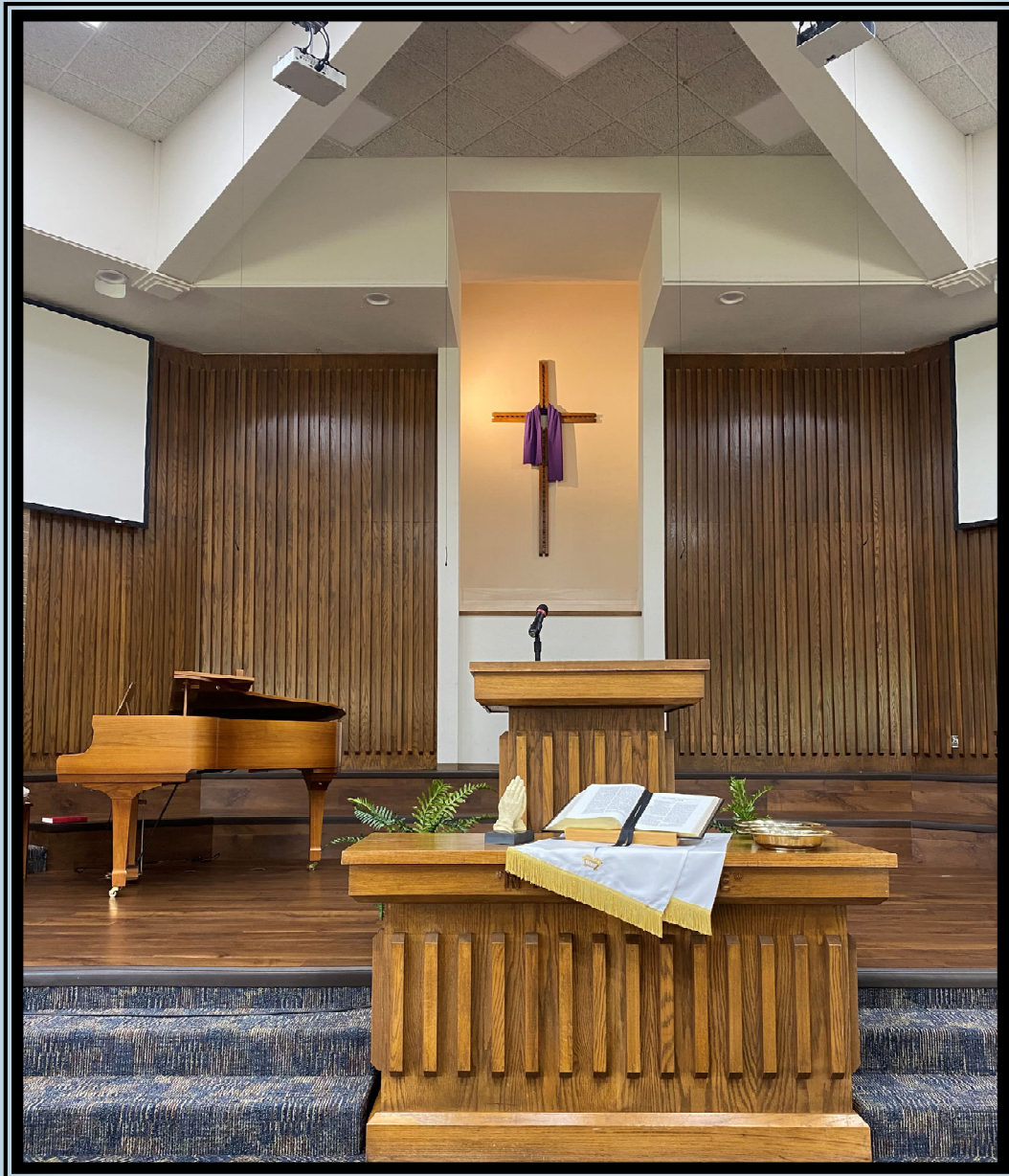


# Northwest Baptist Church ✦ Ardmore



Congregational Profile  
July 2023

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The mission of Northwest Baptist Church centers on sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ and meeting people's needs together. "Together" serves as a significant description of who we are. We believe spiritual growth and the call to mission

happen in community. This word also reminds us of how much we need each other in experiencing God's grace and forgiveness. We seek to be a church where everyone is welcome as you experience the love of God as well as the love of our congregation. We invite people to encounter Jesus, engage in community, and grow in their spiritual journey.

We describe NWBC as a "church without walls". This identity grows out of our understanding of the gospel and the design of our sanctuary. The architecture reveals expansive windows on two sides of the sanctuary. This striking feature allows people in the community to look in as we celebrate hope and forgiveness. It speaks of openness and transparency. The windows also invite the church to look out to our mission field in a hurting world. The windows remind us of our commitment of being the presence of Christ in our corner of God's Kingdom.



The history and pioneering spirit of our church demonstrates such inclusiveness. The bold decision in 1986 to ordain a woman to the ministry reveals its courage. The church served as a pioneer in reaching out to the divorced and creating one of the first single adult ministries in the city. Innovation and a commitment to reaching

people is not new to NWBC. We seek to be a church that builds bridges of understanding in a polarized culture and invite people to think and be open about the Kingdom's mission of Jesus.

The present congregation shows a membership primarily comprised of people over the age of 55. These members bring the strength of experience and maturity in loving God and

loving people that some congregations lack. During this time of pastoral transition, the church seized the opportunity to look at who we are, where we are, and where we are going. This extensive self-study, led by the Center for Healthy Churches, provided valuable data for the future. In these challenging times for our church, we remain committed to being a creative and innovative congregation as we prayerfully discern where God is leading us in the future.

Northwest affiliates with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, a national network of churches working together globally to spread the hope of Christ. Our fellowship supports a wide range of missions and ministries that give people meaningful opportunities to put their faith into action.

We face complex problems with hope and joy because of the powerful presence of Jesus Christ in our lives. Out of gratitude for all that Christ is doing for us, we seek to love and serve others. The words and theology of William Sloan Coffin serve as a powerful introduction to our church:

*“May God give you grace to never sell yourself short, grace to risk something big for something good, grace to remember that the world is too dangerous for anything but truth and too small for anything but love.”*



# OUR MISSION AND VALUES

## Where are we today?

Our church engaged in a series of congregational conversations in which we shared who we are and where are we going. In the first congregational conversation, we considered what we value most about our church. We focused on stories that reveal what we love about NWBC, what drew us here, and what keeps us here. Those fruitful discussions and information resulted in three fresh statements describing our core values we share as a church family.

## NWBC CORE VALUES

**NWBC is a community of belonging that accepts, encourages, and nurtures everyone to build authentic relationships of grace and love.**

**NWBC is a community of belonging that challenges everyone to grow spiritually, encourages freedom to think about our faith and understanding of God, and helps others to grow in Christ.**

**NWBC is a community of belonging that calls us to be a church on mission together as we discover and use our gifts through service both inside and outside the church. *“God has no hands but our hands”*. This is demonstrated by the number of people serving in lay leadership positions.**



# CONGREGATIONAL POLARITIES

In our third congregational conversation, the Search Team collected data on a series of polarities that characterize typical congregations. This information identified the current focus as well as the future focus of our energy as a church.

Data analysis from the congregational conversations revealed three polarities that were particularly enlightening:

## Internal Focus Versus External Focus

The first polarity looks at the church on a scale between internal focus (*directed toward needs within the congregation*) and an external focus (*directed toward the needs of the larger community*). In the area of internal versus external focus, the data revealed a need in the future for increased energy on the external, supporting the needs of the larger community. In comparing internal versus external focus, the difference between the present and future values was not extreme but significant, which speaks to the desire of focusing more of our energy on the external in the future. The changing larger community needs a voice and ministry from the church, just as the church needs to increase their hearts and minds in serving the larger community through Jesus Christ.

## Stability Versus Change

NWBC celebrates its rich tradition and heritage. Over the course of their history, the congregation carved out a unique identity in Southern Oklahoma that provides stability. The congregation, especially today with the challenges it faces, recognizes that change is important if not essential for the health of the congregation.

Comparing the polarity of stability versus change, the results showed a need to focus more energy on an openness to change rather than settling for stability.

The data revealed the church exhibits a present openness to change while calling for an increased openness to change in the future. Again, the difference did not appear extreme in the present and for the future. **Yet, the difference between the pole of stability versus change becomes significant as the church considers what such change for the church might actually look like in the future.**

## Lay Leadership Versus Pastoral Leadership

The mission of the church requires strong leadership. We found NWBC believes in a healthy balance between the polarity of strong lay leadership and strong pastoral leadership. Each one plays an important role in the success of the church in working together as a team.

NWBC embraces a long history of a healthy balance between lay and pastoral leadership. A few times in the past one became stronger than the other, occasions that were challenging but were resolved. Therefore, we believe, a balance of energy between lay leadership and pastoral leadership works best for the church, the Pastor, and the work for God's kingdom.

NWBC has been blessed with excellent pastors over the years, most of whom moved on to larger churches as Senior Pastors with a full staff. Through their continued ministry, we take pleasure in knowing we are an integral part of spreading God's kingdom throughout our nation as well as in our own community.

## Comments on the Polarities for the Future

Some members believe the resolution to declining attendance numbers will emerge from stronger emphasis on the external and becoming more open to change. The ongoing concern of remaining a viable church drives this emphasis. Perhaps the focus on the external grows out of the deep hope of ministering to the larger community more effectively. Our immediate neighborhood contains families with children and youth. Earlier attempts to reach our neighborhood resulted in mild success. The congregation realizes to reach our neighborhood, more energy and emphasis on the external and openness to change will be required. This enhanced emphasis could include changes in the ways we worship as well as new ways to creatively engage our neighborhood and the Ardmore community.

## OUR WORSHIP

We believe worship calls us to our mission of being the presence of Christ in every area of our lives. The worship of God transforms our lives as we offer our total selves to God. We worship God with a heritage of freedom—the freedom that each person has before God alone,

the freedom to worship without hindrance, the freedom to serve God regardless of your age or gender, the freedom to interpret Scriptures for yourself, and the freedom to worship God by serving others. We will learn to BE the church more faithfully as we keep the glory of God at the center of our worship.

Worship becomes more than what happens in the sanctuary but who we are in our community. Worship becomes a way of life. This understanding of worship supports our belief that every member of our church is a minister. Each Christian discovers his or her calling to serve using his or her own gifts and talents by the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Whatever the call—to teach, to encourage, to build, to comfort, to cook, to clean, to serve—all followers find a place to minister.

### **The Four Components of Our Worship**

- **Worship and Praise**
- **Spiritual Formation (Discipleship)**
- **Service and Missions**
- **Fellowship**



### **Worship and Praise**

The congregation participates in worship together. The focus of worship centers on the love and greatness of God while being practically based in how we live out our discipleship. We hold a rich heritage of music in our services. We utilize a blend of traditional hymns as well as contemporary Christian music. We seek to be a welcoming community as people enter the sanctuary. Each worship service begins with a spoken congregational Call to Worship and ends with a spoken Congregational Benediction and Blessing. Worshippers lead the church in worship by reading scripture, praying, sharing their story, and using their gifts in song. At times in our worship, faith becomes action through baptism and Holy Communion. We celebrate baptism as the powerful symbol of the redeeming life of Jesus and that we belong to God. We come to the Table to receive Holy Communion as a joyous symbol we belong to each other. We observe the Christian calendar with special services during the seasons of Advent, Epiphany,

Lent, and Pentecost. We worship God through our tithes and offerings each Sunday. We come in sincerity and love to truly worship God, our creator and Savior, with all we have--our hearts, minds, voices, and talents/gifts.

## **Spiritual Formation**

As a church, we foster growth. Spiritual formation serves as the process of being conformed into the image of Christ for the glory of God and for us to reflect Christ as we interact with others. We journey together to grow deeper in our relationship with God, maturing in our faith and helping others grow in their faith. We understand growth as a life-long journey with Christ. Sunday School provides our primary source of discipleship. Presently, we offer two adult Sunday School classes, both well attended. Each class provides strong Biblical study and prayer. One class involves study and discussion. The other class focuses on study through presentation or lecture, allowing a safe place for those uncomfortable with sharing or discussion. Our Sunday School classes nurture love, caring, a sense of belonging, and encouragement to their members. The Sunday School class often becomes the first group to meet needs by purposefully providing acts of caring.

Each Wednesday evening, we meet to study God's word and pray. We pray for the mission of our church, members of our church and their families and friends. We offer prayers for friends and families in our community, our city, our nation, and our world. We send prayer cards to let people know of our concern and that we lifted them up to the Father.

## **Service and Missions**

Our worship takes us into the world. Service and missions become a way our church reaches out to our community as we provide compassionate ministry to others. We believe that our members are all called to serve according to their unique spiritual gifts, and we provide many different opportunities to share God's love. As one member said "Missions—it's the way we roll."

# OUR HISTORY

Our church fulfills Jesus' parable of the "mustard seed" -- small beginnings have kingdom endings that will surprise you. A view of the church today provides a well-designed campus and facilities in a well-established neighborhood. Yet, Northwest grew out of a vision to plant a church in the open spaces on the far northside of a growing town. This pioneering spirit still captures the mission of Northwest of reaching out and being a church for all people.

On August 3, 1952, 41 people met in an unpainted house at 1725 NW Robison Street in Ardmore, Oklahoma. This house certainly did not look like a sanctuary of worship, but God's spirit was at work. Those 41 people served as the



genesis of a new work of God in the Ardmore community, daring to start a new church on the edge of the city. Northwest Baptist Chapel, a mission of the K Street Baptist Church, was established. The chapel called Rev. Paul Kerr to be its first pastor.

Growth came quickly. By September 1952, a structure, known as "Robison Hall," was built. Soon it became too small. April 1953, funds were collected to begin new construction of a church building. In May 1953, Rev. Galen Irby was called as the pastor of the Chapel. In January 1954, Northwest Baptist Church became an autonomous church with thirty-seven charter members. During this time of growth and change, Rev. Vee Hoyle and Rev. B.J. Morris would follow each other providing pastoral guidance for this emerging congregation.



Their names as pastors are more than just part of the history of the church because they served as the leaders who did the hard work of starting a church.

The church dedicated the first sanctuary and education complex on November 1, 1959. This structure featured a 200-seat auditorium, a pastor's study, and classrooms. This original structure remains a part of the renovated educational building and fellowship hall.



Rev. John Gurley became pastor in 1961. During his tenure, the church increased by 163 members and doubled its operating budget. The church took steps of building a spacious fellowship hall in 1962. This facility today serves as the youth center. Rev. Bob Worley became pastor in 1964. Because of the large number of children involved in the church, the church constructed a nursery and children's area in 1968.

In addition to the traditional ways that a church measures growth, the church not only grew in numbers but also in depth. The time of pastoral transition became one of the most shaping factors in whom the church was becoming, breaking the image of a traditional Baptist church.

Several times during the 1960's and 1970's when the church was without a pastor, Dr. William Hendricks, professor of theology at Southwestern Baptist Seminary, served as interim. Dr. Hendricks' influence on the identity of Northwest cannot be overstated. His impact on the church became significant through his approach to worship and scripture resulting in the formative character of the church. Dr. Hendricks helped the church to think theologically as well as practically. He possessed a great sense of who this church was. He saw their potential and power. A few years later he described the church with this comment, *"they are seemingly ordinary people who in truth are extraordinary in their openness to God's leadership"*.

Rev. Larry Taylor was called as pastor in May 1968. Dr. Taylor encouraged the church to think for themselves as they studied the Bible. Dr. Taylor helped the church learn to disagree as brothers and sisters in Christ with understanding instead of anger. He attracted people searching for a church where one could question while finding the truth and hope of the gospel in an atmosphere of acceptance.



Dr. Robert (Bob) Campbell was called as pastor in August 1975. The church began to experience explosive growth during Dr. Campbell's tenure, prompting the church to begin two worship services on Sunday. A new building which featured a 350-seat sanctuary, staff offices, and choir

room was dedicated May 18, 1980. Dr. Campbell brought humor, storytelling, and depth to the pulpit. He continued the church's openness to reaching out to the unchurched as he encouraged the church to start a ministry to single and divorced individuals.

Dr. Philip Christopher became Pastor in 1981. In late 1983, the church began a building project to renovate the education area and convert the original sanctuary into a modern fellowship hall and kitchen, which is still used today. This project represents more than conducting a "Together We Build" campaign to renovate our facility but guided the spirit of the church to change a sanctuary and baptistry of memories into a fellowship hall and kitchen.

In 1986, the church would become involved in the greatest controversy it faced in its first 50 years; a controversy that would put the church not only on a national stage but also



squarely in the center of the conservative/moderate controversy within the Southern Baptist Convention. The controversy centered on ordaining a man and his wife to the Christian ministry. The church did not take this decision lightly. The church spent hours studying the scriptures on the role and qualifications of a deacon. The church invited Southwestern Seminary professor of Church History, Dr. Leon McBeth to lead a weekend study on "The Role of Women in Baptist History". Dr. McBeth shared that the exclusion of women from leadership developed as a recent practice in Baptist life.

The congregation eventually decided and affirmed that both the husband and wife would be ordained in November of 1986. This decision was not a popular one. Some families moved their membership, and the local Enon Baptist Association voted to disassociate Northwest Baptist Church from the Association. Yet, the church thrived in this courageous act as it lived out its identity of being a "Church without Walls". The church went on to ordain women to the deacon body realizing women could not only serve in the kitchen but serve communion in worship. Dr. Phil Christopher was called to be Pastor in Louisville, Kentucky in 1987.

Dr. William Johnson became Pastor in 1988, and under his leadership, the church became involved in the formation of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, a national network of moderate Baptists. This step of aligning with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship served as a bold move in the church's theology and practice of inclusion and global missions. Dr. Johnson left Northwest to serve as pastor of First Baptist Church, Jefferson City, Tennessee in 1996.

In 1997, Dr. Vaughn CroweTipton became Pastor. Even though his tenure was only three years, he brought a depth in worship and in his preaching. Dr. CroweTipton brought out the rabbinic role of the pastor as a skilled teacher. Dr. CroweTipton left in 2000 to become pastor of the First Baptist Church, Auburn,



Alabama. He now serves as Associate Vice President for Spiritual Life and University Chaplain at Furman University, Greenville, South Carolina.

Dr. Russell (Rusty) Brock became Pastor in 2001. His relational gifts in the community helped raise the visibility of the church in Ardmore. He worked with civic groups and often worked on a sermon at one of the popular coffee shops. He went on to become Pastor of First Baptist Church in Clemson, South Carolina.

Dr. Leonard Ezell became Pastor in 2008. During his tenure, the church completed the renovation of the Children's Building in 2014 and installed new flooring in the Sanctuary in 2016. Dr. Ezell left Northwest Baptist Church on October 23, 2016, to become Senior Pastor of Broadmoor Baptist Church, Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Rich Lubbers began as Senior Pastor on August 13, 2017. He announced his resignation on October 15, 2017, due to a personal crisis. The congregation addressed this unanticipated event by calling Dr. Charles Wade as Interim Pastor. Dr. Wade brought wisdom and a steady hand to guide the church through this uncertain time of transition. Dr. Wade possessed years of pastoral experience as former senior pastor of First Baptist Church, Arlington, Texas, and Executive Director of the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

In November 2018, Dr. Becky Jackson began her tenure at NWBC as Pastor. The church lost a few families because of a woman being called as pastor. Yet, calling Dr. Jackson helped affirm the church's commitment to women in ministry. Dr. Jackson courageously led the church through the difficult time of the Covid pandemic. All churches understand the heavy toll of living through those days of change and crisis. Pastoring a church during the pandemic resembled the theme of the book by Tod Bolsinger, Canoeing the Mountains -- the church was ill-equipped and unprepared for the changes we faced. Yet, we survived and now as we look to the future we are expecting to thrive. In September 2022, Dr. Jackson resigned to begin Clinical Pastoral Education in pursuit of becoming a hospital chaplain.

The church faces one of the most critical times of transition in its history. Following Dr. Jackson's resignation, a five-person Pastoral Search Team was elected by the church. These individuals represent years of involvement, past search experiences, theological depth, and a passion for the mission of the church. As the Search Team explored ways of addressing the present state of NWBC, Dr. Matt Cook, Executive Director of the Center for Healthy Churches was called to serve as both Interim Pastor and Search Consultant. Dr. Cook helped the church to think about the call of the gospel in his excellent, biblically based sermons. He worked with the Search Team to create congregational conversations about where and who we are. He called us into the process of spiritual discernment. We pray the prayer of St. Ignatius in seeking a "Holy Indifference" for God's Will for our lives and church – *nothing more, nothing else, nothing less*. We trust through the leadership of the Holy Spirit God continues to lead this congregation, even during wilderness times. The Creator has prepared a future for us to share the Good News and to meet the needs of people together.

## OUR PASTORS REMEMBER

The history of Northwest Baptist Church tells the stories of gifted pastoral leadership. Each pastor brought different gifts, but those gifts were what the church needed at a particular time in its history. The congregation saw part of its mission to help nurture these young pastors in their ministries and provide a healthy place to serve. Those persons privileged to serve as

Pastor share their remembrances in the spirit of the Apostle Paul: *“I thank my God every time I remember you... and the joy and partnership we shared.”*

Dr. Larry Taylor gives thanks: *When I think of Northwest Baptist Church. . .*

- *I think of a church of young families whose growth paralleled our own.*
- *Thank you, Northwest, for giving our family a nurturing church home during those years.*
- *When I think of Northwest Baptist Church. . .*  
*I think of a congregation ready to learn and ready to be led.*
- *When I think of Northwest Baptist Church. . .*  
*I think of a courageous congregation willing to follow the Spirit’s leadership into the future.*
- *When I think of Northwest Baptist Church. . .*  
*“I thank my God upon every remembrance of you” (Phil. 1:3)*

Dr. Phil Christopher remembers:

*I am so grateful that Northwest gave me the opportunity as a young youth minister to become pastor of a church that had a history of exceptional pastoral leadership. Northwest was a place for me to grow and develop as a minister. I’m grateful for the church’s patience as I introduced some new “features” in worship. I failed to remember the words of C.S. Lewis: “Feed my sheep; not try experiments on my rats.” The church nurtured our family and understood at times I needed to put my children first. The church took bold steps in renovating our facilities. It was an emotional decision when we voted to renovate the old sanctuary with all its memories into a new fellowship hall. But even more importantly, the church took courageous steps in being a “church without walls” as we affirmed women in ministry and our Baptist identity.*

Dr. Bill Johnson remembers:

*My overwhelming impression from the day I arrived to what I know of it to this day is that Northwest is a place of genuine acceptance. I felt this at a deeply personal level. It was,*

*after all, the church without walls. It seemed that the more difficult times became the moments when grace was extended beyond measure. That acceptance was also reflected in the makeup of the people—so many different personalities and ways of seeing the world and yet somehow there was genuine love and acceptance of one another. I believe that love and acceptance reflected the genuine Spirit of Christ at work.*



*There was also a beautiful spirit and celebration of creativity within the church. I am reminded of the times we held a “Festival of the Arts” and asked people to share their personal arts and crafts. The response was literally overwhelming. Those were such fun times. But that spirit of creativity also extended to exploring how to be the church together. At Northwest there was almost always a sense of openness to considering new ideas, of allowing the renewal of the Spirit to show us new possibilities and directions.*

*At a more personal level I want to express my continuing love and gratitude for the way the people of Northwest Baptist Church nurtured our growing family. Those were blessed days for Bill, Cheryl, Vince, and Gaines Johnson. You helped shape our children and helped all of us learn in tangible ways how genuine grace could help us through the most difficult days.*

Dr. Vaughn CroweTipton writes:

*My time at Northwest Baptist Church was both formative and transformative. Not surprisingly pastors come to a congregation ready to pastor, but less often so ready to be pastored. The people of Northwest over and over again taught me the gifts of grace, love, and forgiveness. Forgiving my mistakes, gracefully showing me what it is to be Christian community, and lovingly allowing me to grow. While I believe I gave to them in ways that helped them, I know they gave to me in ways that shaped me as a pastor, as a Christian, and as friend. Of all*



*the places I have had the privilege to serve over the years, NWBC is the community that set the bar for the pastoral/people relationship for me. I miss them and am grateful for them.*

Dr. Rusty Brock remembers:



*When I reflect upon my time as pastor of NWBC, I rejoice remembering the good people, the good vision for worship, fellowship and missions, and the good intentionality for being a congregation that embraced the Ardmore community. NWBC is, for Baptists, a lighthouse in Ardmore as*

*it affirms women in ministry, accepts baptism from other traditions, and puts people above church politics. NWBC is a unique congregation with much to offer anyone seeking a sustaining faith.*

Dr. Leonard Ezell remembers:

*Northwest Baptist Church is clearly a long-suffering and patient congregation, allowing me eight years to minister among them, permitting me to lead as I felt God leading, and supporting me in earning my Doctor of Ministry. In all sincerity, they are a loving congregation and open, making space in their fellowship for the remnants of a local Christian Church congregation; serving the bereaved by providing and hosting family meals; feeding the hungry by serving at the soup kitchen; caring for the orphaned by celebrating birthdays and Christmas with the residents at Madill Girls' Home; and in so many other ways. They are truly Christian. They wear their faith on their sleeves, which are rolled up, breaking bread and washing feet.*

Dr. Becky Jackson looks back:

*Northwest Baptist Church will always be the church that first and fully acknowledged my pastoral call, ordained me, and with great patience and grace, allowed me to grow into the role of pastor and preacher. I remember many friends there with fondness and gratitude. I pray for NWBC and wait in hope to see what God will do in her future!*

## OUR CONGREGATION

Thoughts from members about the joy and warmth that drew people to Northwest.

- *The singles department was a place where I was valued by the whole congregation and not a second-class member...*
- *The friendliness where we were immediately treated like family...*
- *I was nine months pregnant when we were visiting. The pastor came to see me when our child was born which was so kind. Then we joined and I was asked to serve.*
- *I had grown up in another denomination and feeling empty. When I visited Northwest, it seemed like I had something to hear and something I could take home with me. I had a chance to grow spiritually. People were caring and welcoming.*
- *We were married at Northwest. The church where I was going would not marry us because my fiancée was divorced. A work colleague invited us to NWBC and said, 'Our pastor will marry you...' and he did. We felt like we belonged in the acceptance and kindness of the church.*
- *I came to Northwest because the freedom of thought was encouraged.*
- *I came as a teenager from a dysfunctional family situation and through special people was taken under their wing and nurtured through their kindness and an active youth group.*
- *A unique church that valued the leadership role and ministry of women in the church.*



## OUR LEADERSHIP

As explained earlier in the profile, the church understands pastoral and lay leadership as a team of ministers who work together in fulfilling the mission of the church. The Pastor is a

full-time position. The staff presently includes a part-time Ministry Assistant, Linda Sherry who has served a key role during the interim. In the past, the church employed a part-time, Youth Minister, Children's Minister, and Music Minister. These positions are now vacant and will be subject to evaluation by the Personnel Committee, input from the new Pastor and availability of Budget funds.

Deacons serve as the other key component of the church's leadership team in addition to committee members and Christian education leaders. The Deacons function as a body of ministers or servant leaders and not as a board of directors. Christ calls every member of Northwest Baptist to his or her ministry, using his or her spiritual gifts. While Christ calls all of us to be ministers of reconciliation, some are called or set apart to oversee the needs of entire congregation. They work with the staff to help chart the spiritual direction and health of the church. The present Deacons are Cheryl Smiley, Chair; Bill Owen; Carolyn Olson; Donnie Williams; Jody Williams; Rex Morrell; and Geoff Jones.

Members of the Pastoral Search Team bring together a wealth of mature church leadership and experience.

- Bill Owen, Chair, a member for 52 years, served on Deacons, Personnel, Finance, Operations, Search Committee and participated in several mission trips. He also served on the original Steering Committee of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. Married to Gayle with 2 children and 4 grandchildren, Bill is an engineer and President of Fenix Constructors Inc.
- Allen Crawford, a member for 52 years, served on Publicity, Personnel, Trustee, and Singles Ministry. He has 3 children and 2 grandchildren. Allen retired from Michelin Tire Company.
- Cheryl Smiley, a member for 42 years, serves as chair of Personnel Team, and chair of Deacons. She teaches Sunday School on campus and at the Veterans Center. She is married to Mike with 3 children and 7 grandchildren. Cheryl retired from the teaching profession.
- Cookie Smith, a member for 45 years, served on the Missions, Kitchen, Personnel, and sang in choir. She is married to Glenn with 2 children and 6 grandchildren. Cookie works for Noble Research Institute, LLC as External Funding Coordinator.
- Sallie Walker, a member for 44 years, served on Finance, Personnel, last two Pastoral Search Teams, Softball, presently serves as Treasurer and sang in the choir. Sallie works as a Nurse Practitioner, specializing in oncology.

# OUR OUTREACH



We suggest a mural on a fence in Ardmore, “*amore*,” captures the missional spirit of the church. Our outreach and mission calls us to share the love of Jesus Christ with a

broken world. This missional commitment happens globally through the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.



The church participated in one of the more creative approaches to missions in feeding the hungry and addressing poverty. The church worked with Jeff and Alicia Lee, CBF field personnel in Skopje, Macedonia with a cow banking program, generating sustainable income for farmers in the region. Cow banking begins when a farmer donates a newborn calf to a local farmer in need of more income. NWBC participated by giving funds for a calf that produces

milk, income and ultimately returns the offspring of the cow for a donation to other farmers.

The church understands that “*amore*” calls us to live out the love of Christ right where we are in our neighborhood and community. We could even take the mural on the fence as just “*more*” – more love for Christ as we walk the sidewalks of Ard“*more*.”

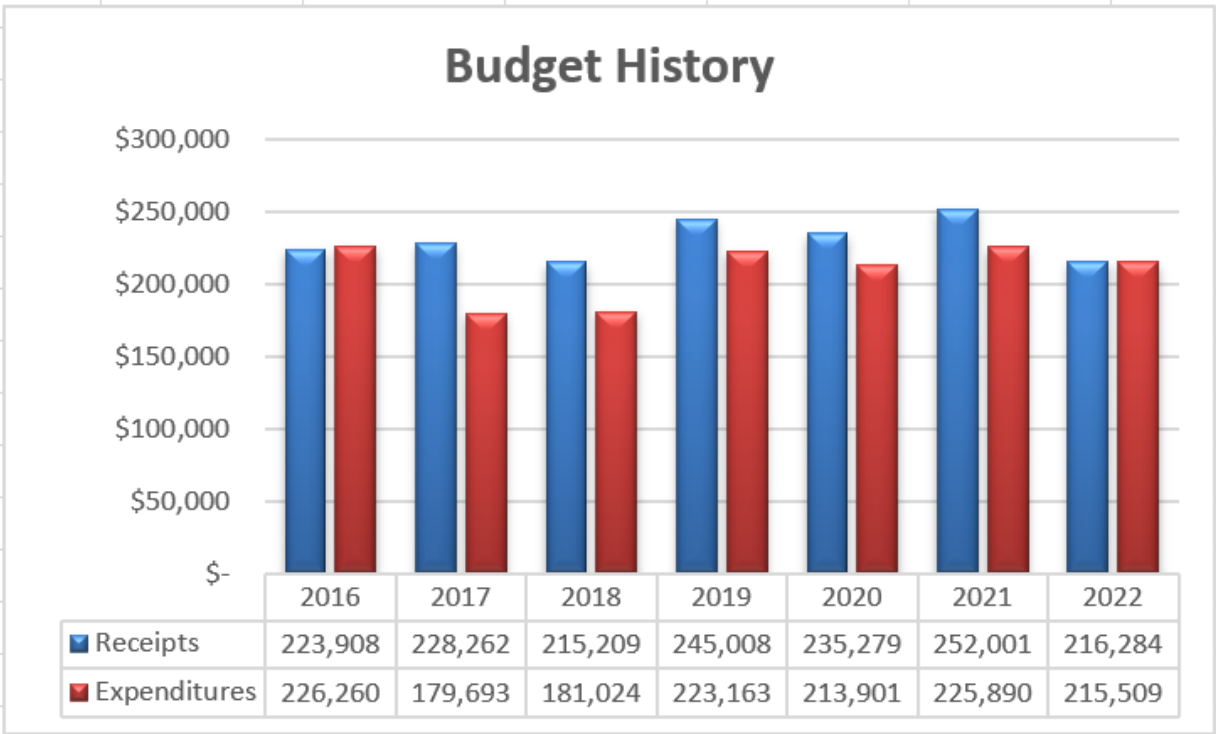
After 58 years, the church still provides a Sunday worship service and Monday Bible study at the Oklahoma Veterans Center. For 42 years, the church continues to serve the Madill Home for Girls with Christmas parties, gifts, birthday parties, and campus clean up.

Beside the ways the church supports missions in the budget financially the church looks for ways to engage the congregation in mission trips like the group that roofed a Native American

Church in Northeastern Oklahoma. New and creative missional opportunities will surface as the church looks to be more open to change and externally focused.

# OUR FINANCES

The story of NWBC Church through giving continues to be positive. We experienced an upward trend in overall receipts over the past 5



years, although 2023 has been somewhat more of a challenging year. During this same time, we saw a decline in church attendance closely aligned with the national trends. NWBC continues to be a very active participant in mission giving and is reflected in our financials. The pie chart reflects percentage break down of total budgets receipts.

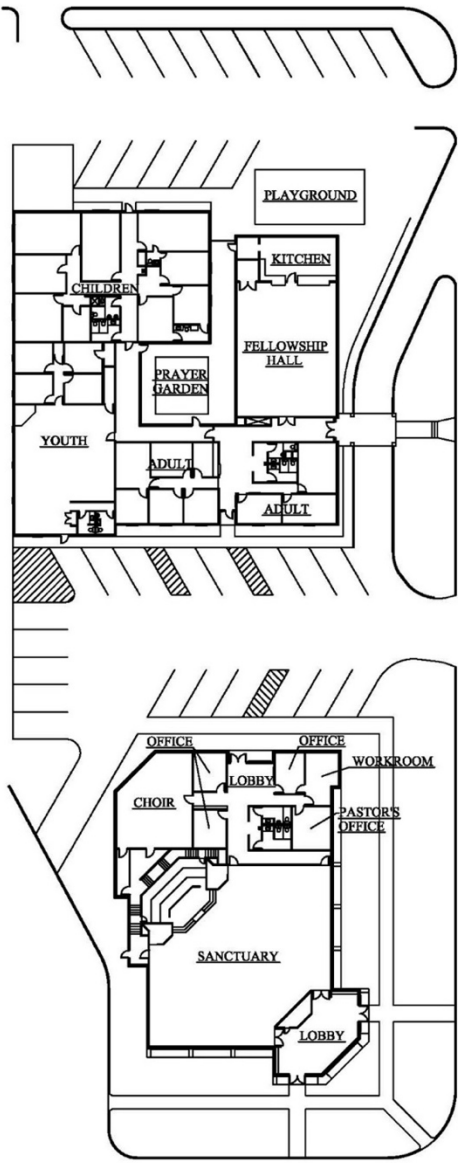
Current assets remain strong, and the membership continues to support the church and its ministries with the necessary resources. We are blessed as a congregation to have operated debt free for over twenty years.



NWBC also benefits from various assets beyond tithes and offerings which includes Securities investments and rental properties. Total assets, as of first quarter of 2023, are estimated at 2.9 million dollars including our facility.

# OUR FACILITIES

Our church is located in the Northwest section of Ardmore at 1609 Robison Street. It is comprised of two separate buildings. Our church has four separate parking lots providing adequate parking. Our church also owns several rental houses around the church buildings that provide additional income.



The Education building contains our Fellowship Hall, complete with a kitchen and pantry. The Children’s area consists of a nursery/toddler area, five classrooms, and a storage area. The Youth area has two main rooms with an office and a kitchen. There are six adult classrooms.

Our Sanctuary building includes our Sanctuary, choir room, and church offices. The Sanctuary will hold approximately 350 people. There is a choir loft, baptistry, organ and piano bay, sound booth, and two lobby areas.



# OUR ART

In 2022, a former member provided an extraordinary gift of art for our church. Rachel Wimpey of Tulsa was commissioned to create art for the Institute for Creation Research Discovery Center Museum in Dallas, Texas, to depict the days of God’s Creation. Rachel provided the same art for our church through a generous gift by her grandfather. There are seven paintings that are placed on the upper furr down at the back of the Sanctuary, complete with the Bible verse “O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is Your name in all the earth. You who have displayed your splendor above the heavens! Psalm 8:1”. It is beautiful. She also painted “The Lion of Judah” which hangs in the Education building.

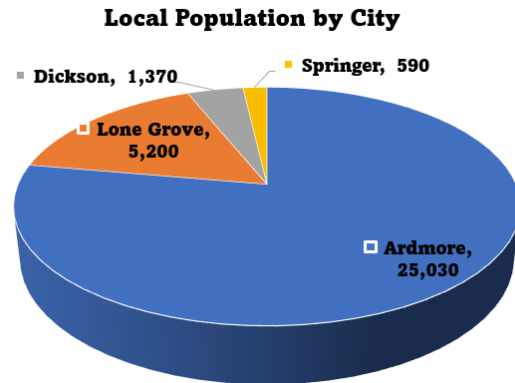
These are the paintings hanging in the Creation Museum in Dallas.



# OUR CITY

The beautiful city of Ardmore and the surrounding communities are nestled halfway between Oklahoma City and Dallas, right on I-35, at the foot of the Arbuckle mountains.

- This area is home to approximately 32,000 people with an average household income of \$64,000.
- Nearly half of the local population is age 40 and above.
- 73% are families without children.
- 26% of the population has a bachelor's degree or higher.
- 43% are married.
- The ethnicity in our community is nearly 70% white with mixed races, African American, native American and Asian making up the other 30%.



## Employment

The work opportunities demonstrate the healthy economy of the Ardmore area. Top employers are:

- Michelin North America
- Mercy Hospital Ardmore
- Dollar General Distribution Center
- Ardmore City Schools
- East Jordan Ironworks
- Noble Research Institute
- City of Ardmore
- Valero Energy Corporation
- DOT Foods
- Flanders Filters
- Best Buy Distribution Center



Aviation and industry add to Ardmore's economy via the Ardmore Industrial Airpark and Ardmore Executive Airport.

### Health Care

Mercy Hospital Ardmore is the leading health provider in Southern Oklahoma and currently has 190 licensed beds, a women's center and a state-of-the-art intensive care unit. Mercy Ardmore is known for its Joint Replacement Center, Heart and Vascular Services, and Cancer Care.



Used with permission of Mercy Hospital, 2023

### Cultural Opportunities



The Charles B. Goddard Center for the Visual and Performing Arts and the Brass Ring Center for Performing Arts have a strong commitment to providing quality cultural opportunities for area residents. Live entertainment is available at nearby concert venues. Ardmore is home to the

brand-new Jerome Westheimer Center for Performing Arts, which is a world-class performing arts center for a city the size of Ardmore.

The Greater Southwest Historical Museum is located in Ardmore. The museum features exhibits and programming that highlight the history and culture of Southern Oklahoma. It has a wonderful military exhibit, the Military Memorial Museum, that honors our nation's veterans.



## Travel and Entertainment

Train travel is available via the Heartland Flyer, traveling north to Oklahoma City and south to Fort Worth, Texas. The Hardy Murphy Coliseum and the Ardmore Convention Center both host an array of activities such as livestock shows, concerts, and business expos. Golf,



swimming, soccer, softball, and the YMCA provide additional sporting events. Twenty-one parks are located throughout Ardmore including the Water Park, splash pads, and a Community Skate Park. The annual Christmas Festival of Lights draws many people from Oklahoma and Texas.

## Education

Area schools, Ardmore, Plainview, Lone Grove, Dickson, and Springer work diligently to meet the needs of a diverse student population. A perspective pastor would find one of these schools to be an excellent educational experience for their families. Southern Tech offers vocational courses designed for high school and adult students wanting to achieve career certification and/or gain technical skills. Southern Tech also offers a dental hygienist program. Ardmore is home to an extension of Murray State College which offers courses and associate degrees to the local population.

## Dining in the Ardmore Area

There are a variety of cuisines and atmospheres to match your mood. Of course, there are many fast-food restaurants, family restaurants as well as nice dining opportunities.

**Leisure and Entertainment**

Residents can view the nearby scenery of Turner Falls Park, viewing the 77 ft waterfall, explore hidden caves, hike along nature trails and experience the blue hole natural pool.

Also, less than 30 miles away is the Chickasaw National Recreational Area, where you can experience native Indian culture and events at the Chickasaw Cultural Center. Only seven miles south of town, a myriad of recreational opportunities are available at Lake Murray State Park, Oklahoma’s oldest and largest State Park. Lake Murray Nature Center natural history and geological museum offers fossils, wildlife exhibits and other artifacts for viewing. Right outside the museum, treat yourself to a tour through Tucker’s Tower.



**The Ardmore area is a wonderful place to live, to work, to raise a family, to enjoy life, and a great place to call home.**

# OUR FUTURE: LIFTING UP HOPE



Our Cross Tower is a symbol of hope, reminding the people of Ardmore how much God loves us. The cross rises high in the air. It can be seen from the windows of Mercy Hospital for those going through a crisis trying to cope as well as to those driving by on their way to work searching for hope.



View of Cross from Mercy Hospital 5<sup>th</sup> floor.

The book of Hebrews declares, *“Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see”*. Even with the significant challenges we face, our faith gives us hope and confidence in the future of Northwest Baptist Church. Given the landscape of culture, churches throughout the country face similar challenges. As a member expressed at one of our congregational conversations, *“Most churches will eventually need to have such a*



*conversation about the church's future."* The self-study process in which we participated during the interim gives us a head start on the church of the future. We cannot return to past church-life if we are going to reach people for Jesus Christ. The search team recognizes the opportunity to step out in faith with the assurance God is with us, even when we cannot see the future.

In Southern Oklahoma a church like NWBC does not fit the traditional Baptist model. Ardmore needs a church like this for people turned off or hurt by the church. Strugglers, seekers, and thinkers need such a church.

Although potential pastoral candidates may hold concerns about addressing the challenges we face, one of our church's strengths rests in our openness to work together. The seasoned church leadership live in the hope and assurance of what is unseen. We invite potential candidates to join us in this journey, lifting up hope. We live with the assurance that the *"God who began a good work in us will continue to grow us in faithfulness, love, joy, and service to our city and world."*

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