



ILLINOIS FREE WILL BAPTIST

May 2024

# NEWSLETTER

A monthly publication for Illinois Free Will Baptist families

## Called and Found Faithful

**A fond farewell to a faithful couple whose predominant ministry has been in Illinois.**



David Burgess was born in Herrin and grew up there, and then in Sesser, where he graduated from High School. As a young lad, he was saved at the First Baptist Church of Sesser. Susan grew up in the Ina Church and was saved in 1959 at our Free Will Baptist Camp in West City. It later became Camp Hope. It was at this camp that David and Susan Hayes first met.

A couple of years later they were married at the Ina Church on October 18, 1968. The day before they were married David committed to the US Navy and in February 1969 he reported to the Great Lakes Naval Station. After Basic Training he was sent to Millington TN, where Susan joined him in May of that year. After a year there, he was transferred to Green Cove Springs, Florida. For

the next five years David served in FL and also aboard the USS Saratoga Aircraft Carrier. He toured from the Atlantic to the Mediterranean experiencing many events and places.

The Call to the ministry was being felt and upon his honorable discharge he and Susan and four year old daughter, Wendy, moved to Nashville where they spent the next three and a half years as David completed his BA Degree. They answered a call to Hazel Dell FWB for their first pastorate.

They enjoyed their over three years of ministry in Sesser but David was feeling a call into the Navy Chaplaincy. This call would necessitate a MDiv Degree. They relocated to Memphis where he completed his degree work with the Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary and served as interim pastor at Liberty FWB Church, Millington. In August of 1984 they were sent to Camp Pendleton Marine base as the Marines utilized Navy Chaplains. This was in Oceanside, California. His second appointment was also in CA, at Point Mugu.

He then entered a five year ministry of preaching and church planting in Normal, IL. He later pastored the North Memphis FWB Church and earned a Doctor of Ministry degree. An opportunity to come back to Illinois came when he accepted a pastorate at Oak Valley FWB, in Geff. For the past 21 years, David and Susan have served the congregation of the Pleasant View FWB near Walnut Hill.

The Calls came, they responded and they have been found faithful. After 50 years in the ministry, David is retiring due to health concerns. They are happy to be able to relocate near their daughter Wendy and her husband Travis Penn in Indiana. Both David and Susan are thankful that because of his 20 year military career their medical expenses are manageable.

May 19 will be their final service at Pleasant View and following the morning service the church will host a luncheon and a time of fellowship where we are all being invited to come by to give them greetings and a pat on the back for a job well done.

**Waltonville Church Pastor: Mark Wells**

We have had some exciting times here at Waltonville. We have had four new people join our church. Our new building is still in the planning stages. We have had three very successful fundraisers, and another one is being planned for this fall. We want to say a big thank you to all the churches and individuals that have donated to our building fund. God is truly blessing us in this adventure.

Our food pantry is seeing an increase each month. In this ministry we are able to pray and to witness to individuals and have had some come to church and attend regularly. This July will mark three years of this ministry. God is truly blessing us. We couldn't do this without the help of monetary and food donations from churches and individuals.

**New Hope Church Pastor: Larry Cook. Reporters: Kaitlyn Catron and Jackie Capps**

During January, Sister Linda learned of a missions program where you gather up your old shoes, this company will give you so much money per pound and the money gets donated for missions, so we collected old shoes and donated them!

On February 9th and 10th several adults and most of our youth members enjoyed a hotel stay with swimming and then a day at The Ark Encounter! The fellowship together was enjoyed by all.

At the beginning on March we celebrated Bro. Larry's birthday and Bro. Larry and Sis. Linda's anniversary. Of course fried chicken was the main dish. Small gifts and cards were given to them. We appreciate Bro. Larry and Sis. Linda!

Recently we had new front doors installed to the sanctuary and new gutters placed on part of the church.

Bro. Nick Catron was the speaker for our Son rise service on Easter. The kids enjoyed an Easter egg hunt after a delicious breakfast! We had our normal Sunday school service and then the title of the message Bro. Larry brought to us during worship service was "The goat has left the building." During the message Bro. Nick was dressed as the priest and his son Reid was dressed as the goat. Hope you all had a great first few months of 2024!

**Mt Vernon First Pastor Craig Smith Reporter Mary Ann Levitt**

Greetings from Mt. Vernon! What a glorious time of year as spring is finally arriving! We had a wonderful Good Friday service with many doing a reading, special singing, a message from Bro. Craig, and ending with a candlelight and communion service. We had our regular time for Sunday School and Worship Service on Easter as we celebrated the Resurrection.

The second Tuesday of each month we gather for our Coffee with the Pastor (although he does not drink coffee) and a time of fellowship.

Attendance for our Wednesday evening Bible Study has been growing. We are discussing current events and what the Bible says about them. Also, if someone has a scripture or question about the Bible they don't understand, we search to find an answer for the question.

We have also been having a Vesper when we gather on Sunday nights occasionally for a time of testimonies, devotions and singing. As the weather improves, we will be having them outdoors around a campfire.

The ladies of our WAC met at the home of Sandy Ellis on March 20. It was decided to hold a bake sale at Rural King on April 20. On April 12<sup>th</sup> it was our honor to prepare lunch for the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office as a thank you for all they do.

Bro Craig was able to attend the Illinois State meeting at the Victory Church in March. On Sunday mornings, Bro Craig has been preaching on prayer. If there was ever a need for prayer, it is now! Remember to always pray for our great country!

*Man may spurn our appeals, reject our message, oppose our arguments, despise our persons, but they are helpless against our prayers!*

**Heritage Church    Interim Pastor: Steve Wease    Reporter: Tom Hay**

Welcome from the Capitol City! Heritage has been reaching out - knocking on doors and handing out flyers to the Community. We had a Big Push to grow our little Church for Resurrection Sunday! We offered shuttle service and enjoyed a fabulous Potluck dinner, Children's Easter egg hunt, a Photo Booth and wonderful Fellowship!

Pastor Steve was on Fire with The Gospel Message and 11 new Converts came forward during the Alter Call - PTL!!! Also 6 Children asked Jesus to come into their Heart! The Lord is Working - we are only the Messengers!

Heritage is starting a Go Fund Me page to purchase a Bus to better be able to pick up families on Sunday!

*"Therefore, if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfill My joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind." (Phil. 2:1-2).*

**Hazel Dell Church    Pastor: Brother Curtis Smith    Reporter: Diana Kirk**

The community Good Friday Service was held at Eternal Friends in Christ Church on Friday, March 29. Brother Gowdy Cannon was the speaker. We hosted an Easter egg hunt on Saturday, March 30th. Our annual Easter Sunrise Breakfast was at 6:30 a.m. on March 31st. The men prepared the breakfast. Bro. Curtis gave a message. Several showed up for this special service.

We look forward to two upcoming baptismal services. One will be on Thursday, April 18th. during the Celebrate Recovery meeting. The other will be on Sunday, April 21st. during our morning service. Also, our CTS kids will be sharing with us the things they have been working on for CTS competition. We are excited to see and hear all they have been learning.

We are looking forward to VBS this year. It is scheduled for June 17-21. The theme is "The Great Jungle Journey".

*"I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Philipians 3:14*

**Ina Church    Pastor: Brad Ryan    Reporter: Katie Williams**

Hello from Ina FWB Church! On March 25th, our church hosted an Ignite the Flame dinner for our area. We had a wonderful Easter service on March 31st. That Sunday, we had a time of prayer for Specialist Judd Hicks, who was headed for Fort Bliss in El Paso, Texas. Our pastor's daughter Kendal, and husband Jonathan are also moving to Fort Bliss soon. We are thankful that God has divinely placed these young people together when they have to be so far from home.

Our Ladies Friendship Circle met on April 3rd. They meet once a month for a time of Bible study and fellowship. The following Sunday they had a Bake Sale to raise money for Missions and other good causes they support.

Our church family lost a special lady, Brenda Kash, on April 1st. Brenda was a long-time member of our church. She was always so encouraging, even with all the health issues she has had in recent years. She is greatly missed, but we are thankful she is with the Father, completely healed.

**Crossroads Church    Pastor Jeff Pope    Reporter Robin Crabtree**

Hello from Crossroads Our theme for this year is, Making A Difference In 2024. Someone has made a difference in all of our lives and may we make a difference in others. Our Adult Wednesday Bible Study is going through the book, Jewels for the Journey. Pastor Jeff leads and we have an open discussion. Great biblical truths.

WNAC meets monthly and one of our mission projects was Money For Missions in March. All the money will go to one of the missionaries. \$695.10 was given in the whole month. We made it fun...Men against Women. The women won. We are blessed to be able to help spread the Gospel.

Pastor Jeff celebrated his 58th birthday on March 7th. We love and appreciate him and all that he does. On March 17th, Ivan Ryan came and spoke to us. It was great to have him here to share with us. We are preparing for VBS (date TBA). We will be doing, The Great Jungle Journey...an epic cruise from Genesis to Revelation. We are praying for the staff and for the kids who will attend. May souls be saved.

We will be having our 43rd Homecoming on May 19th. The Hall Family Music Ministry will provide the special music. They are from Loda, IL. A luncheon will be provided.

**Blue Point Church. Pastor Ernie Lewis Reporter Suzanne Lewis**

The work on our new pavilion is complete except for a little landscaping. Now we are working on doubling the size of our nursery as we have been blessed with numerous babies.

We recently hosted a Mennonite singing group on a Sunday evening. It was a great night of praise and worship with the Lighthouse Mennonite Church near Bluford. We hosted the Wayne County Quilts of Valor sewing group in our Link. These ladies are now making quilts for veterans using fabric designed by our own Vicki Gifford. We held a Senior Grocery Giveaway toward the end of March. We also set up a booth at the Family Resource Night for the whole Cisne community. Brother Ernie and Suzanne attended the State Association at the Victory Church in O'Fallon.

Our special Easter day began with a breakfast prepared and served by the men of the church. Joe Matthews gave the morning message at our Resurrection Service. After Sunday school and church, there was an egg hunt for the children. It was a morning full of blessings.

A baby shower for Nick and Rebecca Eckelberry was held in the Link. Their first child, daughter Patience Avery, will be arriving soon. Several from the church attended the annual banquet for the Compassion Pregnancy Center. Plans are underway for this year's vacation bible school: 'The Great Jungle Journey: An Epic Cruise from Genesis to Revelation'. We offer our sympathy to the family of Kay Smith who passed away in March. Kay was a long-time member of our church.

**Benton Church Pastor Phillip Kennedy**

Hopefully everyone is enjoying this warmer weather! We had wonderful Palm Sunday and Resurrection Sunday services! It was good to have a lot of visitors! Pastor Phillip enjoyed attending the ILFWB State meeting! Also Pastor and family attended the Ignite the flame dinner. Our Gym Nights have gone well and we continue to meet new people! We have also had some New Students at Student Hangouts! On April 7th we had A Day and B Day fellowship meal after morning worship. We always have a great time of fellowship! Our Fellowship with the Pastor Donut days continue to be a great time to eat sweets and enjoy a cup of coffee! It's also a good time to enjoy Mike Thomas' humor!

James Kennedy sends a big Thank you to all who have donated to Truth and Peace! He is fully funded! Please continue to pray for him!

We will have Open Gym night again on May 3rd from 6p.m to 8p.m (this will be our last until School starts back up.) We also plan to have Student Hangouts on May 9th and 16th. (Which will also be last until school starts back up.)

Our Homecoming service is coming up on June 9th. We will have special music from Righteous Reign

**Harmony Church Interim Pastor Kent Dunford Reporter Alice Barron**

Praise the Lord for the beautiful weather that our God has provided for us. We pray that everyone had a glorious Easter in rejoicing and celebrating His resurrection.

Sis. Geneva Walker and Sis. Joyce Treat attended the Sisters in Strength Seminar held at range Hall on March 2. Bro Kent and Sis. Tedra Dunford attended the State Association Meeting at Victory Church in O'Fallon on March 14-15. Our Easter Egg Hunt was held on March 23 with 19 egg hunters and 45 in all attending. Thanks to Bro. Cody Alsop for getting all this together. We were blessed to have Bro. Dink Phelps bring the evening message on March 24<sup>th</sup>.

Nine from Harmony attended the "Ignite the Flame Banquet" on March 25<sup>th</sup> at the Ina Church. The men of Harmony prepared breakfast Easter morning before the service. Good job, men. What a great day in the Lord we had.

We continue to pray and prepare for Homecoming on My 5<sup>th</sup> and VBS which this year will be held June 10-14.

*"To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven." Ecclesiastes 3:1*

**Arnold View FWB Pastor: Adam Brown Youth Leader: River Doss Reporter: Jodi Tanner**

As I pause to write this, the recent eclipse is fresh on the minds of most and at the forefront of news headlines. It's a wonderful reminder of God's intricate design and sovereignty. When we consider the science of the event, it also serves as a reminder to stay aligned with Christ and His will, so that we won't be in darkness. As we go throughout May, we want to look for opportunities to share Christ's love and light. Largely this month, those opportunities at Arnold View are focused on ladies and graduates. Some ladies are looking forward to a time fellowship and recharging at the WAC state meeting. Our Arnold View WAC group is hosting a women's banquet on May 7 celebrating that Christ is our shield and that refuge can be found under his wings. The group's desire is to share this message with the community. Graduations are another well-known part of May. We want to congratulate all the graduates throughout the community. These graduations are the culmination of hard work and dedication, but most excitingly a gateway for what's to come. Pastor Adam is graduating from Welch College in early May as well, with his Master of Ministry degree. We're looking forward to seeing God continue to work through the Brown family's ministry. Our prayer is that our congregation would partner with Pastor Adam, Amanda, Ella Kate, and Addy Jo to be the hands and feet of Jesus throughout our community.

**J-City Church Pastor Randy Carney Reporter Doug Hancock**

J-City Church is happy to announce that we are the chartering organization for Troops 7019-G and 7019-B, along with Pack 19...making our church the sole sponsor of Scouting in our town. Our church has the philosophy that the more traffic through the door, the better...and for this reason, we host the JC Lions Club, city planning committee, and the Prime Timers, a senior get together with music, food and fellowship. The Center for Hope and Renewal hosts the JC Ministerial Alliance.

An art class of elementary students was just complete at the center with Marta Phillips instructing. The Arrow, our hometown newspaper, is being used at middle school...and there is interest with some of the students trying their hand in writing an article. Does your church keep a prayer journal? We started to record all answered prayers and praise items during our Wednesday night prayer service...placing a "star" by each. At the time of this writing...there are 175 stars for 2024! Praise God!!

And finally, by the time this newsletter is read, J-City will be gearing up for Lunch Bunch, a summer lunch program for kids in our school district. This will be the 145<sup>th</sup> year for us...preparing 75-100 meals 5 days a week until school begins again in August. Along with lunch, a Bible story is taught...and we get to interact with children AND parents.

**Pittsburg Church Pastors Eddie Donelson and Keith McDannel Reporter Heather Phillips**

Greetings from PFWBC! Praying every one of you had a blessed March! Jesus conquered Hell, death, and the grave on Resurrection Sunday! The words of Luke 24:6-7 says "He is not here; He has risen! Remember how He told you, while He was still with you in Galilee: 'The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.'" So thankful He is Risen! He is Risen Indeed! Jesus is still performing miracles and it is His power that brings about true-life changes.

We are so excited about our VBS for 2024: **Camp Firelight! Camp Firelight** revolves around helping students to trust in God, no matter the circumstances, as He helps us to overcome fears and share His love with everyone! Students will explore their faith, and learn how they can serve their community through this exciting theme! All are welcome to join us from Monday July 15th to Friday July 19th for this incredible experience! VBS is our biggest week of the year at PFWBC, filled with making new friends, fun activities and a chance for students to deepen their walk with God! VBS is open to all students in Pre-K thru those 5th grade, and we encourage students to invite their family and friends. It's a fun week you won't want to miss! "Whenever I'm afraid, I put my trust in you." Psalm 56:3

Just a reminder that next month we will host our bi-annual Church Closet Giveaway on Saturday, May 4, from 7am-noon. If you have any questions about donating items to the closet feel free to call the church office at 618-982-2230. All items are needed, but especially children's items. Please join us in praying for the hundreds of souls that may walk through the doors of God's house; that they would feel His presence and desire to come back and worship with us.

*"For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations." Ps 100:5*



JOIN US FOR A

# Ladies Fellowship Meeting

Saturday May 4th  
Ina FWB Church

Breakfast will begin at 9:00 AM. Meeting begins at 9:30 AM

Our speaker, Tara Heinzman, will bring encouragement on how to "Bloom Where We Are Planted."

Young ladies, ages 12-19, will enjoy a special breakout session with Maddie Kate Thompson

Lunch will be served.

Reporters, please be sure to submit your church news to [iryan1970@gmail.com](mailto:iryan1970@gmail.com) by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month  
For more news and information check out our website

## ILFWB.org

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