

BECOMING WHOLE AND HOLY PERSONS: A COVENANT FOR LIFE TOGETHER AT BETHEL

Community covenant

As a Christ-centered learning community, Bethel University seeks to develop whole and holy persons for leadership, scholarship, and service. Our community reflects diverse lived experiences, Christian faith traditions, cultures, and beliefs. As a university with pietistic and irenic roots, Bethel is uniquely positioned to peaceably engage the complexity of differences with a central focus on Jesus. Therefore, we make the following commitments, rooted in Bethel's understanding of the Bible and its authority for faith and life, and our goals for education at Bethel and within our community.

We Commit to:

Seek truth

As followers of Jesus, we view the pursuit of truth as a special calling. We commit ourselves to excellence, integrity, and humility in the work that lies at the heart of our life together: learning, teaching, and scholarship. We value study that advances our understanding of God and His creation, and that equips us with particular expertise to serve others. We seek to integrate faith and learning in all types of study as we live out the call to be God's representatives in this world, exercising creativity and intellect in advancing His purposes for all creation¹.

Grow as whole and holy persons

Because Jesus commands his followers to love God with their hearts, souls, minds, and strength², the goal of a Bethel education is the transformation of the whole person. We strive to grow in knowledge and wisdom—learning to live carefully rather than thoughtlessly conforming to the patterns of this world³. We yearn to become whole and holy, persons of integrity whose character resembles that of Jesus. We cultivate the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control⁴ and seek to fix our eyes on Jesus, throwing off sins that so easily entangle. We strive to live out the renewal of our minds by loving what is good and hating what is evil⁵. And we recognize that worship, fellowship, spiritual nurture, and service are all essential to our growth in holiness.

Live well in community

Like the larger body of Christ, our community depends on the interdependence of its diverse members⁶. We commit to learn with and from one another, to share our gifts and talents, seeking to understand each other's perspectives, and to offer mutual encouragement and support. We commit to mutual respect and promise keeping. We reject behaviors that are destructive of community; and where relationships are broken, we commit to the accountability, forgiveness, and grace required for healing. At times, we must follow the biblical mandate to sacrifice our individual liberty for the good of the community⁷. When differences arise, we will choose the course that demands greater personal restraint and self-discipline and strive to resolve those differences graciously and justly.

Value life and steward God's creation (living as image bearers)

We believe that God made men and women in His image to care for His good creation⁸, and that God redeems and restores a world that fell into sin⁹. We strive to do justice and love kindness in a fallen world that too often erodes peoples' inherent worth and dignity¹⁰. Thus we value all human beings, as fellow image bearers, worthy of respect, honor, and dignity. We further recognize that in the new creation for which we strive, people from every nation, tribe, people, and language will be united in worship of Christ¹¹, so we endeavor to reflect that unity in our community. We commit to being good stewards of God's creation—entrusted to our care¹²; to use natural resources wisely, to make choices that promote the physical, emotional, and mental health of ourselves and others¹³; to care for the

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marginalized both locally and globally¹⁴; and to use our time, abilities, and resources for God's glory and our neighbor's good.

¹ Genesis 1:26-28

² Luke 10:27-28

³ Romans 12:2

⁴ Galatians 5:19-23

⁵ Amos 5:15; Isaiah 5:20

⁶ I Corinthians 12:12-31

⁷ Romans 14:1-23; I Corinthians 6:12, 10:23-24

⁸ Genesis 1:26-28, 2:15

⁹ Romans 8:19-22

¹⁰ Psalms 139:13-16

¹¹ Revelation 7:9-10

¹² Genesis 1:28, 2:15

¹³ I Corinthians 6:19

¹⁴ Exodus 22:22; Deuteronomy 10:18; James 1:27