

Macalester and the Presbyterian Church

Statement of Covenant between Macalester College and Synod of the Lakes and Prairies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

THE COVENANT

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and Macalester College freely covenant together to support education that leads to growth in scholarship, faithfulness in character, and preparation to serve the common good. This is an historic and continuing relationship that both the church and the college value, dating from the launch of our common history in 1880. The Covenant carries forward this intentional relationship and is maintained for the respective institutions by the Synod of Lakes and Prairies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the Board of Trustees of Macalester College. The purpose of this document is to reaffirm and renew this relationship as together we seek to honor our common history.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Upon founding Macalester College, Presbyterian minister, The Rev. Edward Duffield Neill relied upon Presbyterian laypeople and congregations to provide financial and moral support to secure the college's future as an institution of higher learning on the frontier. In 1880 the newly chartered college asked that the Presbyterian Church establish a formal relationship between the Synod and the College. The Synod agreed. In 1885 the Synod established an endowment of funds and gave land for the College. From that time until today, the tie between the two institutions has continued. Several prominent dimensions of the College's life express the connection between the Church and the College: The Weyerhaeuser Endowed Chaplaincy of the College, the presence of Presbyterian ministers and laypeople on Macalester's Board of Trustees, the Margaret W. Harmon and the Arnold Lowe Chairs in Religious Studies, endowed student scholarships, the Bloedel Trust held by the Presbyterian Foundation, the Lilly Project for Vocation and Ethical Leadership and continued financial support by Presbyterian individuals and congregations. In addition, Westminster Presbyterian Church, Minneapolis, The House of Hope Presbyterian Church, St. Paul and Macalester Plymouth United Church, St. Paul host annual Macalester Sunday worship services. These services are visible reminders of the connection between the College and Presbyterian congregations.

COMMON CONVICTIONS

This Covenant is based on our historically shared conviction that the human capacity to seek knowledge and discover truth is a precious gift. Both the College and the Synod hold that unflagging support for scholarly engagement is at once a privilege and an obligation. The traditions and roles of Church and the Academy have evolved in both complementary and in divergent ways since John Calvin and others of the Reformed tradition laid the foundation for what would become the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Both the College and the Synod nevertheless continue to share commitment to open inquiry and serious study. Both support the critical exploration and practice of ethical values and religious commitments. Both strive to work within a pluralistic, broadly diverse global context. Both also believe that scholarship and religious commitment have important contributions to make to the betterment of the world around us. This covenant reaffirms these shared convictions.

THE CONTINUING RELATIONSHIP

We affirm the need of both institutions for this relationship. To put the purpose of the Covenant into effect, we agree to strengthen this relationship by addressing significant social and faith issues in ways that impact Macalester College, the Synod of Lakes and Prairies and the wider community. At a minimum the College and the Synod will co-host one event annually that engages religious and social issues in contemporary society. The initiative for these events may arise from either the Synod or College and may be coordinated with other events occurring in the Twin Cities or beyond. Any financial implication for programming is subject to approval of the two bodies. The College Chaplain will be the primary contact person for these events. The Center for Religious and Spiritual Life of Macalester College promotes religious diversity and understanding within the campus and beyond. The interfaith engagement of the religious life program is in keeping with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s commitments to inclusivity and respect for other religious and spiritual traditions and is a dimension of the College's life that can be of service to the Church.

REVIEW OF THE COVENANT

A. Each party shall be free to take initiatives at any time to discuss problems related to this Covenant that may arise.

B. Every five years this Covenant shall be reviewed by an ad hoc committee appointed for that purpose by the President of the College and the Synod Executive to determine if the covenant should be reaffirmed and/or modified.

Executed at Saint Paul, Minnesota, the 7th day of October 2011.

Macalester College: David Deno, Chair of the Board of Trustees; Brian C. Rosenberg, President of the College; Lucy A. Forster-Smith, Chaplain

Synod of Lakes and Prairies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.): Ardeth Kocourek, Moderator of Synod of Lakes and Prairies; Philip Brown, Synod Executive; J. Jay Wilkinson, Stated Clerk.