

Point Loma Nazarene University Community Life Covenant¹

The Point Loma Nazarene University community is, and intends to be, a decidedly Christian community, as exhibited by our shared beliefs, corporate practices, and Christlike character.

Shared Beliefs

PLNU is a Christian university in the Wesleyan tradition, sponsored and guided by the theological doctrines and practices of the Church of the Nazarene. We have deep commitments to our tradition, and we also honor and respect the breadth of Christian thought and practice across history, culture, and tradition.² Corporately, we confess our faith in Jesus Christ as expressed in the historic Christian creeds.³ We believe that the Old and New Testament Scriptures, given by plenary inspiration, contain all truth necessary for faith and Christian living.⁴

While we respect and welcome people from a variety of Christian traditions, it is our hope and expectation that all in our community will respect the theological commitments of the Wesleyan tradition and the Church of the Nazarene.⁵ At its heart, the Wesleyan tradition is a movement within the larger church of Jesus Christ, especially emphasizing that God calls us to and empowers us for holiness of heart and life – that is, complete devotion to God and love for neighbor.

Corporate Practices

Christian disciplines (or practices) have played a significant role in the life of the Wesleyan movement, including the founding and ongoing formation of PLNU. Wesleyans refer to these practices as “means of grace”—that is, means through which God’s grace works to shape us in Christlike character. The means of grace include works (or acts) of piety, and works (or acts) of mercy. At PLNU, we affirm our call to participate in these means of grace, for without such participation we limit our capacity to be shaped in Christlikeness. Wesleyans strongly affirm that people cannot become holy through their own efforts. The actual work of transformation is ultimately the work of God, in Christ, through the Spirit. The desire for growth comes from God, the ability to respond and act in obedience is inspired by God, and the growth itself is empowered by God.

¹ We would like to express our deep gratitude and appreciation to the many other Christian colleges and universities who generously shared their community agreements and lifestyle statements with us. We are indebted to many of them, as their documents helped shape both the form and content of this covenant.

² This is a characteristic of the Wesleyan tradition often referred to as “evangelical catholicity.”

³ Specifically, the Apostles', Nicene, and Chalcedonian creeds

⁴ Plenary, here, indicates biblical interpretation from the whole of scripture.

⁵ See attached Agreed Statement of Belief from *The Manual* of the Church of the Nazarene.

Works of Piety

Works of piety are communal and individual practices that lead to growth in Christlikeness. We affirm the proposition that communal works of piety are any means of grace that believers do together that inspire and empower growth in holiness. We believe that the Holy Spirit is present and at work in us whenever we gather together in the name of Christ for worship, accountability, prayer, and Bible study. In this way, we affirm the value of worshipping together. While this takes place in many ways across our campuses, we have made chapel participation a priority on the main campus three days a week as a communal means of grace. Chapel is intended for all members of the PLNU community, bringing together an array of generations, voices and experiences. Likewise, members of the PLNU community are active participants in local church congregations that are congruent with the mission and values of the university. And we affirm that individual acts of piety such as prayer, Bible reading, devotional reading, and fasting are means of grace practiced by followers of Christ.

Works of Mercy

Works of mercy are means of grace through which we extend God's love to those in spiritual, physical, and material need. Both in Scripture and the Wesleyan tradition this includes caring for widows, orphans, strangers, and others in need. Likewise, PLNU has a significant number of opportunities, such as student ministries, short-term missions, and academic department service projects. The powerful intersection at PLNU is found when students, faculty, staff, and administrators can participate in these works of mercy together. All attending or working at PLNU are encouraged to seek out such opportunities. As Christians in the Wesleyan tradition, our practice is to engage in acts of mercy as a means of participating in God's love for those in need and in obedience to clear scriptural mandates.

Christlike Character

Point Loma Nazarene University is a Christian community dedicated to higher education. As a community of believers, we seek to establish and encourage ideals and standards consistent with holiness of heart and life. We believe that the Christian life is lived in relationship – in community with other Christians. Jesus taught us that the two greatest commands are to love God with all our heart, soul, and mind and to love our neighbors as ourselves.⁶ These commands connect serving God with serving others. In grace, Scripture also gives us specific rules and principles to guide us in Christian living. We commit ourselves to the disciplines and values of Christian living and embrace them as expressions of holiness of heart and life.⁷ In particular, we affirm the following:

⁶ Matthew 22:37-39.

⁷ In the following list, disciplines and values are expressed as a statement of theological belief, followed by a statement of affirmation and a statement of boundaries.

Interpersonal Relationships

We believe that our relationships should reflect that we are members of the body of Christ.

We commit ourselves to treat one another with dignity and mutual respect in all our relationships.

We grieve the hurt and destructiveness of broken relationships and commit to being a community of encouragement, correction, reconciliation and healing.

Maturity and Discretion

As a community of Christlike character, we expect of one another, and hold one another accountable for, attitudes and actions that exhibit Christian maturity.

As God is at work in us, we are and are becoming people of integrity, faithfulness, diligence, discretion, and responsibility.

We are committed to being sensitive to the discernment of the Holy Spirit and to the consciences of others with regard to our work ethic, language, choice of entertainment, and academic honesty. In our roles as faculty, staff, and administrators, we refrain from actively promoting positions directly contrary to the institution's mission and the theological convictions of its sponsoring denomination.

Diversity

We believe that all people are loved by God and bear the image of God.

We believe in the inherent worth of all human life and celebrate human diversity. We seek to support and encourage diversity and affirm that women and men of all races, ethnicities, ages, cultures, abilities, and socioeconomic statuses are equally respected and valued as members of our university community.

We view any prejudice, discrimination, or marginalization based on race, ethnicity, sex, age, or class as unacceptable and in opposition to Christian beliefs. We also view any disrespectful, malicious, harassing, or mean-spirited behavior as destructive to our university community and contrary to the teachings of Christ to love one another.

Gender Equity

We believe that women and men are equally endowed by God with gifts and must exercise these gifts with equal authority and responsibility.

We celebrate the long tradition of the ordination of women and the promotion of women to positions of leadership within the Wesleyan Holiness tradition.

We do not discriminate against women under any circumstances including decisions related to hiring and promotion.

Health of Mind and Body

We desire to promote health and wellness in all areas of our lives as a reflection of respect for human dignity and of our bodies as temples of the Holy Spirit.

We support a commitment to a healthy university founded on standards that reflect personal accountability and responsibility for the larger community, demonstrate regard for safety, security, personal health and the health of others, and support and maintain an atmosphere conducive to abundant life.

We encourage discernment in making choices that could have a negative impact upon our students, colleagues, families, and the community. Given the potentially destructive consequences of addictive behaviors, we abstain from the use or possession of alcoholic beverages and tobacco and the practice of gambling on the PLNU campus, its branch campuses, or at any activities sanctioned or sponsored by the university or where students are present. We also abstain from the use, possession, or distribution of illicit drugs. We further abstain from the viewing, ownership, or distribution of print or electronic pornographic materials.

Human Sexuality

We believe that all human beings are created in the image of God, are unconditionally loved by God, and are of inestimable worth to God; therefore we strive to treat each other with respect, dignity and love. We believe that all people, married or single, are called to a life of holiness and are affirmed as full participants in our campus community.

Consistent with the historic teaching of Christian scripture and tradition, we believe that God has provided the context for the full expression of sexual intimacy in the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman. We further believe that outside this covenant of marriage, the holy life calls for celibacy.

As a community of learning, we recognize that our discussions and considerations regarding sexuality, both in public and private arenas, must be treated with spiritual discernment. We agree to evaluate our teaching and our dialogue regarding sexuality in the light of the historic understanding of the Christian church.

Stewardship

Our talents and resources are gifts from God, and we are entrusted to use them responsibly with wisdom and due care, putting kingdom work and university mission ahead of personal gain.

We use our time, abilities, and university resources to make a positive impact on the growth of our students and campus community.

We abstain from wasteful consumption of university assets and exploitation of natural resources.

We believe that God calls us to and empowers us for holiness of heart and life. With the help of the Holy Spirit, we seek to maintain states of mind and being that allow us to hear and respond to God. We encourage members of the PLNU community who are struggling with emotional, mental, or physical issues -- to seek confidential help from appropriate PLNU resources.⁸ We desire to be a community that serves God with all our hearts, souls, minds, and bodies.

⁸ https://my.pointloma.edu/ICS/Employee_Info/Benefits/Employee_Assistance_Program.jnz