

Why We Worship at SPU

Seattle Pacific University is a premier national university—this means that we pursue knowledge and wisdom with passion and excellence in every field. SPU students develop the necessary skills to succeed in a multitude of disciplines and careers. But this is not the whole story.

SPU's statement of faith claims that "we seek to ground everything we do on the transforming gospel of Jesus Christ." This means that the mission of the university is much bigger than just helping students to develop marketable skills. We strive for excellence in every discipline, but what sets this university apart is that we engage in our studies for a *purpose*.

Our community has a mission that involves each student, staff and faculty person. At the core of this institution, in every department on campus, lies a profound gospel ("good news"). In part, the good news is this: in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus we have seen the heart of God for this creation. The God who created the universe has also entered it and suffered with it. And the God who has suffered with creation has also promised to raise it to new life—just as the dead body of Jesus was raised by nothing but the promise and power of God.

As the followers of Christ today, we proclaim the wild hope that God will make all things right. Injustice will end. Disease will end. Evil of all kinds will end, and God's good plan for this world will be realized. This is the good news of Jesus Christ, and it transforms us into a People with a mission: we will actively participate in the work of God's Spirit, making all things new. This Spirit is alive in us even now, and so we model and proclaim the reconciliation of all people and all things in heaven and on earth. This is our witness to the kingdom of love that is coming.

Because our mission is much bigger than just acquiring knowledge—because we seek to bring life and hope to all of creation—we need more than just textbooks for our training. We need hearts that are transformed by God's love, and we need inspired minds to imagine our place in the great story that God is writing. We need to know from where we've come and to where we're going. We need to be *formed* into people who dream God's dreams; a community that is equipped to change the world for the better. In the history of the Christian faith, people and communities have been formed in these ways by participating in worship.

As a university, when we worship together each week we are slowly transformed. We learn Scripture together, and it gradually sinks into the depths of our being. We learn how to speak to God and hear from God through song, art, prayers and other creative expressions. We learn how to support and care for one another as the People of God. We learn how to reach out.

The way we worship at SPU also challenges us to think bigger and love better. Though we come to this place from our own traditions and with our own preferences, when we come together as a university we open ourselves to new perspectives and cultures. In this way, we learn how to more fully love those who are different from ourselves—and this is absolutely necessary if we are to model the peace and unity of God's kingdom.

SPU is not a church, yet we do seek to live a healthy model of Christian community and to equip one another for a lifetime of participation in the church and in the Spirit's work on earth. As we worship together—students, faculty and staff—we discover who we are and what it means to be a premier national *Christian* university, on a mission to change the world.