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ILFWB NEWSLETTER

July 2025

A monthly publication for Illinois Free Will Baptist Families

Notes from the Promotional Director



Happy Birthday, America! Perhaps it's because the sun shines brighter during this time of the year or because the wind seems to whip it around more briskly than at other seasons of the year. Whatever the reasons, the colors of the American Flag just seem brighter during the summer months. What would a Vacation Bible School opening assembly be without the pledges to the American Flag, the Christian Flag and the Holy Bible? What would a day at Camp Hope be without an early morning meeting around the flag pole and prayer to begin the day? And what about the "bombs bursting in air" with the glorious lights of red, white and blue against the night sky? So, we salute the flag of our country and we pledge our allegiance to our country as she reaches birthday number 249.

Let us agree with this prayer originally offered by Billy Graham:

Our Father and Our God,

We praise You for Your goodness to our nation, giving us blessings far beyond what we deserve.

Yet we know all is not right with America. We deeply need a moral and spiritual renewal to help us meet the many problems we face.

Convict us of sin. Help us to turn to You in repentance and faith. Set our feet on the path of Your righteousness and peace.

We pray today for our nation's leaders. Give them the wisdom to know what is right, and the courage to do it.

You have said, "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord." May this be a new era for America, as we humble ourselves and acknowledge You alone as our Savior and Lord.

This we pray in Your holy name, Amen.

State Association Address Change

At the State Meeting in March, Bro. Mike Johnston retired after many years as the Treasurer of our State Association. Bro. Josh Colson was elected to succeed him, and the two have been working together over the past couple of months in a period of transition. Up to this point, churches have sent their Together Way (co-op) and other Designated Giving to Bro. Mike. Starting in July, however, churches and individuals are asked to send any mail for the Illinois State Association of Free Will Baptists to the following address: P.O. Box 1 Bonnie, IL 62816. Thank you!

If you have any questions, please reach out to me (Ivan) at 618-922-2634 or to our Treasurer, Bro. Josh Colson, at 618-364-5961.

Arnold View**Pastor: Adam Brown**

July is here! It doesn't seem possible that summer breaks are half gone. However, before we move on to recent and upcoming events, we'd like to invite you to join us in praying for those in our community that were impacted by the recent devastating storms. We're so thankful for their safety, but want to continue remembering them as they make decisions and move forward. We're also remembering Brooke Loyd in the loss of her father, Jeff Burnett. Also on our hearts as they begin their Christian walk are Henry Stokes and Sawyer Orrill, who were recently saved and followed the Lord in baptism. In this month, we are also reminded of the many freedoms we enjoy. May we never forget to be thankful for the freedom to gather and worship Christ our Savior.

It seems that July is full of activity from beginning to end. Several of our youth are returning from a week of camp or preparing to attend one. Some of our adults may even make their way to camp to help in one way or another. Wonder Junction, our 2025 Bible School, kicks off on July 6. We are looking forward to its lessons that let us know who Jesus is, encourage us to marvel at Him, and to live for His glory. In the midst of the month, Chuck, Angie and Skye Mausey will host their annual block party for the community with amazing fireworks and fellowship. Our youth will do concessions for this exciting event. Later in the month, several are attending the NAFWB and V3 Conventions. As a congregation, we glean enthusiasm and energy from those that attend the conferences sharing what they've experienced and heard. *-Jodi Tanner*

Bakerville**Pastor: Robert Craig**

Greetings from Bakerville FWB Church! On June 1st while our pastor and Sister JoAnn were on a trip to Alabama, Pastor Robert's twin brother, Gilbert and his wife Brenda came to fill in for a couple of services. We enjoyed having them here. Bro. Gilbert had served here as interim pastor before Pastor Robert came.

On June 8th Deacon and adult Sunday school teacher, Charlie Morgan, fixed a breakfast buffet for his class and invited everyone to come and fellowship with us. Pastor Robert pitched in and we all enjoyed a delicious breakfast and wonderful class lesson.

June 14th we enjoyed having The Larry Delawder family here for an evening of good music and some humor. We will have a fish fry coming up in July so stay tuned!

-Debi Morgan

Benton First**Pastor: Phillip Kennedy**

Summer time! I hope that you are taking advantage of Summer for ministry and rest!

May was busy with graduations. We recognized our graduates on May 18th! Joshua Kennedy graduated eighth grade.

We celebrated our 54th Homecoming on June 1st. The Victory Voices were with us. We also enjoyed a wonderful fellowship meal afterwards.

Pastor Phillip attended the leadership breakfast on June 2nd at Mount Vernon Bonnie Café. Our church is helping with the summer lunch program on Tuesdays. We enjoyed serving lunch at Camp Hope on June 11th.

Pastor Phillip and family went to Nashville to drop off James Kennedy for E-Team. Thank you to Ivan Ryan for filling in on June 8th.

Pray for all the Camps, VBS, missions trips, Truth and Peace, and all headed to the National Convention.

Blue Point**Pastor: Ernie Lewis**

We hosted an end-of-the-year praise and worship night for 'Rooted in Christ', an area group for Kindergarten through 6th grade young people. Pizza and cookies were served, then our praise team sang numerous songs. All the young people seemed to enjoy the evening.

We had a wonderful VBS with the theme of 'True North-Following Jesus in this Wild World'. We ended the week with a family picnic that included inflatables and a snowcone and ice cream truck.

We offer our congratulations to two newly married couples: Noah Barnard and Kodie Nobles and Maddie Bowen and Gunner Wilson. On Mother's Day we recognized the mothers and presented each with a new dish towel. On Father's Day, the dads were each given a package of candy.

Camp Hope is in full swing. Sawyer Patterson and Katelyn Sessions attended Leadership Camp. Sawyer, Hadley Walker, and Brother Ernie Lewis were all at Junior-Senior Camp. Our church provided fruit and several kitchen workers during Freshman-Sophomore Camp.

The finishing of the upstairs loft was completed for our ever-growing Young Professionals Sunday school class. On Father's Day they held their first class in the new room while enjoying home-made breakfast prepared by the class members. Now that this loft is complete our next project will be a new playground. *-Suzanne Lewis*

Crossroads

Pastor: Jeff Pope

Greeting from Crossroads Free Will Baptist Church. On June 5th, Bro. Roy Bartels went home to Heaven after a long battle with cancer. His visitation was June 9th and funeral on June 10th with Pastor Pope presiding. Pray for his widow, Sis. Kathy and their family.

June 11-14 we are having VBS. Thankful for all the workers. Sis. Linda Pope is leading it this year, and she is doing a great job.

On June 15th, we celebrate all the fathers. Hope everyone has a happy Father's Day. We will also have the VBS program that morning as well as a baptism as nine-year-old Eli Jackson gave his heart to the Lord during Sunday School on Palm Sunday. We are very proud of him!

July 23rd our Pastor's son, Eric, will be with us to bring the morning message with lunch following. Looking forward to seeing him and his family.

Our church has been blessed by two wonderful individuals who donated money to our church mortgage, bringing our total to \$59,000. Praise the Lord for them.

We have three people in our church in need of prayer. Jeff Deunk is battling cancer and needs back surgery. Tammy Ray needs knee replacement surgery. And Mike Crabtree has been having some major health issues.

On June 5th, I have been blessed with being at this wonderful church for two years. On July 5th two years ago, I became a member. It has been a real blessing to be here.

God is good // God is Great // Please accept Him as your Savior // Before it's too late
 -Tammy Boster

Hazel Dell

Pastor: Curtis Smith

We are continuing to collect items for the Operation Christmas Child Donations. In July, we will be collecting nail clippers/files. Items may be placed in the plastic container in the foyer of the church.

May 18th. we had Friend Day. A potluck dinner was served following the morning service. It was such a blessing to see so many friends and family members attend. We will be having a Family Night, Sunday, June 29th. with food, games for the kids, and fellowship. Praying for a good turnout for this special evening.

The Summer Kids' Meals began the week of June 2-6. We were responsible for handing out the meals for this week. Thank you to those who volunteered for this outreach. We will be serving another week starting on July 14th.

Preparations are in progress for our VBS which will be held from 6:00-8:30pm on July 28-August 1. The theme is "Wonder Junction". We look forward to ministering to many young people. -Diana Kirk

Ina

Pastor: Brad Ryan

Greetings from Ina FWB Church! At the end of May we were able to have a special Sunday night service, in which all of our CTS students performed the various things they have been working so hard on. We also had a fundraiser dinner to raise money for travel costs. We are so proud of our students and are looking forward to the National!

The Diefenbach/Simpson family joined our church on June 8th. When they started attending a few months ago, they jumped right in, got involved, and have been faithful ever since. We are thankful they have become part of our church family. We also got to Facetime Shane & Joy Davidson, missionaries to France, that morning!

That night we were able to hear from Bro. Brad and Sis. Tommi Jo about their recent trip to Greece, touring the places where Paul would've ministered. It was so neat to look at pictures of the ruins and read the scripture that coincided with what we were seeing. It brought those particular passages to life! Summer can be hectic with camps, vacations and projects. Home you all are finding a bit of rest & relaxation amongst the busyness.

-Katie Williams

Mount Vernon First

Pastor: Craig Smith

Several from our church enjoyed an evening of good music as we attended the Triumphant concert at Woodlawn Christian Church on May 18.

The WAC met at Sandy Ellis' home May 21. Many issues were discussed, Sandy, as usual, had a very good Bible lesson, and then we enjoyed her chocolate cake.

Memorial Day we honored those who had served our great country. We had two present who had served. May God continue to bless America!

We celebrated our 95th Homecoming on June 1st. Several spoke about what they remembered about the church and the changes that have occurred over the years. Maxine Hicks displayed a beautiful quilt that had been presented to her and husband, Clifford, while he was preaching here. It had the names of many saints who are now with the Lord and there were still a few there that day who had worked on it. The church was organized February 23, 1930, with 50 charter members. This was after a revival was held that lasted six weeks with 70 or more being saved. W. R. Burton led the revival.

Fathers were honored on Father's Day with a small gift. God bless these men who are Godly fathers! Becky and daughter, Lauryn, will be singing during the morning service on June 22. They are always a blessing! If you are in the area, we would love to have you visit!

June 29th is our 5th Sunday singing followed by the June birthday and anniversary celebration. -Mary Ann Levitt

New Hope

Pastor: Larry Cook

We had our fish fry on May 18th to raise money to help our young people attend the National in Kansas City and saw over \$3400 given. PRAISE THE LORD!!

Then we recognized our 2025 graduates: Jersey Lea 8th grade, Iris Fowler, Kindergarten, and Hank Catron Tuesday School. Congratulations!

Homecoming was great. A solo concert by Ashton from the former group Righteous Reign did a great job. The Spirit could be felt. We had 67 in attendance and a great dinner was provided by our ladies.

God truly has been blessing as we have seen over the past few months two new families with young children (PRAISE GOD!) beginning to attend and several adults as well helping us to see our average over 50.

-Kaitlyn Catron

Oak Valley

Pastor: Marty Smith

In April, people from our church and community came together to support the family of a young lady who passed away.

In May, Pastor Smith participated in a number of charity motorcycle rides. We also celebrated Mother's Day, and the mothers of our church were blessed with devotionals.

In the middle of May, Pastor Marty and his wife, Tonya, went to Clear Water, Texas to participate in the War Rally, which is a motorcycle revival. There were over 3,000 people with amazing worship and many different speakers who spoke the living Word of God. The following day we attended church that was being held in a bar that was open so that those who were partaking in what the bar served could hear the Word of God. After church, Pastor Smith starts his drive home while Tonya visited friends and family in Corpus Christi. While there, she met up with a fellow amputee. He recently lost his leg and was dealing with uncertainty, depression, and confusion. She was able to have lunch with him and after a few hours, he rededicated his life to the Lord and God took away those anxieties. He has called a few times with excitement. He is preparing to get his new leg and learn how to walk again.

While Marty and Tonya were gone, Oak Valley was blessed to have Ethan Keyer to preach. He and his family are such wonderful blessings.

In June, Marty and Tonya will be going to a secular event called Hog Rock, where they will pray over and speak the Word to thousands of bikers and others.

We pray and hope that everyone is blessed and are being blessings to others.

-Tonya Smith

Pittsburg

Pastor: Eddie Donelson

PFWBC celebrated our Graduates during the month of June. We had 21 Graduates this year (7 from 8th grade, 11 from high school, and 3 from college). To all 2025 graduates this year, CONGRATULATIONS! "The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; HE will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged" (Deuteronomy 31:8). May God continue to bless your future endeavors! We are well pleased of you!

On Saturday, June 14, PFWBC celebrated our Men with a time of food, fellowship, and encouragement from God's Word with a big ol' breakfast. They had a wonderful time enjoying each other's company! We are thankful for all of our Father's and most importantly our Heavenly Father!

As this is being written, we are getting ready for an amazing VBS adventure. We will be "hitting the road" during the week of July 21-25 from 6pm-8:30pm. Kids (Travelers) ages Pre-K through 5th grade will be invited to embark on an exciting journey with **Road Trip VBS, ON THE GO WITH GOD**. Our theme this year is based on Joshua 1:9 - "The LORD your God is with you wherever you go." Discover God's presence everywhere as we explore new places, make new friends, and experience God's goodness together. Our Road Trip will be led by the Navigator and an adventurous pup Scout, kids will learn that God is always with them. Through engaging stories from the Navigators' Guide (the Bible), Travelers will delve into timeless tales of faith from the Old and New Testaments. We invite you to join us as we get ready for twists, turns, and excitement as we set out to face new challenges and find strength in God's presence on this unforgettable trip! *-Heather Phillips*

Harmony

Interim Pastor: Kent Dunford

We are praising the Lord for the many visitors we have had over the past month. We anxiously await to see what God has planned for us.

Several have been out with sickness for an extended time, and we are praying for them and their families. We do know God answers prayers as we now have a piano player. Rose Fields has graciously been filling this position and doing a tremendous job.

Sisters of Strength has started a study of "Women of the Bible," the first being Sarah and Hagar.

Bro. Ben Eldridge has been preaching for us during the month of June, and we so appreciate him and his family.

Harmony has been decorated, and we are looking forward to VBS beginning on June 16: "Egypt: Joseph's Journey from Prison to Power. We will have Church in the Park on June 22 with a devotion, singing, meal, and fellowship. What a great time it will be. All are invited! *-Alice Barron*

Open Hand

by Malinda Edgell

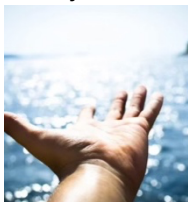
I'm always on the lookout for exclamation points in reading God's Word. They, in our language, denote a tone of excitement, thrill, or importance. They give lift to what might otherwise be words simply laying on a page. So, when I found this nugget, I was thrilled to share it with you—

"...The man of God replied, 'The Lord is able to give you much more than this!'" (2 Chronicles 25:9).

I consider myself a very blessed woman. I have been given more than I could ever have dreamed of, more than I ever could have wished for, more—much more—than I will ever deserve. So, upon reading that 'this' can be topped? Well, I was intrigued.

But . . .

Receiving 'more' of what God has for me will require letting a few things slip from my fingers. Things I have conjured in my head to go in a set way and be produced in a set time. Things that focus a lot less on me and a whole lot more on Him. Things that I deem wonderfully grand, but when measured against what He has in store for me will be dull and lifeless.



Sounds like an easy exchange, doesn't it? Well, it's not. Some of my 'things' I've clung to so tightly that I have their indentions in my heart and life.

There are a few things that, even knowing God's got something bigger and better in store, comfort me and have been held near and dear for a long time.

There are a few things that I will have to readjust my thinking about. You see, I have this erroneous thought that some of my blessings I have worked hard for or earned—and truth be told, nothing could be farther from the truth!

There are a few things that I can't willfully give control of to God. I've 'handled' them thus far in life and plan on continuing with them.

But the verse ends with an exclamation point. That leads me to believe I am needing to rethink what's going on in my head and my heart.

I can trust Him. I know I can, but will I?

Remembering Sherri Milburn

Sherri Milburn, wife of Rev. David Milburn, went to be with the Lord on May 23rd at the age of 68. She was the daughter of the late Rev. Bill and Sis. Emma Jean McDonald. She was a gifted musician and a multi-talented lady. She would often play the piano and sing with her mother in churches where her father was preaching.



Sherri and David were married in 1976 at the Pittsburg Free Will Baptist Church, and they began their 49-year ministry together. She worked alongside David as he attended Free Will Baptist Bible College.

During their ministry at Bakerville Free Will Baptist Church, Sherri began to suffer from chronic health conditions relating to a surgical procedure which impacted her life from that time forward. She endured unspeakable health issues while maintaining an unshakable faith. She became a fierce prayer warrior, wholly rejecting bitterness and embracing joy.

Sherri is survived by her husband, David, two children and their spouses, Kari and Drew White and Terry and Lyndsay Milburn, and four grandchildren.

ILLINOIS FREE WILL BAPTIST

**MASTER'S MEN RETREAT
AT CAMP HOPE**

Sept
11-13
2025

Worship - Fellowship
Archery - Horseshoes - Skeet Shooting -
Disk Golf - Fishing - Pie Auction

This year's speaker is nationally known author and producer Jay Payleitner

Illinois Free Will Baptist

July 2025

NEWSLETTER

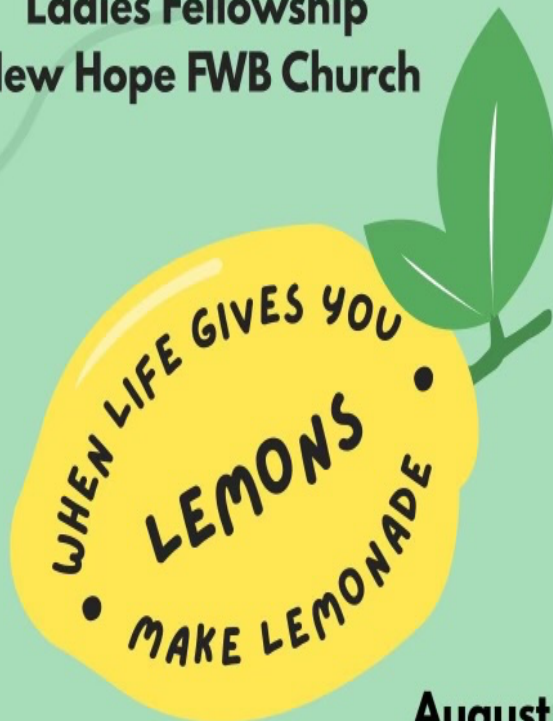
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Reporters, please note: Please send all correspondence for the Illinois Newsletter to www.iryman1970@gmail.com The deadline for the August Newsletter is July 15

Ladies Fellowship
New Hope FWB Church



August 2nd
10:00am

ILLINOIS FREE WILL BAPTIST

Camp Meeting

SEPTEMBER 7-10, 2025

6:30 EACH NIGHT
AT CAMP HOPE

Come join us!

16322 Camp Hope Rd.
Ewing, IL 62836



DR. TOM MALONE