

WEPC Statement on Emergency Preparedness

Arise, O LORD; O God, lift up your hand;
forget not the afflicted.
Why does the wicked renounce God
and say in his heart, “You will not call to account”?
But you do see, for you note mischief and vexation,
that you may take it into your hands;
to you the helpless commits himself;
you have been the helper of the fatherless.
Break the arm of the wicked and evildoer;
call his wickedness to account till you find none.
The LORD is king forever and ever;
the nations perish from his land.
O LORD, you hear the desire of the afflicted;
you will strengthen their heart; you will incline your ear
to do justice to the fatherless and the oppressed,
so that man who is of the earth may strike terror no more.

Psalm 10:12-18 (ESV)

“Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.”

Hebrews 13:20-21 (ESV)

For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come. And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

Ephesians 1:15-23 (ESV)

I will never forget your precepts, for by them you have given me life.

Psalm 119:93 (ESV)

Mission Statement:

Natural disasters can occur at anytime, and random acts of violence are just that-random and unpredictable. When we are tempted to anxiousness, we should remind ourselves of the truth found in Scripture. The purpose of this document is to reflect on what Scripture says about our identity in Christ, and to encourage and exhort both the leaders of West End Presbyterian Church and members of the congregation.

Our God is sovereign, and His ways are unknowable.¹ Scripture tells us that God is mindful of us, that He loves us, and is at work for our good.² God loves us, is for us, and transforms us, so that we can be beacons of light in the world.³

Sin is in us and all around us, and the heart of man is inherently evil.⁴ The Psalmist repeatedly declares the protection of the Lord.⁵ So, in faith, we should cry out to the Lord and acknowledge that in Him alone we will find strength, justice, and rest.⁶

The Spirit of God, given to us by Jesus, dwells in us and equips us to do His work, which includes peacemaking, to His glory.⁷

Elders and Deacons have been entrusted with God's Church, and to serve God's people.⁸ To that end, acknowledging all of these truths, and having a desire to properly shepherd and care for this particular church, what follows are some practical thoughts and guidelines on safety.

Objective:

To establish and provide guidelines on emergency preparedness, in order that all members of, and visitors to, West End Presbyterian Church (WEPC) have a safe and comfortable environment in which to worship and build community.

Scope:

These guidelines apply to all activities that occur on WEPC property. This includes, but is not limited to, Sunday worship services, child and adult Sunday school classes, youth activities, women's and men's ministry events, ESL classes, neighborhood outreach activities, and non-WEPC activities that have been previously approved for use of WEPC property.

The goal of this document is to provide clear guidelines on how to act in the event of an emergency on WEPC property, including under whose authority certain guidelines are to take place. A clear designation of authority will be addressed, in order to ensure that individuals are identified who are ultimately responsible for decision making and operational coordination, in the event of an emergency.

Further consideration may need to be done at a later date, to determine when and how often supplemental training of church officers and volunteers needs to occur, and whether or not a testing schedule is necessary to evaluate the guidelines.

Designation of Authority:

In the event of an emergency, we want to be clear and purposeful in designating an obvious authority, responsible for decision making, for the various times events occur on WEPC property.

- On Sunday mornings, final decisions are made by the Deacons of the Month (DOMs).
- On WEPC-related ministry events, final decisions are made by the Identified ministry leader.
- When a non-WEPC ministry applies for use of WEPC property, part of the approval process will require the designation of a decision-making leader.

Identified Emergencies:

1. Earthquake
2. Hurricane/Tornado
3. Fire
4. Severe Weather (cold/power outage)
5. Medical Emergency
6. Bomb Threat
7. Suspicious persons

Earthquake Guidelines:

In the event that an earthquake occurs during a service or ministry event, please observe the following guidelines:

If you are inside:

1. Drop
 - a. Kneel under a desk or table
 - b. If there are not enough sturdy pieces of furniture to get under, kneel next to an interior wall away from windows, overhead light fixtures, and tall pieces of furniture that might fall over.
2. Cover
 - a. Cover your head and face with your hands.
 - b. Face away from windows and bend your head close to your knees.
 - c. Stay under cover until the shaking stops (at least one minute).
3. Hold
 - a. If applicable, hold on to the table or desk leg (if your “shelter” moves, move with it).

If you are outside:

1. Move into the open
 - a. Move into an open area, away from buildings, fences, trees, wires, streetlights, etc.
2. Drop
 - a. Kneel or sit on the ground.
3. Cover
 - a. Cover your head and face with your hands.
 - b. Once in the open, stay there and cover until the shaking stops.

Once the earthquake is over, wait for further instructions on evacuation from the designated authority.

Hurricane/Tornado Guidelines:

Given the current availability of weather forecasting and alerts, it is unlikely that we would be caught by surprise by a hurricane. Even the threat of a tornado would likely be preceded by some forewarning. However, in the event that a hurricane or tornado occurs during a service or ministry event, please observe the following guidelines:

If you are inside:

1. Deacons and Elders, if upstairs, proceed to the Nursery desk to assist. If downstairs, proceed to the Sunday school rooms to assist.
2. Sunday School Teachers and Helpers, Nursery Room Leaders and Helpers
 - a. Line up class and confirm with sign in clipboard.
 - b. Take sign in clipboard with you.
 - c. When possible, an adult should be at both the start and end of the line.
 - d. Move quickly to an interior room.
 - i. If upstairs (and don't have time to get downstairs), move to rooms 160 and 162.
 - ii. If downstairs (or able to get downstairs), move to rooms 20 and 22.
 - e. Once in the new location, take roll.
 - f. Report to Sunday School Director or Nursery Coordinator that all children are accounted for.
 - g. Keep children quiet and calm.
3. Sunday School Director and Nursery Coordinator
 - a. Make sure all nurseries/Sunday school rooms are empty and close the doors.

If you are outside:

1. Proceed immediately inside and follow the inside guidelines above.

Once the hurricane or tornado is over, wait for further instructions on evacuation from the designated authority.

Fire

These guidelines provide for a safe and rapid evacuation of the sanctuary, classrooms, and nurseries in the event of a fire inside the building. In the event of a fire outside the building, on WEPC property, the designated authority will decide whether implementation of these guidelines is necessary.

1. Initial Phase
 - a. Alarm is to be activated if not already active.
 - b. Pastor will instruct individuals in sanctuary on what to do.
 - c. Church members and visitors are to proceed to the nearest safe exit. Exit pathways, posted in each room, are to be followed.
 - d. Persons who need assistance are to exit through the front exit walkways with assistance from elders.
 - e. Elders are to help direct individuals out of the building by going to an exit, staircase, and elevator, and verbally and physically directing and assisting individuals to the exits and to the assigned holding area at the lower area of the parking lot adjacent to Nottingham Green.
2. Evacuation of minors
 - a. Parents are encouraged to proceed to the nearest safe exit, and meet their children at the assigned holding area at the lower area of the parking lot adjacent to Nottingham Green.
 - i. It is the responsibility of all childcare workers to ensure that all children leave the building safely.
 - ii. If parents insist, they can report to their child's room and assist in getting all of the children to the holding area.
 - iii. To ensure that all the children have been accounted for, parents must wait with their child in the holding area until a leader has released them (see guidelines below.)
 - b. Nursery guidelines
 - i. Deacons that are not on DOM duty are to report to the nursery coordinator to assist with child transport as needed.
 - ii. The Nursery Coordinator is to provide direction to nursery workers and to coordinate deacons coming to assist.
 - iii. Nursery workers are to begin transporting children outside, bringing with them the sign-in clipboard, with at least one worker from each class remaining to account for all children still inside.
 - iv. The last Nursery worker to leave the room will ensure all people are out, and will close the door.
 - v. The nursery coordinator is to confirm no children remain inside.
 - vi. The Children's Ministry Director or, if the Children's Ministry Director is unavailable, a member of the pastoral staff is to account for all nursery-age children at the assigned holding area at the lower area of the parking lot adjacent to Nottingham Green.
 - c. Sunday School / Youth guidelines

- i. Sunday school teachers are to exit the building with their class, bringing with them the sign-in clipboard.
 - ii. The last volunteer to leave the room will ensure all people are out, and will close the door.
 - iii. Sunday School Director is to confirm no children remain inside.
 - iv. The Children's Ministry Director or Youth Director is to account for all Sunday School age children at the assigned holding area at the lower area of the parking lot adjacent to Nottingham Green.
3. Resolution Phase
 - a. Deacons of the month should check the gym, library, fellowship hall, kitchen, upstairs and downstairs bathrooms, chapel, and office area for anyone still inside the building that may need assistance.
 - b. Once each room is empty, deacons are to shut, not lock, the door.
 - c. Deacons of the month should be last to leave the building.
 - d. Holding Area: All officers, parents, and children are to go to, and wait in, the assigned holding area which is the lower area of the parking lot adjacent to Nottingham Green.
 - e. All leaders are to remain until every child is accounted for.

Severe Weather

In the event that severe weather causes a power outage or otherwise prevents comfortable use of the building, a member of the church staff in coordination with the designated authority will decide on whether or not to close the building and for how long. Notification will take place by email and information on reopening will be provided.

Medical Emergency

Anyone who becomes aware of a church member or visitor that has encountered a medical emergency should immediately call 911, followed by notifying a deacon of the month, church staff member, or other church officer.

Bomb Threat

If you receive a phone call with a bomb threat,

1. Keep the caller on the phone as long as possible, gathering as much information as possible.
2. Try to keep as calm as possible, in order to avoid any panic on either of your parts.
3. Complete as much as possible of the bomb threat checklist (Appendix A)
4. Notify other members of the church staff, or, if the threat is received on a Sunday morning, deacons of the month ASAP.

Suspicious persons

Any suspicious activity should be reported to a WEPC staff member or church officer immediately. Staff members should in turn notify the deacons of the month, who will serve as the designated authority if escalation is required.

Greeters are to remain alert for church members or visitors whose behavior appears inconsistent with arriving for the purpose of worship. Greeters should always exercise caution and, whenever possible, should maintain a plural presence at each door. Greeters should engage suspicious individuals in friendly conversation to determine the nature of their visit. If a greeter is uncomfortable with this, or when this is not possible due to other activity, greeters should notify the deacons of the month, who will engage the individual in conversation.

Active Shooter

If an altercation takes place, weapons are brandished, or shots are fired, the main concern is protection of church members and visitors, volunteer workers, and children. **Law enforcement has recommended a policy of Run, Hide, or Fight. If you are away from the immediate threat, getting out as quickly as possible is the best response (RUN). If getting out is not possible, or could lead to increased risk, barricading in a secure room and staying quiet is the best response (HIDE). As a last resort, if getting out or barricading is not possible, attack the threat (FIGHT).** Which of these methods is chosen is situation dependent, and cannot be answered in a document.

When a hostile individual is actively causing deadly harm, or the threat of deadly harm is imminent, the following guidelines should be followed:

1. **Run** – When possible, and when you are certain it will not increase the risk of deadly harm, get out of the building.
2. **Hide** – Turn off all lights in the room, lock the door, and stay away from the doors and windows. Be as quiet as possible. Remain where you are until informed by police or a church officer that it is safe to move. (see Lockdown below).
3. **Fight** – As a last resort, use whatever is available as a weapon such as a fire extinguisher, chair, etc., to defend yourself and to stop the attacker.

Be aware:

1. If communication is available, call 911 immediately and provide as much information as possible about the shooter(s) physical appearance (height, weight, hair color, race, type/color of clothing) and the exit the shooter is in closest proximity of (upstairs/downstairs, northwest/southwest side of building, nearest playground, etc.)
2. Do not stay in open areas.
3. Do not sound the fire alarm.

4. Where possible, lock windows and doors, and close blinds or curtains.
5. Stay away from all windows.
6. Turn off all lights and audio equipment.
7. Try to stay as calm and quiet as possible.

Lockdown ("Hide")

In the case of an intruder in the building, a local civil disturbance, and shooter in the area or on the premises, the designated authority may declare a lockdown. The following guidelines address what to do if a lockdown announcement is made. These guidelines are also helpful if you decide to hide (Run, Hide, Fight) in the case of a hostile individual actively causing deadly harm, or the threat of deadly harm is imminent.

1. Initial Phase
 - a. The person responsible for making a decision on whether or not to lock down the building will come from the Designation of Authority guidelines above. If a lock down decision has been made, initial notification will go through the emergency SMS thread that includes DOMs and church staff. Follow up notification will occur as follows:
 - i. DOMs will be responsible for notifying the Nursery Coordinator, and anyone in the Fellowship Hall, Library, Gym, or any Sunday School classroom downstairs. The P.A. system may be used.
 - ii. Church Staff will be responsible for notifying anyone in the Church Office area, Chapel, and the Pastoral staff in the Sanctuary.
2. Lock Down
 - a. If Inside the building:
 - Nursery workers and Sunday school teachers/helpers will clear the hallways.
 - Nursery workers and Sunday school teachers/helpers will clear the hall bathrooms.
 - Lock nursery/classroom doors.
 - If available, pull shade over door window.
 - Turn off lights.
 - Sit the children in the safest possible location in nursery/classroom.
 - Stay as quiet and still as possible.
 - Use furniture to hide behind if necessary.
 - Report to nursery coordinator or Sunday school director if any children are missing.
 - Do not allow anyone outside the nursery/classroom.
 - Ignore all alarms.
 - b. If outside the building and the threat is in the building (*i.e.* your class is at the playground)
 - i. Quickly move away from the building
 - a. If you are in the playground area, move toward the Quioccasin Station Shopping Center parking lot (Arby's)
 - b. If you are on the opposite side of the building, move toward the designated holding area as noted the Fire guidelines, section 3.d.
 - ii. Report to nursery coordinator or Sunday school director if any children are missing.
 - c. If outside the building and the threat is in the area
 - i. Quickly move inside the building and follow the guidelines above.
3. Resolution Phase
 - a. Lock down will remain active until local authorities advise the church staff and church officers that it can be lifted.

- b. Nursery workers and Sunday school teachers/helpers will keep classes in lock down until notified by a law enforcement officer, church staff, or church officer.

Appendix A

Bomb Threat Checklist Form:

Log Call
<input type="checkbox"/> 1. Date reported:
<input type="checkbox"/> 2. Time reported:
<input type="checkbox"/> 3. How reported:
<input type="checkbox"/> 4. Exact words of caller: _____ _____ _____ _____
Ask Questions
<input type="checkbox"/> 5. When is bomb going to explode?
<input type="checkbox"/> 6. Where is bomb right now?
<input type="checkbox"/> 7. What kind of bomb is it?
<input type="checkbox"/> 8. What does it look like?
<input type="checkbox"/> 9. Why did you place the bomb?
<input type="checkbox"/> 10. Where are you calling from?
Identify Characteristics
<input type="checkbox"/> 11. Description of caller's voice: <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Young <input type="checkbox"/> Middle Age <input type="checkbox"/> Old <input type="checkbox"/> Accent
<input type="checkbox"/> 12. Tone of voice: <input type="checkbox"/> Intoxicated <input type="checkbox"/> Speech problem <input type="checkbox"/> Hostile
<input type="checkbox"/> 13. Background noise:
<input type="checkbox"/> 14. Time caller hung up:
<input type="checkbox"/> 15. Remarks: _____ _____
Recipient
<input type="checkbox"/> 16. Name of recipient:
<input type="checkbox"/> 17. Address of recipient:
<input type="checkbox"/> 18. Phone number of recipient

¹ **WCF 5-1:** "God, the great Creator of all things doth uphold, direct, dispose, and govern all creatures, actions, and things, from the greatest even to the least, by his most wise and holy providence, according to his infallible foreknowledge, and the free and immutable counsel of his own will, to the praise and the glory of his wisdom, power, justice, goodness, and mercy."

Job 26:14: "Behold, these are but the outskirts of his ways, and how small a whisper do we hear of him! But the thunder of his power who can understand?"

Psalms 139:1-6: "O Lord, you have searched me and known me! You know when I sit down and when I rise up; You discern my thoughts from afar. You search out my path and my lying down, And are acquainted with all my ways. Even before a word is on my tongue, Behold, O Lord, you know it altogether. You hem me in, behind and before, And lay your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; It is high; I cannot attain it."

Isaiah 45:7: "I form light and create darkness, I make well-being and create calamity, I am the Lord, who does all these things."

1 Corinthians 8:6: "Yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist."

Romans 11:36: "For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen."

Colossians 1:16-17: "For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities – all things were created through him and for him."

WCF 5-3: "God, in his ordinary providence, maketh use of means, yet is free to work without, above, and against them, at his pleasure."

² **Psalms 8:4:** "What is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?"

Psalms 115:12-13: "The Lord has remembered us; he will bless us; he will bless the house of Israel; he will bless the house of Aaron; he will bless those who fear the Lord, both the small and the great."

Matthew 16:18: "And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

Luke 15:20: "And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him."

Romans 8:28: "And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose."

³ **Ezekiel 36:26a:** "And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you."

Matthew 5:14: "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden."

John 3:16: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."

Romans 8:1-2: "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death."

Romans 8:31, 37-39: "What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?... No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Romans 12:2: "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."

Ephesians 4:23-24: "and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness."

Philippians 2:15: "That you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world."

⁴ **Genesis 6:5:** "The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."

Jeremiah 17:9: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?"

Proverbs 20:9: "Who can say, 'I have made my heart pure; I am clean from my sin'?"

Matthew 15:19: "For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander."

Romans 3:10-11: "As it is written: 'None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one.'"

Romans 3:23: "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

Romans 7:18: "For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out."

1 John 1:8: "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."

⁵ **Psalm 23:4:** "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me, your rod and your staff, they comfort me."

Psalm 32:7: "You are a hiding place for me; you preserve me from trouble; you surround me with shrouds of deliverance."

Psalm 34:7, 17-19: "The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him, and delivers them... When the righteous cry for help, the Lord hears and delivers them out of all their troubles. The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit. Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of them all."

Psalm 91:1-2: "He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say to the Lord, "My refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust."

Psalm 121:1-2,7-8: "I lift my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth... The Lord will keep you from all evil; he will keep your life."

⁶ **Psalm 17:8-9:** "Keep me as the apple of your eye; hide me in the shadow of your wings, from the wicked who do me violence, me deadly enemies who surround me."

Psalm 39:7: "And now, O Lord, for what do I wait? My hope is in you."

Psalm 46:1: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."

Psalm 61:1-4: "Hear my cry, O God, listen to my prayer; from the end of the earth I call to you when my heart is faint. Lead me to the rock that is higher than I, for you have been my refuge, a strong tower against the enemy. Let me dwell in your tent forever! Let me take refuge under the shelter of your wings!"

Proverbs 18:10: "The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous man runs to it and is safe."

Matthew 12:18: "Behold, my servant whom I have chosen, my beloved with whom my soul is well pleased. I will put my Spirit upon him, and he will proclaim justice to the Gentiles."

⁷ **Matthew 5:9:** "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God."

John 14:16-17: "And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you."

Romans 12:18: "If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all."

1 Corinthians 3:16: "Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?"

2 Corinthians 10:31: "So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."

Ephesians 2:10: "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."

Colossians 3:23: "Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men."

Hebrews 13:20-21: "Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen."

⁸ **1 Corinthians 12:28:** "And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues."

Ephesians 4:11-13: "And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."

Titus 1:9: "He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it."

1 Peter 5:1-3: "So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock."