Ethos Statement (June 2025)

1.Our Christian Identity
Westbourne Park Baptist Church (WPBC) is a community of Christians whose purpose is to build God's Kingdom, wherever we are, by loving God and loving people. Central to the purpose is the advancement of the Christian faith. It is this Christian identity, our covenant with the Baptist community and Westbourne Park Baptist Church's agreed beliefs and values that are the foundation of all we are and do.

2. Our Commitment to the Wider Baptist Community
Westbourne Park Baptist Church has chosen to covenant with the Baptist Union of Great Britain (BUGB) and its member churches and organisations. Therefore, BUGB's Declaration of Principle, Vision and Culture all inform our ethos as a Baptist church.

The Declaration of Principle
The three-part 'Declaration of Principle' forms the basis of understanding for all who belong to the Baptist Union and Westbourne Park Baptist Church affirms this declaration prayerfully and wholeheartedly:

1. That our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, God manifest in the flesh, is the sole and absolute authority in all matters pertaining to faith and practice, as revealed in the Holy Scriptures, and that each Church has liberty, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to interpret and administer His laws.

2. That Christian Baptism is the immersion in water into the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, of those who have professed repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ who 'died for our sins according to the Scriptures; was buried, and rose again the third day'.

3. That it is the duty of every disciple to bear personal witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and to take part in the evangelisation of the world.

Baptist Union of Great Britain Vision and Culture
BUGB is committed to intentionally developing a culture where we are "Growing healthy churches in relationship for God's mission". This means we:

Seek to be a movement of spirit led communities – As those who have encountered the living Christ, to intentionally seek his will and purpose for our local churches and every expression of our shared life. (Galatians 5:22-25)

Feel like one team – celebrating diversity; valuing, respecting and trusting each other as we work together in partnerships - making sure everyone feels included and listened to. (I Corinthians 12:24b-27)

Embrace adventure – being serious about discipleship, willing to take risks, pioneer and move out of the comfort zone of familiar ways of doing things. (Matthew 28:18-20)

Inspire others – with a generosity of spirit, to energise and motivate people to be all that God created them to be. (Ephesians 5:1 & 2)

Share a hunger for God's coming kingdom – nurturing a 'holy discontent' that arises from our desire to give practical expression to our vision of God's purpose for creation - confronting evil, injustice and hypocrisy and challenging worldly attitudes to power, wealth, status and security both within and beyond our Union. (Matthew 6:9 & 10)

3. Our Values and/or Vision Statement
As a church we have discerned this purpose statement specifically for our mission and ministry, complemented by the Vision and Culture of The Baptist Union of Great Britain.

Our purpose is to build God's Kingdom, wherever we are, by loving God and loving people.

Together (as discerned at our Church Meeting 12th March 2025) we understand this to mean:

Building God's kingdom involves living out Christian values, and being a positive influence in society through service, sharing the gospel, and modelling godly behavior. This is demonstrated by nurturing relationships, caring for creation, and encouraging each other in our faith.

The 'wherever we are' is a person's "frontline" and refers to a person's everyday environment—such as work, home, school, or community spaces —where we have opportunities to live out our Christian faith and impact others.

Loving God is expressed through prayer, worship, obedience, dependence, gratitude, and prioritising His kingdom in daily life. It involves serving others, studying His Word, practicing humility, and nurturing relationships within the church and community.

We express love for people both individually and as a church, emphasising kindness, respect, prayer, support, hospitality, and community involvement. This highlights the importance of sharing the gospel, being empathetic, forgiving, and serving others through generosity and outreach.

4. Statement of Beliefs
In recognition of the Baptist principle that each church has liberty, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to interpret and administer the laws of Jesus Christ, and following the ethos outlined above, Westbourne Park Baptist Church has discerned and agreed to hold to the following theological convictions.

General Theological Statement of Faith (Evangelical Alliance 2023)

We believe in...

1. The one true God who lives eternally in three persons - the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

2. The love, grace and sovereignty of God in creating, sustaining, ruling, redeeming and judging the world.

3. The divine inspiration and supreme authority of the Old and New Testament Scriptures, which are the written Word of God-fully trustworthy for faith and conduct.

4. The dignity of all people, made male and female in God's image to love, be holy and care for creation, yet corrupted by sin, which incurs divine wrath and judgement.

5. The incarnation of God's eternal Son, the Lord Jesus Christ - born of the Virgin Mary; truly divine and truly human, yet without sin.

6. The atoning sacrifice of Christ on the cross: dying in our place, paying the price of sin and defeating evil, so reconciling us with God.

7. The bodily resurrection of Christ, the first fruits of our resurrection; His ascension to the Father, and His reign and mediation as the only Saviour of the world.

8. The justification of sinners solely by the grace of God through faith in Christ.

9. The ministry of God the Holy Spirit, who leads us to repentance, unites us with Christ through new birth, empowers our discipleship, and enables our witness.

10.The Church, the body of Christ both local and universal, the priesthood of all believers is given life by the Spirit and endowed with the Spirit's gifts to worship God and proclaim the gospel, promoting justice and love.

11.The personal and visible return of Jesus Christ to fulfil the purposes of God, who will raise all people to judgement, bring eternal life to the redeemed and eternal condemnation to the lost, and establish a new heaven and new earth.

Specific Statements

Marriage & Divorce
WPBC holds to the understanding that neither divorce or remarriage are necessarily barriers to church leadership or full participation in the life of the church.

Women in Leadership
WPBC holds to the view that God created women and men equal in personhood and that He calls and equally affirms both men and women into a vast array of roles, including all forms of church leadership.

Sexual Orientation & Same-Sex Marriage
WPBC holds to the understanding that while sexual orientation in and of itself is no barrier to full participation in the life of the church, sexual relationships can only be expressed in marriage which we recognise as being between a man and a woman. This theological position does not allow those who are not celibate outside of marriage or those in a same-sex marriage to be appointed to leadership positions in the life of the church.

The Ethos Statement was agreed by the Church Membership at a Church Meeting on the 20th July 2025.

Review Date: July 2028