

AN AFFIRMATION OF OUR FAITH

When **traditional undergraduate** and **seminary students** enroll at Bethel University, they profess their personal and genuine faith in Jesus Christ. As part of this, they sign Bethel University's Covenant for Life Together. The Covenant for Life Together reflects Bethel's commitment to living as a Christ-centered learning community. Rooted in biblical truth and shaped by our irenic spirit and pietistic heritage, it outlines how we seek truth, grow as whole and holy persons, live well in community, and steward life as image bearers of God.

Traditional Undergraduate Students

1. **The Word of God.** We believe that the Bible is the Word of God, fully inspired and without error in the original manuscripts, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and that it has supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct.
2. **The Trinity.** We believe that there is one living and true God, eternally existing in three persons, that these are equal in every divine perfection, and that they execute distinct but harmonious offices in the work of creation, providence, and redemption.
3. **God the Father.** We believe in God the Father, an infinite, personal spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power, and love. We believe that He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of each person, that He hears and answers prayer, and that He saves from sin and death all who come to Him through Jesus Christ.
4. **Jesus Christ.** We believe in Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son, conceived by the Holy Spirit. We believe in His virgin birth, sinless life, miracles, and teachings. We believe in His substitutionary atoning death, bodily resurrection, ascension into heaven, perpetual intercession for His people, and personal visible return to earth.
5. **The Holy Spirit.** We believe in the Holy Spirit who came forth from the Father and Son to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, and to regenerate, sanctify, and empower all who believe in Jesus Christ. We believe that the Holy Spirit indwells every believer in Christ, and that He is an abiding helper, teacher, and guide.
6. **Regeneration.** We believe that all people are sinners by nature and by choice and are, therefore, under condemnation. We believe that those who repent of their sins and trust in Jesus Christ as Savior are regenerated by the Holy Spirit.
7. **The Church.** We believe in the universal church, a living spiritual body of which Christ is the head and all regenerated persons are members. We believe in the local church, consisting of a company of believers in Jesus Christ, baptized on a credible profession of faith, and associated for worship, work, and fellowship. We believe that God has laid upon the members of the local church the primary task of giving the gospel of Jesus Christ to a lost world.
8. **Christian Conduct.** We believe that Christians should live for the glory of God and the well-being of others; that their conduct should be blameless before the world; that they should be faithful stewards of their possessions; and that they should seek to realize for themselves and others the full stature of maturity in Christ.
9. **The Ordinances.** We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ has committed two ordinances to the local church: baptism and the Lord's Supper. We believe that Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water into the name of the triune God. We believe that the Lord's Supper was instituted by Christ for commemoration of His death. We believe that these two ordinances should be observed and administered until the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.
10. **Religious Liberty.** We believe that every human being has direct relations with God, and is responsible to God alone in all matters of faith; that each church is independent and must be free from interference by any ecclesiastical or political authority; that therefore church and state must be kept separate as having different functions, each fulfilling its duties free from dictation or patronage of the other.

11. **Church Cooperation.** We believe that local churches can best promote the cause of Jesus Christ by cooperating with one another in a denominational organization. Such an organization, whether a regional or district conference, exists and functions by the will of the churches. Cooperation in a conference is voluntary and may be terminated at any time. Churches may likewise cooperate with interdenominational fellowships on a voluntary, independent basis.
12. **The Last Things.** We believe in the personal and visible return of the Lord Jesus Christ to earth and the establishment of His kingdom. We believe in the resurrection of the body, the final judgment, the eternal felicity of the righteous, and the endless suffering of the wicked.

Seminary Students

1. **The Word of God.** We believe that the Bible is the Word of God, fully inspired and without error in the original manuscripts, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and that it has supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct.
2. **The Trinity.** We believe that there is one living and true God, eternally existing in three persons, that these are equal in every divine perfection, and that they execute distinct but harmonious offices in the work of creation, providence, and redemption.
3. **God the Father.** We believe in God the Father, an infinite personal spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power, and love. We believe that He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of each person, that He hears and answers prayer, and that He saves from sin and death all who come to Him through Jesus Christ.
4. **Jesus Christ.** We believe in Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son, conceived by the Holy Spirit. We believe in His virgin birth, sinless life, miracles, and teachings. We believe in His substitutionary atoning death, bodily resurrection, ascension into heaven, perpetual intercession for His people, and personal visible return to earth.
5. **The Holy Spirit.** We believe in the Holy Spirit who came forth from the Father and Son to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, and to regenerate, sanctify, and empower all who believe in Jesus Christ. We believe that the Holy Spirit indwells every believer in Christ, and that He is an abiding helper, teacher, and guide.
6. **Regeneration.** We believe that all people are sinners by nature and by choice and are, therefore, under condemnation. We believe that those who repent of their sins and trust in Jesus Christ as Savior are regenerated by the Holy Spirit.
7. **The Church.** We believe in the universal church, a living spiritual body of which Christ is the head and all regenerated persons are members. We believe in the local church, consisting of a company of believers in Jesus Christ, baptized on a credible profession of faith, and associated for worship, work, and fellowship. We believe that God has laid upon the members of the local church the primary task of giving the gospel of Jesus Christ to a lost world.
8. **Christian Conduct.** We believe that Christians should live for the glory of God and the well-being of others; that their conduct should be blameless before the world; that they should be faithful stewards of their possessions; and that they should seek to realize for themselves and others the full stature of maturity in Christ.
9. **The Ordinances.** We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ has committed two ordinances to the local church: baptism and the Lord's Supper. We believe that Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water into the name of the triune God. We believe that the Lord's Supper was instituted by Christ for commemoration of His death. We believe that these two ordinances should be observed and administered until the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

10. **Religious Liberty.** We believe that every human being has direct relations with God and is responsible to God alone in all matters of faith; that each church is independent and must be free from interference by any ecclesiastical or political authority; that therefore, Church and State must be kept separate as having different functions, each fulfilling its duties free from dictation or patronage of the other.
11. **Church Cooperation.** We believe that local churches can best promote the cause of Jesus Christ by cooperating with one another in a denominational organization. Such an organization, whether a regional or district conference, exists and functions by the will of the churches. Cooperation in a conference is voluntary and may be terminated at any time. Churches may likewise cooperate with interdenominational fellowships on a voluntary basis.
12. **The Last Things.** We believe in the personal and visible return of the Lord Jesus Christ to earth and the establishment of His kingdom. We believe in the resurrection of the body, the final judgment, the eternal felicity of the righteous, and the endless suffering of the wicked.

Doctrinal Position

Theological studies at Bethel are set within the framework of historic evangelical theology, such as the reliability of the Scriptures as the authority for Christian living and church order; the depravity of humanity, making divine redemption necessary through personal regeneration; the virgin-born Christ as the incarnate Redeemer; the vicariously atoning death of Jesus Christ; the historicity of the resurrection; and the certainty of the return of Christ. We combine the continuing foundational truths of evangelicalism with the best insights of contemporary thought. While preserving our own distinctive theology, there is healthy interaction of faculty and students with the larger ecumenical world of theological discussion.

Spiritual Life

Individuals who are called into Christian ministry are called to continually pursue their own spiritual growth so that their ongoing study, prayer, and experience contributes to their ministry to others. Each student must examine his or her own ways of providing for this growth. We expect students to participate in corporate and individual, inward and outward, Christian disciplines and service. Their choices will vary depending on individual maturity in Christ, the call of God in their lives, their church fellowship, and expectations of the seminary for the development of ministering persons.

Reflecting on these goals as well as goals of their own, students should plan, semester by semester, how they will attend to these priorities and seek to be accountable for their intentions. Many opportunities are available to students for spiritual formation. They include:

- Classes
- Chapel programs with emphasis on worship and becoming a whole, holy community, praise, or scriptural challenge
- Retreats for the whole seminary community, for couples, and for singles
- Prayer groups
- Days of prayer
- Women's organizations
- Periodic seminars on caring, time and stress management, and finances
- Personal one-day retreats
- Small special interest groups
- Appointments with special visitors to campus

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- Referrals to spiritual directors and/or therapists who practice from a Christian framework
- Connection with a faculty mentor.

All aspects of life at Bethel Seminary are intended to be part of the student's ongoing growth in relationship with God, including academic study and a life of prayer and service. The call to be a student is a serious Christian commitment, no less spiritual than aspects considered to be devotional. It is expected that students enter into all aspects of life at Bethel as "unto God."

Statement on Women and Men

With respect to women and men in our community, the faculty and staff of Bethel Seminary represent a range of positions on the issue of how we may best interpret biblical passages regarding gender roles in the church and home. Nonetheless, we are all committed to cultivating a supportive and affirming climate for women called to all levels of ministry leadership and ordination. We are committed to principles that provide all students (1) a rich theological education, (2) equal opportunities to engage with faculty and receive professional development, and (3) faculty and staff who operate with conduct that creates a climate of Christian care and concern that undergirds the well-being of everyone and respects and affirms the imago Dei in all of us.

Furthermore, we recognize that our women students come from a wide variety of church backgrounds with different standards and practices concerning women in ministry. This can present unique challenges for women in seminary, especially when their sense of gifting or calling may not exactly coincide with the commitments of their home denomination or church community. We are committed to helping our women students navigate the spiritual, personal, and professional aspects of these challenges as best we can, and are also supportive of each person's individual quest for discernment.

Finally, we are committed to facilitating classroom environments characterized by mutual respect, where even as our efforts to be faithful may result in disagreements we may still "love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor" (Rom. 12:10). Not just in the classroom, but in all aspects of seminary life, we encourage and indeed expect both colleagues and students to exhibit loving care, mutual respect, and the presumption of equal value and honor.

Multiculturalism

Bethel does not discriminate against any worthy student on the basis of age, gender, race, color, ethnic or national origin, or physical disability. Bethel values diversity in its student body and strives to create an environment that welcomes all students, uniting them around a common allegiance to Jesus Christ. Students become equipped with the theological knowledge and ministry skills to address the kingdom concerns of personal salvation, reconciliation, and biblical justice.