

**Westlock Gospel Chapel**  
**HANDBOOK**  
**April 2015**

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**1. OUR HISTORY**

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***Where We've Come From***

The roots of Westlock Gospel Chapel reach back to the Christian Brethren movement that began in Great Britain in the mid 1800's. The founders of this movement, including John Darby, Anthony Groves, Benjamin Newton and George Mueller, left a variety of Protestant Churches and joined together to recover the vitality of first-century Christianity.

Being convinced that the true Church transcends denominational boundaries and includes everyone who confesses Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, the early Brethren resisted any formal organization under a denominational

hierarchy. Still today, the formal connection between Brethren Churches is minimal.

Believing that every believer is a priest with full access into God's presence through Jesus Christ, the early Brethren also resisted the idea of a priesthood or a clergy of any kind. Still today, most Brethren Churches have a strong emphasis on leadership by lay people.

During the second half of the 1800's, the Brethren movement spread throughout Great Britain, Europe and North America. In 1924, it finally reached Westlock County, when a group of believers began meeting near Pibroch, in the home of David and Nancy Calderwood.

This group grew through evangelistic services of Bill Fairholm in 1931 and 1933. In 1933, Bill was joined by Alf Wallace. Even though they were a small group, these believers conducted numerous Sunday Schools and home Bible studies throughout the county. In addition, many were instrumental in beginning Bethel Bible Camp, which started in 1945.

The group was holding mid-week and Sunday evening meetings in the Pibroch Presbyterian Church, as well as continuing to share Communion in the home of Alf and Jean Wallace. When the house got too small, it was decided to construct a church building. In 1948/49, the first Westlock Gospel Chapel was constructed in the town of Westlock at the corner of 102 Avenue and 104 Street. Twenty years later, that building became too small as well. An addition was put on, increasing both the sanctuary size and the classroom space, since it had become a church that worked with children and youth.

By the late 1980's, the Church had outgrown its building yet again. The decision was made to construct a new facility. This culminated in the April 1995 dedication of the Westlock Gospel Chapel at its current location on Highway 44. Within ten years,

this new facility became too small as well. So plans were made to add an extensive education wing, which was dedicated in the Fall of 2009.

## 2. OUR VISION

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### *What We Are Seeking to Become*

- It is our aim to become a community of believers who reach people in our community, our country and around the world with the Good News about Jesus Christ and see them transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit.

## 3. OUR MISSION

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### *What We Are Seeking to Accomplish*

- Our mission is, by the power of the Spirit, to grow the people we reach into passionate disciples of Jesus Christ.

## 4. OUR VALUES

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### *What's Important to Us*

- **God's Word:** We seek to be Word centered, keeping the written Word of God (the Bible) and the living Word of God (Jesus Christ) at the centre of everything we do.
- **People:** Of all the things we see around us, only people will last forever. It is our prayer and passion that every one of those people will experience the love of God and eternal life.
- **Participation:** While giving our best to God is important, we value participation over excellence in performance in our programs and services.

- **The Next Generation:** We make an effort to pass both our faith and the mantle of leadership to the upcoming generations.

## 5. OUR PROGRAMS

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### *What We Do*

- **Communion Service:** Every Sunday at 9:30 AM, we gather for Communion. The service is opened by someone who has been asked by the Overseers to share thoughts focusing on God's goodness revealed in Jesus Christ. After this opening, individuals pray spontaneously, request a song or give a testimony. While we may learn from what is said, the primary purpose of this service is remembrance and worship, not teaching. Throughout the service, there are moments of silence, giving opportunity for individual contemplation. The service culminates with the Lord's Supper. Everyone who has accepted Jesus Christ as their Saviour and Lord is welcome to participate.
- **Family Bible Hour:** After the Communion Service, each Sunday at 11:00 AM, we gather for our Family Bible Hour. This service includes worship through music and teaching. Occasionally, we will share Communion in this service.
- **Sunday School:** While the adults are being taught in the auditorium, children and youth from two years of age to Grade 12 receive age appropriate teaching in classrooms.
- **Care Groups & Bible Studies:** Beginning in the Fall and through the Winter, numerous Care Groups and Bible Study groups meet at people's homes throughout the week. These gatherings include discussion, prayer and fellowship. Everyone in the church family is encouraged to connect with one of these groups.

- **Youth Ministry:** Starting in the Fall, through the Winter and into the Spring, our young people (Grades 7 to 12) gather most Fridays evenings for activities, an inspirational talk and social interaction.
- **AWANA Clubs:** From September until April, our AWANA Clubs meet during the week. Our clubs include Sparks (K – Grade 2), Girls Truth and Training (Grades 3-6), Boys Truth and Training (Grades 3-6), Trek (Grades 7-8) and Journey (Grades 9-12).
- **Foreign Missions:** As a church, we support numerous workers and organizations all over the globe. These workers and organizations share the Good News about Jesus Christ and bring aid to people in need. As they are able, the workers and representatives of the organizations we support visit the Chapel and report about their activities. You will find the names of those we support regularly in the “Our Partners in Ministry” section.
- **Prayer Chain:** Our prayer chain consists of people who are ready to bring requests to God whenever the need arises. If you have a request for the prayer chain, call one of the people on the list and that person will pass it on to the other members of the chain by phone and/or email. These people are committed to pray for you and to keep your request confidential. Contacts for the prayer chain are listed in the church’s weekly bulletin.

## 6. OUR MEMBERSHIP

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### *Who Belongs*

At Westlock Gospel Chapel, we do not maintain a formal membership list. Instead, we regard anyone who is a part of God’s family and considers WGC their church family as a member. Furthermore, we encourage each member of the family to grow in the following marks of membership.

## Be a Part of the Family...

- **By Accepting Jesus Christ as Your Saviour and Lord:** Your membership in God's family and WGC begins when you accept Jesus Christ as your Saviour and Lord. To accept Jesus as your Saviour is to trust him to forgive your sins and give you eternal life with God. To accept Jesus as your Lord is to make him your leader for life. The Bible teaches that, when you do these things, you are accepted into God's family.
- **By Getting Baptised:** Following the instructions of our Lord, we baptise people after they have made a clear declaration of faith in him. Baptism does not make you a part of God's family; rather it is a public statement that you are a member of his family.
- **By Participating in Communion:** While baptism occurs once in a person's life, Jesus calls us to participate in communion regularly. Just like baptism, participating in communion does not make you a part of God's family; but it does show that you are a member. Participating in communion regularly keeps you connected to your heavenly Father and to your spiritual family.

## Participate in the Family...

- **Through Association:** The basis of family life is getting together and getting along with family members. That's why we encourage our members to get together for friendship and to make every effort to get along with each other.
- **Through Awareness:** Another important element of family life is understanding the family: its story and beliefs, its dreams and values, and how it functions. That's why we

encourage our members to become familiar with material in this handbook.

- **Through Attendance:** Yet another element of family life is joining in family events. We strongly encourage our members to be a consistent part of the Church's functions, including the Communion service, the Family Bible Hour, a Care Group and others. While we do not keep attendance records, you are missed when you do not attend.
- **Through Accountability:** One more element of family life is accountability. If you see someone doing something that is harmful (spiritually or otherwise) either to themselves or to someone else in the family, it's your responsibility to approach them. Or if you do something that is harmful, you can expect to be approached. Far from a license to condemn, accountability is about looking out for each other and the family. Biblical guidelines for accountability are laid down in Matthew 5:23-24 and 18:15-17, as well as 1 Timothy 5:19.

### **Contribute to the Family...**

God has filled our lives with many great things, including time, talents and treasures. The Bible makes it clear that we are stewards of these things and will someday give an account for the way we use them. God does not want members of his family to use what they have solely for themselves. Instead, he expects them to use their time, talents and treasures for the benefit of his family, here at home and around the world.

- **By Giving of Your Time:** When you become a member of WGC, you will find many opportunities to contribute your time. Initially, you will be asked to help out with simple tasks and acts of service. As we get to know each other, you may be asked to serve in other ways that are in keeping with your God-given abilities.

Please be aware that we ask people to be a consistent part of the family for at least six months before we ask them to take any kind of teaching or leadership role. Anyone working with minors is required to get criminal and intervention record checks.

- **By Giving of Your Talents:** The Bible teaches that God gives each member of his family distinct and special abilities. He expects each person to discover their abilities, develop them and use them for the benefit of the Church.

At WGC, you will find many opportunities to use your God-given abilities. If there is a role at the Church for which you feel especially suited, be sure to talk to the leader of that area or to one of the Overseers.

- **By Giving of Your Treasures:** The Bible teaches that each member of God's family is to set aside an amount of money each week that is to be used for the benefit of God's family, the Church. At WGC, we don't tell people how much money they are to set aside. Instead, we encourage them to pray about it and ask God to impress an amount on their hearts. It may start off as 1 or 2% of their income and may grow to 5%, 10% or more. The Bible makes it clear that, whatever amount we give, we are to give it cheerfully, for God loves and rewards a cheerful giver.

WGC operates entirely on the money that is voluntarily given by its members. We rely on God's Spirit, rather than public pleas, to motivate members to give. We take an offering each week at our Communion service. You will also find an offering box in the Church's foyer.

We thank God for all people who willingly give their time, talents and treasures.



## Invite Others into the Family...

Before he left this planet, Jesus told his followers to go into the world, inviting people into God's family. There are three ways you can do that.

- **Through Your Lifestyle:** The most powerful invitation into God's family is a lifestyle that reflects the goodness of our heavenly Father. As the people around you witness your lifestyle, don't be surprised if they will become curious about your faith.
- **Through Service:** Because we have God's promises of provision and eternal life, we are able to share freely the things we possess. As people experience your generosity, you will find opportunities to share your faith.
- **Through Witness:** It's true that people don't care how much you know until they know how much you care. But, once they know how much you care, you have the right and responsibility to tell them the Good News about Jesus Christ, that he came and died to give them eternal life.

## 7. OUR LEADERSHIP

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### *How We Are Led*

Westlock Gospel Chapel is led by a team of Overseers.

The Overseers are a group of men who seek to meet the qualifications set out in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9 and 1 Peter 5:1-4. Together, they seek to lead the Church as God directs them with input from the Congregation.

Once a man becomes an Overseer, that person remains in that role until he moves away, needs a break or fails to meet the biblical qualifications. While a person may remain in this role indefinitely, our Overseers serve in an active capacity for terms

of five years, after which they take a one year break before they may become active again.

The Overseers are accountable to God, to one another and to the congregation. Anyone in the Congregation can hold them accountable according to the guidelines set out in Matthew 18:15-17 and 1 Timothy 5:19-20.

### **Becoming an Overseer**

A man becomes an Overseer when he is recognized by the existing Overseers and by the Congregation as one who meets the biblical qualifications and does the work. Here are the steps by which a person might join the team:

1. Anyone in the Congregation may recommend a man to the Overseers. The person making the recommendation is asked to speak to one of the existing Overseers *without* speaking to the person they are recommending.
2. The one who has received the recommendation will bring it to the other Overseers for consideration at one of their meetings.
3. If, after considering the recommendation, the Overseers agree that the individual does not qualify, the one who received the recommendation will let the person who made the recommendation know the Overseers' decision.
4. If the Overseers agree that the individual does qualify, a designated Overseer will approach the candidate to let him know that he has been recommended and to ask if he will consider joining the team.
5. Before saying "Yes" or "No," the candidate will be asked to:

- Become familiar with the beliefs of the Church, its vision and the way it functions.
  - Pray about it.
  - Examine himself in light of 1 Tim. 3, Titus 1, 1 Peter 5.
  - Speak with his wife and family.
  - Meet with the Overseers for an interview.
  - Attend one or two meetings.
6. If the candidate is willing to join the team, the Overseers will make this known to the Congregation. Members of the Congregation will be given one month to bring their concerns in writing to the Overseers. If no substantial concerns arise during that month, the candidate will be asked to join.

## **Meetings**

The Overseers meet as a group twice a month (normally on the first and third Wednesdays) in order to pray and discuss the concerns of the Church. At those meetings, the Overseers ...

- Set Direction: *Where are we going?*
- Establish Goals: *What has to be done?*
- Appoint Leaders & Delegate Tasks: *Who's going to do it?*
- Hold accountable: *What has been done?*

Any member of the Congregation with an question or concern, an idea or suggestion is welcome either to submit their comments in writing to the Overseers, or attend one of their meetings. Just let one of the Overseers know and a time will be arranged.

## **Decision Making**

The Overseers seek to make decisions by consensus, seeking full agreement among themselves before moving forward with any decision. While this may be less efficient than majority rule in

the short term, we find it more in line with God's Word and unifying in the long term.

Throughout the year, the Overseers invite and seek the input of the Congregation in their decision making. They report to the Congregation at the Church's Annual General Meeting, which takes place in February of each year.

### **Pastoral Workers**

The Overseers include paid and non-paid individuals. The paid Overseers are called Pastoral Workers or Pastors. They are remunerated by the Church according to 1 Timothy 5:17-18, since they carry a larger share of the work load.

As Overseers, the Pastoral Workers share an equal measure of authority with the others. As paid workers, they are accountable to the other Overseers. Among themselves, the Pastoral Workers function as co-pastors, without hierarchical designations.

The Pastoral Workers meet regularly to pray and discuss the week-to-week needs of the Church and the running of its programs.

### **Overseers Emeritus**

WGC also recognizes a number of mature leaders who once served as Overseers. These individuals do not meet with the Overseers on a regular basis. They are, however, informed about the Overseers' discussions. The Overseers consult with them when the need arises; and they make recommendations to the Overseers from time to time.

## **8. OUR DEACONS & DEACONESSES**

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### *How Things Get Done*

The Overseers rely heavily on Deacons and Deaconesses for the week-to-week operation of the Church and its programs.

Deacons are men who meet the qualifications of 1 Timothy 3:8-13 and are committed to serving the Church. Deaconesses are women who meet the same qualifications and are committed to the same task.

Rather than having a single Board of Deacons and Deaconesses, at WGC we have a growing number of groups and committees of Deacons and Deaconesses. Here is the current list:

- Finance & Facility Deacons
- Serving Coordinator
- Sunday School Committee
- AWANA Leadership Team
- Youth Leadership Team
- Missions Committee
- Library Committee
- Music & Worship Committee

The Overseers meet with the Finance & Facility Deacons, which includes the Church's treasurer, once a month in order to receive a financial report and make financial decisions.

Individual Overseers act as liaisons to the other groups and committees. The Overseers meet with these groups and committees as the need arises for discussion, planning and prayer.

## 9. OUR BELIEFS

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### *What We Hold to Be True*

#### **What We Believe about the Bible**

We believe that the Bible is God-given, reliable in everything it asserts and the final authority for what we believe and how we live.

- **God-given:** In various ways, God guided the human authors of the Old and New Testaments to record the very words that originally appeared in them, making the Bible the very Word of God – 1 Corinthians 2:13; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21.
- **Reliable:** When all the facts about it are known, the Bible will be found to be without error as originally written and absolutely reliable in all it asserts – Matthew 5:18; John 10:35.
- **Final Authority:** While God speaks through creation and His Spirit, the Bible is the final authority for all we believe and how we live – Psalm 119:105; Matthew 5:18; 2 Timothy 3:17.

#### **What We Believe about God**

We believe in one God who made all, knows all and is over all. He exists eternally in three persons: God the Father, God the Son (Jesus Christ), and God the Holy Spirit – Matthew 3:16-17; 28:19-20; 1 Peter 1:2.

- **Father:** According to God's plan, the Father sent the Son and the Spirit to carry out the work of creation – Genesis 1:2; John 1:3; Colossians 1:16. After sin entered the world, He sent them again to carry out God's plan of redemption –

Joel 2:29; John 6:37-39; 14:28-32; Galatians 4:4-5.

- **Jesus Christ the Son:** Jesus Christ is eternally divine – John 1:1-4; 8:58; 20:28; Colossians 2:9; Titus 3:4. He also became human, was born of a virgin, lived a sinless life and died a sacrificial death – Isaiah 7:14; 9:6; Matthew 1:18-23; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 4:15; 10:10,12. After paying the penalty for sin, He rose from the grave bodily, appeared to many witnesses and ascended to heaven – Luke 24; John 20:21; Acts 1:9-11; 1 Corinthians 15:1-8; 2 Timothy 3:16.

Currently, Jesus Christ sits at the right hand of the Father, acting on our behalf until he returns – Ephesians 1:20; Hebrews 1:3; 1 John 2:1-2. Jesus Christ could return to earth at any time to gather His people, put an end to evil and establish His kingdom – Acts 1:11; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. After binding the forces of evil, He will rule the earth for one thousand years – Revelation 20:1-6.

- **The Spirit:** The Holy Spirit is a distinct person and eternally divine – John 14:26; 15:26; Acts 5:3. He is active in the world, making people aware of sin, righteousness and judgment – John 16:8-11. When we turn to Christ, the Spirit indwells, renews us, declares us righteous and sets us apart for unending fellowship with God, guaranteeing our spiritual inheritance – Matthew 3:11-12; John 3:5; Romans 8:9; Ephesians 1:13-14. He continues to act in our lives, encouraging us and guiding us in all truth, filling us with Himself, helping us overcome sin and giving us gifts for service – John 15:26-27; Romans 8:15-17; Ephesians 5:18; 1 Corinthians 12:7-11.

## **What We Believe about Humankind**

We believe that every human being is created in the image of God for unending fellowship with Him, but is alienated from

God by sin and needs to be saved from the eternal consequences of that sin and reconciled to God.

- **In God's Image:** While we do not share His divine nature, we do reflect God's image, are created male and female, and are stewards of his creation – Genesis 1:26-30. Every human (born and unborn) is of infinite worth – Jeremiah 1:5.
- **For Fellowship:** Having created us for fellowship with Himself, God longs to dwell with us and share His incredible joy with us – 1 John 1:3; 1 Corinthians 1:9; Revelation 21:3.
- **Alienated:** Beginning with Adam and Eve, we have all sinned by turning our backs on God and disobeying His laws for living. As a result, we are all alienated from God and from His joy – Genesis 3:1-7; Psalm 51:4-5; Romans 3:10-18, 23.
- **Need Salvation:** We are thoroughly unable to make up for our sin – Isaiah 53:6; 64:6. Indeed, we are liable to death and eternal separation from God – Genesis 2:17; Romans 5:12, 6:23. Our only hope is that God in His grace took it upon himself to save us from sin and reconcile us to Himself, which He did through Christ.

### **What We Believe about Salvation**

We believe that salvation is an act of God, accomplished by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and imparted by the Holy Spirit to everyone who turns from sin and relies on the death of Christ as a payment for their sin, resulting in the guarantee of unending fellowship with God.

- **Act of God:** Recognizing our helplessness and liability, God graciously took it upon himself to send Jesus Christ to do for us what we could not do for ourselves – Romans 3:21-31; Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:3-5.



- **Accomplished by Christ:** Through His death, Jesus Christ paid the penalty for our sin so that we can be forgiven and reconciled to God – Isaiah 53; 1 John 2:2; 1 Peter 2:24. Through His resurrection, He opened the way to eternal life – Romans 6:5; 1 Corinthians 15:21-22; Ephesians 1:19-21, 2:4-6.
- **Imparted by the Spirit:** When we confess our sin and rely on the death of Christ as a payment for it, God’s indwelling Spirit declares us righteous, leads us in righteousness and reconciles us to God – 1 John 1:9; Romans 4:5; 2 Corinthians 5:18.
- **The Guarantee:** Once saved, sin may hinder our immediate fellowship with God – Psalm 51:10-12, 66:18; 1 John 1:7; Ephesians 4:30; 1 Thessalonians 5:19. But nothing can separate us from His love and eternal life – John 10:29; Romans 8:38-39; 1 John 5:11-12.

### **What We Believe about the Church**

We believe in the global Church, consisting of every follower of Jesus Christ – 1 Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 4:4. We believe in the local Church, consisting of believers in a given area who gather regularly under biblical leadership for teaching, fellowship, worship and prayer, with the goal of making disciples of all nations – 1 Corinthians 1:1-2.

- **Gather Regularly:** Just as the Spirit incorporates each believer into the global Church, so our Lord directs each one to be committed to a local Church – Hebrews 10:24-25.
- **Biblical Leadership:** The New Testament Church is led by men who meet the Bible’s qualifications for Overseers, who oversee the life of the Church and who function as shepherds to the flock – 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4. Men and women who meet the Bible’s

qualifications for Deacons manage the daily operations of the Church and assist in caring for the flock – Romans 16:1; 1 Timothy 3:8-13. All believers are called to align themselves with their leaders and follow the biblical guidelines when confronting them – 1 Timothy 5:19-20; Hebrews 13:17.

- **Making Disciples:** The goal of our gathering is to grow in Christ-likeness and lead others toward the same. Our mission is to make disciples in our community, our country and around the world – Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8.

### **What We Believe about the Ordinances**

We believe in Believers Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Jesus gave these ordinances to his followers as visible symbols of spiritual realities.

- **Believers Baptism:** By being immersed in water after professing faith in Christ, we show that we have participated in Christ's death and resurrection. That is, we have died to the guilt and power of sin and have risen to a new and eternal life – Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 2:38, 8:36; Romans 6:1-7.
- **The Lord's Supper:** By taking the bread and the cup, we remember what Christ did for us through His death and show that we are united with Him and His Body, the Church – Matthew 26:17-30; Acts 2:42; 1 Corinthians 10:16-17; 11:23-26. Believers who are at odds with Christ and any member of His Body are urged to set things right before partaking of the Lord's Supper – 1 Corinthians 11:27-29.

### **What We Believe about Marriage and Family**

We believe that marriage is the lifelong union of one man and one woman established by God and the state – Genesis 2:24;

Matthew 19:1-9. We believe that the family consisting of father, mother and children is God's norm and the building block of a functional society – Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 6:4-9.

- **Lifelong Union:** God intends marriage to last a lifetime and hates divorce – Malachi 2:15-16; Romans 7:2. When spouses are at odds, God forbids divorce and calls for reconciliation 1 Corinthians 7:10-14. When one spouse proves unfaithful without regret or abandons the marriage altogether, the other spouse is no longer bound, after doing everything to restore the marriage – Matthew 19:9; 1 Corinthians 7:15-16.
- **Man and Woman:** The relationship between husband and wife is a reflection of the relationship between Christ and the Church – Ephesians 5:22-33. Just as Christ loves the Church and gave Himself for it, so a husband is to love his wife and give himself for her. Just as the Church is to revere and align itself with Christ, so a wife is to respect and align herself with her husband.
- **The Family:** While we are committed to promoting God's norm for the family, we are also committed to reaching out to every member of our society regardless of their family's structure.

### **What We Believe about the Life to Come**

We believe in the immortality of the human soul. We believe in the final resurrection of all people: Non-believers to an eternal existence apart from God. Believers to an eternal existence in fellowship with God.

- **The Human Soul:** We believe that the souls of those who die continue to exist, consciously waiting for the resurrection - Daniel 12:2-3. The souls of believers wait in

heaven – Luke 23:39-43; 2 Corinthians 5:1-10. The souls of non-believers wait in hell – Luke 16:19-31.

- **Resurrection:** Before Christ establishes his millennial kingdom, the souls of those who were faithful to Him in life will be united with their resurrected bodies. This is the first resurrection – John 11:25-26; 1 Corinthians 15; 2 Corinthians 4:14. They will reign with Christ for a thousand years - Revelation 20:4-6.

At the end of Christ’s reign, the souls of all people will be united with their resurrected bodies. This is the second resurrection. All will confess Christ as Lord and be judged by Him. Those whose names are not found in the Book of Life will forever be separated from God in the Lake of Fire – Revelation 20:11-15. Those whose names are in the Book of Life will enjoy unending fellowship with God in His New Creation – Revelation 21-22. This is the final goal of God’s plan and our ultimate hope.

## **10. OUR ABUSE PREVENTION POLICY**

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### ***Protecting the Vulnerable***

Westlock Gospel Chapel (WGC) has the privilege of having many opportunities to minister to children and youth through our various programs and services. This follows the concerns of Jesus Christ, who insisted that children should have opportunity to be brought to him and not hindered (Matthew 19:14 and 18:5). Jesus also had strong words to say against anyone who would interfere with children or cause them to sin (Matthew 18:6). Unfortunately, we live in a society where we see that love, respect and protection of children is neglected, and abuse occurs.

**At WGC, we have made a commitment to provide a safe environment for children and youth.**

Those involved in any of our ministries to children or youth, including staff and volunteers, will be brought to know that we have zero tolerance for abuse, harassment or neglect. The purpose of this Abuse Prevention Policy is to prevent problems from occurring, to protect the children in our programs and to protect staff and volunteers from false or wrongful allegations.

### **Policy Guidelines**

1. All those who serve in a ministry involving children and youth at WGC must first **meet the following requirements:**

- Be a regular attendee of WGC for at least 6 months.
- Complete an application form which will include personal information and references, and also conduct Child Abuse Registry and Criminal Record checks. These will be required every three years.
- View the video “Reducing the Risk” or receive similar information or training.
- Be interviewed by the ministry leader together with a pastoral worker, as available.

Application forms and other documentation will be kept on file indefinitely, maintained by the pastoral workers.

2. In ministries where children are being cared for or supervised, ministry workers will **use a team approach**, which requires at least one approved leader and helper to be present at all times. Off-premise programs must be supervised by two or more approved leader adults.

3. All ministry workers will **avoid potentially compromising situations** in which an allegation of abuse or impropriety could be made. At no time should an individual worker be

alone in an enclosed space with a child or youth. Meeting rooms will have windows in their doors and/or doors will be left open.

4. Children are **never to be physically disciplined nor verbally abused**. If there are problems with discipline which cannot be remedied with verbal correction given in a positive manner, the child should be removed from the program and/or the parents called. Program supervisors should also be consulted if there are difficulties.
5. In addition to the responsibilities that ministry workers have (as above), **ministry leaders and/or their designate will randomly visit classrooms** and check all areas of the building.
6. **Parents will be made aware of the precautions** we are taking to protect their children. Parents will also be reminded to be vigilant especially at times when children are in the building but not specifically being supervised by church ministry workers.

Children under the age of 4 must be brought to and picked up from the program they are participating in by a parent or designate. For children 5 and older, parents will choose whether their children will be brought and picked up or arrive and leave on their own.

7. At the discretion of ministry supervisors, **parental permission may be requested** for certain events, such as those which require travel and/or overnight trips. For this purpose, consent forms will be provided, giving details of the event.
8. Church ministry **workers who become aware of the occurrence or allegation of any type of abuse must report** it to their supervisor or coordinator immediately. Also, a

church Overseer must be informed immediately. A committee of 3 people (consisting of an Overseer, the ministry leader, and an independent, uninvolved adult) will then convene to investigate the incident. An alleged perpetrator will be suspended immediately pending the outcome of the investigation. Necessary procedures will be followed which may include:

- Filling out an incident investigation report form.
- Reporting the incident to the police and/or Child and Family Services.
- Contacting the Church's insurance agent.

All allegations will be taken seriously. Respect will be given for people's privacy and confidentiality. Without admitting legal liability or making public statements prior to obtaining legal counsel, we will assure that there is a compassionate response to the alleged victim and their family.

9. This policy will be included in the church handbook and will be referred to at each Annual Meeting of the church to remind all members of **the importance of strict adherence** to this policy. There will be a review of this policy for all workers each September, at the start-up of our programs.

## **11. OUR PARTNERS IN MINISTRY**

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### *Going Beyond Ourselves*

WGC works in close partnership with numerous organizations and individuals.

#### **Organizations...**

- **Missionary Sending Committee (MSC):**

<http://msccanada.org>

- **Vision Ministries:** [www.vision-ministries.org](http://www.vision-ministries.org)
- **Bethel Bible Camp:** [www.bethelbiblecamp.com](http://www.bethelbiblecamp.com)
- **Mount Carmel Bible School:** [www.mountcarmel.net](http://www.mountcarmel.net)
- **Haiti Children's Home:** <http://haitichildrenshome.com>
- **Nehemiah Construction Ministries:**  
[www.nehemiahconstructionministries.com](http://www.nehemiahconstructionministries.com)
- **Youth for Christ, Westlock:**  
<http://yfcwestlock.blogspot.ca>

### Individuals ...

- Nick & Jocelyn Frey (Missionary Aviation Fellowship, Africa)
- Mirek & Beata Marczak (MSC, Poland)
- Brad & Catherine Dickson (MSC, France)
- Sadrach & Lori Louis (MSC, Haiti Children's Home)
- Garry & Connie Engler (MSC, University of Regina)
- Rob & Kara Bustin (Wycliffe Bible Translators, Ethiopia)

## 12. OUR CONTACT INFORMATION

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### *Where to Find Us*

- **Address:** 10227-97 Street  
Westlock, AB  
T7P 2H1
- **Phone:** 780-349-4555
- **Email:** [wgchapel@telusplanet.net](mailto:wgchapel@telusplanet.net)
- **Website:** [www.westlockgospelchapel.com](http://www.westlockgospelchapel.com)