

Profile of Winfree Church

Summary

Winfree Church is a 170 year old congregation which is experiencing new life. We are a healthy organization with a strong genetic trait of service for others. The Winfree family is fully supportive of two established, high quality worship services; one in Traditional style and one in Contemporary style. The Contemporary service moved into a dedicated space in a significant facilities expansion in 2016. A new venture, a Monday night worship service, starts in February. Staff is long-tenured. Finances are solid and growing. The primary mission partners are Middle District Baptist Association, the Baptist General Association of Virginia, and the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. Winfree is known for its warmth, community involvement and the weekday preschool.

History

Winfree Memorial Baptist Church was founded in 1852 as Jerusalem Baptist Church with Rev. David Winfree as pastor. It relocated to its present location in 1881 by rolling the original meetinghouse on logs down Midlothian Turnpike. The site was given to the church by the Mid-Lothian Mining Company so that the church could better minister to miners and their families. Five months later a mine explosion killed 32 miners. The church was significantly involved in caring for the remaining families. In 1925 a brick sanctuary was erected (and still stands) and the church was renamed in honor of the founding pastor and his son, Robert Winfree, the pastor at that time. An educational wing was added in 1958.

A preschool was begun in 1963, which today enrolls over 150 children. The weekday preschool is probably the best known ministry of Winfree in the community. It is nationally accredited and often has a wait list for spaces. An educational building was completed in 1980, now used primarily by children and the weekday preschool.

The octagonal sanctuary, along with office, fellowship and educational space was dedicated in 1988. This visible structure helped lead to a time of significant growth. Ten years later an organ was installed in the choir loft.

At first an informal time before Sunday School known as "Praise and Donuts", this led to the creation of a contemporary worship service in about 2006, held before the Sunday School hour. In 2012 the church shifted to new schedule which started with an 8:30 Contemporary service along with Bible study classes, at 9:40 had both Traditional worship and Bible study, and at 11:00 had Contemporary worship and Bible study groups meeting.

The expansion of 2016 included a large, multi-purpose space for Contemporary worship and church fellowship, a new kitchen, an office suite, adding an elevator to the 3-story educational wing, renovating the fellowship hall into a dedicated youth space and expanding the parking lot. The Sunday morning schedule returned to Traditional worship at 9:40 and Contemporary at 11:00.

Missions and Partnerships

Winfree has a deeply ingrained trait of service for others. Some trace it back to the care given to the widows and orphans of fallen miners, or the care given to injured Confederate soldiers as they passed the church on the way to a nearby hospital. This trait is still evident today in ministries such as:

- Backpack ministry, which supplies food to over 100 children and family members
- Richmond Friends of the Homeless, with the donation of meals and items
- CARITAS, Winfree would house and feed a group of homeless families for a week
- CCHASM and Chesterfield Food Bank, donating and helping with local relief agencies
- Helping Hands, giving assistance with manual labor projects
- IMPACT VA, involving youth and leaders in construction and renovation projects
- AfricaExchange, supporting 13 preschools in Kenya

Winfree also offers space in the historic chapel to an international congregation, the local director for Young Life, and houses the offices of the Middle District Baptist Association. An AA group, a singles association and several women's clubs and scouting groups are also given space regularly.

Winfree gives over 10% of her income to+ various ministry projects and partners. The three primary ministry partnerships are with the Middle District Baptist Association, the Baptist General Association of Virginia and the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship at the global level. Whenever there is a need, Winfree can be counted on to respond generously with gifts and energetically with helping hands.

Worship

Winfree has two distinct worship services on Sunday morning, both offered with excellence in quality and spirit. The Traditional service was averaging 160 pre-COVID and has returned to about 110. The Contemporary service was averaging 300 and has returned to close to 200. Both services are also offered via livestream on Sunday morning and on the website later. In February Winfree will begin to offer a Monday night worship service, targeted at those who are not available on Sunday morning, whether currently involved at Winfree or new to the church.

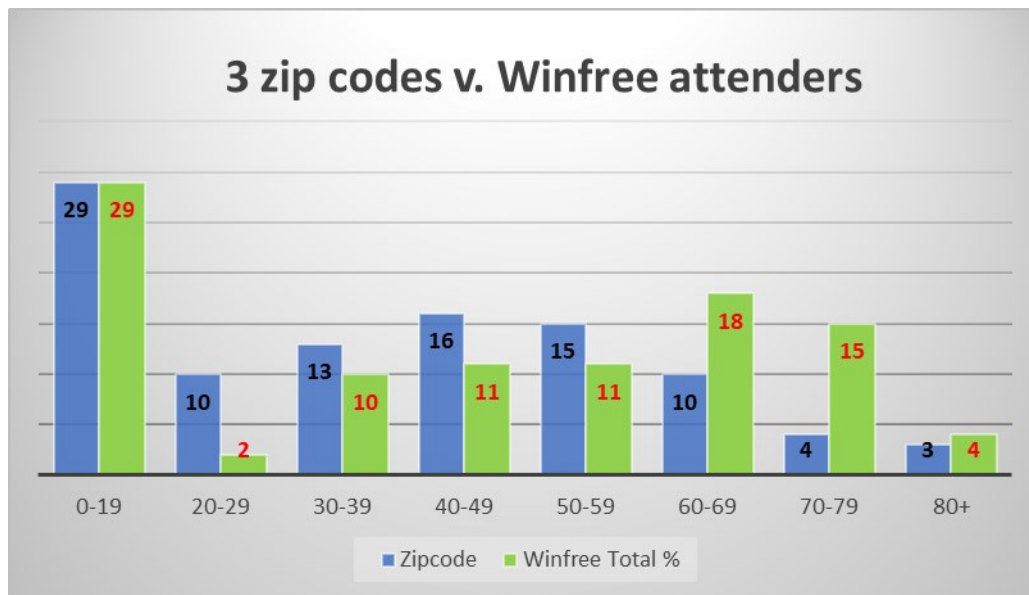
Staff

After a long period of staff stability, Winfree is in a period with some transition. Dr. Mike Weaver, who led the Traditional worship music ministry, retired in the fall after 35 years at Winfree. Rev. Randall Goulard, leader of the Contemporary worship music, transitioned to a different pastoral ministry in October. Rev. Steve Mapp, Associate Pastor for Discipleship and Pastoral Care, retired Dec. 31. He continues to be involved at Winfree as an active member. On the stability side, the Winfree pastor is Dr. David Benjamin, who is in his 13th year of service. Rev. Cynthia Collins has been the Minister to Children and Families for 8 years. Jimmy Doan has served as the Youth Minister for 7 years. Matt Knesal has stepped into leadership of the Contemporary service music and Jennifer Ripley is slated to start directing the Traditional service choir in February.

Church Stats

Winfree is on extremely solid financial footing. Our gifts have exceeded our budget in the last 2 years, despite the pandemic. We have strong reserves for emergencies. The mortgage on the newest expansion was refinanced last year at outstanding terms, with a balance of \$2.5 million. This item is included in the regular budget. The budget for 2022 is \$1.4 million. 330 family units or individuals contributed to Winfree in 2021.

Despite the addition of new and younger members, the average age of those involved at Winfree has climbed. The chart below shows the age of Winfree attenders compared to residents in our 3 primary zip codes (23112, 23113, 23114). What is apparent is that Winfree children and youth involvement reflects our community, but the adult segments are out of balance, skewing to an older demographic at Winfree.



Church Structure

Winfree is an autonomous, congregational fellowship. Any external partnerships are purely voluntary and have no ability to dictate to Winfree. A Church Council, composed of ministerial staff and elected lay leaders, offers primary guidance to the church and makes recommendations to the church for significant items of business. The church holds business meetings quarterly.

All of the ministries at Winfree are organized under 4 headings: Worship, Discipleship, Missions & Outreach, and Administration. Each of these 4 areas has a team lead, elected for a 3 year term. These 4 individuals, along with the church elected Moderator and Treasurer, form a 6 person Leadership Group, which both advises and supervises the Pastor. The Leadership Group does not make recommendations to the church directly, but through the Church Council. The Pastor supervises all other staff and coordinates with the Personnel and Stewardship Committees.

The Deacons serve as practical ministers to families and individuals, typically organized by Sunday School classes. Their term of service is 3 years.

All lay leadership positions are open to both men and women.