

## **Western Springs Baptist Church Church Profile**

*Approved by the Church Board – July 13, 2023*

*Revised October 13, 2023*

### **OVERVIEW**

We are an unaffiliated Baptist church with an unapologetic scriptural and evangelical emphasis, located in a western suburb of Chicago. Our church strives to be a friendly, caring community of believers that functions as a family, growing and serving together to reach others for Christ. With a congregation from a variety of church backgrounds, we focus on the truth of the gospel.

While our faith and relationship with God is individual, we recognize the importance of learning, growing, and serving together within a local church body. We have ministry for and by all ages with cross-generational interactions as we seek to be a place of discipling and equipping believers for service in Christian living, as well as a place of spiritual healing in Christ's love for those who are hurting. Through much of our 110 years, our church has been characterized by strong biblical preaching that fosters discipleship; worship that honors God through excellence in music; engaged support of local and worldwide missions; and children's and youth ministries that reach our community.

### **OUR BELIEFS AND PURPOSE**

Our shared vision statement is: 'To Discover Christ and Display His Transforming Power'. We pray that, through the words of this *Profile*, you will sense that God is leading and working among us for His glory. The following statements from our *Constitution* outline the purpose and some of the beliefs of our church, but they only begin to describe who we are.

We believe that the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, given by the Holy Spirit through inspired men, are the word of God, and therefore are the supreme authority for our faith and life. ... We believe that mankind is sinful both by nature and by choice and that God reconciles the sinner to himself by grace, through faith in Jesus Christ alone. ... (*WSBC Constitution*, Article V, Confession of Faith)

The purpose of this church shall be to declare and demonstrate the gospel of Jesus Christ to its constituency, its community, and to the world. It shall provide the vital experiences of worship, fellowship, growth, and ministry to make its calling effective. (*WSBC Constitution*, Article II, Purpose)

### **CHURCH GOVERNANCE**

We have a congregational form of church governance that allows both men and women to serve in all elected lay leadership positions. The elected leaders serve on the Church Board, the Spiritual Leadership Council, and seven Core Committees. The Church Board is responsible for the

administration and operation of the church and is comprised of a Moderator, the Church Treasurer, seven Core Committee chairpersons, all members of the Spiritual Leadership Council, and the Senior Pastor (*ex officio*). The Spiritual Leadership Council is responsible for the overall spiritual direction, guidance, and pastoral care for the congregation. The primary function of each Core Committee is to serve as a task force to create strategy, determine policy and to have oversight of relevant ministries. The seven Core Committees are Diaconate, Discipleship, Evangelism, Facility and Finance, Fellowship, Missions, and Worship.

## **PROGRAMS AND MINISTRIES**

### **DIACONATE** – *Selfless Ministry: giving ourselves to others in Jesus' name*

The purpose of the Diaconate is to serve with the pastoral staff and other church members in caring for the practical needs of the congregation. They provide resources and facilitate care to the congregation by administering the Good Samaritan Fund for those with emergency financial needs; assisting at communion, baptisms, and funerals; organizing the preparation and delivery of meals to those who would be blessed by some help during stressful times; encouraging people through correspondence, telephone calls, and visits; coordinating Sunday rides for those who cannot drive; and other activities encouraging the congregation in selfless ministry to others.

### **DISCIPLESHIP** – *Costly Discipleship: sacrificing everything to follow Christ*

**Adult Ministries** – Bible-centered adult Core classes offer a blend of teaching, media, and discussion on Sunday mornings and Wednesday evenings. Various small groups meet throughout the week creating an atmosphere of transformation in which each participant is encouraged to become like Jesus Christ in a community of believers. We have many kinds of small groups – Couples groups, Family groups, Young Adults, Men's Bible Studies, and Women's Bible Studies.

**Youth Ministry** – The purpose of Youth Ministry is to continue to develop a strong foundation in Christ in the lives of the teens, to help the youth understand the Bible and effectively reach their friends for Christ, and to incorporate the youth into the life of the church. High school and middle school groups meet weekly to discover and grow in Christ through fellowship, music, prayer, and Bible study. Throughout the school year, small groups provide a more intimate place for spiritual learning and meaningful fellowship. The Youth Ministry also offers special events, weekend retreats, service projects, and mission trips.

**Children's and Family Ministries** – We believe that because children are important to Jesus, ministering to children is a high priority. We also believe that, because God has given parents the primary responsibility and privilege to be the spiritual teachers of their children, the church is called to partner with and encourage families in the spiritual guidance of their children. Therefore, the purpose of our Children's Ministry is to provide Scripture-based, life-relevant, age-appropriate programs that offer opportunities for evangelism, worship, growth, fellowship, and service. In addition to Sunday morning Children's Worship, we offer a mid-week club program for boys and girls, called *Live Wire*. Activities include Bible lessons and memorization, games, and

crafts. A *Vacation Bible School* is held one week each summer for children through sixth grade with most families from outside our church.

**Library** – The library provides a wide range of material for reference, devotion, study, and spiritual growth – including Christian books, periodicals, DVDs and CDs for all ages.

**Wednesday Evening Meal** – To foster church-wide connections and growth, we offer a weekly meal on Wednesdays prior to several mid-week ministries.

**EVANGELISM** – *Incarnational Evangelism: living as Jesus in our world*

**Community Outreach** - We desire to help each member of our congregation to participate with Christ in sharing the gospel by lifestyle and word. Our goal is to encourage and equip our church family to reach out to people who need the Savior in the communities where they live and work. We have offered various training classes and seminars to help people build bridges of friendship and be equipped with strategies for reaching others for Christ. We have held regular outreach events which offer informal settings to introduce friends and neighbors to our church and its ministry. We look for ways to serve our community and have participated in community events sponsored by Western Springs businesses. Our Evangelism Committee also helps new attenders at WSBC to integrate into the life of the church with follow-up phone calls and “get-acquainted” luncheons.

**Monday Night Basketball** – Monday night basketball started out in 2002 as an informal gathering of men from our congregation, for an evening of pick-up basketball. In 2008 several high school students from our congregation and their friends began participating. As attendance grew, three men from our congregation moved to create an organized outreach ministry. Since September of 2011 over 1300 different players have participated including both men and women. Many participants have come from some of the most depressed neighborhoods in Chicago and the suburbs. A devotional and prayer time is a part of each weekly gathering. Occasionally a meal is provided. Guest speakers from within WSBC, and guest speakers from outside the church have shared from the Word. Through the relationships that have developed, WSBC has been able to provide assistance to several participants in the form of financial aid, employment counseling, meals and spiritual discipleship. Several have come to accept Christ since participating in this ministry. Several believing long time players are stepping up into ministry leadership positions. A ministry priority is to support the mental health of the players through the assistance of local chaplains and the National Association of Mental Illness.

### **FACILITY AND FINANCE**

The Facility and Finance Committee is responsible for the regular financial affairs of the church and for the use and maintenance of all church property and equipment. The last major facilities renovation was completed in 2003, with the addition of a new sanctuary and audio-visual system, an expanded community room/recreation facility, meeting rooms, classrooms, an elevator, and full ADA compliance. We are currently in a cycle of evaluating which elements of the facilities need replacing or upgrading, and carrying out those upgrades we can, such as a switch to LED lighting in the most-used areas of the church. There have been recent ongoing upgrades to the audio-visual system, largely prompted by the COVID-19 pandemic, to allow for high-quality

streaming of the regular services and special events. The pandemic also validated the 2019 adoption of a platform allowing for online contributions.

The church is currently debt free. Over the past 10 years, the General Fund budget has fluctuated between \$850,000 and \$970,000, while the Mission Budget has ranged from \$250,000 to \$350,000.

**FELLOWSHIP** – *Transparent Fellowship: opening ourselves to others because of Jesus Christ*

From Sunday morning coffee time to Tuesday pickleball, Saturday morning hikes, Dinners for Eight, and Christmas concert receptions, we offer ongoing opportunities to connect with each other and invite others to join us.

**Senior's Ministry** – OWLS (Older Wiser Loving Saints) gather monthly for a program and meal. Trips are designed for fellowship and social encouragement and usually include a meal together. ROMEOS – this informal group of Retired Old Men Eating Out meets at a local restaurant for breakfast the first Tuesday of every month and has a great time of Christian fellowship.

**MISSIONS**

Our church is strongly committed to the support of missions. We provide partial support for nineteen families or individuals serving in fifteen countries, including several foreign nationals serving in their own countries. Approximately one-fourth of our total church budget goes to the support of missionaries and mission agencies. Many of our currently supported missionaries grew up in or were members of our church. We also support five domestic mission organizations and six organizations in other countries.

Our supported missionaries and mission organizations are involved in evangelism, church planting, church leadership training, Bible translation, youth ministry, medical services, services to the urban poor, education, and a wide variety of mission support activities. We sponsor mission emphasis weekends each year, providing opportunities for our congregation to meet our missionaries, learn about their ministries, and capture a vision for the global ministry of the church. We also provide support for individuals and groups to participate in special mission activities and short-term mission projects.

**WORSHIP** – *Genuine Worship: worship that is never about us but about God*

Our worship services seek to bring glory to God through praise, thanksgiving, prayer, and preaching from His Word. Our purpose in worship is to glorify God by helping believers worship the one true living God in spirit and truth in their daily lives and corporately. Such worship centers on scripture and uses a variety of worship forms of the highest quality possible to create worship that is never about us, but always focused on God. Our services use a blended balance of contemporary and traditional styles so that our whole body can worship together. Currently we have one corporate worship service on Sunday at 10:00 a.m.

Our organist has recently retired, and finding a qualified organist is proving difficult. Thus, we are concentrating on providing our in-house musicians with opportunities to lead the congregation in worship. We also have an orchestra, Worship Band, and pianist. The Worship Band consists of a rhythm section along with guitars, vocalists, a sax player, and a piano. Music for special events such as Christmas and Easter is provided by both in-house instrumentalists and vocalists as well as hired musicians as needed. The Worship Choir consists of 20 - 30 members. The choir rehearses on Wednesday evenings and sings on most Sundays. Children's Choir and Youth Choir sing for worship and special events.

Special events include two identical Christmas concerts on a Saturday and Sunday preceding Christmas with receptions following each. On Good Friday evening, we have a meditative service with extra music and scripture readings. We have two Easter services with choir and orchestra.

## **HISTORY**

Our church was founded in 1912 by several resident families. In the beginning, it was a store front meeting place for Sunday morning worship and Sunday School. When the church was two years old, the congregation voted not to join an association, but rather to remain an unaffiliated Baptist church, which it is to this day. In 1927, the first church structure was built – a basement sanctuary.

In 1943 Billy Graham, a recent graduate of Wheaton College, became pastor of the 100-member church. During his 21 months of ministry, "[Songs in the Night](#)," a well-known Sunday evening radio vesper service, began broadcasting from the church.

Lloyd Fesmire pastored the church from 1945 to 1965. He continued the radio ministry of "Songs in the Night." During this time, the church's commitment to missions grew. In 1947, an above-ground sanctuary was built. Space for Sunday School, library, offices, and nursery was added in 1954.

Art Brown pastored the church from 1967 until he retired in 1989. His pastorate brought an increased missions emphasis, particularly through outreach in inner city Chicago. Art's ministry also strengthened a love and tolerance for other Christians resulting in a diversity of denominational backgrounds within our congregation. In 1975 a community room/recreational facility was constructed.

Dick Norwood pastored the church from 1989 to 1993. Under his pastorate, an informal contemporary Sunday evening service evolved, and a small-group intensive Bible study program was begun.

John Beukema pastored the church from 1996 to 2005. In 2001 the congregation moved from its current site to accommodate a major facility upgrade. The church returned to the new facility in January 2003 and experienced significant numerical growth. Under Pastor Beukema's leadership, our governing structure was redesigned, and our church constitution rewritten. This new structure was approved by the congregation in February 2006.

Dean Monkemeier served as Senior Pastor from 2007 until his retirement in January 2023. Missions programs were strengthened and expanded, both internationally and domestically. The church explored initiatives in discipleship and evangelism to adapt to the changing cultural landscape. Two full-time pastoral positions were added: Minister of Music and Worship, and Pastor of Family Ministries. The church's website and social media presence was expanded, and a livestream broadcast of the worship services was added in the last few years.

### **DEMOGRAPHICS – THE CHURCH AND ITS COMMUNITY**

[Western Springs](#), incorporated in 1886, is located approximately 15 miles west of downtown Chicago, with a population of 13,600 and is 2.32 square miles in size. Our congregation members reside in many of the surrounding suburbs in addition to Western Springs, reflecting the diversity of the wider suburban area. Our church has a history of welcoming attenders and participants from multicultural backgrounds.

As of October 2023, the church has 188 active members. During the first six months of 2023, the average Sunday morning worship attendance was 235. Sunday morning worship attendance averaged 203 in 2022; the 12-month average for 2021 was 179.

### **CURRENT MINISTERIAL STAFF**

Rev. Don Zimmerman	Interim Preaching Pastor (part-time)
Aaron Hoesli	Minister of Youth/Technical Director (full-time)
Joel Sisson	Pastor of Family Ministries (full-time)
Steve Wolf	Minister of Music & Worship (full-time)

### **CURRENT SUPPORT STAFF**

Open	Communications & Office Administrator (full-time)
Bev Dougherty	Financial Secretary (part-time)
Martin Viramontes	Custodian (full-time)
Lisa Wolf	Pianist/Choir Accompanist (part-time)