



Whetstone Baptist Church Profile

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WBC in a nutshell

Whetstone Baptist Church (WBC) is a community of faith that lives to glorify God through Jesus Christ in worship, making disciples, loving one another, and serving the community.

- We are Christ-centred and evangelical.
- We are a friendly, welcoming and vibrant church blessed with gifted and talented people. We are busy with activities and ministries to serve the large congregation and the local community.
- We serve the community of Whetstone and the surrounding villages. Most age-groups are well represented and we particularly attract families with children.
- We are organized and well managed. We have a united, gifted and well supported church leadership team (CLT).
- We have ambitions to be more active in the community. We are building a new church building in obedience to God's call to expand the ways we serve reach out to the community. We have a developing agenda for mission and social action.

Our Scripture verse for 2017

*Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit,
binding yourselves together with peace. Ephesians 4:3*

In November 2016, 100 members gathered together to discern our vision for the future and the calling of a new senior minister. Those discussions inform this profile especially the section on strengths, weaknesses and dreams.

1. Our vision and mission

Our mission statement:

To glorify God through Jesus Christ in worship, making disciples, loving one another, and serving the community.

We sense God is calling us:

To a deeper faith through the opportunities He's giving us, with more openness to Him and risk in our commitment and relationship with Him.

To be a welcoming community for everyone where we seek to ensure that children, young people and adults of all ages belong, are involved and valued.

To be more intentional in outreach and make our church a community hub where Christ is known.

2. Qualities we seek in a senior minister

We are actively seeking God's will and praying that we will find the person He is calling and equipping for this role. We are in a unique position, coming from a period of secure sustained growth, yet flexing our faith to follow God's leading to build a new church. We are expecting the next few years to be exciting, challenging, testing and fruitful. This is a big job which will require an ambitious, proven leader with inner strength and resilience. We're looking for someone who has the following attributes, skills and experience:

Key skills and experience

We are looking for someone:

- Who can provide effective strategic leadership of those overseeing our varied teams and activities.
- With a strong prayer life and continuing desire to seek the Holy Spirit's direction.
- Who is grounded in, and lives by the Bible, and is able to communicate biblical truth.
- Who is able to focus our vision, and engage the church in mission and outreach to make a difference for Christ in our community.
- With pastoral skills which will complement those of our associate minister.
- Who is able to maintain and grow links with other churches, organisations and networks.

At a glance

The key attributes we seek:

Leader
Spiritual/Godly
Preacher
Dynamic and visionary
Enabler of others

3. Our location and community

Whetstone is a village in South Leicestershire located around five miles south of Leicester city centre. It has a growing population of around 7,000 and is a popular place to live. It's essentially a commuter village with good travel links for employment and some light industry in the local area too.

To give you a snapshot of the community, there are three churches, four pubs, two primary schools, a dentist, chemist, a number of local shops, café and supermarket. There are a couple of sports clubs, a memorial hall, parish council rooms, a community orchard and three recreation grounds.

WBC is presently situated in the older heart of the village. Our new building will move us further south to the new geographical village centre, surrounded by housing developments.

4. Our church family

We have over 250 church members with 70 being added in the last five years. In the same period about 40 people went through believer's baptism. The congregation reflects the local demographics: predominantly white, middle-income, property owning. Most church attendees live in Whetstone, Blaby and the surrounding villages. In our most recent census (5 February 2017) our Sunday gathering attendance reached 290 in total (in the same month in 2015 attendees figure was 279). We have two morning services and an evening service. The majority of the children, teenagers and young adults come to the mid-morning service.

At a glance

Sunday gatherings
attendance:

9am - 83

10.45am - 156

6.15pm - 51

**Total = 290 for the
day**

We have a broad range of spiritual gifts and talents across the church which are shared both in regular worship, such as preaching, music, teaching, and through our ministries such as pastoral care, prayer and children's work.

Read more about our ministries, activities and missions we support on [our website](#)



5. Our theology and convictions

Spiritual ethos

We are an evangelical Baptist church committed to biblical preaching and living. Our spirituality is quite diverse, ranging from the more traditional and contemplative to the more charismatic. The church embraces this diversity and is enriched by it. The prayer ministry team is available at Sunday services and additional ministry is offered through small groups and when pastoral needs arise.

We encourage the fellowship to use their spiritual gifts sensitively, and some gently offer prophecy, healing and deliverance ministry as the Lord prompts and as needs arise. We also encourage every believer to share their personal faith in Christ and play their part in extending the Kingdom.

Worship style

Sunday services are held at 9am, 10:30am and 6.15pm. Whilst we use mainly contemporary songs and digital technology, our worship is a blend of informal and formal, and we are happy with both traditional styles and newer more free-flowing relaxed approaches. We have three worship teams who lead worship with musicians, singers, readers and AV operators. A number of members regularly preach or lead worship at WBC and elsewhere.

Our aim is to ground worship in scripture and provide an opportunity for everyone to draw closer to God through worship. You can listen to recent sermons on [our website](#).

Leadership, gender and relationships

Leadership and ministry is open to men and women. There are currently four women and eight men on the CLT. The church seeks to be open and welcoming while holding a traditional Christian view of marriage. Members of the CLT developed guidelines on same-sex relationships and church membership recently. There are no single-issue theological pressure groups.

Affiliations and mission links

WBC is an active member of BUGB, the EMBA and Churches Together in Whetstone and has good relationships with nearby churches. We support BMS, Home Mission and three other mission agencies, which are reviewed annually. Our world mission interest is largely channeled through individual members and families.

6. Our recent history - how we've developed

The church has changed with the times and been influenced by the ministries of successive pastors and other paid workers. We have introduced some variety in how and when we teach and worship, such as introducing Messy Church. We also have a developing online presence through our website and social media.

Growth in numbers

In the 1960s the church was made up of a few extended Whetstone families, now the congregation is a wider representation of the surrounding South Leicestershire community.

This nurturing church has seen many people come to faith, develop their spiritual gifts

and become mature Christians. We have been blessed with exceptional ministers who have been gifted preachers and leaders. We run the Alpha course regularly, and over 100 people have come to faith through the course.

With three Sunday services, nobody knows everyone, which is why we emphasise being in small groups for belonging, fellowship and discipleship.

Environment

Our buildings have served us well but we've grown out of them and they are no longer fit-for-purpose. Since 2003 we have been following God's lead to finance and build a brand new church to serve the community through the 21st century. God has also provided us with skilled people to manage the construction ourselves. See wbcdesign.co.uk

Pastoral and discipleship

Our midweek small groups now encourage pastoral care and personal growth in the Christian life rather than purely being a formal Bible study. The majority of pastoral care is delivered through the small group network and we desire that each group has a leader and a pastoral contact point. They are supported by the Prayer Ministry Team and Prayer Circle. Previously, management of more serious matters was undertaken by our Senior Minister in collaboration with the Associate Minister and supported by members of the CLT - those with particular pastoral gifting and retired ministers within the membership. During the pastoral vacancy, the Associate Minister has taken over responsibility for leading pastoral care. We are open to God's leading as to the management of pastoral care in the future.

7. What makes people come to the church and stay?

Many people come to the church through recommendation or through friends and family. Some try WBC while searching for a new church, and feel at home. Many people cite the welcome and friendship as key reasons for joining, plus appreciating the impact of the range of ministries, children's work, preaching or music.

You can read personal testimonies on [our website](#)



8. Church leadership, staff and employment

Nick Swanson has been Associate Pastor at WBC since 2006. Nick was called here to develop our small group ministry, oversee discipleship and spiritual formation and the training of leaders. During the pastoral vacancy, Nick has also been responsible for pastoral care and the teaching ministry.

The church employs a full-time qualified children's and families' worker, Nicola Foster. She works across all the children age groups, takes a lead on family activities within the fellowship and also runs activities in the community, such as assemblies at local schools. Nicola is partway through a three year contract.

We have two part-time administration staff who run our church office.

There are 12 people serving on the Church Leadership Team (CLT) including the church secretary and treasurer. With the ministers, these serve as the charity trustees. Members of CLT head up or oversee aspects of church life such as prayer team, youth, worship teams etc.

You can read more about the CLT on [our website](#).

Moderator

Our moderator during the search process is the Revd Dr Michael I Bochenski, the Minister of Rugby Baptist Church and a former President of the Baptist Union (BU).

Finances

The church's financial position is good, with sufficient income to meet our regular commitments and reserves for future spending plans. We are financing the building project through saved income, additional personal giving and pledges, fundraising and, in due course, the sale of our current land. Our secure financial position has allowed us to take out a £1.15million mortgage with the BU and begin the first phase of the build project. We expect to move in towards the end of 2018.

Our annual accounts are posted on the [Charity Commission website](#).

Minister's support and accommodation

The church will agree mutually acceptable Terms of Settlement in accordance with BU guidelines.

No manse is available at present. Accommodation will be provided if required, and help given for a minister wishing to purchase their own property, in accordance with BU guidelines.



Artist's impressions of the new building



9. Our strengths and weaknesses (direct quotes from our members)

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our faith is alive and we want to follow Jesus and make disciples • We are good at gathering together, being a family and caring for each other • We receive challenging teaching, are led with creative worship, and are encouraged and supported to develop our faith • We are well organised and managed • We are blessed with many people who use their talents and wisdom to serve the church and wider community • We have run successful and well established outreach and evangelism ministries over many years. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are better at asking people to come to us than going out into the community. We need to do more to meet people 'where they are' • We want to encourage greater levels of commitment and ownership of volunteer roles in the church • We would like to include more of the church community in our corporate prayer life • Our view of mission needs to be enlarged

Let our thoughts be the Lord's, not our own wishes. Church member

Small Groups

One of the key strengths of the fellowship is our small group network which is overseen by Nick Swanson. Currently there about 20 groups. Membership of a small group is encouraged, and over 75% of the active adult congregation are in at least one small group.

Some groups, such as the afternoon men's group, have developed over many years and feature strong pastoral support. A small-groups coordinator helps keep the resource library up to date, order new material and help groups better use the library.

After Alpha, some people join small groups in the New Life cluster which particularly aims to bring new Christians to maturity in the faith. The New Life groups have in recent years been key to growing new disciples in the church.



10. The challenges and opportunities ahead

We see the following as challenges for the next few years:

Remaining prayerful, unified, and focused on God's will, not our own, as we deal with the highs and lows of building and moving to the new church.

Getting bigger - losing the welcome? Making sure people interact and belong. Building and maintaining effective two-way communication between leaders and the congregation.

Becoming more corporate - losing individual responsibility? Not expecting professionals to do everything. Encouraging committed volunteers. Protecting leaders from burn-out.

Learning to adapt and embrace new ways of being a faith community, particularly in what we offer for our older teens, young adults and families with children.

Some of our dreams for the future

