



# THE WESTCITY WAY

---

VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

WESTCITY CHURCH

TABLE OF CONTENTS	2
-------------------	---

WELCOME	3
---------	---

WESTCITY WAY	4
--------------	---

WESTCITY VALUES	9
-----------------	---

FAITH & LIFE	10
--------------	----

PILGRIMAGE FRAMEWORK	12
----------------------	----

HEALTHY CHURCH FRAMEWORK	14
--------------------------	----

GRIEVANCE & CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION POLICY	17
--	----

COMMUNITY CONDUCT	18
-------------------	----

TEAM MEMBER COMMITMENT	23
------------------------	----

# TABLE OF CONTENTS



# WELCOME

---

Hello and welcome to you, staff, volunteers, and community members. This handbook has been collated to share with you what we feel to be the key foundations that have underpinned, moulded and shaped the Westcity Vision and Mission. Also included, are the core values we as a church community feel we must share in order to grow and function together as a body (albeit a flawed one), that seeks to be a healthy community of welcome, reflective of Jesus in all we do.

We trust that this Westcity Way Handbook will merely put words to the experience you have had thus far in our Westcity community.

Thank you for joining us on this journey, we look forward to growing with you in our love for Jesus and our desire to let the world know just how amazing He is. Phil and the Westcity team



*COME FOLLOW ME - JESUS*





# LOOKING BACK IN ORDER TO MOVE FORWARD

Christianity is a passed-on faith. Discipleship has its foundation in first looking to Jesus who has modelled through his words, life, death and resurrection who God is and what he wants. But it's not just Jesus we are called to look at. The Christian faith is to be practiced in community. The Bible tells us to observe others who are following Jesus, (follow me as I follow Christ, observe their lives). We are to imitate those who exhibit God's character and follow Jesus' way (as seen in the Sermon on the Mount and the Gospels). These men and women become examples who we get to 'look over their shoulders' as it were, in order to learn the way of Jesus. So at Westcity we do just that, we look back in order to move forward. We look back in history to men, women and communities who took seriously the call to follow Jesus. As we do this, we believe, we become more grounded in the story of God rescuing the world first through Abram and the Israelites then His Disciples and now including us His Church.



# THE CHURCH OF CHRIST MOVEMENT

## Church of Christ History

Westcity is part of the Church of Christ (COC) movement. The Churches of Christ came out of the restoration movement which swept through the US in the 1800s. Some of the key foundations of our movement were around unity. There was a deep desire to break down denominational walls, to make Jesus, His teaching and table central to church life as well as make the New Testament church the model for discipleship.

Because of the open and inclusive nature of the COC distinctives, we feel our movement acts as a container flexible enough to hold a generous orthodoxy. We feel free to learn from church history and adopt truth and spiritual practices from outside the COC movement if they help us to follow Jesus and make him central.

A good way of seeing this might be to view the Church of Christ movement like a wine skin that is both flexible enough to receive the good wine of what God has shown His church throughout the ages, and grow with what He will continue to show us in the future.

The following are, we believe, the rich wine of Christian community and practices we have discovered, that help us to live as Jesus' community.

A vertical photograph showing a hand reaching upwards with fingers slightly spread, set against a background of a sunset or sunrise sky with soft clouds. The text 'A GENEROUS ORTHODOXY' is overlaid vertically on the right side of the image.

A GENEROUS ORTHODOXY

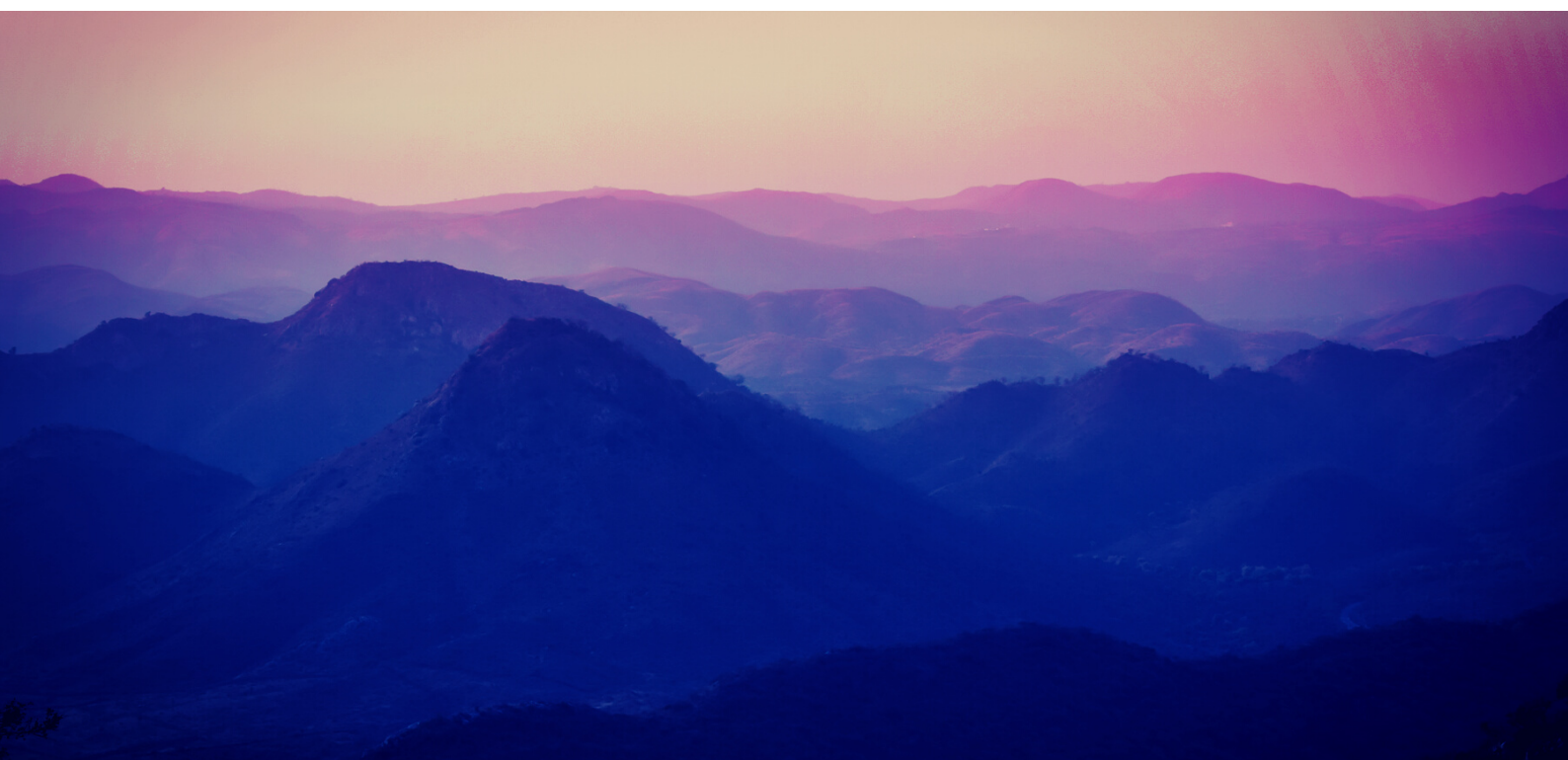


A photograph showing the silhouettes of four people standing on a beach, looking out at the ocean during a sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm, orange glow. The water is calm, and the sky is a mix of orange and blue.

# THE ANABAPTIST EXAMPLE

Ana Baptists while celebrating Martin Luther's emphasis of justification by faith, believed that the reformation that swept through Europe wasn't reformed enough. There was a strong emphasis amongst the Ana Baptist, that faith in Christ needed to be coupled with faithfulness to Christ, and His way, along with a deep commitment to being peacemakers. Consequently, they formed communities focussed on how they could live out Jesus' words as seen in the sermon on the mount.

As a community we believe and practice the cross shaped love we see at work in our Lord's life and death. So, we commit to being peacemakers and believe this is central to our mandate as Christ followers.





# SACRAMENTAL PRACTICES

The word Sacrament means 'Mystery', it speaks of the practices that Jesus established to be undertaken by his people. These practices act as a 'means of grace', or spaces in which God's grace gets to us and transforms us. We need to point out here that we don't believe these practices are Holy in themselves, but rather act as conduits where a Holy God can speak and move towards us and where, if we do them trusting in Jesus, we encounter God and are transformed in that encounter.

The three main Sacraments we identify and practice intentionally together at Westcity are:

1. **Communion or the Table** - Which is the unconditional welcome of God to all. Where we remember Jesus' victory at the cross and his resurrection. Where we hear the invite to be in relationship with Him, to have our sins forgiven and to receive the enabling of the Spirit of life.
2. **Water Baptism** - Which is our response to the call of Jesus to be His disciple. It's where we die to our old ways and rise to live Jesus' way, in His resurrection life.
3. **Foot-washing or the Towel and bowl** - This is the 'Go of Christ, the sending to serve the world rather than trying to rule it. Where we serve others with the cruciform love that we see in Jesus' life and death.



# CHARISMATIC EXPRESSION

And we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life. He proceeds from the Father and the Son, and with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified. - Nicene Creed

The first thing to say is that the Holy Spirit is God, not a “presence”, or even as some have suggested, the “love” between the Father and Son. He is the third person of the Trinity, identified in the beginning Genesis narrative and active throughout scripture. In both the Old and New Testament, the metaphor of wind is used to describe His freedom and majesty, the Hebrew word *rauch* in the old and *pneuma* in the new. He is unfettered, powerful yet gentle.

The second, as John 16 attests, is that He is deeply involved in life in all its aspects and complexities. He is with us and is working on our behalf even when we don't fully understand how. And when He works, He is unlimited.

The baptism in the Spirit which is also referred to in scripture as the Jesus' baptism (water being John's baptism) can be seen in the book of Acts. We see that for the disciples who knew about prayer and living a life of surrender to God, following baptism in the Spirit, all of those practices became somehow energised and different. The key characteristic of the baptism in the Spirit seems to be that God was present in deep, meaningful, and powerful ways.


As a church, we look to the Spirit of life to fill our lives as well as to lead us to where God is at work in the world. We join with Him in his magnificent re-creation project, inaugurated by Jesus at his resurrection.



# WESTCITY VALUES

When we put all of these influences and practices together, we see a difference between believing in God and knowing the God of Jesus. We learn through Jesus that we are called to be a reflection of God in the world.

So, as a Church we commit to becoming and being a community that is:

- **Welcoming** by finding ways to ensure people find their place and discover friendship.
  - **Inclusive** by demonstrating wholehearted acceptance of others irrespective of our points of difference and challenge.
  - **Loving** in overlooking offence, extending friendship, offering care and support, being truthful and practicing at all times the radical welcome of Jesus.
  - **Compassionate** towards those less able, less willing and less empowered to represent themselves and their needs.
  - **Kind** as an active practice of love; always putting forward and looking for ways to show people their value and worth.
  - **Peace-seeking** in every situation (non-violent). This is not passivity, nor fight or flight, but the third way of fighting back with radical love that gives dignity to the oppressed while at the same time holding onto the hope of transformation for the aggressors.
- 





# FAITH & LIFE

At times, people make contact with Westcity and ask if we have a position on a particular issue or belief, and often our response is that we don't. That is usually because we are a diverse community of Christ-followers and hold a diverse range of views. Sometimes those views converge, sometimes they change and sometimes they remain unresolved. It seems to us that this is part of being a robust and loving community. Lately, we are also concerned at the worrying trend of the so-called "culture wars".

This seems to be linked to a polarising lobbyist mindset, which can take us away from being apprentices on a life-long journey of following Jesus. It is self-evident that churches don't maintain static positions on numerous issues. In fact, throughout church history, Christians have routinely and robustly debated all sorts of challenges as they settled on priorities. Martin Luther was doing just that as he ignited what we now call The Reformation, but many examples could be mentioned. Slavery, the status of women, the ethics of going to war, and whether the creation account should be considered literal are a few that spring quickly to mind.

Ancient times were no different, as the fledgling church came to grips with deciding what really mattered. For example, leading up to the famous church councils of Nicaea and Chalcedon, there was fierce debate on what should be considered foundational for Christian life and practice. As they prayed and talked together, they penned creeds that have stood the test of time. Ever since, the Nicene Creed (325AD) and others like the Chalcedonian (451AD) have provided a "compass point" for Christians to help navigate the challenging issues that crop up in life and culture. That's also why many years ago many churches like ours adopted the maxim:

In essentials unity.

In non-essentials liberty

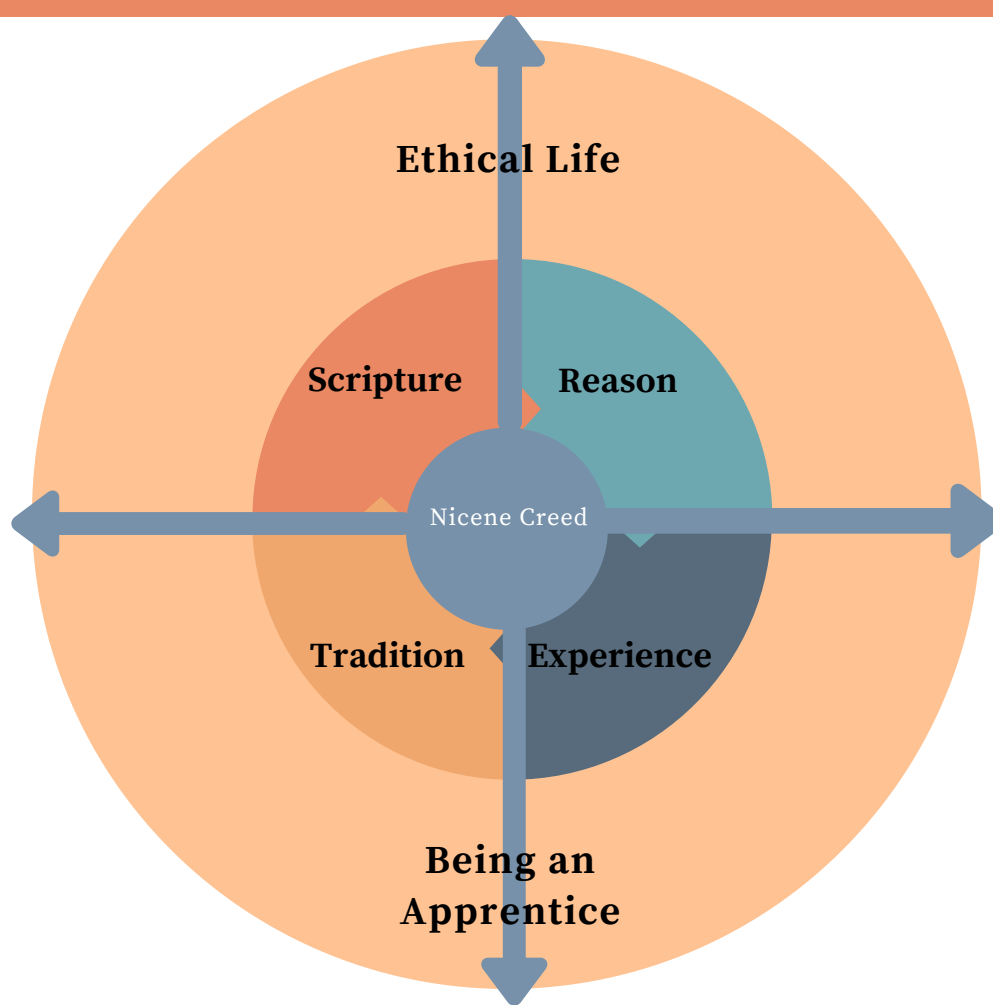
In all things, love

In the late 18th century John Wesley employed a method of theological reflection for similar reasons, that took four factors into consideration. It has come down to us as the “Wesleyan Quadrilateral” and suggests that reflecting on life and practice should ordinarily include scripture, reason, tradition and experience. These are holistically interconnected (though scripture would be pivotal). Our faith community also looks to these tried-and-true approaches to navigate our 21st century contexts and culture.

As our Faith and Life diagram describes, at the centre of our reflection on life and faith are the creeds. They represent what the church has always considered foundational and we do likewise today at Westcity. Branching out from this “compass point”, prayerful reflection on scripture is linked with church tradition and further knowledge as it comes to hand. These are reflected on contextually, in the lived experience of ourselves and others in community. Our ethical life, being an apprentice, means we are willing to hold fast to what is essential and are willing to hold in tension the many aspects of life and faith that are not.

## THE WESTCITY WAY

# Faith & Life







# PILGRIMAGE FRAMEWORK

Walking together towards loving God, loving people & following Jesus.

At Westcity, we have set out on a 2-year pilgrimage; a long journey made to a sacred place as an act of religious devotion. Now pilgrimage is not new, not one off, not all defining but it is an intentional walk in a particular direction with all the accompanying risks, opportunities, and choices.

Where have we been?

In recent years, we have been setting the foundations for gathering and walking together. We have written our mission and theology in the Westcity Handbook and captured our values in mosaics that sit on our chapel walls. We want to be known as a people who “Love God, love people, follow Jesus”. It’s simple really.

Yet, there is always the risk that by focusing only on our foundations, we can become CAMPERS. We camp out and even defend territory. Instead, we want to pack up our foundations into our backpack and carry them with us. We want to become PILGRIMS. To set out on a journey that puts us in the position that Jesus can change us and move us.

Where are we going?

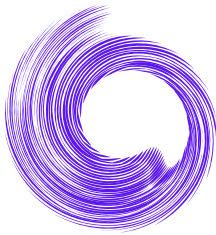
So, to set our compass, we asked ourselves 2 questions:

1. Where do we want to go as a church community?
2. What do we want to look like as a people group along the way?

And we discovered three areas of strengthening listed on the next page as we walk together loving God, loving people and following Jesus. We’d love you to join the long walk...

# PILGRIMAGE FRAMEWORK

Walking together towards loving God, loving people & following Jesus.



## HEALTHY SPIRITUALITY

### LOVE GOD

SPIRITUAL BOOK CLUB - ONCE A MONTH

SPIRITUAL WORKSHOPS - 6 TIMES A YEAR

SPIRITUAL RETREAT

PILGRIMAGE WALK - CAPE TO CAPE 2023

CAMINO DE SANTIAGO - DEC 2023



## HEALTHY SUPPORT

### LOVE PEOPLE

REGULAR FINANCIAL GIVING

SERVING OTHERS

INVITING OTHERS TO PILGRIMAGE WITH JESUS



## HEALTHY COMMUNITY

### FOLLOW JESUS

HOME CHURCH

CONNECT GROUPS

WELCOME TO WESTCITY DINNERS

WELCOME TO PILGRIMAGE DINNERS

CAMPS / GETAWAYS





# HEALTHY CHURCH FRAMEWORK

In line with the Westcity Values, we strongly believe that all community members have the right to feel safe in their church community. With this right comes the expectation that each and every member of the Westcity community will take responsibility for their actions to ensure the safety and wellbeing of others. The Westcity Healthy Church Framework is the Westcity response as an organisation, to this responsibility.

The complete set of policies referenced in this document are available to you through your team leader if you would like to read further. Additionally, we would welcome a conversation to clarify any aspects of the handbook you are unsure of or would like further information regarding.

## WESTCITY COMMITS TO:

- **Safe governance:**

Overarching governance of Westcity is provided by a Board of individuals from the Westcity community with expertise in areas of governance and pastoral care. The Westcity Board operates in both a governance and eldership capacity and adheres to the Healthy Board Mandate.

- **Excellence in recruitment, training and development of leaders and volunteers:**

All recruitment of both paid and voluntary positions within the church will follow a clear recruitment process. Prior to appointment, all prospective leaders and volunteers in Westcity ministries, will be required to complete the Volunteer / Leader Ministry Application Form and obtain a Working with Children Check. All leaders / volunteers will be inducted in the Westcity Healthy Church Framework and be required to attend training / accreditation and ongoing learning relevant to their area of ministry:

- Pastoral Staff – COCWA accreditation
- Children and Youth workers – COCWA Child Safe Training.



# HEALTHY CHURCH FRAMEWORK

- **Provision of clear expectations of the essential behaviours for healthy community:**

All leaders/volunteers will be required to adhere to the Westcity Community Conduct guidelines.

- **The provision of clear guidelines for managing grievance:**

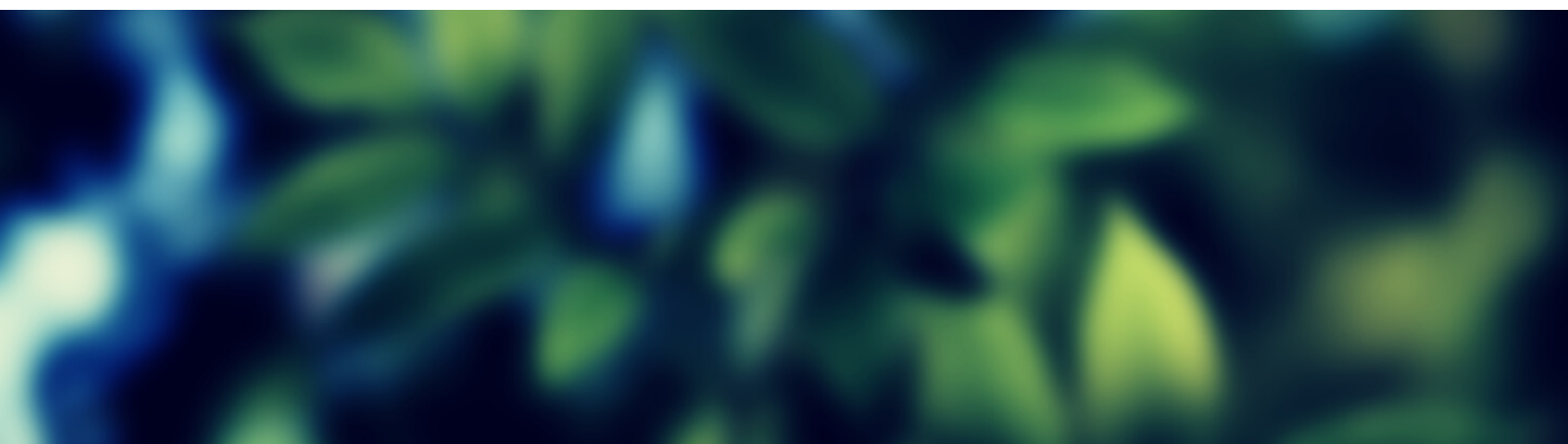
All leaders/ volunteers and the Westcity community in general will be counselled in working through the Westcity Grievance Procedure.

- **Provision for the adherence to equal opportunity for all within the structure of Westcity:**

Westcity believes that all people are of equal value before God and the Westcity Equal Opportunity Policy reflects this belief.

- **Clear risk management guidelines both churchwide and within specific ministries:**

Westcity believes that the utmost care must be taken to mitigate / eliminate risk to all those within the church community and when interacting with the wider community. Westcity Risk Management Policy, Event Planning, Building Management and Safety, Child Safety Policy.







# HEALTHY CHURCH FRAMEWORK

- **Adherence to COCWA guidelines for both child safety and disclosure of abuse:**

All leaders / volunteers working in the areas of children / youth ministries will be required to attend specific child safe training, familiarise themselves with the COCWA Child Safety Policy, COCWA Child Safety Reporting Procedure, and be aware of the Child Safe Representative within the church community.

- **A system for responding to allegations of risk of harm (abuse) and serious ministry misconduct:**

We will ensure that procedures are clear and appropriate in responding to allegations of abuse. Where a leader has an allegation of misconduct made against them, Westcity will provide support to alleged victims and perpetrators and seek appropriate denominational help for a just and fair resolution. Westcity Bullying and Harassment Policy, Westcity Grievance Procedure.

- **The embedding of pastoral care principles across all aspects of Westcity to ensure the respectful, holistic consideration of the individual, and health of the community:**

Westcity Pastoral Care Policy

- **Safe delivery specific pastoral care and supportive supervision as required:**

Westcity Pastoral Care Processes

- **Safe Building Management, Hazard Mitigation**

- **Event planning and Risk Assessment**

See Safe Church Policy



# GRIEVANCE & CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION POLICY

In every community, there are times when issues arise, misunderstandings happen, and sometimes hurtful or offensive behaviour occurs between individuals. Westcity is focused on relationship building including in times of conflict. We see conflict as normal in human life and interaction. Knowing this, Westcity has established this document and process to help our Church find godly and appropriate pathways to see issues and concerns addressed.

The core biblical values supporting this process are truth-telling (Ephesians 4:15,25), justice-seeking (Micah 6:8), grace-giving (Colossians 3:13) and peace-making (Matthew 5:9; Ephesians 4:2-3). The process is seen in operation in Matthew 18:15-20. It is a process that is not to be used as a weapon or demand but exemplifies how Jesus sees God's presence in the process of resolution, and the significance that God places on finding restoration of relationship.

Once begun, such a process should be followed with care and a commitment to walk through the process step by step so that it does not become too drawn out or complex. At all times, commitment to the values outlined above need to anchor all actions and discussions.

A process like this can guide any individuals or groups wishing to restore relationship. However, within a church context and particularly among leaders, it needs to be agreed that leaders will be held accountable to follow it through. In some circumstances, depending on the severity, potential impact and under the oversight of the Westcity Board, parties may be asked to stand down from their roles or aspects of their roles whilst this is being done.

Please refer to the Grievance and Conflict Resolution Policy for further information.



# COMMUNITY CONDUCT

A healthy culture at Westcity is our shared responsibility. When we communicate, collaborate and connect with one another in a manner that aligns with our kingdom values we believe it will lead to a shared sense of belonging and a community that thrives.

Healthy Community Engagement is defined by standards of behaviour that are aligned with our values and applies to all people who are either employees of the church, volunteer or consider themselves part of the Westcity community.

This code is in place to encourage all members of the Westcity team to prayerfully approach their role at Westcity in a healthy respectful manner that is accountable to the vision of the church.

## **Live Out a Moral Code Consistent with Westcity Community Conduct.**

Although we are all broken and fall short of the standards shown by Christ, our expectation is that every Westcity team member endeavours to fulfil a high moral code. This includes attitude as much as behaviour, and private as much as public life. When breached then most often restoration is possible with confession, support and accountability.

The adoption of the code of ethics and related procedural documents for investigating issues outlined in the grievance and complaint handling policies reflects a deeper desire to be proactive rather than reactive. The objective is to create a safe space that honours God whilst trusting him to bring his redemption and healing to those involved, prayerfully resulting in resolution and restoration.

## **Essential theology that underpins this code**

Matthew 7:12 Jesus says,

“So, in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.”



# COMMUNITY CONDUCT

## **Galatians 5:22-23 New International Version (NIV)**

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.”

## **Mark 12:30-31 New International Version (NIV)**

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.”

## **What does this theology look like in practice?**

### **1. Treat Everyone with Dignity and Respect**

We believe that everyone is of equal value in the body of Christ hence all policies and processes are designed to reflect this ‘essential’ theology. At Westcity we value people over assets, and restoration over judgement. This includes duty of care considerations for all ministry areas.

#### **Team member commitment:**

- a) I will seek to be respectful and treat everyone the same – regardless of rank or socioeconomic position, including myself.

### **2. Be a Good Steward of God’s Resources**

God supplies church resources – people, time and money. All Westcity team members (Church leaders, employees and volunteers) should be reminded to be good stewards of those resources. This is done by exercising good time management skills, by creating an annual operating budget and holding leadership accountable for adhering to spending guidelines.

#### **Team member commitment:**

- a) I will use church resources consistent with my responsibilities and parameters of my role



# COMMUNITY CONDUCT

## 3. Compliance with Policy

Church employees and volunteers will comply with all policies as set out by the Board and ministry leaders. It is important that anyone who is unsure of a policy or procedure that they seek out clarification from leadership.

### **Team member commitment:**

- a) I understand that the Westcity healthy church framework (including policy and procedures) exists for the healthy functioning of the church and its people.
- b) If I am unable to find a policy that applies to our situation, I will refer to a leader within the church for direction.

## 4. Conflict-of-Interest

Church leaders and employees have a duty to act in the best interest of the church always. It is the unambiguous duty of any person in a church position not to use the influence of their position for personal gain, whether that gain is financial, self-gratifying or otherwise. Therefore, 'We give up our rights to be served and find greatness in serving each other' (Jesus on leadership).

### **Team member commitment:**

I will exhibit;

- a) Transparent motivations.
- b) Healthy boundaries.
- c) Honest communication.
- d) Self-care which includes seeking pastoral guidance and stepping aside from my role for a season if best for my health and wellbeing and that of others.
- e) Acknowledgement of the duty of care you have for my own family and friends.

# COMMUNITY CONDUCT

## 5. Confidentiality

Westcity team members will maintain the highest standard of confidentiality and will share sensitive information only with those who have a need to know. This includes information about the internal operations of the church as well as information about church members and other team members.

### **Team member commitment:**

a) I will seek to understand clearly the processes that are in place to make a complaint against a person or process without compromising this principle. This includes the passing of information to those on the ministry team.

## 6. Streamlined Processes

Church staff should continually be looking for ways to improve operational processes and systems that affect the church experience for volunteers, visitors, members and employees.

### **Team member commitment:**

a) I will strive to understand all processes and systems including why they exist before looking to improve them.

## 7. Proactive Communication

Church leaders, staff and as relevant, volunteers, should take measures to proactively communicate any information that would benefit others and improve the church or work experience. Encourage those to whom they minister to move towards self-determination under God, recognising the responsibility for their own lives

### **Team member commitment:**

a) I will seek to follow the grievance procedure when in the face of conflict with anyone in the Westcity community.



# COMMUNITY CONDUCT

## 8. Comply with Legal Requirements

The day-to-day operations of the Church will comply with all governing laws and regulations by adopting policies and procedures to ensure legal compliance.

### **Team member commitment:**

- a) I understand the damage that is caused by emotional and spiritual abuse (see bullying and harassment policy), recognising that both are highly subjective and difficult to identify from one person to another.
- b) I understand Westcity has a zero tolerance to any form of abuse and will take the measures required to ensure this does not take place within our community.
- c) Recognise that while touch is an essential component of human compassion what we intend with a touch hug or kiss is open to interpretation by the recipient (see bullying and harassment policy). Great care must be taken using 'touch' during any encounters and must not be of a sexual nature as well as in line with child safe policy, safe church policy, and overarching healthy behaviour guidelines.



# TEAM MEMBER SUMMARY COMMITMENT

## Team member summary commitment:

- a) I am accountable for my own behaviour and responsible for my own actions and seek accountability for the way my actions impact other people.
- b) I will be aware of the way my behaviour impacts others and my intentions when dealing with other people within our community are respectful and reflect the heart of Jesus always.
- c) I am willing to reflect on the healthiest way to address any issues that arise (see grievance procedure)
- d) I will not exploit those in my care for any reason and will seek to understand the safe church policies that Westcity has in place.
- e) Treat all people with whom I come into contact regardless of race, religion, gender, political beliefs, disability, sexual orientation, or any other difference with compassion and respect for the human person.
- f) Respect the right of all people to make their own educated decisions and choices in life.

I have read the above and fully understand my commitment.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Vocation Chaplain to sign: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

NB:

Any team member who doesn't comply with the Code of Conduct may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from the Church.

The Code applies to these persons when they are on and off site, whilst representing Westcity during or outside working hours and attending Westcity sponsored functions.

Please refer to the Code of Conduct for further information.