

# *Welcome to Westlake*



*Rooted in the gospel ~ Radical Transformation*

**Welcome to Westlake** is an introductory course for people who are interested in becoming members of Westlake Lausanne.

Westlake Lausanne draws people from a range of backgrounds, with a variety of experiences and **Welcome to Westlake** helps to explain some of the basic beliefs of this particular church. You will also have an opportunity to learn more about our history, our vision and our structures, as well as discovering what is meant by membership.

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## **Part 1**

### ***Understanding the Church***

First some basic groundwork:

Although the Church is a *human institution*, in that it is made up of people, and it is an *organisation*, it ultimately needs to be viewed as a *living body* whose Head is Jesus Christ. This means that the church does not belong to any person or group of people. In fact the only church that Jesus promises to build is His church (Matt 16v18). Westlake Lausanne is one part of Christ's Church and so our starting point in thinking about *this* church must be to think about *the* Church.

#### **1. The Bible gives us a number of pictures of the church**

##### **The Church as a family**

###### **Ephesians 2:19**

<sup>19</sup> Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household,

##### **The Church as a building**

###### **Ephesians 2:19-22**

<sup>19</sup> Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, <sup>20</sup> built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. <sup>21</sup> In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. <sup>22</sup> And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

(See also **1 Peter 2:5** )

##### **The Church as a body**

###### **1 Corinthians 12:12**

<sup>12</sup> The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ.

##### **The Church as a bride**

###### **2 Corinthians 11:2**

<sup>2</sup> I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him.

These pictures tell us that the church is alive and dynamic and a work in progress, that it is made up of people in relationship with each other and with God, that it is not one dimensional but complete in its diversity and that it belongs and is deeply loved by Christ.

## 2. The church is made up of **people**

The church is made up of people who are Christians.

*A Christian is someone who has embarked on a radical new life. Their life has been transformed by Jesus Christ. The starting point of that new life is an experience of forgiveness through Christ's sacrifice. The Christian life is rooted in grace: we simply do not deserve the forgiveness and blessings God pours into our lives. It is a life of growing conformity to Christ's image; it is a life where we are led by the Holy Spirit and seek to increase in the knowledge of God. It is a life of worship and service of God and of others.*

## 3. The Bible describes the **purpose** of the Church

**The Church exists to glorify God**

**1 Peter 2:9**

<sup>9</sup> But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

**The Church exists to proclaim the Gospel**

**Acts 1:8**

<sup>8</sup> But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

**The Church exists to encourage its members**

**Hebrews 10:25**

<sup>25</sup> Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another-- and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

So a local church should be a place where people worship and glorify God for all He is and all He has done in their lives. A local church should be *missional* - that is it should be working to see the good news of Jesus reach out to those around them both near and further afield. And it should be a place of great encouragement, where its members get built up and edified.

## 4. A church has some essential **practices**

**Baptism**

**Matthew 28:19**

19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

**Romans 6:3,4**

<sup>3</sup> Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? <sup>4</sup> We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

While Westlake Church has members who subscribe to both forms of baptism (infant and believer), we only practice believers' baptism.

**The Lord's supper**

**1 Corinthians 11:23-25**

<sup>23</sup> For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, <sup>24</sup> and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body,

which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." <sup>25</sup> In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

Both of these practices point us back to the cross of Jesus Christ and His once for all sacrifice of Himself for us. That is a good reminder to us to keep the cross central in our lives and our church.

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## **Part 2**

### *Understanding Westlake*

#### **1. Our history**

Westlake Lausanne is one of two Westlake churches in the Lac Lemman area.

*The early days:*

Westlake Church started with a vision. Philippe and Wendi Berthoud, two former missionaries in India were the catalysts for this and Westlake Nyon was born in 1987, the result of a collaboration between two existing English-language churches in the Geneva area: the Evangelical Baptist Church of Geneva and Crossroads Church in Ferney, France.

In 1990, Alan and Pauline Wilson arrived from Northern Ireland for Alan to become the first full-time pastor of Westlake Nyon.

In December 2005, we began monthly services in the Morges/Lausanne area. These then moved in September 2006 to twice-monthly, and from January 2008 Westlake Lausanne has been meeting weekly. In April 2008 Martin and Su Slack moved from England for Martin to be Westlake Lausanne's first full-time pastor.

#### **2. Our vision and mission**

We want to grow into a church where:

- a passion to see Jesus Christ exalted permeates everything that we do
- lives are transformed by the power of the Spirit of God through the word of God, so that:
  - our people desire that God be glorified above all things
  - our people grow in their knowledge and understanding of the call to serve Christ and make disciples of all nations
  - this growing understanding radically affects the decisions they make in life
  - that marriages and families and those called to the single life are strengthened in God and in grace
  - there is growing evidence of the fruit of the Spirit in people's lives
  - we are effectively reaching out with the Gospel into the English-speaking community in such a way that people turn to God and away from their sins.

It is our conviction that these goals can only be achieved through the transforming gospel of Jesus Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Consequently, our vision can be summarized as...

### **Rooted and Radical**

**Our vision is that the gospel of Jesus Christ would be so deeply rooted in our lives and that our lives would be so deeply rooted in the gospel that it has a wonderful, radical transforming effect upon our lives.**

### **The Gospel**

A. The Gospel is a declaration of the Good News that God has come to our world through Jesus, who brings God's Kingdom. At the heart of the gospel proclamation is the proclamation of the cross (1 Corinthians 15): Jesus Christ has lived the life that we have failed to live and he has died

the death we deserve to die. In him we are justified, we begin to be sanctified and we will ultimately be glorified.

B. The Gospel is the central message of the church (1 Corinthians 15 "of first importance"). The Gospel is the power of God for salvation: it is a message that is given to bear fruit.

C. It is easy to *assume* the Gospel and set it on the sidelines. We can replace it with vague talk about God's love and our need to open our hearts to Jesus. Or we can leave it behind as we set out on a path of disciplined legalism -and grace has a hard time being channelled through us.

D. The acceptance we have in Jesus through his death and resurrection, the work that is declared in the Gospel, is the ground for our growth.

E. The church must not send mixed or unclear messages that cloud the Gospel. Ideally the Gospel and its clear implications should be visible throughout the life and activities of the church.

F. We will reflect the light of Jesus Christ as we become a community of Gospel-believing, Gospel-centred people.

## Radical Transformation

We believe that being firmly rooted in the gospel will have a wonderfully radical transforming effect across every area of our lives: our personal, inner lives, our relationships, our families, our work and our priorities. As a church it will affect our worship, our mission, our service and our community.

## Worship

A. The Gospel is the ground of all Christian worship (we can only come to God on the basis of what Christ has done).

B. Our corporate worship times should give a prominent place to our celebration of the Gospel.

C. While it is hard to change people's personalities, we seek to encourage and cultivate a greater degree of joy and celebration in our worship times, as befits people who have something to celebrate and declare. We should also seek to cultivate a greater expectancy of God's presence and work (see 1 Corinthians 14:25).

D. We want our worship style to be contemporary in nature, mingling modern and historic worship songs.

## Mission

A. The Great Commission of Jesus still stands: to take the gospel into all the world.

B. As a church and as individuals we must have a missional mindset: all of us are missionaries to our own tribe, to those around us: at home, in our workplaces and in our neighbourhoods. The church must also have this mindset and this can be worked out in our weekly corporate worship, at special times of the year such as Christmas, in various programmes or special events such as The Marriage Course or Alpha, in small group based events. But none of these can ever take the place of us befriending those who do not know Jesus.

C. We should be a church with a world vision. We need to support world mission in a range of ways (financial, prayer, information, recruiting), across a range of activities (Christian humanitarian work, church planting, leadership and theological training, Bible translation, youth and children's outreach, media ministry), and across all the continents.

## Service

A. The Gospel is not only meant to bring us a message of salvation; it calls us to a radical way of life that is humble and devoted to the needs of others (see Mark 10:45).

B. Humility and other-centred service are expressions of the Gospel at work in our hearts. The

presence of pride and an unwillingness to serve others may indicate that we have not fully grasped the implications of the Gospel.

C. Gifts - whether natural talents or specific spiritual gifts - are God-given means for serving others. Every believer has been gifted and should be involved in active service.

D. The same humble service that should be normal in the life of the church can also be put to work in the wider world, whether through our vocation, as we seek to honour God, serve people, and give expression to forms of redemptive work, or through acts of mercy and compassion as we love our neighbour as we love ourselves.

## Community

A. Community is a key part of God's plan. Community reflects the nature of God, it models the love of Jesus and it becomes an instrument for the work of the Spirit.

B. The concept of community extends to learning to enter into one another's lives to care, and encourage in various ways.

C. The Gospel defines our community. A Gospel-centered community is a witness to God's glory as people who would not naturally get together are brought together in Jesus.

D. Properly functioning community helps us to help one another to hold on to our Gospel confession and to keep walking in line with the truth of the Gospel.

E. Small groups are a primary means of expressing this community. It is our desire to be a church of small groups, not just a church with small groups.

## 3. Our structure

### *a) Our independence*

Along with Westlake Nyon, Westlake Lausanne is an independent Church. We are a registered Swiss Association. With Westlake Nyon we have formed an Association of Westlake Churches. We are not a member of any particular denomination, although we have links of friendship and co-operation with a number of evangelical churches in the area. We are also members of Reseau Evangelique (the Swiss equivalent of Evangelical Alliance). In Lausanne we have a very warm relationship with the local Swiss Reformed Church.

### *b) Our members*

Westlake operates a formal membership system. Formal membership gives us the opportunity to have a stable basis for the government and organisation of our church.

### *c) Our elders*

Responsibility for the spiritual direction and health of the church rests with the elders who are nominated and approved by the members. The pastor is a *de facto* elder of equal status with the other elders, set apart specifically by God and the local church for the ministry of preaching, teaching and pastoral oversight.

### *d) Our ministry leaders*

Ministry leaders - responsible for a specific area of ministry - join representatives of the elders several times a year for co-ordination, prayer and support at Ministry Leaders Meetings.

### *e) Our staff*

Most of the work at Westlake Lausanne is carried out by volunteers. In addition we have one full time paid member of staff, Martin Slack and a part-time administrator, Marinette Abrahams. We also welcome a number of short-term workers (our interns).

## 4. Our ministries

*Specific ministries include the following:*

Sunday service refreshments

A-V ministry

Children's ministry, including Sunday School

Youth ministry

Worship

Small groups

Men's ministry ; Women's ministry

One 2 One ministry

Missions

Set up/down

Administration

Web site

Students

## 5. Our finances

The finance needed to run Westlake Lausanne comes from the gifts and offerings of members and attendees of Westlake. Westlake Lausanne and Westlake Nyon operate separate accounts and run separate budgets from each other. Our finances are carefully planned and monitored by a treasurer and our books are audited each year. Elements of the operation are looked after by a professional "fiduciaire" in Nyon.

*How to give to Westlake*

1. By Sunday offering.
  2. By using a bulletin de versement.
  3. By a direct transfer order through your bank.
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## **Part 3**

### *Understanding membership*

Although the main activities of Westlake Church are open to anyone, and it is possible to be involved in some levels of responsibility without being a member in the strict sense, Westlake Church does operate a system of formal membership.

#### **1. The purpose of membership**

- Having a formal membership means that we are able to establish a coherent and stable basis for organisation and government of the church.
- Having a defined membership means that we have a group of people from whom we may choose leaders. It also provides a wider decision-making body for certain decisions in the government of the church.
- Membership is also an opportunity for growth for the individuals concerned, as they commit to a local church.
- Membership is a commitment to a healthy Christian life, cultivated in the context of a local church. Members are expected to affirm the vision and mission of the church and commit to play their part.

A healthy member:

- Rooted and growing in the Gospel.
- Regular participation in corporate worship.
- Committed to growing and contributing in the community of the church.
- Involved in serving according to their gifts and the opportunities in the church.
- Involved at some level in the work of Gospel mission.

**Growing - worshipping - relating - serving - witnessing.**

#### **2. The requirements for membership**

*Am I a Christian?*

*Do I accept Westlake's statement of faith?*

*Do I endorse Westlake's mission?*

*Payment of a 50 Sfr annual "cotisation" (legal provision).*

#### **3. The responsibilities of membership**

*A In relation to our personal lives.*

We ask that members aim to live a life of personal purity and holiness consistent with their high calling in Christ;

*B In relation to involvement.*

(1) Attendance.

It is obviously impossible for every member to attend all of the activities and meetings of the church. Spiritual maturity cannot be measured exclusively in terms of church attendance, and each person's circumstances and availability differ. However we do believe that commitment to a local church is part of God's plan for Christians and members should prioritise church attendance within their possibilities.

(2) Service.

Westlake Church aims to exercise "every member ministry". This means that each member should seek to find an avenue for service within the church, in keeping with their gifts and opportunities.

(3) Finance.

Westlake does not stipulate a certain level of giving for members. We recognise that each member's circumstances will differ and so will the amount or percentage they are able to give. However, we encourage each member to take seriously the Bible principles of stewardship as they relate to finance.

(4) Prayer.

Members should try to take time to pray for the life, work and people of Westlake.

(5) Participation.

Part of the purpose of membership is to ensure a structured basis for decision-making and church government. Members are encouraged to take seriously the privilege and responsibility that this implies.

*C In relation to my brothers and sisters.*

The Church is a family. Like any other family, there are relationships which need to be developed and guarded. We remember the promise of the Lord Jesus that "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." (John 13:35).

## Statement of Faith

As well as other biblical teaching, the church professes the following basic doctrines and principles:

- The divine inspiration and authority of the Holy Scriptures as originally given, and their supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct.
- The unity of God in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- The creation of all things, both visible and invisible, by the Word of God; all creation being in, through and for Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God.
- The universal sinfulness and guilt of mankind since the Fall, rendering him subject to God's wrath and condemnation and necessitating the regeneration of his whole being.
- The believer's redemption from the guilt, penalty and power of sin solely through the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God, the only Representative and Substitute for mankind; This redemption is received through personal faith in Jesus Christ.
- The bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.
- The second coming of Jesus Christ.
- The resurrection of mankind, and the eternal blessedness of the redeemed and the eternal punishment of the impenitent.
- The work of the Holy Spirit, convicting mankind of sin, bringing the sinner to repentance toward God and Faith in Jesus Christ.
- The indwelling and work of the Holy Spirit, granting new life and power to the believer and granting gifts to the Church.
- The unity and common priesthood of all believers, who together form the one Universal Church, the body of which Christ is the head.
- The believers' common objective to live Christ-centred lives (Ephesians 4:1-3) under the Lord's authority and to make disciples of Jesus Christ according to His commandment (Matthew 28: 19- 20).

## **My response**

Briefly explain how you became a Christian.

Outline some of the main steps of progress in your journey as a Christian.

Explain why you would like to become a member of Westlake Church.

Statement,

As a believer in Jesus Christ, and having prayerfully considered my commitment, I would like to become a member of Westlake Church. I am in full agreement with the statement of faith and the mission of the church.

Signed:

Date: