to raise a little bit of money for our Youth Group via an online auction!

The PFWBC skate night was on February, 8. This is always a fun time for the young and 'young at heart' to get out and fellowship while being entertained by those brave enough to skate!!

As this is being prepared, we have over 20 members from PFWBC and 20 more from surrounding churches getting ready to depart to the Holy Land. We are looking forward to hearing how the Lord blesses them on this journey and pray for their safe return.

This month we will be hosting our annual Easter Egg Hunt for the kids at the Pittsburg Village Hall. Even though Easter is officially in April, we are looking forward to the celebration of our risen Savior. Easter Sunday, we will have our SONrise service at 6am and a breakfast to follow. We will meet at 10am for our normal worship service. Praying for this time of celebration and that God would pour out His spirit upon these upcoming services.

May God continue to bless our sister churches!

"There Ain't Nothin' Gonna Steal Our Joy, in 2018" ...and no one can rob you of that joy. John 16:22

Do your hymn books need REPLACING?

Rejoice Hymnal - \$15.99

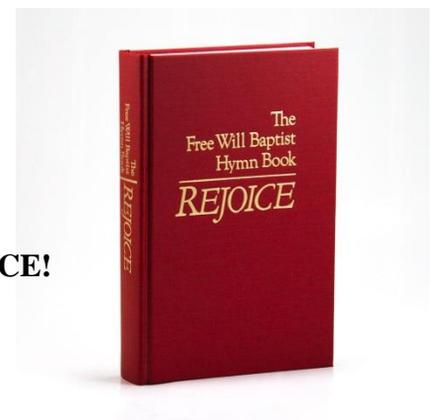
Colors: Blue Canvas, Cardinal Red,

Brown French Roast and NEW: Dove Gray!

Also available in Loose Leaf and Large Print

The FREE WILL BAPTIST HYMN BOOK – REJOICE!

Order now: 800-877-7030 RANDALLHOUSE.COM



HAZEL DELL CHURCH

Pastor: Larry Clyatt Reporter: Diana Kirk

Greetings from the Hazel Dell Family!

A special thank you to those of the church who have recently helped with putting away Christmas décor, snow and ice removal, cake and brownie baking and assistance at the Five Loaves Café. May the Lord Bless you for your service.

Jessalyn Eubanks, our Welch College student was with us on January 28th to share information and needs about a Missions' Trip to Brazil that she is taking this summer. A special offering was received on February 4th to assist Jessalyn with her financial needs for this ministry.

The Men's Prayer Breakfast group met on February 4th for their monthly meeting. There were 8 present. Brother Brian Gibson spoke on "Indifference".

The Peppy Calebs met at Bennie's Italian Foods in Marion for their monthly outing. There were 18 present to enjoy a good time of food and fellowship.

Please continue to pray for our shut-ins: Gearld Hamilton, Frances McNeal, Wilma Cockrum and Helen Galloway.

"Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another." - 1John 4:11

ARNOLD VIEW CHURCH

Pastor: Ivan Ryan Reporter: Buddy Parks

Average Sunday School attendance during January was 74. The Women Active for Christ meeting was held on January 10. The WAC announced a project of collecting diapers to donate to Pregnancy Matters in Marion. Arnold View had a group at the FCA Night event at SIU. The Salukis defeated Illinois State, 74-70. Brother David Milburn brought the evening worship message on January 21. Arnold View's delegates to the South Central Quarterly Meeting at Benton on January 27 were Colene Doss, Dale Hastings and Diane Ryan. Betty Tanner, 76, passed away on February 1. She was a sister to Norman Owens. Condolences to the family.

"And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ." - 2 Thessalonians 3:5



2018 STATE CALENDAR

In the next issue of the Newsletter, we plan to list a calendar of events planned by our State Association.

Quarterly Meeting and District Association Clerks and State Board Secretaries should send the dates and meeting places for 2018.

Your consideration in this matter will be greatly appreciated

MOUNT VERNON CHURCH

Pastor: David Shores Youth Minister: Phillip Kennedy

Like many of the other churches, our congregation has had its share of sickness and inclement weather. We are also in the process of renovating our kitchen and having a major overhaul of our sanctuary heating system.

Recent events at our church include a Christmas Eve Candlelight service, celebration of many birthdays and anniversaries, meetings of the WNAC, hosted the East Central Quarterly Meeting and some good youth programs. We have held two services in our fellowship hall. The Lord met with us there!

We had some representatives at the Ignite the Flame dinner at Ina Church, but we had to postpone our offering to the college because of icy conditions on the Sunday before the dinner.

Our church has a small prayer group praying for revival...join with us as we pray.

OR CURRENT RESIDENT

*Note to Church Reporters: News items for the April issue of the Newsletter must be submitted by March 15th.
Send all correspondence to David Shores: davids@mvfreewillbaptist.org.*



**DR. ROBERT
PICIRILLI**

ILLINOIS STATE ASSOCIATION

March 15- 17 at Peace Church (Granite City, IL)

*Theme: "Christianity is Working Beyond Me"
Hebrews 10:24 and Ephesians 4:15-16*

March 15: Thursday Evening – 7:00 pm: (Two Sessions)
Speaker: Robert Picirilli

March 16-17: Friday and Saturday
Business Sessions, Reports from State and National Boards
Speakers for Friday and Saturday:
Dr. Picirilli (Friday Morning and Evening)
Brother Brad Ryan (Friday Afternoon)

The Peace Church will host a Banquet on Friday Evening – 5:00 pm

Dr. Robert E. Picirilli is professor emeritus (New Testament Greek and philosophy) at Welch College. He is the author of several books and is also editor of the Randall House Bible Commentary on the New Testament

