Spiritual Transformation

a guide to the office of campus ministries

at Bethel University
This brochure will introduce you to our mission and model of spiritual transformation. Its purpose is to educate you in how we understand our mission and how we hope to uniquely accomplish it at Bethel. We recognize that this task requires the participation of our entire campus, including all students, staff, and faculty. The process of an individual’s spiritual transformation requires the effort of the entire body of Christ. We, as a holistic community, covenant together in seeing this task through. Transformation is therefore a task that takes place in the classroom, residence halls, the dining center, and sports arenas, as well as chapel.

We are on this journey together. Our desire is that you will gain a greater understanding of how spiritual transformation happens and also what is expected of you as a community participant. The Office of Campus Ministries is open, willing, and able to assist you in whatever ways are necessary for you to truly encounter Christ and make His image your own.
The mission of Campus Ministries is to equip the Bethel community to live lives of transformation as we together grow into the image of Christ.

"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

our mission

To Equip
We understand that deep and lasting spiritual growth happens through providing the Bethel Community with tools necessary for that growth—not simply spoon-feeding faith.

We strive to support and educate rather than indoctrinate.

To Live Lives
We understand that 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 love will be learned and expanded every day.

Transformation
We understand that 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.

We Together
We understand that we are communal in nature. We need each other to fulfill what it means to be human.

Conformation into Christ’s image is therefore also a communal task. It cannot be done alone but only as a body seeks Christ together.

Grow
We understand that 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
We understand that 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 work to participate in redeeming a hurt and broken world.
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.

We strive to meet this mission by continually aligning ourselves with seven core values:

- We are Christ-followers.
- We are character builders.
- We are truth-seekers.
- We are learners.
- We are reconcilers.
- We are salt and light.
- We are world-changers.

The opportunities developed through the Office of Campus Ministries are driven by these core values, values that are enveloped in the Word of God and prayer. However, our office can only offer opportunities for transformative obedience: you alone make the decision how you want to exemplify these values in your own life.

The decision to submit to God in love and transformative obedience is between you and God alone. Once you choose to submit to God, the process that follows necessarily involves the whole community.

Transformation—the process of becoming whole and holy persons—involves the whole community of believers in all areas of Bethel’s campus and life. It is the goal of the Bethel community to walk together in love as we together engage on the journey toward Christ’s image.
What do we mean by transformation? To understand transformation, we first need to understand formation. Though we don’t often think this way, we have actually been formed spiritually since birth. Everything we do with our bodies impacts our soul. Spiritual formation is therefore holistic. It happens to all people at all times; it is not only a Christian journey or process. All people are being formed into one of two types of people: one is more hardened in their sinful nature, the other more hardened in Christ’s image. The former is becoming more selfish, the latter more sacrificial and loving. Christ-centered spiritual formation, then, is “the process of conforming to the image of Christ.”

Transformation begins to occur when we shift our lives away from the self and redirect ourselves toward God.

The Language
Our goal: Conformation (together, with)
To become same in nature, form, and character with that of Christ.

Our task: Transformation
The process of shifting our sinful nature into the nature, form, and character of Christ

Our process: Formation
Every decision we make reinforces our devotion either to sin or Christ’s image. We either become formed to our sinful nature and more selfish, or we become more like Christ—more sacrificial and loving.

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—Dallas Willard, Renovation of the Heart, 13
God created humanity in His image; out of His essence (love) He created man and woman. Adam and Eve were created to reciprocate love. Enter sin. We need to change trajectory. Repent. Our hearts need unbending. We must re-attain the image of Jesus Christ. (Colossians 1:15)

God is love. (Agape: sacrificial in nature, other oriented, enduring) God is trinity. (a reciprocating love relationship)

In Genesis 2:7, we read that “the Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.” Biblical Jews believed that at the moment of Adam’s creation, the “image of God” indwelled humanity—the essence of the Creator indwelled the created. They believed that God himself was embedded in the human person. Therefore, every person is a spiritual being embodying the essence of God.

God created Adam and Eve to reciprocate love as God reciprocates love in Trinitarian community. The problem came when Adam and Eve chose to disobey God, therefore damaging the image in which they were created (Genesis 5:1-3). They bent their hearts inward and are now compelled to love themselves first.

Our task is to move from being defined by self-love to other-love—to bend the heart back outward. We do this through repentance, the process of turning from self and facing God. Repentance begins by acknowledging the circumstances of our sinful nature. It continues as we participate in Christ’s death so that we might participate in His resurrection. Christ himself said, “If anyone would come after me, they must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it” (Matthew 26:24-25).

To be transformed is to reclaim the image of God in Jesus Christ (Colossians 1:15). Christ is the embodiment of perfect love. This perfect love is unconditional, self-sacrificial, other-oriented, active, and enduring (1 Corinthians 13).

“We, Teachers, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.” This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.” —Matthew 22:36-39

“Adam made love to his own body, which is a sin.” —Luke 16:18

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The human nature now tempts each individual to love themselves first. We are born into this trajectory. And with each selfish choice we are hardening the sinful nature within.
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

Because the heart is the center of the Christian faith, when Jesus commands that we love God with all our heart (Mark 12:30), He is commanding that our entire life, including all thoughts, words, behaviors, and intentions, be directed toward God and others in love.

A compartmentalized Christian faith that only sends tribute to God when it is convenient or traditional is not a Christian faith lived from a transformed heart. Rather, in all our thinking and moving, the self-sacrificial love of God ought to be our motivation.

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.
The knowledge of God is less about acquiring information and more about establishing an intimate connection to His being. The language of knowledge is the language of intimacy. Being in intimate connection first means to know God and to be known by Him; it is relational.

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, study is imperative for knowing and being in relationship with God.

The classroom then has a transformative goal. All that we learn concerning how the world functions, the human body, economics and business, family and social systems, and all other knowledge we gain at Bethel should prompt us to love God and one another on a deeper, more intimate level.

The goal is that we engage in a paradigm shift, 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 experiences we have impact our hearts and form our spirits. What will we do with our education? 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?

"Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—His good, pleasing and perfect will."

—Romans 12:2

"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. We talk about God’s plan for our lives, and that we are not likely here by mere chance, but that our time here at Bethel is part of a bigger plan for our lives. We want to be proactive in trying to figure out our purpose in parallel to our learning."

—Tim Shaw, Professor of Biology
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 not give up meeting together as some are in the habit of doing but let us consider how we might spur one another on toward love and good deeds” (Hebrews 10:24-25).

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).

“Now that I, your Lord and teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you... A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

We hope that as you encounter our office and the ministries we offer you will have a better understanding of the great love of God for you and what this great love is calling you into. Discipleship is not cheap (Luke 14). It costs us the entirety of our lives, but Jesus has come to give us life abundantly (John 10:10), and only in losing our life for Christ’s sake in love for one another will we find it (Matthew 10:39).

The Office of Campus Ministries offers many opportunities to assist you in your transformation of heart, mind, and body into the image of God.

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, including dynamic biblical teaching, interactive and student-led worship and music, and creative arts (dance, drama, video, etc.). While chapel attendance at Bethel is not required, it is strongly recommended for students, staff, and faculty as part of a continued process of spiritual transformation. 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 His throne. 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, held in Benson Great Hall, has two Sunday night services at 8 and 10 p.m., each with its own unique following.
God with our lives in worship. The UNITED mission, which is to honor congregation, and every service lives out participating on stage and present in the for prayer, praise, and worship. Each prayer in all areas of our life. We want our community to have a passion for our hearts engage with God's heart. We our relationship with God will grow as when we pray. As that intimacy grows, so transformed by the intimacy that occurs minds. We desire our community to be at the forefront of our

**Pray First**

Pray First is a ministry in which students are equipped (prepared), empowered (by the Holy Spirit), and encouraged (confident) to serve their peers through intercessory prayer. The goal of Pray First is that prayer would be at the forefront of our minds. We desire our community to be transformed by the intimacy that occurs when we pray. As that intimacy grows, so our relationship with God will grow as our hearts engage with God's heart. We want our community to have a passion for prayer in all areas of our life.

How will students serve their peers and our community? Through intercessory prayer at Vespers and in residence halls, and prayer for Solidarity Missions leaders and teams. Teams can also be available to assist pastoral staff in chapel, participate in 24 Hour Prayer, and help facilitate and participate in prayer walks.

**Suite Ecclesias**

Much more than small groups, “suite ecclesias” (house churches) call their participants to engage in life with one another based on an agreed covenant. They exist when friends and suite-mates decide to learn together what it means to love God and love one another with their whole being. This takes place through their communal study of the Word, prayer, and koimnas (biblical fellowship). Koinonia exists when solidarity forms within our community—when the burdens, hurts, needs, and celebrations of an individual are shared by the whole community.

**Solidarity Missions Partnership**

Bethel students to be with, learn from, and serve alongside in solidarity with God's people and God’s work around the world. The purpose of this “standing in solidarity” is to experience the love of God in a reciprocal way in which everyone involved is changed—that both host communities and student guests would be spiritually transformed more and more into the likeness of Christ.

**Shifft**

The transition from high school to college can be very intimidating. Shift leaders assist incoming freshmen in this transition through developing community on their floors and simply being present in their lives. Their second, more important, role is to engage the Word of God with freshmen so that through the developing mentorship and community bond on their floors, they might learn more deeply what it means to know God, love God, and love each other.

**Quest**

There are many issues yet to be resolved when trying to understand the complexities of the Christian faith and its theology. Quest offers a safe place to engage in conversation with professionals, learned biblical scholars, and theologians regarding any number of topics that pertain to the Christian faith and how we are called to live in this world. The point is not necessarily to arrive at an answer, but to journey in discovery as the Bethel community wrestles together over various challenging and sometimes controversial issues.

**Twin Cities Outreach**

Through serving in diverse environments, students learn about the complexities of social inequality (specifically race and economics) and how these issues are related to Christian discipleship. Twin Cities Outreach allows students to enter a process of reflective service through which they learn more about themselves, others, and God.

This learning process encourages students to make connections between social activism and Christian faith.

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The transformed life is not one that can be earned or bought (Acts 8:20). Participating only in ministry and walking away from our work to engage in the ways of the world is a life that only wants what Christ has to offer rather than Christ Himself.

The transformed life is one that seeks to understand what it means to love God with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and as we engage in that exploration, to attach our love for God to our hands, feet, eyes, ears, mouth, and mind. We, in other words, put on the person of Christ. We conform into His image so that as people see us in the world, they see the person of Christ, and as they see the person of Christ, they see a restored humanity.

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 where the transformed life 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 Campus Ministries 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.