



A GUIDE TO
Faith Formation
AT BETHEL



BETHEL
UNIVERSITY

Office of Christian Formation
and Church Relations



At Bethel University, we have a unique mission and model of faith formation. This is something we pursue together—students, staff, and faculty alike. As a community of faith in Jesus Christ, we covenant together in seeing this journey of faith formation through. Our desire is that you will gain a greater understanding of how faith formation happens and what is expected of you as a member of the Bethel community. The Office of Christian Formation and Church Relations (CFCR) is open and able to assist you in your journey to encounter Christ authentically and make His image your own.

**The mission of CFCR is
to equip the Bethel community
to live lives of
transformation as we
grow together into the
image of Christ.**

to equip

Deep and lasting spiritual growth happens through providing the Bethel Community with tools necessary for that growth. We strive to support and educate rather than indoctrinate.

to live lives

Formation into Christ's image is a process. It begins as we commit our lives to following Christ out of love for God and for one another. For those who pursue Christ, this is a daily commitment and a process that requires patience with self and others.

transformation

Since the day we were born, we have been formed into who we are today. Every decision made has brought us to where we are and who we are becoming. Formation will take place until we die. We, therefore, are in need of transformation—changing the trajectory of our formation into that of Christ, not of the world (Romans 12:1-2).

grow

Discipleship requires growth. We are never stagnant but always moving either toward or away from Christ. Therefore, we must grow in our ability and capacity to love God and one another. Growth means progress and intentionally engaging in the journey toward Christ.

image of Christ

Our goal is conformation into Christ's image. To enter into salvation means to enter into Christ. This means that we become the visible hands and feet of Christ as His Spirit indwells us in order that we might participate in living in unity and reconciliation within a hurt and broken world.

“For this reason, I kneel before the Father, from whom His whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of His glorious riches He may strengthen you with power through His Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us, to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever! Amen.”

—Ephesians 3:14-21

Faith Formation

All people are being formed into one of two types of persons: one is more hardened in their sinful nature, the other created into Christ's image. The former is becoming more selfish, the latter more sacrificial and loving. Christ-centered faith formation, then, is the process of conforming to the image of Christ. Transformation occurs when we shift our lives away from the self and redirect ourselves toward God.



**Transformation into
Christ's image is a holistic task,
engaging our hearts,
our minds,
and our bodies
to seek a life founded
on the principles of
the Gospel of Jesus Christ.**

our hearts

The heart is at the center of the Christian life. In the biblical understanding, the heart is the very center of a person. Our heart is our core, and out of our heart flows all of our traits and behaviors (Matthew 15:18). Our heart is the most fundamental thing about us, and it is our heart that is in need of transformation. When we seek only to transform our behavior, we become people who “honor God with our lips” but keep our “hearts far from [Him]” (Isaiah 29:13). Because our heart encompasses all of who we are, it can be said that our heart is our being. The question of identity is a question of the heart. Who are we? Where is our heart aligned? In what direction is it bent?

“Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.”

—Deuteronomy 6:5-9

our minds

The knowledge of God is not only about acquiring information, but also includes establishing an intimate connection to His being—knowing God and being known by Him.

In order to fully know God, we must engage in an exploration not only of His word, but also of His creation and all that exists. In this light, the classroom has a transformative goal.

The goal is that we engage in a renewing of our minds, and learn to make our study less about our own gain and more about someone else's. The shaping and renewing of our minds is a transformative task because the knowledge we gain and the experiences we have impact our hearts and form our spirits.

Will we study so that we might enjoy a paycheck and the connections we make? Or will we study so that we might be a conduit of change for God's Spirit and kingdom? How has our knowledge prompted us to move our hands?

“*At Bethel, we begin with the presupposition that God is Creator and Author of all that is, and it is our responsibility in science to explore how it all fits together. As a person who primarily teaches human anatomy and physiology, I normally use the word ‘design’ in reference to structures and processes, and we pause at times to consider how truly amazing it is that aspects of our shape and function can operate with such precision.*”

—Tim Shaw, Professor of Biology

our bodies

The work of our hands and our bodies is merely a byproduct of the heart within. “Every good tree bears good fruit...” (Matthew 7:17). A transformed heart asks the question: “In my current situation, what does it mean to love God and to love my neighbor?” The answer is not always easy to uncover or follow through on.

It is a question that we must learn to answer in the context of community. Love and being other-oriented are necessarily communal. When love is learned and developed in community, that love, by its very nature, will overflow.

Let us be a people who move our hands to mend a broken world because of the transformation of our hearts. Let us open our eyes to see the worth of every human person. Let us open our ears to hear those who silently cry for justice. Let us open our mouths to speak truth to a world that desperately needs it. May our feet always bring with them the gospel of peace. Let us be a people who take upon ourselves the cross and participate in the restoration of a fallen world. And let us be a people who take upon us the humble hands of Christ to serve all people; let us walk and dance to the movement of God's voice; let us be defined by the God who is love (1 John 4:8, 16).



Forming Faith in Community

We were created for community. We need each other (1 Corinthians 12). Nowhere is that more evident than in our faith formation. The Bethel community is an essential element of students' transformation into Christ's image. Whether through corporate worship in Chapel and Vespers, Bible studies with residence hall floormates, or service on a Spring Break mission trip—relationships are at the core of our formation as Christ's disciples. The body of Christ provides the accountability, the challenge, and the support we need in order to grow. CFCR offers a variety of opportunities to help you find community, which God will use to bring about the transformation of your heart, mind, and body into the image of Christ.

Chapel

As the focal point of spiritual life on Bethel's campus, Chapel provides opportunities for multicultural, corporate worship experiences through multiple avenues of expression. While Chapel attendance at Bethel is not required, it is strongly encouraged for students, staff, and faculty as part of a continued process of faith formation. At Chapel, you'll have the opportunity to worship alongside friends, classmates, professors, staff, and guests while being challenged to grow deeper in your faith.

Chapel Worship Arts

We believe that God has given us His gift of creativity and that we are to use this gift to worship and honor Him and to lead others to Him. The Chapel Worship Arts team is a group of artists who are passionate about their gifts. Whether through graphics, video, technical arts, drama, or dance, we are called to give God our very best. As artists, our job is to communicate clearly what is often felt vaguely—to make visible what was previously unseen.

Vespers

By definition, the name “Vespers” comes from an ecumenically historical discipline of “evening worship.” Currently, Vespers is held in Benson Great Hall on Sunday nights at 8 and 10 p.m.

Living The Questions/Youth Crew

Bethel's Youth Theology Institute creates space for students to grow as Truth-Seekers and World-Changers through dialogue, reflection, and service. This unique ministry focuses on programming for high school students and serving the local church. This ministry is supported by amazing Bethel students who seek to use their gifts and passion for youth, as they seek to follow God's calling.

Peer Empowerment Program (PEP)

PEP exists to support and contribute to the holistic growth and success of first-year students who come from underrepresented and underserved groups or backgrounds. Incoming students will connect with upper-classmen students who will give guidance and help first-year students navigate Bethel's campus life academically, socially, and spiritually.

Sankofa

Sankofa is a designed trip that focuses on racial reconciliation through a biblical lens. The term Sankofa is from west Africa and means, "Looking back to move forward." On this trip, we travel locally and regionally to engage and reflect on some of the painful history that America has caused to certain groups of people so that we as Christians can be more informed about the past and be equipped to make more informed and inclusive decisions. We believe that we are called to reconcile, not just with God but also with those around us.

Cultural Connection Center

In collaboration with the Office of Diversity and Intercultural Engagement, the Cultural Connection Center is a Christ-Centered and multicultural community designed to promote collaboration. The Cultural Connection Center is here to serve and support historically marginalized communities on campus and welcomes people who desire to develop in their intercultural competence to live out understanding, friendship, and shalom.

Solidarity Missions Partnerships (SMP)

Solidarity Missions Partnerships (SMP) sends students to learn, to serve, and to build relationships in partnership with God's people and God's work around the world. In teams, students go on mission to be engaged with a God who is actively working with all people, at all times, in all places. This is as much an exercise of discipleship as it is anything else. By that, we mean that to be a disciple of Christ is to be actively engaged in God's redemptive activity in the world.

Mu Kappa

Mu Kappa is a student organization of missionary kids (MKs), other third culture kids (TCKs), and international students. These students who grew up outside the United States have unique and beautiful cultural experiences and complex identities. They bring so much richness to the Bethel community! Mu Kappa provides a place for them to come together for understanding, support, community, and connection.

Bethel Buddies

Bethel Buddies is an on-campus program for youth ages 6-17 in partnership with Union Gospel Mission and Compassion Among Alliance Church. The program has three pillars: academics (tutoring), friendship (relational engagement), and discipleship (Christ-centered teaching and modeling). This one-on-one mentorship program is divided up developmentally between elementary children (ages 6-11) and middle school or older (ages 12-17).

Shift

Every week, first-year students in the residence halls are invited to join two upper class leaders for a small group on each first-year floor. The mission of Shift is to do life together with hopes of owning our faith. That is accomplished by developing close relationships and being vulnerable about our beliefs and experiences.

United Worship

Worship, especially musical worship, is an important component of the Bethel campus culture. We gather together three times each week for Chapel and every Sunday night for Vespers. The musical worship at each of these services is led by United Worship, a student-led team of incredible musicians and ministry minded leaders. Auditions for United take place each spring.

Prism

Students who identify as LGBTQ+ or same-sex attracted are invited to join a campus pastor and a few student leaders for a small group that seeks to encourage belonging, worthiness, and discipleship. Prism meets every other week.





ROYAL

21PACIFIC

BETHEL
ROYAL
SOFTBALL

Our Prayer:

May Bethel University be a place where the kingdom of God is not an exception but the norm.

May Bethel University be a great light on a hill, proclaiming loudly that God dwells here.

May Bethel University be a place that sends men and women out into a broken, hurting, and searching world to instill within it the great love and redemption of God.

May Bethel University be a place that is humble and quick to repent when we are wrong. May we be guided by the Spirit of God to teach, impact, shape, and establish men and women who are longing after the heart of God.

May we find comfort in His love and compassion in His Spirit.

May we be like-minded, having the same love and being one in spirit and in mind.

May we do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but rather, in humility, value one another above ourselves, not looking to our own interests but only to the interests of everyone around us (Philippians 2:1-4).

May we clothe ourselves in Christ. And may the Office of Christian Formation and Church Relations serve as a conduit for the work of God's Spirit in your life.

Heavenly Father, may You be glorified in and through this campus, its practices, and its people. Amen.



BETHEL
UNIVERSITY

Bethel's Mission

Boldly informed and motivated by the Christian faith, Bethel University educates and energizes men and women for excellence in leadership, scholarship, and service. We prepare graduates to serve in strategic capacities to renew minds, live out biblical truth, transform culture, and advance the gospel.