



ILLINOIS FREE WILL BAPTIST

March 2024

NEWSLETTER

A monthly publication for Illinois Free Will Baptist families

A Note From Bro. Ivan:

As I have been getting around here and there I have heard very few complaints about the mild winter we are experiencing. There have been a few weekends where ice and snow have interfered with services but overall our weather has been milder than some we have had. Now we are not superstitious and we refuse to buy into that way of thinking, so just enjoy each day that God gives us.

In this issue of the Illinois Newsletter you will find reports from some of our various churches, along with other upcoming events within our state and denomination. You will also find a corrected list of available motel rates near the Victory Church when we gather there on Thursday evening and Friday, March 14,15.

Our annual State Association is a great one time per year event that can bring us all together to celebrate what we have in common. All our churches have their own distinct personalities, which includes a diversity of music preferences and pastors and other teachers who have their own styles. Some of the things we all share in common include our love and devotion to the Word of God and its inerrancy. We stand together in our belief in the virgin birth of Christ. We believe the Great Commission is a command, not a suggestion. And we all love to be together with family. So please join with us, to the best of your ability, as we gather together at Victory to be reminded that God has prepared us to serve the kingdom "For Such a Time as This".
Esther 4:14



- 1) Hilton Garden In - \$122.00 (360 Regency Park, O'Fallon, IL. 672269. (618)624-4499)
- 2) Hampton Inn - \$129.00 (150 Ludwig Dr, Fairview Heights, IL. 62208 (618)397-3275)
- 3) Holiday Inn EXP - \$132.00 (Green Mt. Crossing Dr. Shiloh IL. 62269 (618)589-9848)
- 4) Candlewood Suites \$140.00 (Green Mt. Crossing Dr. Shiloh IL. 62269(618)221-8080)
- 5) Drury Inn & Suites \$130.00 (Ludwig Dr. Fairview Heights, IL. 62208 (618)398-8530)

After last month's Newsletter went out we realized there was some outdated information concerning lodging availability for the state meeting. Our clerk, Bro. Jason Janus did some research and came up with a more up to date listing. All of these are within a 5-7 mile distance from the church. There are other options available and virtually any kind of food you desire.

Benton Church Pastor: Phillip Kennedy

Don't get discouraged in serving the Lord! We have definitely had our ups and downs this last month. We have had different visitors and successful student Hangouts as well as our largest attended open gym night. It has been great to see the Lord at work in people's lives! We also have had some wonderful times of Fellowship! We've had two "Fellowship with the Pastor" donut days and a Valentine's Party. We also hosted the South Central Illinois quarterly meeting. It was wonderful to hear from Ed Goode. He shared an update with us about the mission work in Champaign Illinois and he preached for us! It was an encouraging day!



Pastor Phillip was able to attend the pastors and leaders breakfast on the first Monday of the month in February. Some of the Pastors were even able to get together with Barry Simpson for a time of fellowship and update.

On February 4th a member of our church George Bauer went to be with the Lord. He was a Trustee and served as an usher. His wife Mary is one of the founding members of our church. Please pray for us and the Bauer family. We are also praising the Lord because James Kennedy has been fully funded to go on truth and peace. We ask that you please pray for him!

We are looking forward to the FWB State meeting and the Easter season which is rapidly approaching! Praying for God's blessings on all of our churches as we reach out to our communities with the good news about Jesus Christ!

Blue Point Church Pastor: Ernie Lewis Reporter: Suzanne Lewis

Our Praise Team recently hosted a Sunday evening 'Worship Night' at the church. Joe and Katie Matthews shared about their recent Hanna Project trip to Bulgaria. The men recently held a Bible study at the home of Daryl Hargrave. They also devoured a meal and played some pool.

Recently Brother Ernie preached at Ryanwood Fellowship in Vero Beach, Florida. He and Suzanne were in the area for a ministers and wives cruise. He has recently attended an Executive Board meeting and participated in a Zoom mission board meeting where they interviewed Ed Goode and Ilian Perez, church planters in Illinois.

We hosted a Senior Grocery Giveaway at the end of January. For the 18th year in a row, we held a Team Sunday for the Cisne High School basketball players, managers, cheerleaders, and coaches and their families. They were all introduced during the service. Afterwards we served them pizza, salad, and desserts in the Link.

Congratulations to Nic and Jenna Allison on the birth of Griffin Luke. He is welcomed home by siblings Cade and Ava.

Ina Church Pastor: Brad Ryan Reporter: Katie Williams

Hello from Ina FWB Church! We started off the year with a game night on New Year's Eve. It was a wonderful time of fellowship. On January 7th, PJ Kloster brought our Sunday night message. PJ is currently enrolled at Welch College and we are always glad to see him whenever he has time to visit home.

On February 11th, we had a CTS fundraiser for our youth, "Treats for Your Sweet". We sold tickets that were redeemed for cookies and chocolate. We are grateful for the generosity of our people.

That Sunday, Bro. Brad was with family celebrating the homegoing of his grandfather. Bro. Jason Janus filled in with a sermon on faith that included an object lesson of climbing a ladder. It was certainly memorable!

Our choir has been working hard practicing for Palm Sunday. Everyone is invited to the production "Death was Arrested" on March 24th at 10:30am.

Hazel Dell Church Pastor: Curtis Smith. Reporter: Dianna Kirk

Trusting that your new year is off to a good start. It's already February. Where does the time go?

Our condolences go out to the family of Sis. Bonnie Ezell. Sis. Bonnie was a long-time member of Hazel Dell. Although she was unable to attend in person for some time due to her failing health, she will be missed.

We celebrated Valentine's Day with a church outing on Fri., February 9th. Our group met at the Bonnie Cafe in Mt. Vernon to enjoy a time of food and fellowship. There were 24 in attendance. Thank you to Bro. Curtis and Sis. Emilee for organizing the outing. It was enjoyed by all.

The Master's Men group met on Sunday, February 11th. for their monthly meeting. Nine were in attendance. Bro. Mike Sample prepared the breakfast and Bro. Rusty Miller delivered the devotion.

Some of our ladies are planning to attend the Sister's in Spirit Ladies Seminar at Grange Hall FWBC on March 2nd.

We have been enjoying the Sunday morning scripture readings by the youth of the church. It's a blessing to see their willingness to stand before the church and serve their Lord and Savior.

Please join us in prayer for the young man who was saved during the Celebrate Recovery meeting on Feb. 8th.

"Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." -John 15:13

Pittsburg Church Pastors: Eddie Donelson Keith McDannell Recorder: Heather Phillips

March has arrived and we are patiently looking for the first signs of spring— longer and brighter days, leaves budding, birds singing, and butterflies migrating. Spring is the time for new plans, exciting new projects, and a beautiful reminder of the newness of life we have in Jesus.

Preparations for Easter are well under way here. We are all looking forward to the Easter week. Our annual Easter Egg Hunt for the kids of PFWBC and community is just a few days away. We always have a great time at this outreach! It is such a blessing to see all the smiling faces! Resurrection Sunday is one our favorite days here. We are looking forward to our SONrise Service at 6am and breakfast to follow. Praying for this time of celebration and that God would pour out His spirit upon these upcoming services.

Before we know it, summer will be here. Our dates for VBS are July 15-19. The theme is Camp Firelight. A Summer Camp Adventure with God. We invite kids to come and explore timeless Bible stories that demonstrate how people trusted God in the face of their own fears and went on to do great things in God's name.

Kids will learn ways they can put their trust in God when they are afraid, challenged, or called to do God's work and share the Good News of God's love through Jesus Christ. Psalms 56:3 says, "Whenever I'm afraid, I put my trust in You."

Lord, let us enjoy the sunshine and the rain and let them be reminders that YOU are at work!

"The LORD your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing." - Zephaniah 3:17

CAMP HOPE SCHEDULE 2024

May 30-31 – Leadership Camp (Brad Ryan)

June 2-7 – Jr./Sr. Camp. (Ernie Lewis)

June 9-14 – Fresh/Soph Camp (Corey Penn)

June 16-21 – 5th & 6th Grade Camp (Bryant Harris)

June 23-27 – 3^{rs} & 4th Grade Camp (Adam Brown)

June 30-July 5–7th & 8th Grade Camp (Jonathan Payne)

Illinois

2024 CTS Ministry Expo

April 26-27, 2024
Ina FWB Church

Arnold View FWB Church Pastor: Adam Brown Reporter: Jodi Tanner

It feels as though this year—2024— is absolutely flying by. It's almost unfathomable that the calendar has already turned to March. It seems as though we just had our Love Banquet celebrating Christ's love for mankind and a youth lock-in over Presidents' Day weekend.

Our congregation is so grateful to be able to serve our community. This month one of those opportunities is providing lunch for election workers at some polling places in our community. Good News Club resumes for its spring sessions at Crab Orchard Elementary this month. We're looking forward to continuing to share the good news with those that have attended before. We're also looking forward to meeting and sharing with newcomers. Our WAC and some adult Sunday School classes have continued to help provide items for the homeless in our nearby communities. Our AV youth are planning to attend WinterJam in St. Louis. They'll enjoy worship music from several artists including Crowder and Katy Nicole. They'll be diving into the scripture with Zane Black, the conference evangelist. In addition to a great time of worship and teaching, the fellowship will be fun too! We want to extend our deepest sympathies to the families of Collin Lane and Bill Smith.

Of course, this year, March rounds out with the celebration of our risen Savior. We're eagerly anticipating celebrating our Living Hope with all ages throughout resurrection weekend. As we move throughout the remainder of 2024 and beyond, we want to remember that there's no sinner that His amazing grace can't save, so let's be sure to tell everyone about our Jesus!

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes..." Rom 1:16

Rescue Church Pastor Bryant Harris Reporter Donna Harmon

Happy New Year now to bring us up to date after Christmas events. The 17th of December was Christmas Eve service with evening service dismissed. December 27th was evening Bible study and youth group. December 28th was youth group Christmas party. December 29th brother Ryan's class squad for 56 was at rescue. December 31st brother Bryant brought the evening service. Afterwards another get together with food and fellowship. December 20 20th was Christmas caroling. January 3rd another evening for Bible school. January 7th monthly business meeting. January 9th Tuesday school resumes. January 14th youth group Paoli peek ski trip. January 17th Wednesday night visitation, ladies Bible study, and youth group. After being sick for several weeks I asked one of my many friends, I've got to get back in church. Do you think God will hang in there with me? She said of course he will but do you want to miss the special blessing your effort may be to help someone. What an awesome God we serve.

JCity Church Pastor: Randy Carney Reporter: Doug Hancock

February may be a short month, but it was a busy one at J-City Church. Here's a quick review of what went on... # Scout Sunday was the 4th...Pack 7019 (chartered by J-City) attended morning services. Our Cubs performed a flag ceremony, then presented Pastor Carney with the charter. At the Center for Hope and Renewal (one of our ministries), Marta Phillips conducted art classes on Tuesday afternoons after school for elementary students grades 2nd to 5th. Soon, a class for kids in kindergarten and 1st grade. # Speaking of the Center, two of our trustees, Kevin Horn and Terry Starrick, have been remodeling the basement for extra office spaces...in addition to a laundry room and a studio for recording podcasts for the Arrow, our monthly newspaper. Keith Fletcher (the Arrow editor) and yours truly host a monthly podcast that highlights positive news of our hometown. # Along with our Saturday night drive through meals (free) - the third installment of Senior Day was held on the afternoon of the 20th. This gathering of senior citizens is a fun time for music, munchies and fellowship. Roger LeGendre is the song master. # And finally, our congregation was blessed on the 25th to have Ivan Ryan delivering the message.

Harmony Church Interim Pastor: Kent Dunford Reporter: Alice Barron

First, we would like to wish Bro. David Shores a very happy retirement. May you enjoy what God has in store for you. You have served us well. We know that Bro Ivan will do a great job in doing the newsletter, and we pray that everyone had a glorious Christmas and New Year. God's blessing to all.

Harmony had their Adult Christmas party on Dec. 16 with 34 in attendance with a meal catered by Bonnie Café. Thanks to Sis Kay Veller for providing the games. A good job as always. We also wish to thank Bro. Ted Cunningham for a good sermon on Dec. 31. On the last Sunday evening of January we had our Birthday and Anniversary fellowship.

Bro. Curtis Smith preached the evening service on Feb 11 and his son, Titus, played a hymn on the piano. It was also on this day that Hailey Diefenbach joined the church. What a blessing. It was also in February that our Masters Men and SOS had their monthly meeting at Bonnie Café in WF for Valentines Day. There were 39 that enjoyed the meeting.

When looking for a Spirit filled church with good teaching and wonderful people, we would love to have you.

"For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee." Psalm 86:5

Remember:

- *State Association Meeting at the Victory FWB in O'Fallon on Mar 14-15.*
- *Ignite the Flame Banquet for Welch College Monday evening March 26 at Ina FWB.*
- *State WAC Meeting at Ina on Saturday, May 4.*
- *CTS Expo at Ina on April 26-27*
- *National Association and Vertical Three Conference in Tampa July 21-24 in Tampa, FL*
- *Adult Camp Meeting at Camp Hope September 8-11. 6:30pm with Bro. Jim McComas*

Camp Hope schedules are out and all of our directors need good, dependable, and willing helpers for most weeks. If you would have some inclination, availability and willingness to help, please contact the director for the week you could possibly assist.

Here is something of interest to all Women and Girls:

Annual State Meeting for Women Active for Christ

The State Meeting of our Women Active for Christ (WAC) will be held on May 4 of this year. It will be hosted at the Ina Church. There will be a Breakfast Fellowship at 9:00 am with the meeting to begin at 9:30 am. The idea is to be there by 9 to not miss anything. The primary speaker will be Tara Heinzman. Tara is the daughter of Terri Bryant, Illinois State Representative. She is a member of the Belle Rive Baptist Church. Her topic will emphasize the theme for the day, "Bloom Where You Are Planted".

There will be breakout session for young ladies from ages 12 to 19 that will be lead by Maddie Kate Thompson.

Co-Leaders Bethany Sink and Rhonda McLearn invite all to come to enjoy the fun and fellowship as we uplift our sisters in Christ.

The meeting will be concluded with lunch and as is the usual custom of this group, an offering of money, gift cards and items for the Missionary Provision Closet will be received.

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

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***Reporters, please note: Please send all correspondence for the Illinois Newsletter to
www.iryann1970@gmail.com The deadline for the March Illinois Newsletter is March 15***

A Word of Welcome to our Host Church, Victory Free Will Baptist From Senior Pastor Jon Cannon

Here at Victory Church, we're looking forward to hosting our annual Illinois FWB State Meeting: Thursday, 14 March – Friday, 15 March. Our campus is in O'Fallon, the second largest city in the Metro-East. We are located at 223 Scott-Troy Road, O'Fallon, Illinois. Our church is one mile north of I-64 (Exit 19B). You will notice we are very close to Scott Air Force Base. The majority of our church family are either active duty, retired, or former Air Force military men and women. We are very blessed and proud to minister to our military community. We look forward to serving you!

Also, this March, we are celebrating our Silver Jubilee – 25 years of ministry! In March 1999, my family and I moved from the Great Smokey Mountains of North Carolina to the Metro-East of Illinois to plant and start Victory Church. The Lord has certainly blessed this ministry. It's so hard to believe we have been building this work for 25 years!

In 2001, just two and a half years later, we organized as Victory Church. In 2008, as our ministry continued to grow, we purchased 21 acres of land in O'Fallon. This would and has become the home of Victory Church. In 2012 we cleared a portion of the property and built our first multi-purpose facility. We have maxed out this facility and are currently waiting on the Lord's direction for the future development of our campus.

I would love for you to "connect with us!" Please visit our website: www.myvictory.church. You can also download our Victory Church App. Simply visit: <https://get.theapp.co/bctx>, or search for "Victory Church O'Fallon" in your app store.