



Westview Baptist Church embarked on a journey over the last couple of years, to relook at our mission statement and refresh our vision of the future – to reflect on who we are as a congregation, what characterizes the church and how we can better be a light to a world that so desperately needs hope.

Our mission, *‘to make fully devoted followers of Jesus’* means that not only is each of us on a journey in our Christian walk, but we intentionally desire to help each other progress down that continuum to becoming more and more like Jesus – as with the Apostle Paul, we “... *don’t mean to say that [we] have already achieved these things or that [we] have already reached perfection! But we keep working toward that day when [we] will finally be all that Christ Jesus saved [us] for and wants [us] to be ... [we] are still not all [we] should be, but [we are] focusing all [our] energies on this one thing – Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead. [We] strain to reach the end of the race and receive the prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us up to heaven ...*” (Phil 3:13-14).

Although we come from diverse backgrounds and experiences, we envision a people of God here at Westview with a deep sense of belonging, united in God’s love, abiding in the Holy Spirit, living out the gospel and extending Christ’s love to the world.

Diversity can be a strength and a weakness. We have seen a dimension of diversity during the pandemic that is currently a challenge for us. There are a variety of views within the church body, similar to what we see in our world, country and city, regarding how we can respond to the pragmatic pandemic challenges created when it comes to church ministries and fellowship. The Board has spent considerable time in prayer, discussion and thought to positioning the church policy on ‘COVID Care-fullness’ and has communicated it through updates to our website and through the posting of short pastoral video presentations. This policy has been met with mixed reactions. Some in the church believe the policy is too authoritarian, while others believe it does not go far enough - each have their reasons for the position they hold. The Board recognizes that the diversity in thought regarding this topic is creating challenges to our envisioned state of ‘belonging’ and ‘unity’.

The policy’s intent is to facilitate, as best we can, an environment of belonging and unity, while taking reasonable precautions, given the state of the pandemic. It is based on respect and a sensitivity for each other’s circumstances while facilitating the desire for an ‘in-person’ worship experience. It is rooted in the desire to love our neighbours - to create an avenue for those who are more vulnerable to participate in live worship. This takes on the form of sacrificing some of the freedoms we may want to enjoy, for the sake of others.

We recognize this policy could potentially hurt or upset some members, and for this the Board apologizes. This is clearly not our intention. Our desire is for the church to continually seek to be in communion with one another, reconciled and living in peace together - to live out the church’s vision as God intends it. To the extent you find yourself in the category of the hurt or marginalized due to this policy, we would encourage you to follow the directions laid out by Jesus in Matthew 5:23-24 and Matthew 18:15-20. Let’s dialogue with each other, to understand each other and perhaps to find a way to work through these difficult times in a way that sustains community and peaceful fellowship.

Having said this, the church policy as it relates to COVID-19 protocol still remains in effect for the time being. We are confident the day will come when we can worship together at Westview Baptist Church without the encumbrances of a mask. This is temporary. Until then, let us encourage one another and build each other up in the faith (1 Thess. 5:11). Consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds ... let us not give up meeting together ... but let us encourage one another (Hebrews 10: 24-25).

May God richly bless you as you seek to honour Him!

-Westview Baptist Church Board