

Madison Square Foundational Document

Statement of Purpose/Mission:

Seminary is an exciting journey, but it is also a challenging one. Students, staff, and their families are simultaneously attempting to: discern their vocation, refine their theology, maintain healthy relationships (which may include the raising of children), prepare for ministry, earn sufficient income to pay the bills, and cultivate their own walk with God. The cumulative effect of pursuing all of these worthy endeavors frequently leads those who undergo the seminary experience to feel stretched, overburdened, and isolated – feelings which are only compounded by the loneliness and alienation endemic to modern life. However, we believe that our relational God did not intend for us to live alone, but has created us as relational beings who work out our faith together in community. **In light of this, Madison Square exists to create a space for belonging, to cultivate a community of hospitality, and to live together as a family of faith formed in Christ.**

Community Core Values:

I. Common Life

We believe that we flourish when sustained by a vibrant common life centered on Christ. Therefore, we are committed to being neighbors who love, support, and encourage one another in the midst of blessings and brokenness. These relationships of mutual giving and receiving are expressed in the midst of sharing meals, raising children, discussing theology, pursuing vocation, and having fun.

II. Hospitality

We believe that hospitality has a central role in establishing and nurturing our common well-being and Christian witness. Therefore, we are committed to creating space for one another in both our attitudes and actions. This marker of our life together finds expression in the ways that we serve each other within the community as well as in our extension of welcome to others beyond it.

III. Reconciliation

We believe that reconciliation involves both striving for harmony in our relationships and resolving conflicts. Therefore, we are committed to the hard work of understanding one another, embracing our differences as opportunities to grow together in Christlikeness. This conviction entails both pursuing practices that cultivate peace and seeking to restore strained relationships in healthy ways: attending to our own role in conflict with humble repentance, and addressing others' contributions with generous forgiveness.

IV. Spiritual Vitality

We believe that spirituality encompasses every area of our lives. Therefore, we are committed to remaining aware of and open to God's ongoing work among us, so that each member of our community might thrive holistically. Accordingly, we seek to be a community that generates shared spiritual practices that promote emotional and relational health with God and others.

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Statement of Community Life:

As we seek to live into these core values, we ask each community member to commit to the following set of practices and responsibilities:

- 1) Service on a cook/clean team for one common meal each week
- 2) Participation in community meetings every other Sunday at 8 PM
- 3) An Opportunity to Serve (OTS) – a unique responsibility given to each community member
- 4) Attendance at quarterly retreats, held on the first Saturday of fall, winter, and spring quarters
- 5) A one-year commitment to live in the community (though we welcome you to consider staying with us for the duration of your time at Fuller)

While community life is not less than these commitments, our hope is that it would be more for you than this list. We desire to relate in ways that reflect our mission statement's aims of creating a space for belonging, cultivating a community of hospitality, and living as a family of faith. Community life also includes planned and spontaneous activities such as pot-luck dinners, movies, wine nights, rides to the airport, conflict resolution, and morning prayer times. These practices and others are continually evolving to reflect the heart, interests, and gifts of current members.

Our desire is that the community becomes something like a family for you with all of its benefits, tensions, responsibilities, and comforts. While in our brokenness we sometimes fail to live fully into our core values, and need to speak truth and extend grace to one another, we hope that you will find ample opportunities to experience the love of God in our community.