

# Winchester Baptist Church

## Church Profile – January 2010

Winchester Baptist Church (WBC) is a caring, lively, renewed, evangelical Baptist Church in a beautiful historic city.

While affiliated with the Baptist Union of Great Britain the church is not strongly denominational and draws a membership from all ages and denominations and the area around. It is an influential church in the city, particularly with regard to unity.

The church has four congregations: the main Sunday morning service (which is full and diverse), a more progressive Sunday evening service, a weekly Youth Congregation (called The Edge) and a monthly service for Seniors, i.e. third and fourth agers, called Silver Service. On a typical week in September last year 246 individuals worshipped with us. In total about 350 worship with us of whom 90 are Youth and Children. The church has grown, particularly these last three years, mainly through renewal and the adding of congregations such as the Silver Service.

WBC has a thriving and pioneering work with Seniors that came from the Lord's leading some six years ago which was followed by considerable research, and unreservedly seeks to care for the spiritual as well as other needs of individuals. Key elements behind the work's success are the heart of its leaders and team and its close and fruitful working relationship with Age Concern and the sheltered homes around. The Seniors work is in regular contact with 90 Seniors and is supported by some 40 volunteers, mainly from the church.

The church has a healthy Youth work and besides the Thursday night Edge congregation (~30 attend) runs an evening "Friday Club" for unchurched youth (~30 attend) and "Fresh" for teaching church youth on a Sunday morning (~20 attend). The Youth work is overseen by our Associate Pastor currently assisted by an Intern. Winchester is a university city and we have some 25 students linked with us through worship and our Student Cluster.

Children's work is crucial to us and is frequently reported as one of the reasons families settle with us. Though we are often stretched for workers our Sunday COGS ('Children of God') work teaches and cares for some 40 children. 'Friday Fun' is a packed morning parent and infant group with a waiting list.

WBC supports three main missionary families in Lesotho, Democratic Republic of Congo and the Middle East and generally a team visits one of these each year to encourage and help them. In summer 2010 we have teams going to Lesotho and DR Congo. A good number of other mission projects and individuals are also supported.

WBC has played a leading role with other churches in the setting up of a City Nightshelter, the Olive Branch Counselling Centre, Keystone housing project, City Centre Chaplaincy and also supports a Basics Bank to help individuals with basic needs. It has played the key role in initiating Healing on the Streets in our city (teams are out every Saturday praying for anyone's needs) and has played a major part in city outreaches over recent years (The Feast, Winchester Passion, J John's Just10). The city is intending to start Street Pastors ([www.streetpastors.co.uk](http://www.streetpastors.co.uk)) in the near future.

A strength of WBC is its willingness, after prayer and investigation, to take risks. This has been demonstrated in its approach to Seniors work and its recent entering of a two year 'Cluster' (mid-sized group) pilot that structures the church around mission. The church currently has nine Clusters and ten Small Groups (mostly linked with Clusters).

Our current hopes for the future of WBC are:

- to appoint an individual with a real heart for seniors and mission to them, and to see this work continue to grow.
- to experience more of God in renewal.
- having experienced a move of God's physical healing touch these last few years, to seek to build on this and find and develop a model for the inner healing of hurts and emotions.
- increasingly to take God's love to people outside the church through, for example, increasing our participation in Healing on the Streets, Clusters and becoming involved with the city's Street Pastors initiative when it starts in the near future.
- to humbly increase our influence for the Lord in the city and further afield.
- to see our pilot Cluster Project succeed so as to permeate the ethos of our whole church and cause individuals to be freed up for relational mission of a kind that suits their heart and gifting.

More information about Winchester Baptist Church, its values, activities and sermons preached can be found on [www.winbap.org.uk](http://www.winbap.org.uk).