



ILLINOIS FREE WILL BAPTIST

FEBRUARY 2023

NEWSLETTER

A monthly publication for Illinois Free Will Baptist families

THE ILLINOIS STATE ASSOCIATION MEETS AT THE INA CHURCH – INA, ILLINOIS MARCH 16-17, 2023

(The Program and Theme for the annual State Meeting will be published in the March Newsletter)

In preparation for the Illinois State Association of Free Will Baptist annual meeting in Ina, the following hotels are available for those who attend:

1) **SureStay By Best Western Whittington**

2-Star Hotel (due to special event in area might not have many rooms available)

13277 Freeway Ln, Whittington, IL 62897 • (618) 200-4116

Mention: Illinois State Association of FWB, rate (\$88.79 tax included)

2) **Comfort Suites Mt. Vernon**

3-Star Hotel

404 S 44th St, Mt Vernon, IL 62864 • (618) 244-2700

Mention: Illinois State Association of FWB, Rate (\$90 Plus tax)

3) **Hampton Inn Mt. Vernon**

3-Star Hotel • Eco-certified

221 Potomac Blvd, Mt Vernon, IL 62864 • (618) 244-2323

Mention: Illinois State Association of FWB, Rate (\$109 Plus tax) (15 rooms reserved)

Please make your reservations by Thursday, March 9, 2023.

For additional information, please contact our State Clerk, Jason Janus at: ijnanus74@gmail.com

**Note: The State Executive Board will meet at the Mount Vernon Church on February 6 at 6:00pm.
(The Program Committee will meet at 5:00 pm)**

BAKERVILLE CHURCH...starts the year with water damage in their sanctuary!

Pastor: Robert Craig

We had a water line to freeze and burst in our sanctuary and men's restroom during the week after Christmas. This caused considerable damage to sheetrock and eight pews.

Several in the Church came together to mitigate damage and began clean up. We have Service Master doing the demo and sanitizing all areas affected. We hope to see things start going back together sometime next week. I expect it will be four to six weeks till completion.

Meanwhile we are seeing people working together and certainly an increase of prayer for the Church. I fully believe through it all God will make this a *Good* outcome for us here at Bakerville. To God be Glory, Pastor Robert Craig

HAZEL DELL CHURCH

Pastor: Curtis Smith Reporter: Diana Kirk

Happy New Year to all. May God continue to bless each and every one of us in 2023.

We did our annual Christmas caroling on Wednesday, December 21st.

We caroled at several homes with our final stop at Sister Len and Brother Larry Jones's home where we were treated to homemade hot chocolate and cookies. Thank you to the Joneses for their warm hospitality and fellowship time.

Our Christmas morning service was a special blessing. We met at 9:30 a.m. with a special music presentation by the Victory Boys. Following the music, Brother Curtis delivered the message. It was so good to be in the House of the Lord on Christmas morning.

Our children's Christmas program had to be postponed until January 8th due to so much sickness amongst us. It was definitely a great program. Sister Emilee did a wonderful job of directing the youth in the presentation of "A Lamb's Tale". Much time and effort was put into preparing this performance.

Our Senior Meals were suspended for January due to some maintenance in the church kitchen. They are expected to resume in February.

"Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice." - Philippians 4:4

BENTON CHURCH

Pastor: Phillip Kennedy

Hopefully everyone enjoyed the holidays!

On December 18th our Church observed Communion together. We had a wonderful Candlelight Service on December 21. Every person that came shared a testimony. It truly was a blessing! Our Christmas service was special. It was nice to gather with Church family on Christmas day! It seems like this year during our prayer request times at church we have been hearing more Praise reports! You cannot help but be encouraged by this!

We had a good open Gym Night on January 6th. Several from the community came out for the first time. Our Next Open gym night is February 3rd from 6p.m. to 8p.m. All are welcome! Some of our Ladies met for a meeting the first Saturday of this month and enjoyed a time of Fellowship. We also had our Fellowship with the Pastor on January 9th where we get together and enjoy coffee and donuts at 9A.M. we also do this once a month on the second Monday of each month. Feel free to join us February 13 at 9A.M.

Pray for our student Hangout ministry and the youth that don't attend church. May God bless you and your Churches this new year!

BLUE POINT CHURCH

Pastor Ernie Lewis Reporter Suzanne Lewis

Congratulations to Rebecca Smith Eckelberry on her December graduation from the University of Southern Indiana. We also congratulate Howard Block who turned 100 years old in December.

Under the direction of Bill and Christal Lewis, our Junior Church presented the Christmas program, "Christmas Roadtrip". Everyone in attendance that morning received a treat bag of goodies. That evening we held our annual Candlelight Service in which several sang, played musical instruments, or presented a reading. Thanks to Amelia Byars for organizing the program. Several in our church helped sort and box groceries for the ministerial alliance during the Christmas season. Others delivered them to various homes in the area.

Brother Ernie enjoyed the Pastor's and Leaders' Breakfast held at the Bonnie Café in the Mt. Vernon Airport. This breakfast is held on the first Monday of every month at 8:30am. We hosted a food giveaway for Senior Citizens for the Tri-State food bank.

Brother Ernie received good news about his surgery. A surgeon in St. Louis removed a mass from his liver, believing it to be a cancerous tumor. He later concluded that it was actually dead cancer cells and could not explain why. He concluded it was an old-fashioned miracle. We praise the Lord for this diagnosis.

HARMONY CHURCH

Interim Pastor: Kent Dunford Reporter: Cody Alstat

Greetings from Harmony. We held our yearly church office elections on January 1ST, we are blessed to have people step up to hold these offices. The following offices were filled: Trustee- Dave Marrs, Sunday School Superintendent – Charlie Swann, Assistant Superintendent – Dick Cremer, Clerk – Buffy Diefenbach, Assistant Clerk – Jennifer Meacham, Treasurer – Penny Blades, Assistant Treasurer – Kathy Cremer, Youth Leader – Cody Alstat, Song Leader – Charlie Swann, Assistant Song Leader – Kay Veller, Moderator of Business – Dick Cremer, Nursery Coordinator – Jennifer Meacham, Primary 1 – Sherry Stewart, Primary 2 – Cody Alstat, Jr High – Kay Veller. We appreciate all you do in service to the Savior and the body of this church!

Our youth had their monthly outing at Emery Brothers on January 2nd. We had 11 skaters in total. Our Masters Men and Sisters of Strength met for their monthly meeting, we had a total of 20 in attendance.

*“For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value.
The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.” - Galatian 5:6*

WALTONVILLE CHURCH... exceeds their goal of 5 saved in 2022!

Pastor: Mark Wells

The Lord has blessed us here at Waltonville Church. I had shared that our congregation was challenged by the Lord to reach 5 souls for Jesus in 2022. God gave us those 5 plus 1 more as He does in the closing days of December!

One of our dear sisters, Shirley Gilbert, went to be with the Lord on Christmas Eve. Please pray for her family during this time of loss. Keep our church in your prayers. We just praise the Lord!

LETTER FROM IM (International Missions)

To our Illinois friends,

Happy New Year! We are thankful for your continued support of IM missionaries and THP workers serving around the world. Your partnership with them is so important as they work *on the front lines* taking the Gospel to the unreached and sharing Help, Hope, and Healing with those around them. We are excited about two opportunities taking place this year that will help every believer find his/her place in God’s story to the nations.

Go Global workshops are taking place nationwide. Contact Jerry Gibbs for more information (jgibbs@iminc.org) or visit www.iminc.org/go/go-global.

Perspectives is offering an intensive six-day missions course for Free Will Baptist pastors, ministry leaders, and believers. The intensive, scheduled for April 23-28, 2023, will take place in southwest Missouri. Learn more and register at www.perspectives.org/SWMOIntensive.

The IM family

2023 GRANT PROGRAM SUSPENSION

Since 2017, the **Free Will Baptist Foundation** has awarded grants annually to various Free Will Baptist ministries. In total, the Foundation has awarded over \$4 million in grants. The grant program is funded by capturing a portion of the capital gains from the Foundation’s stock portfolios.

Last year, the Foundation was fortunate to capture enough capital gains to fund the \$750,000 needed for grants before the market began to fall. Unfortunately, this is not the case in 2023. With the fallen stock market and the potential to fall further before seeing a turnaround, the Free Will Baptist Foundation cannot award grants in 2023. Last year was a record year, with the Foundation awarding \$750,000 in grants and giving away an additional \$1.1 million to denominational ministries for a total of \$1.85 million. The Free Will Baptist Foundation is optimistic that the grant program will be able to resume in 2024.

Illinois Free Will Baptist February 2023

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Illinois State Association of Free Will Baptists
P.O. Box 1 Bonnie, Illinois 62816-0001

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OR CURRENT RESIDENT

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

Illinois Pastors and their wives are invited to Welch College's "Ignite The Flame" planning meeting on February 20th at the airport Bonnie Café in Mount Vernon at 6:00 pm.

If you can attend, RSVP to Brad Ryan 618-316-4123.

The Illinois ITF Dinner will be held at the Ina Church on March 20th at 6:00 pm.

EASTSIDE COMMUNITY CHURCH...schedules Church Dedication Service

Pastor: Daniel Renfro Reporter: Don Federle

Greetings from Eastside Community Church.

We would like to share what God has done for us over the last few months.

Our lease was up at the end of October and we had to decide what God wanted us to do. An amazing opportunity was presented for us to purchase a church. We knew at first the price was out of our range but GOD had a bigger plan. The group that owned the building wanted it to remain a gospel preaching church and God working through them made it possible for us to purchase it at an amazing price.

Everyone is invited to our dedication service on March 26 at 3pm.

The address is 549 Cimarron Dr. In Hamel.

Come and see what the Lord has done .