



Ministry Leader for Children, Youth and Families Willesborough Baptist Church Profile

wbc-ashford.org.uk

About Willesborough Baptist Church

Unusually there are three Baptist churches in the Ashford area: Ashford Baptist Church, Willesborough Baptist Church and South Ashford Baptist Church. Willesborough Baptist Church was founded in 1902 as a small chapel. In 1984 a new church was built alongside the existing chapel and this was extended in 1999 to its present size. Willesborough Baptist Church is situated about 1½ miles from the town centre on the Hythe Road. Willesborough has a population of 8,000+, and has seen significant growth over the years.

The Sunday morning service attracts around 150 people of all ages from the immediate area of Willesborough as well as the spreading estates around Ashford and the surrounding rural villages.

The present leadership of the church comprises the minister, three elders and eight deacons.

Rev Alan Dinnie, our minister, has been pastor of the church for the last 38 years and has indicated his retirement by June 2019. The next eighteen months will be a time of challenge and opportunity for the church as a new pastor is appointed.

We employ an administrator, Lynn Edwards, who manages the church office each morning of the week.

For ten years we employed a Senior Youth Leader until his move to Northern Ireland in Feb 2017.

Subsequently we have sensed God leading us to widen the scope of the ministry appointment to that of children, youth and families with a distinctive missional approach that works within our existing groups but is also rooted in the community.

One of our challenges is that the church has seen a decline in those attending; in part due to the growth of new churches in the town. Four years ago, for a relatively short period, we ran two morning services with combined attendances of 180 to 200 a week. For various reasons we did not think this was sustainable at the time and reverted to a single service at 10am. Currently numbers are 120 to 150 attenders for this service. We have a thriving and talented youth work. Apart from Sunday morning their main gathering is the Sunday evening Furnace meeting where worship is led by the youth band. We are very much a family church with a strong children's work on Sunday mornings and children and youth groups during the week.

Our Purpose Statement

"A passionately God-centred family, committed to sharing his life-changing power"

This statement indicates why we exist. There are challenging and exciting days ahead for WBC. As a church family we are to be galvanized together to make vision become reality.

However, all that we long for will never be achieved without the empowering Spirit of God igniting our hearts to worship, work and witness for God, to be a vibrant life-imparting family of God.

It is ... *'not by might, nor by power but by my Spirit'* says the Lord.'

We strive by God's grace to become such a church in the town of Ashford, and we welcome all who share this purpose to join with us in ministering as part of the WBC community.

Values

On our journey of discovery we have identified the things that characterise WBC as a church - the values we hold dear as we engage in worship and service.

We are a Bible-based church and our core values all derive from this:

- **WELCOMING** – *We are an inclusive caring community, actively welcoming all ages and cultures, promoting a sense of belonging and togetherness*
- **RELATIONAL** – *We are an informal and relaxed family; supporting, encouraging and valuing every member*
- **ADVANCING** – *We move forward together in our spiritual journey, encouraging a commitment to become all that God created us to be*
- **PRAYERFUL** – *We express our dependence on God through prayer, seeking his sovereign will in all situations*
- **AUTHENTIC** – *We act with integrity, honesty, openness and consistency in all we do*
- **GENEROUS** – *We demonstrate generosity in all we do, willingly giving our time, energy and resources wherever needed*

Prayer - All that we do is to be undergirded with prayer. The church's prayer ministry seeks to encourage and stimulate personal and corporate prayer.

Current children, youth and families work

WBC is a busy church with plenty going on and a wide variety of activities take place every week for children, youth and families. They cater both for those in the church congregation and in the wider community.

Regular Activities Include:

Sunday Service at 10am

Worship service (for adults) – Lively worship and practical Bible teaching.

The children and youth generally stay in the main service for about 20 minutes before they go out to their own groups for worship and teaching each Sunday morning:

Beams – Crèche (ages 0-3)

Lights – (Age 3 to School year 1)

Waves – (School years 2 & 3)

Harbour – (School years 4 -6)

Our Sunday morning children's programme, Lighthouse, runs during the morning service. After a time of family worship, Lighthouse gets underway at around 10:15am. We start each session with an altogether time of children's worship - singing songs along with a taster of the day's story - before breaking out into smaller, age-specific groups for Bible adventures based on our current monthly theme. We use Scripture Union's Light resources as the basis for our sessions taking us on a journey through the old and new testaments. We have 31 children on our registers with an average weekly attendance of 20 children.

On the fifth Sunday of the month (four times a year), we run Big Sunday where all age groups stay together for the whole session. We start as always with a time of worship and then play games, listen to stories and take part in craft activities. During recent Big Sundays we have: told Bible stories, baked bread / cookies, learned new songs, made cards, solved puzzles, coloured pictures, played games, learned memory verses, made prayer rocks, made puppets, prayed to and worshipped our great God. We have also used Scripture Union's Explore Together in two sessions, discovering more about The Birth of Jesus and Pentecost.

In April 2017, we welcomed Doug Horley. Doug led an afternoon Children's Leaders' Workshop and we had 45 attendees from 6 churches across Ashford and surrounding towns. In the evening, we filled the church with 200 people, including over 100 children for a Family Praise Party.

Over the summer we ran six themed Sunday morning sessions using Guardians of Ancora Treasure Seekers with the children learning all about Jesus' life in an interactive way; with dramas, stories, crafts, games, songs, videos and more, as they aimed to light up the City of Ancora by finding the missing story treasures (Bible stories). In a traditionally low attendance season of the year we were pleased to have up to 25 children joining in the adventures each week.

Ignite for Youth (School years 7-13)

Sunday Mornings

This group meets in the "Upper Room", and is overseen by two experienced youth workers, with younger members of the group sharing in the Bible teaching.

Sunday evenings

Furnace 6.30-8.30pm - This is a more informal church for teenagers. In a relaxed atmosphere, our youth are encouraged to lead in worship and word.

Refuel - Our young people are also involved in "Refuel", a bi-monthly event that seeks to bring youth from all the Ashford churches together. The emphasis is on encouraging the young people to organise and run the event to lead in all aspects of worship.

Furnace the Event - We also organise "Furnace the Event", usually annually, when the youth meet together for praise and worship and a guest preacher/teacher is invited to bring God's word

The teenagers often have their own special weekend with a focused theme, usually held at Elm Tree Farm, a local Christian conference centre. In addition, the young people are encouraged to attend summer conferences, such as Soul Survivor or New Day.

Youth Cell Group - There is also a youth cell group that meets in the week. This group meets in two venues, led by the hosts in their own homes. Topics vary, but all discussions are bible based. We are planning to commence the Youth Alpha within the next few months.

Children's activities

Informal activity and bible teaching for children both from and outside the church. A typical club would include games, social interaction, craft and bible teaching.

Monday Club 6.00-7.15pm for years R to 2 [8-10 attend]

Tuesday Club 6.30-7.45pm for years 3-6 [12-15 attend]

Family activities

Messy Church 2nd Saturday of each month 3.00 – 5.15pm. We have been running Messy Church for five years with about 50-70 attending.

Pebbles Toddler Group each Tuesday in term time, 9.15-11.00am. The place where parents and carers can find encouragement and friendship.

Small groups

We have a strong commitment to establishing and maintaining small cell groups that meet weekly in homes to study and discuss the current Sunday teaching series. The small groups offer a wonderful opportunity to pray together and support each other pastorally.

We see the church as being a place that is big enough to celebrate (in our Sunday worship) and small enough to care (in our small groups).

Men's activities Regular men's breakfast and other events linked to Christian Vision for Men

Art Group Meets fortnightly on Friday mornings and has a biennial art exhibition

Crafty Cuppa A creative craft group that meets fortnightly on a Thursday morning.

Stepping Stones Contact Centre Run by the church to enable separated parents to see their children in a safe and non-threatening environment. It operates fortnightly on a Saturday morning.

Outside of its very regular activities the church is actively engaged with other churches in seeking to meet the social needs of the area. For the past two years Churches in Ashford have jointly operated the **Winter Night Shelter** and will do so again this coming winter. The shelter for the homeless operates for three months with each church providing shelter and food for one night of each week. The church is also an active supporter of the **Food Bank**.

Other activities include courses such as 'The Marriage Course' and 'Alpha', holiday clubs for children and a Light Party alternative to Halloween.

A Pre-school run by the church and located on its premises has been well established in the Willesborough community for over 24 years. It is an Ofsted rated 'good' pre-school. The pre-school is open Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday – 8.30-4.00pm

In many ways this is just a brief snapshot of life within Willesborough Baptist Church and the local community. You will find more detailed information about WBC activities on our website.

About Ashford

Historically Ashford was a quiet market town but in recent years it has become one of the fastest growing towns in the UK. Its current population of 118,000 is due to rise to 135,000 by 2031. The Willesborough area of Ashford sits mainly to the east of the town centre and is predominantly residential. Finberry, one of the new villages within the area of Willesborough, will eventually contain 1,180 homes out of the planned 12,000 in the new 2030 Local Plan. www.crestnicholson.com/developments/finberry Other developments in the area include 200 new homes behind the William Harvey Hospital and a new Motorway (10A) junction that will open up the way to further development in Sevington in 2018.

On the other side of Ashford there is a new urban village of 5,570 homes at Chilmington Green and the construction stage commenced in September 2017.

Road and rail links in Ashford are excellent. The town sits just off the M20 motorway: journey times by car to the channel tunnel, Dover and London are approximately 10 minutes, 20 minutes and 1 hour respectively.

The town is at the junction of five major rail routes and boasts an International Station with Eurostar trains departing for Lille, Paris, Brussels and Disneyland Paris. Since 2007, with the opening of HS1, passengers have been able to travel from Ashford to London in 38 minutes.

There is an ambitious development strategy that aims to make Ashford an exciting, prosperous and sustainable place to work, live and do business for years to come. For more details go to: www.youtube.com/watch?v=YXYLtoIY5kA

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