



Illinois Free Will Baptist

February 2017

# Newsletter

## ILLINOIS STATE ASSOCIATION TO MEET AT BENTON CHURCH MARCH 16-18

Speakers and program will be published next month.

The following motels are recommended and available for the conference:

### Lake Cove Hotel

13277 Freeway Lane Whittington, Il. 62897 Phone: 618-200-4116 [www.LakeCoveHotel.com](http://www.LakeCoveHotel.com)  
Rates: Double queen \$77.00 plus tax It does have an elevator for upper floors. This hotel is approx. 7.5 miles north from church. It is at the corner of IL Route 154 at IL Route 37. (Exit I-57 at Exit 77).

### Rend Lake Golf Resort's Seasons Lodge

12575 Golf Course Drive Whittington, Il 62897 Phones: 1-800-999-0977 or 618-629-2600  
[www.rendlakegolfresort.com](http://www.rendlakegolfresort.com) or e-mail [seasons@rendlake.org](mailto:seasons@rendlake.org)

Rates: \$69 double queen plus tax - One king with setting area \$89.00 plus tax. It doesn't have an elevator for upper floors. This hotel is approximately 9 miles north from the church at Exit 77 on I-57, just south of IL Route 154 at the Golf Course Resort. It is west of Exit 77 off I-57 about 1/4 miles west and then south of 154 into the resort about 1/2 miles

*Both motels have a small continental breakfast and coffee.*

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## NEW HOPE CHURCH – Rural Ina

Like millions of churches around the world, we celebrated the birth of Jesus. On Sunday morning, December 18, a play "What Is Christmas All About", was given by several of our young people. As is our tradition, the children portrayed the nativity scene. There were wise men, shepherds, different animals, and an angel. Fourteen day old Thyus Lea was baby Jesus. Ty Pierce and Brooklyn Roberts were Joseph and Mary. At the first presentation of the nativity scene, Thyus' mom, McLain, was eighteen and a half months old.

Christmas day was a regular church service for our church. Several Christmas carols were sung and a Christmas message by our pastor was given.

Our annual doughnut fry is part of our New Year's evening celebration. Food, games, and a closing prayer make the evening complete. Sister LaVerne Bernard started making doughnuts for our yearly party several years ago. Here is a poem written by Gale Capps for Sister LaVerne:

*"They say roses are red and violets are blue, And making these doughnuts has been tough without you.*

*Without you to boss us we were needing some prayer, Cause our doughnuts weren't round, they were coming out square.*

*But we tracked down the problem, it was one batch of dough, The one mixed by Tonyia - wouldn't you know.*

*It was quite lumpy and looked a bit dry. But we all kept our silence, cause at least she did try.*

*Who thought making doughnuts could be so hard. Our hats off to you, Mrs. Bernard.*

*So, if there's a time to make doughnuts again. We're waiting on you before we begin."*

Each person was given two pieces of paper: one to write a blessing, and the other a prayer request. On our New Year's evening service, the church had only candles for lights. A verse of a song was sung, Brother Craig read a scripture and another verse of a song was sung, etc. Each person was given a candle and a prayer request. We are to pray for our request all year. The congregation then went outside and each blessing was read and burned.

Several of our families and other youth are going to the Ark Encounter on the 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> of January.

*"The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?*

*The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" – Psalm 27:1*

**Pastor: Craig Smith**

**Reporter: Jackie Capps**

## **FIRST CHURCH - Benton**

God has sent us some weird weather - but we will accept that it is for a reason.

The church was beautifully decorated for Christmas once again. There was Christmas Music Program in the morning on the 18th followed by communion. The young people of the church delivered Christmas Cards to the attendees. Master's Men provided treats to all who attended. We have some talented young people in our church (well and older ones too) who provided music. Later in the day, many went out to sing carols to shut ins and delivered fruit baskets from Woman Active for Christ to those ladies who are in nursing homes or shut in at home. After returning, they were treated to a meal.

There was a good attendance on Christmas morning and all attending received a blessing to take home with them. There have been many suffering with colds during and after the holidays causing several to miss the New Year's Day service. Children's Church learned that their Christmas Boxes made it to several different spots. This is probably the first time any of these children received gifts. They have already started stocking items for Christmas 2017.

We congratulate Zeb Leffler for his honors in music and performing with different groups. Dara MacDonald is a member of the Ranger Girls and at present they have made first place at two competitions. She was honored with a Rising Star Award. These two young people work hard at extracurricular activities, but still made High Honor Roll. Jaxon Page would receive High Honors for all the help he has been to Mrs. Marci in helping with the Christmas Boxes. We ask for prayers for the following people: first, our Country, our new president, our armed forces, missionaries, and all who need prayer for physical as well as spiritual issues. Do pray for Mary Cook, Edith Taylor (97 years old, and she fell recently) Maxine Naylor, Johnie Dallape, Traci Kelley, the many others on our prayer list and all those on yours.

**Pastor: Kent Dunford**

**Reporter: Barbara Spencer**

## **HARMONY CHURCH – Rural West Frankfort**

The cold winds signal that winter is upon us! Even though everything around us seems to be dormant, life still pulses beneath the surface. Congratulations to Dave and Jennifer Meacham on the arrival of their granddaughter Harper Pace Britton! Harmony is very happy for the Britton and Meacham family!

On December 6th, the Sisters of Strength held their annual Christmas party. It was a wonderful evening of fellowship! We are so very thankful for this special group of ladies! The Master's Men group also had their Christmas party on December 6th. The men enjoyed a night of fellowship at the Golden Corral. Please pray that God will continue to lead these ministries as we seek His will.

Our love and prayers are with Sister Emilee Smith and the Meadows family. Sister Emilee's niece, Madilyn, went home to be with the Lord. Please pray that God will continue to place His arms of love around this family and that His peace will be upon their hearts.

Harmony came together to worship and celebrate the birth of the Savior on Christmas Day! May we never lose focus on the true meaning of Christmas. May we always be truly thankful for the one, most important, gift that was given to all mankind, Jesus Christ, our Savior!

On New Years Day, Harmony church held a Ham & Bean Dinner and Birthday/Anniversary meal after morning worship service. It was a wonderful way to start off the new year!

On January 6th and 8th, Harmony Church and Ezra Church presented their annual youth Christmas play, "An Out of the Box Christmas". They did an outstanding job! They put a lot of hard work, time, and dedication into this play. It was truly a blessing to see so many of our youth pouring their hearts into it. To see them lifting their voices up and using their talents to glorify God was a blessing! Thank you to all those who sacrificed their time and worked behind the scenes to help everything work together! We pray for our youth that they will continue to shine their light wherever they go!

After a brief pause, the Truth Project will resume on January 12th at 7pm. Please pray that this study will open hearts and minds and draw us into a more intimate relationship with our Savior!

As we enter into 2017, may we keep our eyes, hearts and minds focused on the one true Savior, Jesus Christ who gave everything so that we can have eternal life with Him in glory!

*"But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin."- 1 John 1:7*

**Pastor: Curtis Smith**

**Reporter: Jennifer Cook**

## **PITTSBURG CHURCH – Pittsburg**

Can you believe it is already February?! Time stops for no one lol! We are thankful for the slow down and a return to “normal schedule” after the weeks and weeks of busy, busy. Praying this letter finds you well!

Here is a quick look back at the last half of December... We had our Children’s Christmas Program on Sunday, December the 18<sup>th</sup> and all of those who participated did an outstanding job! Our youngest congregants were in our annual Baby Parade and oh how cute they all were! Then our Kings Kids who are ages 2 and ½ to 5 years old took the stage and sang so wonderfully for all of us. There was a lot of energy on that stage. Then to round out our evening our Children’s Church kiddos aged 1<sup>st</sup> grade thru 5<sup>th</sup> grade showed us their talents with singing as a group, solos, instrument playing, and more. They were all so brave and did a great job!! After the program everyone was invited to stay for cookies and punch in the Life Center for a time of fellowship. It was a very nice way to end the evening.

To allow time with family over the holiday season, many of our normal services were either dismissed or shortened. For instance on Christmas Day and New Year’s Day we only had 10 am Worship Service and it worked out very nicely. Helped ease some of the rushing around! We did enjoy Communion on Christmas morning and it was a very special time of worship with our Lord.

Our Youth had a lock in right before the New Year. Thank you to the chaperones who dedicated their evening to hanging with them!

We started to get back into the routine on Wednesday, January 4<sup>th</sup> with AWANA resuming classes as well as our adult bible studies. The house of God was streaming with life, just the way it should be. ☺ As a treat for all the kiddos starting back to school the next week we had our monthly skating event at Emery Bros. Skating rink in Marion! Everyone was excited to get out and get some exercise and fellowship!

Our church-wide mission for the upcoming year is...Making our faith seen in 2017! Matthew 5:16 *“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”*

**Pastor: Eddie Donelson**

**Pastor: Keith McDannel**

**Reporter: Christina Wilcox**

## **ARNOLD VIEW CHURCH – Rural Creal Springs**

Average Sunday School attendance during December was 97. The average for 2016 was 93. Brother Kenny Orr read the Poinsettia Memorial List on December 11. Jim Pape, 64, died on December 11. Carolyn Faulkner, 61, passed away on December 12. Condolences to these families and to the family of 18-month-old Madilyn Meadows. She was Joyce Treat's great-niece. Arnold View's Christmas Program was on December 18. The Children's Church presented "The Christmas Story (Through the Eyes of the Friendly Beasts)". Two shadow dramas were presented. The blacklight "It's About the Cross" and the "Jesus Paid It All" painting portrayal were both outstanding. We had one unified service on Christmas Day. Our Candlelight Communion Service was held on January 1. Christian Skate Night was held on January 2 at Emery Brothers in Marion.

"And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also." - 1 John 4:21

**Pastor: Ivan Ryan**

**Reporter: Buddy Parks**

## **BAKERVILLE CHURCH – Rural Bonnie**

In December, we finished up the year with a wonderful Christmas play directed by Mrs. Cheryl Mishler, we had a lot of great acting this year. We also had a good time Christmas Caroling at several of the nursing homes and assisted living centers. We enjoy it as much as the residents do.

We are starting off our year by inviting people to our church. We had magnets printed with a 2017 calendar and our church service times information on them. Our thought is that if they have to look at us everyday, just maybe we can get them there on Sundays.

Bakerville members and attendees have committed themselves to reading the New Testament together in 2017. Our Pastor Brother David Mishler gives us what chapters we are to read for the week and then he gives us a quiz the next Sunday, once a teacher, always a teacher.

**Pastor: David Mishler**

**Reporter: Tammy Hendricks**

## RESCUE CHURCH – Rural Whittington

We had lots of activity in November and December as we closed out the old year of 2016:

Our church family had a Thanksgiving Dinner after the Worship Service on November 13. It was a wonderful time of fellowship, then on November 16 the WAC met in the Fellowship Hall. We met on Tuesday November 22 for Bible Study and Youth Group and gave the ladies Wednesday to prepare for their family Thanksgiving Dinner.

Thank you very much for the toys donated to the Ministerial Alliance. I know smiles were made on the faces of many children on Christmas morning. A big thank you to Pokey and Melinda Squires for their concern and help. They also helped work at the Food Pantry along with Brother Bryant Harris and family, Teddy and Peyton Heater, and Nathan Beaty and family. I hope they all received a blessing for this work.

On December 11 we had dinner and presented gifts, and on December 13 the Tuesday School presented their Christmas Program. Ms Rita thanks everyone who helped whether you picked up pencils, cleaned up a spill, taught a lesson, offered up your prayers or just took the time to come and support the children. We could not maintain this program without you.

Our church went caroling at Heritage Woods and Helia Health Care in Benton on December 21

On December 18 we had our Christmas Program and on Christmas morning we had worship services at 10:30 am.

Happy New Year and remember: *“What an awesome God we serve!”*

**Pastor: Bryant Harris**

**Reporter: Donna Harmon**

## OAK VALLEY CHURCH – Rural Geff

Happy New Year 2017 as we begin a new year. We have been busy through the holidays even if things were mixed up a bit due to the weather. We had to cancel services on December 18, the day of our Christmas Program. We hope to have it a bit later.

The ladies of our church met on December 12 to make cookies and candy to bag for those in the nursing homes and the shut-ins. We passed them out on the 21<sup>st</sup> and the Lord blessed our church.

On Christmas day we had a wonderful worship service beginning at 10:30 am. Beautiful songs, readings, and an inspiring message came to us through our pastor, Brother Richard.

We welcomed several new families coming to ur church and we pray that many more will join with us.

The Geff Hope Ministries gave out food to about 225 families in December and we pray this ministry continues to help those in our community. We have many sick, shut-ins and bereaved: continue to pray for all.

The East Central District Meeting scheduled to meet at Blue Point Church on January 14<sup>th</sup> was rescheduled to meet on January 21 due to icy weather. It seems we have lots of ice, snow and extreme weather in winters here!

*“Stop asking, Why? And instead hold fast to God’s promises. God...always does exactly what He says.”*

*Read II Corinthians 1:19*

**Pastor: Richard Brown**

**Reporter: Marie Rutger**

## HAZEL DELL CHURCH - Rural Sesser

Greetings from all of us at Hazel Dell. Blessings to you in this new year that the Lord has given us.

Congratulations to Ryan and Adrea Petro at the birth of their daughter, Libby Marie, who was born December 9, 2016. We also congratulate proud grandparents Mark and Gena Petro and great-grandparents, Danny and Sharon Sample.

Our condolences to Sister Peggy Clyatt upon the death of her sister, Frankie. Rev. Jamie Lee was with us to conduct the services on December 18<sup>th</sup> while Brother Larry and Sister Peggy were out of town for the funeral.

Monday, December 19<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday, December 20<sup>th</sup> was our turn to assist with the SV Lifeline Food Pantry. Thank you to those who were able to help in this endeavor.

Upcoming Events at Hazel Dell: February 12<sup>th</sup> - Church Wide Valentine Dinner and Service at 6:30. (Potluck Meal, Guest Speaker and Special Music)

*“Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name.” - Psalm 103:1*

**Pastor: Larry Clyatt    Reporter: Diana Kirk**

## **BLUE POINT CHURCH – Rural Cisne**

Our annual Junior Church Christmas program, “Wrapping All the Way”, was held on the Sunday morning before Christmas. Our Junior Church directors Bill and Christal Lewis did a great job on the presentation and the youth presented a powerful message. Our Candlelight Service followed that evening. Several took part in this program. The candlelit sanctuary was beautiful. We held a fellowship in the Link afterward.

On the Sundays of Christmas and New Year’s Day we held only a 10:00 am service. Our New Year’s Eve fellowship was not quite as late as usual since it was held on a Saturday night.

Shane and Joy Davison have arrived in the states. Several members of the Lewis and Bennett families, as well as representatives from the International Missions Department, went to the Nashville airport to greet them. They are available for services during the next several months.

Now that the holidays are over, the women’s exercise and YOGA classes have resumed in the Link each week. Several of the men are meeting on Tuesday evenings to play basketball. The Sunday school classes are having a round robin volleyball tournament after church on Sunday evenings. The College and Career Class took the victory from the young adults in the first matches. We continue to thank the Lord for the blessing that the Link has been to our church and ministries.

**Pastor: Ernie Lewis**

**Reporter: Suzanne Lewis**

## **FIRST CHURCH – Johnston City**

Let’s begin 2017 with some laughter.

One would think I’m a frivolous old gal from the look of things, but actually, I’m still a 93-year-young lady who likes to be going places and doing things, who just happens to be in a relationship with five of the most unlikely gentlemen! As soon as I wake up, Will Power helps me get out of bed. Then I visit John Potts, some days too often. Charlie Horse comes along, and when he’s here, he takes a lot of my time and attention. When he leaves, Arthur Ritis shows up for the rest of the day. He doesn’t like to stay in one place very long, so he takes me from joint to joint. After such a busy day, I’m really tired. Ben Gay soothes my aches and pains so I can drift off to sleep. What a life! Oh, yes, some people think I’m flirting with Al Zymer, but I’m not. I’m trying to keep him as far away as possible. (My name is Reba, not McEntire!)

*“Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: then said they among the heathen,  
The LORD hath done great things for them.” - Psalm 126:2*

To recap some of our December and January events: In spite of icy weather, 108 people attended our children’s Christmas program and adult choir musical, December 18. Many of these were parents of children who ride our bus. Several guests from the community also attended our Christmas Eve candlelight communion service. Christmas morning was not as well attended, but those who came were blessed as they worshiped the newborn King. On New Year’s Day, our pastor introduced our annual theme, “Grow in Grace” (2 Peter 3:18) and began a series of messages on the topic of grace.

The South Central Quarterly met at our church January 28. We spread a wonderful lunch. Everyone remarked how good it was. We always look forward to a spirit-filled, joyful service with singing, preaching, and fellowship at our quarterlies. I wish more people would attend these meetings.

On February 18, we will have a benefit concert for Lunch Bunch and our local food pantries. The Good Old Boy’s Band and the Harvesters will provide some great gospel music. Admission price is canned goods for the food pantry or a free will offering for the JC Kids’ Lunch Bunch, our summer meals program. The concert begins at 6:00 in our auditorium.

*“Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever.” - Hebrews 13:8*

**Pastor: Keith Fletcher**

**Reporter: Reba Ritter**

## **Bits and Pieces**

Brother Keith Maynard has resigned as pastor of First Free Will Baptist Church in Hoopston, Illinois and is now available for pulpit supply and willing to travel. You may contact him by phone at 331-203-8926.

Brother David Shores, pastor of Mount Vernon Free Will Baptist Church was pleasantly surprised when his loving congregation hosted a party in honor of his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday on Sunday evening, January 22.

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

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David Shores 25 Edgewood Road Mount Vernon, Illinois 62864 or by e-mail to: [davids@mvfreewillbaptist.org](mailto:davids@mvfreewillbaptist.org).  
The deadline for articles for the March issues in February 15.

**WELCH COLLEGE invites you to the annual ILLINOIS**



**The dinner provides a time of fellowship, food, facts and fundraising.  
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 18 at the INA FREE WILL BAPTIST CHURCH at 6:00 PM**