



MISSION & EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

2020-2021

IDENTITY AND MISSION

Messiah University is a Christian university of the liberal and applied arts and sciences. The University is committed to an embracing evangelical spirit rooted in the Anabaptist, Pietist, and Wesleyan traditions of the Christian Church. Our mission is to educate men and women toward maturity of intellect, character, and Christian faith in preparation for lives of service, leadership, and reconciliation in church and society.

FOUNDATIONAL VALUES

The University motto, “Christ Preeminent,” points to a full and rich understanding of Jesus Christ and the Christian faith relevant to every dimension of life. The phrase points to Jesus Christ as both “the ground for personal salvation and the pattern for life and service.” Messiah University is committed both to the personal dimension of faith in Christ for the forgiveness of and deliverance from sin, and to the exemplary nature of Christ’s life as a model for our own. Jesus Christ, “the way, the truth, and the life,” is thus foundational to the University’s life and mission.

Since its founding by the Brethren in Christ Church, Messiah University has affirmed a set of values derived from the Anabaptist, Pietist, and Wesleyan traditions of that denomination. These values have guided our efforts to keep Christ preeminent in the total life of the institution. The following five ideals summarize how Messiah University defines its distinctive Christian character.

UNITY OF FAITH, LEARNING, AND LIFE

This principle affirms the wholeness of persons and the unity of every dimension of life as revealed in the incarnation of Jesus Christ. It also emphasizes that all truth is God’s truth, and thus avoids the creation of false dichotomies in thinking and in living. Messiah University affirms a unified Christian worldview and lifestyle that joins revelation with rational inquiry and that integrates believing with doing. Christian “calling” and vocation is accordingly broadly understood. All of our gifts, talents, and interests are to be nurtured as acts of praise towards God while serving humanity and all of creation.

IMPORTANCE OF THE PERSON

Every person of each race, gender, nationality, status, and position is to be respected and valued because each person is created in the image of God. Freedom and responsibility are primary characteristics of being human,

and we must take care to protect each other's freedom while encouraging responsible living. As free agents, individuals make choices that determine the contours of their lives and they bear responsibility for those choices. Individuals are accountable for their manner of response to God's grace. Similarly, every person must be responsible in their pursuit of truth, and yet be free to develop their own understandings as they integrate their formal studies with their broader experience of faith.

SIGNIFICANCE OF COMMUNITY

Our understanding of the Church as the body of Christ and our recognition of humanity's interdependence cause us to value community. In community, we voluntarily share our lives with each other, we care for each other, we rejoice and suffer together, we worship together, and we offer counsel to each other. While every community develops rules, in Christian communities such rules should always be humane, recognizing the impact they have on the lives of those affected, and should help us appreciate each other's gifts and talents. In any community there will be tensions that require mutual give and take, but a Christian spirit of care and support provides the security needed to accept one's own strengths and weaknesses as one also accepts the strengths and weaknesses of others. The ultimate goal of every Christian community should be to help us live more faithfully as disciples of Christ.

DISCIPLINED AND CREATIVE LIVING

The mature Christian life is characterized by a delicate mix of discipline and creativity. We are called to a life of devotion and obedience to the Gospel. Such discipleship demands of us self-control and sacrifice and requires us to examine all our wants and desires in the light of God's holiness. The Gospel also calls us to celebrate the goodness of creation and to live our lives in active engagement with this ever-changing world in which God has placed us. In order to fulfill these tasks, we must be both creative interpreters of the world around us and creative actors in that world. Creativity and discipline are complementary characteristics of the mature, joyful Christian life.

SERVICE AND RECONCILIATION

Central to the Gospel is the work of reconciling individuals with God, with each other, and with all of creation. God has called us to be active agents in this work as we are empowered by the Holy Spirit and bear the fruit of the Spirit within us: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Prepared in this way, we are compelled to share the redeeming Gospel of Jesus with those around us; to build bridges of understanding and peace across the dividing lines of race, class, age, gender, religion, and ethnicity; to demonstrate the love of God in

service to others; to open our hearts to the poor and needy; and to work for justice wherever injustice prevails.

UNDERGRADUATE LEARNING OUTCOMES

Messiah University is dedicated to helping students blend faith with learning in service to the world. As a Christian university of the liberal and applied arts and sciences, Messiah University advocates a bold and disciplined exploration of the world and expects its students to both embrace and participate in that endeavor. At the same time, Messiah seeks to instill in its students a sense of intellectual humility, recognizing that even the most learned persons have limited insight and therefore need the insights of others.

The paradigm under which Messiah’s educational programs are designed is that of liberal education. By raising the right questions, exposing students to multiple perspectives, and encouraging critical thinking, Messiah seeks to enable its students to respond with maturity to the world’s complexities. In addition to nurturing these intellectual skills, the University encourages its students to apply their knowledge to the needs of the world—as servants, as leaders, and as agents of reconciliation.

Messiah University offers two undergraduate academic degrees: the Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) and Bachelor of Science (B.S.). When combined with purposeful cocurricular activities, these programs of academic study enable students to gain a perspective of who they ought to be and provide them with the abilities to live effectively as intellectually competent, socially responsible citizens of the world.

Messiah University has a historic relationship with the Brethren in Christ Church. Now expressed in a covenant agreement, this heritage informs the University’s programs and activities. The distinctive of this heritage, which is rooted in the Anabaptist, Pietist, and Wesleyan traditions of the Christian faith, include emphases on justice-seeking, peacemaking, reconciliation, evangelism, and service. Accordingly, the University encourages and prepares students to act as servants who extend the gifts of grace and peace to a broken world. The University also recognizes the need for each individual to appropriate the Christian faith and express that commitment in daily living within a community.

While we realize that learning is a life-long endeavor, Messiah University expects its graduates to have made progress toward the fulfillment of the following six student learning outcomes below. From a practical standpoint, these six outcomes are both interdependent and overlapping, i.e., while they may be visualized discretely and assessed independently,

they are nonetheless connected to one another in numerous ways and will often be pursued in multiple program areas. Further information on the undergraduate learning outcomes can be found here: https://www.messiah.edu/info/21764/college_wide_educational_objectives/2949/undergraduate

Undergraduate Learning Outcomes:

1. **Foundations for Learning**: Students will develop skills common to the liberal arts and sciences: research, analysis, reflection, and communication
2. **Breadth and Depth of Knowledge**: Students will develop knowledge common to the liberal arts and sciences in the fields of arts, humanities, natural sciences, and social sciences. Students will also develop specialized knowledge and disciplinary expertise
3. **Faith Knowledge & Application**: Students will develop informed and mature convictions about Christian faith and practice
4. **Specialized Skills & Scholarship**: Students will become proficient in the scholarship of their discipline and demonstrate specialized skills needed to pursue a career and/or graduate school
5. **Self-Awareness**: Students will gain awareness of identity, character, and vocational calling
6. **Social Responsibility**: Students will demonstrate a commitment to service, reconciliation, and justice, and lead effectively and ethically within the complexities of an increasingly diverse and interdependent world

STATEMENTS OF FAITH

The University affirms two statements of faith. The Confession of Faith expresses the faith orientation of the University in a nonsectarian manner that highlights the specific emphases of the Anabaptist, Pietistic, and Wesleyan traditions of the Christian faith. It is included frequently in campus worship services. As the oldest and most widely used statement of Christian faith, the Apostles' Creed expresses the essential core of Christian commitment at the University. Trustees, administrators, and educators are expected to support the University Confession of Faith and affirm the Apostles' Creed.

THE APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried.
He descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again,
ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

CONFESSION OF FAITH

We believe in the triune God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—who created and sustains the universe, and who desires to redeem us and all creation.

- God creates each of us in the very image of God to live in loving relationships: free, responsible and accountable to God and each other for our decisions and our actions.
- God speaks to us in many different ways, times, and places but is uniquely revealed to all the world in Jesus of Nazareth who was fully human and fully divine.
- God forgives our sins, renews our hearts and minds, and calls us to join in the work of reconciliation by grace through faith in the life, teachings, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- God bestows on us the Holy Spirit who leads us to repentance, instructs us in righteousness and empowers us to live joyfully as disciples of Christ, as servants of others and as caretakers of the created order.

- God calls us to unite in the Church as a visible community of believers which celebrates God's grace in its worship and bears witness to the truth of the Gospel through its being, doing, and speaking.
- God gives us the Bible as the inspired, trustworthy and authoritative Scripture to reveal God's ways and purposes, to nourish our minds and souls, and to instruct us in how we ought to think and to live.
- God instructs us to pursue the kingdom of peace, righteousness and justice which ultimately will prevail with the return of Christ and assures us that those judged faithful will share resurrected life with God and all the saints forever.

We praise the one God—our Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer—who has called us to personal faith and new life in Christ and to so order our lives that they may demonstrate the truth of our confession.