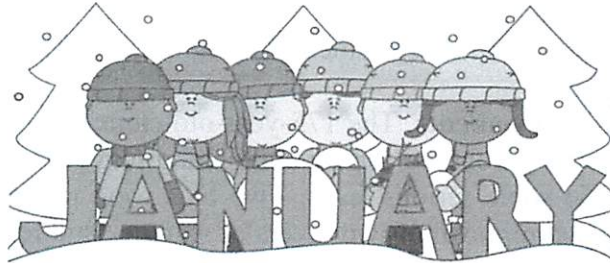




THE FIRST EDITION – BLANDINSVILLE CHRISTIAN CHURCH NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2025



CHURCH, COMMUNITY, AND AREA NEWS AND EVENTS

Wednesday, January 1, -- New Eve's Day – HAPPY NEW YEAR 2025!

Friday, January 17 – Twin Oaks Country Club – Kevin Hunt – 7:00-10:00 p.m.

Monday, January 20 – Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Friday, January 24 -- Little Texas, Country Music Group, Legacy Theater in Carthage, IL – 7:00 p.m.

Saturday, January 25 – Twin Oaks Country Club – Pool Tournament – 1:00 p.m.

Saturday, January 31 – Twin Oaks Country Club – 2/5 (Music) – 7:00-10:00 p.m.

Saturday, February 1 – The Wizard of Oz – “Kids performing for Kids” – Legacy Theater in Carthage – 2:00 p.m.

BLANDINSVILLE-HIRE PARK DISTRICT RECEIVES \$600,000 OPEN SPACE LAND ACQUISITION AND DEVELOPMENT GRANT (OSLAD) – Word was received on December 16, 2024, that this grant was awarded to the park district. The park district board members will be contacted by the state office soon with detailed information and instructions concerning the implementation of plans to make improvements at the park which must be in compliance with ADA requirements and prevailing wages. More information will follow as plans are made.

Congratulations to new parents Katie and Stephen Little: Beckett Joel Little was born on December 10, 2024, weighing 7 lbs. and 12 ozs. His grandparents are Jody Little of Blandinsville and Jim and Michelle Markley. His great grandparents are Steve and Mary Graham and Linda Downing.

REMEMBER WHEN – Do you have a past memory you would like to share regarding a blast from the past, such as family traditions/happenings, historical events, church memories, etc. Send items to Mary Killip at P.O. Box 235, Blandinsville, IL 61420. Let's have fun with this!!

Taken from the 53th Annual Blandinsville Farmers' Picnic Souvenir Book, August 15 & 16, 1940 – "Blandinsville isn't a hard town to get acquainted with. It is just a good mid-western village of 310 houses and 952 people who more or less center their activities around Main Street." Some businesses in Blandinsville during this time were: Grigsby Hardware, Grate's Tire and Battery Service, Chas. H. Jobe Barber Shop, Roberts Funeral Home, Lady Funeral Home, Blackledge Variety Store, Blandinsville Hatchery, Alexander Lumber Co., Orin Myers Chevrolet, Dr. Olen A. Dively, Taylor & Wilson Hdwe. Co., The Blandinsville Telephone Exchange.

Blandinsville Christian Church 2024 - Year in Review by Jean Dougherty, Church Historian

Christmas Tree Sunday offering (December 2024) for use in 2025 so far has totaled \$6,120 and will be used to pay insurance for the church and playground.

The Pastoral Search Committee consisted of Monte Mason (Chair), Jan Thompson, Sherry Meriwether, Mary Killip, Greg James, Jody Little, Alan Driskell and Gary Smith. Aaron Baker and Jim Richardson provided sermons during the search for a new pastor. Since no prospective candidates were found, the Board voted to hire Aaron Baker on a part-time basis and search for a youth pastor. Laura Wilhite was hired as youth pastor in August and is in charge of the youth groups on Wednesday and Thursday afternoons and Children's Church on Sundays.

The following **church officers** were elected to serve during 2024: Board Chairman: Monte Mason; Elders (3-year term): Monte Mason, Greg James; Deacons (3-year term): Alex Ruebush, Glade Mason, Jerry Thrapp, Joe Driskell, Taylor Thompson, Perry Hamm, Brad Purcell, Steve Ruebush; Deaconesses (3-year term): Roxanne Mason, Tresa Hunt, Janet Whitman, Amy Ruebush, Paula Snowden; Trustees (5-year terms): Gary Smith. The following were elected for one-year terms: Church Clerk: Jody Little; Treasurer: Sherry Meriwether; Financial Secretary: Pat Hainline; Historian: Jean Dougherty.

Church Elders are Monte Mason, Greg James, Gary Smith, Dave Hunt, Randy Killip and Alan Driskell. Board Chair for 2025 is Dave Hunt.

Church Repairs and Improvements. The 175-year-old church building requires ongoing maintenance which can be costly. Insurance was purchased for the church and playground for \$9,343. A major expense this year was roof replacement due to some serious leaks. Two bids were received, and the lower bid from Frank Bearce was chosen, which included removal of two layers of shingles and removal of chimneys. The cost of the new roof was \$67,865, which was completed in late October. Both heating system boilers had to be replaced at a cost of \$9,000. They were ordered in early December and have been installed. Two new water heaters were purchased at a cost of \$5,700. A new gate was purchased for the fence for \$2,462. Outside lights were purchased for \$1,172. One hundred new chairs were purchased for the basement in preparation for the church's 175th anniversary celebration at a cost of \$2,697. New carpet was installed in the front entry, stairs to choir loft and kitchen stairs for \$1,478 plus \$700 labor. A new chair lift was purchased for \$4,900. Two new speakers were purchased for the Clavinova for \$246. Basement areas were painted at a cost of \$2,250. In addition to one-time expenses, there are significant monthly ongoing expenses: cleaning the church, utilities of electric and water (Ameren averages \$700 per month), mowing; postage costs have increased for the newsletter this year.

Church Committees. The following committees served during 2024: Safety Committee, Finance Committee, Property Committee, Worship/Fellowship, Christian Education, Evangelism & Membership Development, Outreach & Community Services, Officer Nomination, and the Pulpit Committee.

Church Programs and Outreach. Blandinsville Christian Church members organized and conducted the annual Easter Egg Hunt and related activities on Saturday, March 30, with the help of many sponsors and individuals. There was attendance of over 215 individuals for the 3,000 candy-filled eggs, 600 per age group from toddlers to age 9+. Drinks and popcorn were provided along with treat bags. Additional activities included a visit from the Easter bunny, face painting, bouncy house and obstacle course, games, small animals to pet, and a coffee wagon for the adults. Easter Services included a Sunrise Service, breakfast and Easter Sunday service on March 31. The After School Programs included 5th through 12th grades on Wednesdays from 4:00-5:30 p.m. and grades K-12 on Thursdays from 4:00-5:00 p.m. The Wednesday group included a short Biblical lesson, life skills activities and snacks. The Thursday group had games/playtime, snacks, crafts and a short Biblical lesson. There was a wrap-up celebration on May 23 with food provided. The 49 students who were registered were each given a gift book. A Kick-Off for resuming the After School Program was held August 29 at the Blandinsville-Hire Park with great attendance. Hot dogs, chips, cookies, water and a bounce house were provided. The Youth Group program started back on September 4 and After School kids started September 5 with Laura Wilhite leading the groups.

Due to the Sunday of the Farmers Picnic being on Mother's Day, there was no Church in the Park, Sunday, May 12. Graduates were recognized on Graduation Sunday, June 2. Saturday, June 15, was cleanup day at the church. Vacation Bible School was held at the La Harpe Christian Church in July with our church making a *donation to help* with expenses.

LaMoine Christian Service Camp. The Blandinsville Christian Church hosted Area Fellowship on February 26. There was a total of \$925 donated to the camp at Area Fellowship and 64 attendees. On May 18, volunteers cleaned the light fixtures and the walk-in coolers and donated coffee for the camp barrel. **Volunteers** served lunch and supper at the camp on July 3. LaMoine Christian Campers: The church supported 20 campers and co-sponsored four other campers with the LaHarpe Christian Church. They ranged from day camp to the

high school service camp. Our church was awarded one free camp session for the greatest increase in the number of campers that we sponsored.

175th Anniversary Celebration of Blandinsville First Christian Church, Sunday, August 4. After months of planning, this very special service included a choir, special music by “Just Us” and Kevin Hunt, history of the beautiful stained-glass windows, recognition of long-time members, memorabilia, communion and a spiritual message, followed by a catered meal. The goal of 175 attendees was exceeded as there were 218 attendees. The Blandinsville United Methodist Church closed their church and joined in the celebration. Previous pastor Gordon Blankenship and his wife, Jamie, were recognized. The sanctuary was near capacity with individuals attending from near and far. The catered meal featured pulled pork and accompaniments. There were two decorated cakes – one with a picture of the original church in 1849 and the other with a picture of the current church. The church received over \$6,000 in offering; costs associated with the were \$3,936 plus many hours of volunteer time.

Trunk or Treat was held in the church parking lot on Thursday, October 31, from 4:00-6:00 p.m. Sweet treats were handed out by participants who decorated their trunks. Hot dogs, chips and drinks were provided free of charge for kids and their parents. A photo backdrop was available for trick or treaters to get a fun photo.

Nursing Home Assistance. The church received a conation of \$2,200 which was divided between eight area nursing homes. They each received \$275 to use for prizes for their Bingo or other games.

An Old Fashioned Christmas. The Blandinsville Christian Church participated in An Old Fashioned Christmas in Blandinsville, Saturday, November 30. A Christmas Tree was entered in the Festival of Trees and was decorated by the after-school kids with finishing touches added by church members. Their tree won first prize of \$75 which will go for a fun event for the kids! A holiday meal was provided to the After-School kids and their families on Thursday, December 5, with ham, mashed potatoes and gravy, green beans, pumpkin and pecan pies and beverages. Church Christmas activities included Hanging of the Greens with snacks, December 4; Christmas Tree Sunday on December 15 with breakfast provided at 9:00 a.m.; Caroling and soup supper on Wednesday, December 18, where carolers sang at eight different homes; Christmas Eve candlelight service on December 24 at 5:30 p.m. with a short service, scripture, special music, a short program, and communion.

Church Newsletter. The First Christian Church’s (FCC) monthly newsletter is distributed to over 200 individuals (members and non-members) at no cost to them. Copies are also posted in the post office for individuals who do not receive the newsletter. Individuals are encouraged to contribute news items and memories for the Remember When” section of the newsletter.

Church Missions. The fourth Sunday of each month is Mission Sunday. FCC supported the following mission commitments, monthly, through the 2024 calendar year: One Family/One Purpose; LaMoine Christian Service Camp, and FCC’s Benevolent Fund. The church has a Blessing Box outside the church to provide food items and personal care items for those in the Blandinsville area.

CHRISTMAS TREE SUNDAY -- This is a special Sunday which is traditional to the church. Each December a Sunday is set aside for individuals to give a special donation in envelopes to the church and hang it on the tree as individuals in attendance circle the sanctuary singing “Silent Night”. These donations help support the church with insurance, maintenance, LaMoine Christian Camp, newsletter, Blessing Box, missions, etc. If you would like to make a donation to the tree, please send your gift to The Blandinsville Christian Church, P.O. Box 140, Blandinsville, IL 61420. Any gift is appreciated.

PRAYER REQUESTS AND UPDATES

Please be in prayer for Laurie Locke, James Humphrey, Reagan Pflaster, Maggie Pendergast, Brooklyn Nelson, Jim Wetzel, Emily Blout, Hudson Brand, Duane Chipman, Antonia Aguirre, Mary Evans, Kieran Woods, Jeramiah Byers, Ashley Buchen, Otto Pinto, Kelvey Hamm, Rob Myers, Lisa and Stephen Molzhon, Kim Walters, Gisele Hamm, Caylea Shinall (granddaughter of Dennis & Katie Icenogle), Makenzie Hawkins, Jennie Terrell Brush and family, Cindy Soule, Donnie Little, Ed and Millie Hunt, Brad Hunt, Kara Hunt, Kevin Kleinkopf, Jeremy Hamm, Laura Twaddle, Erin Thilyaw, Lori (Baker) Sperry, Jim Olson, Jim Meriwether, Fred Kitch, Linda Metcalf, Kathy, Alan, and Michelle Driskell, Mike Rawleigh, Hudson Thrapp, Rita Segworth, Michelle Bixler. Be in prayer for our nursing home residents and the families and friends of those who have lost loved ones. Remember the health care workers, caretakers, fire fighters,

police officers, and our armed forces members and their families. Pray for our community, state, country, and the world. Pray for peace, acceptance of all, and love for one another.

IN MEMORY

Janet S. Bond, 72, of Blandinsville, passed away on Wednesday, December 11, 2024, at Decatur Memorial Hospital in Decatur. She was born July 5, 1952, in Macomb to Dennis and Velma May (Norris) Settles. She is survived by her children Heather Levita (Eric) of Lucas, TX, Erin Kempker of Springfield, T.J. Bond of Blandinsville; four grandchildren Rylan Jackson, Marcus Levita, Ayven Kempker, Bryce Kempker; brothers Randall Settles of Plymouth, and Ryan Settles of Bowen. She was preceded in death by her parents and sister Julia Gossage. Janet earned her Bachelor of Science in Early Childhood Education and retired from Western Illinois University where she worked at the Center of Best Practices in Early Childhood Education. She made amazing homemade candy that she took to Christmas parties. She loved Disney.



CHURCH SHEDULE - DECEMBER 2024

DATE	ELDERS	SPEAKERS	MUSIC	OVERHEAD
January 5	Randy Killip	Jim Richardson	Jody Little	Glade Mason
January 12	Monte Mason	Aaron Baker	Anna James	Taylor Thompson
January 19	Greg James	Aaron Baker	Jean Dougherty	Gary Smith
January 26	Gary Smith	Aaron Baker	Jody Little	Monte Mason
DATE	WORSHIP LEADER	GREETERS	NURSERY	DEACONS
January 5	Mary Killip	Steve & Amy	Paula Snowden	
January 12	Monte Mason	Sherry M. & Beth G.	Roxanne Mason	
January 19	Anna James	Bud & Patsy	Jan Thompson	
January 26	Gary Smith	Kris and Jerry	Laurie Smith	

ELDERS AND BOARD MEETING: Monday, January 13 – Elders – 6:30 p.m. – Board – 7:00 p.m.

WORSHIP/FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING – Monday, January 6, 7:00 p.m. Come join the group and help plan church events. **PLEASE HELP:** Let Mary know when you are not available to serve in one of the above areas so she will not schedule you for that date. If you cannot serve, please find a substitute. Thank you.

EVERYTHING IS POSSIBLE FOR ONE WHO BELIEVES. Mark 9:23

Please contact Mary Killip at 309-337-8032 or by mail at P.O. Box 235, Blandinsville, IL 61420, if you have newsletter items or know of someone who would like to receive a newsletter.

Dear Church Family,

As we come to the close of another year, I want to take a moment to thank each of you for your faithfulness, love, and commitment to our church community. Whether through your prayers, service, or presence, you have been a vital part of God's work in and through our congregation.

This year has been filled with moments of grace and growth. We have rejoiced in the growing number of youth joining and engaging with our church, and we've been humbled by the strong support shown to ensure our building is secure and prepared for the future. These are reminders of God's provision and the dedication of His people.

As we look ahead to the new year, I am reminded of the Apostle Paul's words in Philippians 3:13-14: "Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus." This verse challenges us to continue moving forward with hope and purpose, trusting that God has even greater things in store for us.

In the year ahead, we hope to deepen our discipleship, strengthen our relationships, and serve our community in new and impactful ways. I encourage each of you to remain steadfast in prayer, generous in service, and open to the Spirit's leading. Let us continue to walk in unity, sharing Christ's love with one another and with the world around us.

May God bless you and your families abundantly in the coming year. I am grateful to serve alongside you and look forward to witnessing how God will continue to work in and through our church.

With love and gratitude,

Monte Mason, 2024 Board Chairman

