



ILLINOIS FREE WILL BAPTIST

October 2024

NEWSLETTER

A monthly publication for Illinois Free Will Baptist families

Pastor Appreciation

by Ivan Ryan, Promotional Director

In a recent service in one of our Free Will Baptist Churches, I overheard a remark from one of our laymen amid all the “after church fellowship.” Someone said to no one in particular, “That man had something worth listening to.” In my opinion, this is the essence of good, biblical preaching: having something worth listening to.

I have been bragging on our preachers for the short time I have had this job of promotions. I am blessed over and over to rub shoulders with and hear our FWB Pastors preach. I sense the prayers, the time, and the efforts in preparing to provide something from God’s Word that is worth listening to. Please don’t misunderstand—everything in His Word is worth listening to; but the pastor’s study and delivery from his heart makes a big difference in how we really hear it, as he preaches the whole council of truth.

So, it’s October—Pastor Appreciation month. What can you do for your pastor? It is wonderful if your church does something for him! He will appreciate it and likely need it. Perhaps you might consider a small token of appreciation. A small gift, perhaps a gift card. A brief note of support. Perhaps you could remind him of something he shared recently that helped you as an individual or a family. The gift could be either whimsical or serious, and it need not break the bank.

The month of Pastor Appreciation is simply a reminder of what we should do year-round. Pastors, we love you. Thank you for the dedication you give to your calling as you sincerely strive to provide something worth listening to!

ILLINOIS FREE WILL BAPTIST
WOMEN’S MINISTRIES

Fall
RETREAT

Scan to
preregister &
learn more



SOLID AS A ROCK
PSALM 18:1-3

OCTOBER 4-5, 2024
CAMP HOPE

Speaker

Ruth McDonald, WNAC Executive Director

Registration

Preregister online or at 5:45pm on Friday
Adults \$25.00, Teens (ages 12-19) \$10.00
All ladies ages 12 and up are invited
Special activities for girls ages 12–19

Schedule

Friday: Dinner 6:00pm, Worship 7:00pm
Saturday: Breakfast 8:30am, Worship 9:15am

Arnold View Pastor: Adam Brown Youth Leaders: River & Danielle Doss Reporter: Jodi Tanner

We're beginning to see all the signs of fall. It's easy to see the beautiful handiwork of God's creation in the colors of the autumn leaves and the bounty of harvest. It's wonderful to experience—kind of like the fellowship of our recent homecoming service. It was wonderful to have Brad Ryan and Righteous Reign with us to worship and celebrate God's faithfulness. September also marked the kick off of our third year to participate in offering Good News Club at Crab Orchard School. We hosted training for new and seasoned volunteers to organize for these fall sessions. The session kicked off on September 18. Please join us in praying for the volunteer team, but most of all for the students in attendance and their families. We've recently started a study by Barry Raper of Thessalonians on Wednesday night. Our congregation is eagerly anticipating some events planned for October. The youth are planning to attend a concert benefiting Agape Christian High School on October 5. Our third annual Fall Festival will be held October 19th. It is slated to include hog roasting, chili cookoff, pumpkin chunkin, live music, and many other fun events. We're looking forward to sharing an afternoon of food, fun, and fellowship with our local community. Our prayer is that the day will provide opportunities to show love to the community.

Bear Point Pastor: Gowdy Cannon Reporter: Mona Lappin

A wise youth harvests in the summer, but one who sleeps during harvest is a disgrace. (Proverbs 10:5)

Summer has faded, but there were some memorable events that happened during the summer months. The highlight of the month of July was the birth of a precious little boy given the name of Morgan Wyatt Confer. Morgan was born on July 19th weighing 7lbs 5 oz and was 19 inches long. Randy and Janie Eubanks are the proud Great Grandpa and Great Grandma to this little guy. Grandma Chrissy Confer was all too happy to show him off his first Sunday in church. Congratulations to the family!

August was amazing, as we saw 3 people follow the Lord in baptism during the Sunday morning service on August 18th. First up was one of our newcomers who came to VBS—Miss Salena Pedder. Salena is a 4th grader at Waltonville. Next was her grandpa Ray Ferrez. Ray has been so faithful to attend and to bring his family to church as well. We are so grateful for this new family of believers. Last to go was Jon Zsido, husband to Heidi and dad to Emerson and Hazel. This is another precious family in our church who work with our young people. We can't wait to see what God will do in all their lives.

September 1st the church took up a LOVE offering for Luke Pabst who is 9 years old and battling Leukemia. He lives in Arizona, but is connected to Bear Point through Ms. Ceola Benedict his Great- Great Grandmother. Please pray for Luke and his family and he goes through treatments.

The Portell's were with us in the morning service on September the 8th. Please pray for support for them as they prepare for their new mission work in Champaign. The evening of the 8th while the adults were at Camp Hope, the Lappin's hosted a youth meeting at their home. Six very fine young people showed up for burgers and ice cream, a little corn-hole and a devotion from Galatians 5: 19-23. They were on teams: Good vs Evil and listed the fruits of the Spirit vs the sins of the flesh. The devotion time was followed by a gathering around the firepit where Mark entertained them with some good scary stories!

Saturday the 14th the church held an all-day Prayer Vigil focused on our youth. Brother Gowdy provided a list of all our young people from babies (even one yet to be born) all the way up to the high school students. There were about 28 names on the list.

Upcoming is Bear Point Youth Famous Fried Pies: Orders are due by October 6th and they will be frying and filling orders on October 14th. If you need any fried pies I'm sure Brother Gowdy or anyone of our young people would be happy to take your order. More than anything we ask that you to PRAY FOR THE YOUTH OF OUR CHURCHES!

Benton Pastor: Phillip Kennedy

Aren't you thankful for the goodness of God?

We sure are! We have started back our Student Hangouts and they are going well. Continue praying for these students please. Pastor Phillip, James and Joshua attended the Youth Rally at Harmony FWBC on August 18th. We finished going over the Romans Road to Salvation on Wednesday nights. On September 6th we had Open Gym night. September 8th was Grandparents Day, and we recognized all grandparents in the church. Also, Adult Camp Meeting began Sunday night September 8th. Brother Jim McComas did a wonderful job preaching and Ina did a great job leading us in Worship! Some men from our church attended the Masters Men Retreat Sept 12-14. The whole week was quite refreshing! Thankful to our trustees for the work they have been putting in to make things look better around the Church! We are looking forward to our church picnic on September 29th. Praying for God's blessings on our churches!

Blue Point Pastor Ernie Lewis Reporter Suzanne Lewis

Randy and Diana Bryant of Florida recently visited our church. Diana is originally from Roxana, Illinois and grew up attending church camp. Randy serves as the clerk of the National Association and the Promotional Director in Florida Free Will Baptists. On another Sunday Mark Headrick of Harvest Children's Ministries was with us. He shared about the Casa Hogar (a children's home in Mexico) and also brought the morning message.

We recently hosted another blood drive for the American Red Cross. Our August fellowship was an ice cream social held in our new pavilion. The men continued their book study of "The Circle Maker", meeting at the home of Daryl Hargrave. We hosted a Senior Grocery Giveaway on the last Friday of the month. Several attended the wedding of P.J. Kloster to Molly Hicks at Camp Hope. Some of the women were blessed at the "Unspoken" concert in Mt. Vernon.

Brother Ernie attended the recent Executive Board meeting. Brother Ernie and Suzanne attended a breakfast held at the Ina Church during the Illinois Adult Camp Meeting. They were also able to attend a couple of the services there. Brother Ernie met with several area pastors and adult camp speaker, Jim McComas, for lunch and fellowship. He was also able to attend part of the IL Master's Men Retreat and hear Josh Colson speak.

Over Labor Day weekend Joe Matthews of our church preached in the Sunday morning service and Ryan Spradlin of the Calvary Church preached in the Sunday evening service. We had a special time of prayer for Dakota Greenwood who has been deployed to Somalia. We presented his family, his wife and three children, with an assortment of cards and gift cards.

Our Connect group for teens recently resumed after their summer break. They enjoyed a variety of homemade snacks and a game night in the gym. On Saturdays in September we are hosting Upward Soccer. The Young Professionals Sunday school class is coordinating this outreach and providing the coaches.

We sympathize with the family of Barbara Cook who recently passed away. Barbara, the mother of Larry Cook, was raised at Blue Point. Several were able to attend her visitation and funeral. We also extend our sympathy to the family of Mary Lou Simmons. Mary Lou passed away at the age of 88. She grew up attending the Hazel Dell FWB Church in Sesser.

Update from Mark King

We have received an updated from Mark King, who is in Vietnam. He is currently teaching British and American Literature at a university there. He has recently traveled to DaNang and is encouraged with the increased number of team members serving in the country. He thanks everyone for their longstanding support and prayers.



Mark and some of his team.

Decatur Pastor: Stephen Cantrell Reporter: Cathie DeCicco

We had a wonderful homecoming this year with several visitors and a great time of fellowship during our potluck lunch following Pastor Stephen's heartfelt message on the pre-eminence of Christ. In October, we, of course, celebrate Pastor appreciation. I think Pastor Stephen has finally conceded to allow us this time to show him our gratitude and appreciation for all that he does for our congregation. Every week of the month, we celebrate in a different way, including a week to celebrate the Pastor's wife, Candi, with a basket of treats and sweets; a love offering, a weiner roast, and a basket of thanks for Pastor Stephen, as well as a few other events that we haven't completely worked out yet. It's just a wonderful month that we get to shower our pastor and his family with the love and accolades he humbly sidesteps throughout the year. Besides, it's good to see him get the recognition he deserves. And that's how we try to show him how much he is loved by his flock.

Harmony Interim Pastor: Kent Dunford Reporter: Alice Barron

The leaves are starting to fall and the woolly worms are crossing the road so I guess fall and winter will be here before we know it. I have missed a month of reporting as I was on vacation so I will try to catch up. We had Birthday and Anniversary fellowship on July 28th after evening service. VBS was from August 4th thru August 8th with approximately 35 children and 30 adults attending. Many thanks to all who helped including Bro. Cody Alstat who, due to unforeseeable circumstances, took over as Master Teacher. We would not be able to do this without everyone. Brian and Buffy Diefenbach and family attended the National Convention. Hailey and Elijah took part in the CTS competition with Elijah getting a First place in Graphic Art and Hailey received a Second place in Banners. We are very proud of their accomplishments. Our youth has been keeping busy with a movie night, goofy golf and a youth rally. We had around 103 at the youth rally with Caleb Miller from Ezra bringing the message. Also, Ezra provided the music as well. Thank you Ezra and Brother Cody for bringing it all together.

On August 11th, Zane Harmon from Rescue Church brought the morning message. Several from Harmony went to Adult Camp Meeting to hear Bro. Jim McComas preach. What a blessing.

We are looking forward to our Fall Church in the Park at West Frankfort on September 29th with a devotional message, singing, and fish with all the fixins. Then in October we have our Fall Fest on the 26th. This is another time for some great fellowship. We welcome one and all.

Please continue to remember Harmony as we continue our search for a full-time pastor. In saying that, we thank God for the great job Bro. Kent is doing for us. Bro. Kent and Sis. Tedra have been a blessing to us. Praise God for His Wonderful GRACE.

Hazel Dell Pastor Curtis Smith Reporter Dianna Kirk

Anxiously looking forward to the fall season with its beauty and cooler temperatures.

Our Awesome August Revival was a blessing. There was good attendance. Each of the pastors who spoke did an excellent job of sharing God's word. The special music was good, as well. Thank you to all who supported the revival.

Bro. Jim McComas, from the Free Will Baptist Family Ministry, was with us on Sunday morning, Sept. 8th. to preach during the morning service. He also was the guest speaker of the Camp meeting at Camp Hope. He then shared a "Break the Chains" message during our Celebrate Recovery meeting on Thursday, Sept. 12. Thank you to Bro. McComas for coming to Illinois to share with us. We were all blessed by the messages.

The Master's Men group met for their monthly breakfast, worship and fellowship meeting on Sunday, Sept. 8th. Bro. Curtis shared during the devotion time.

Ina Pastor: Brad Ryan Reporter: Katie Williams

Hope you all had a wonderful summer! Many of our youth enjoyed attending various weeks of Camp Hope. The last week of June, we had the privilege to hear from Anthony & Lea Edgmon about their mission work in Spain.

Larry Clyatt spoke during our evening service on July 14th. Ryan Payne spoke on the 21st while our pastors were at our National Convention. We are so proud of our youth who attended and used their talents for the Lord. At the end of July some of our youth went on a mission trip to St. Croix. We are thankful for their willingness to serve.

August 4th was our last Sunday with our Pastoral Intern, Caleb Sampsell. We had a time of fellowship that evening to say goodbye before he headed back to finish his degree at Welch College. August 18th, Quentin & Cassandra Hiatt, along with their son Gabe, joined our church. August 25th, we were able to hear from Army Chaplain Jonathan Truett.

September 7th Molly Hicks married PJ Kloster at Camp Hope. It was a beautiful ceremony and we are excited for this couple as they start their lives together.

God bless you all!

JCity Pastor Randy Carney Reporter: Doug Hancock

The news from last month got lost in the "ozone"... so here's a double portion of our church's going ons: September was a month for celebrations at J-City Church. The J-City Center for Hope and Renewal has completed its third year , along with their partnership with Take Action Today and Caring Christian Counseling, to assist people who are fighting hurt, habits and hangups. And to celebrate, our center took part in a street festival with a local business...there were craft booths, food trucks, inflatables for the kids...even a dunking booth! In addition, The Arrow, the only JC newspaper, enjoyed its first anniversary with its largest publication (8 pages!)...touting all the ministries of J-City, especially Lunch Bunch, feeding kids with lunches and Bible stories for 15 years. And just a week ago, Saturday night meals started back up...folks just gotta drive through for a hot meal. Plus...our church hosted the community's 5th Sunday service...lots of music and a BBQ afterwards.

October is gonna be just as busy with another celebration for the official third anniversary of JC Center and then there's the citywide Trail of Treats on the 31st...and by the way, we started that years ago.

Rescue Pastor: Bryant Harris Youth Pastor: Ryan Payne Reporter: Donna Harmon

I hope everyone is enjoying this beautiful fall that God has allowed us to have. Not only that the temperature is fantastic. I have spent a lot of time at our daughter this summer. I ended up with a torn kneecap. I'm still under the weather. I will bring everything up to date from February till the 13th of September. 26th squad 456 was Holiday world trip 28th food and fellowship outside August men's steak dinner always good time at Hazel Dell. August 21st Wednesday visitation same evening the ladies have Bible study and youth group is also same evening. August 11th Zane Harmon brought the evening message the ladies brought a dish to pass and dessert following. August 21st Wednesday visitation Bible study and youth group. August 25th food and fellowship September 10th first day of Tuesday school I was just told Tom Harmon went recently on the Honor flight. What a great honor for military ones to do. Ted told me what an honor it was to guard at Arlington unknown soldiers for almost 3 years. To everyone if you have let me know I will put in the news of our church anything you would like. God bless each of you what an awesome God we serve.

Crossroads Pastor Jeff Pope

Pastor Jeff and the people of Crossroads Church in Effingham are hosting Bro. David Crowe for a revival on January 26-29. As the Gen Director of our NAM Depart he is an extremely sought after, and powerful preacher. In an effort to encourage participation from the South, West and North he is making the Sunday evening service time to be 5:00 pm! Please consider joining me and others, who would love to go and support our church in Effingham!

Pittsburg Pastor: Eddie Donelson Pastor: Keith McDannel Recorder: Heather Phillips

We hope everyone had a good September and a wonderful start to the school year! Labor Day weekend signaled the end of summer and fall has officially arrived!

Our 2024-2025 AWANA season kicked off on September 11. Our AWANA Club program is open to anyone ages 2-High School and is held each Wednesday evening from 6:30-7:45pm. Our program begins with Cubbies for preschool children, Sparks for Kindergarten through Second grade, T&T for Third through Sixth grade, Trek for Middle School and Journey for High School. The word AWANA stands for Approved Workmen Are Not Ashamed and comes from the Bible verse 2 Timothy 2:15 - "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." The kids work on scripture memorization as well as play games and hear a lesson taught by volunteers within our church. If you or someone you know is looking for a great program to be a part of, tell them about AWANA at PFWBC! We will also have adult classes available as well.

A favorite time of the year for many at PFWBC is Pastor Appreciation. Even though we appreciate them and thank God every day for our wonderful pastors, October is a great time to honor our pastoral families' sacrificial dedication.

We are excited about what God is doing here at PFWBC! We are looking forward to all that God has for us in the future. On Sunday, October 6, we will be celebrating our 117th Homecoming. We celebrate Homecoming each year, taking the time to look back over the blessings of the past year and forward into the future with anticipation for what the Lord is going to do in the year to come. We are currently working on the details for our service, but we are prayerfully looking forward to what God has in store for us. The day is certain to be filled with joy and gratitude as we celebrate God's using our church to accomplish His mission and His purpose. We hope you will come celebrate with us on this special day! We pray everyone is enjoying the beautiful scenery that only our Heavenly Father could create!

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

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