



ST STITHIANS
COLLEGE

STATEMENT ON SPIRITUALITY

St Stithians College as a Methodist School

St Stithians College was constituted on 30 April 1941 as a Methodist school, and opened its doors in January 1953. The College stands as a testament to the faith and vision of our founders, Albert Collins and William Mountstephens, who were active Methodists and who understood Jesus Christ's charge "To whom much has been given, much is expected." (Luke 12:48)

St Stithians College strives to be a place where students, parents, staff and alumni experience the love of God and faith in action. We are challenged and inspired by our Saints Charter with its injunction to: Honour God. Honour Others. Honour Self. St Stithians College lives out its Christian and Methodist character as a *South African School Making a World of Difference*, united and inspired by the College motto, *One and All*.

We give thanks to God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit for the legacy, life and community of St Stithians and for what is yet to come.

The Christian Faith and Methodist Ethos

It is both necessary and helpful at the outset of this Statement on Spirituality to attempt to summarise in brief the essence of Christian belief and its expression in the Methodist tradition. A number of Methodist sources are used for this purpose.

Christians 'believe that God has revealed himself in Jesus Christ, accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour, live in communion with God and in the power of the Holy Spirit, and take their place in the fellowship of Christ's church.' (*A Catechism for the use of the people called Methodists*)

'All need to be saved. All may be saved. All may know themselves saved. All may be saved to the uttermost.' (*A Catechism for the use of the people called Methodists*)

'Do all the good you can. By all the means you can. In all the ways you can. In all the places you can. At all the times you can. To all the people you can. As long as ever you can.' (*John Wesley*)

'A "Methodist Ethos" refers to Methodism's affirmation of the creeds of Christianity and the belief that all churches are part of the Body of Christ. Methodist doctrine emphasizes the tenets of providential grace, the universal love of God, justification by faith and new birth, the blessed assurance of salvation through the atoning blood of Jesus Christ and the priesthood of all believers. Methodism's social witness is proclaimed in its mandate "to spread scriptural holiness throughout the land". This emphasis on God's call to holiness is the essential contribution that Methodism has been called to make.' (*Kearsney College Statement on Spirituality*)

'God bless this Africa which is our home. Give us grace to follow Jesus the healer, Jesus the peacemaker, Jesus the Saviour of the world, Jesus the Lord of all life. Restore us and make your face shine on us that we may be saved.' (*Charter of the Mission Congress of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa adopted in Mthatha, November 2004*)

Spiritual aims of St Stithians College

- To provide the opportunity for students, staff, parents, alumni and visitors to come to know Jesus Christ as their personal saviour.
- To create meaningful opportunities for our school community to 'appreciate and develop their own faith' and to 'pursue a meaningful relationship with the living Lord'. (Saints Charter)
- To promote study, reflection and appreciation of the Bible, the message of the Gospel and Christian doctrine, particularly as expressed through the Methodist Church of Southern Africa (MCSA).
- To apply the relevance of the Christian faith in today's world.
- To inspire lives of Christian witness reflecting gratitude, healthy relationships, servant leadership and active citizenship in our College and in South African society.
- To develop a spirituality which is prayerful and expressed in regular worship, which guides choices and behaviour, and which involves enquiry and engagement.
- To ensure that the life of the School and its activities should reflect and respect the Christian and Methodist Ethos.

The relationship between the College and the Methodist Church

The relationship between the College and the Methodist Church of Southern Africa (MCSA) is one that we treasure as two institutions and in our community of faith. The formal relationship is governed by the Trust Deed and Constitution of the College. As outlined in the St Stithians Trust Deed, the College is a 'church school espousing a Christian Methodist ethos and set of values as a discrete, self-governing institution' and the MCSA 'exercises its influence in relation to good governance and the exercise by the Board of Trustees of their fiduciary duties through its representation on the Board and on the Council.'

The MCSA is strongly represented on the St Stithians College Council, whose members include the Presiding Bishop, the District Bishop (or his or her delegate in the case of both bishops), five MCSA representatives appointed by the Annual Conference, and the Superintendent Chaplain of the College. The Council is the guardian of the College's Christian Methodist ethos. The MCSA has the 'final say in all matters concerning spiritual welfare, religious instruction and worship at the College'. (St Stithians College Constitution)

The Church Sub-Committee of the College Council creates a forum of church, school, parent and alumni representatives to formulate policy, build the relationship between the College and the Methodist Church, and advance and deepen the Christian character and ethos of St Stithians. The College seeks to maintain relationships with Methodist churches in neighbouring circuits.

The Chaplains

Methodist ministers are stationed as chaplains at St Stithians College. In the stationing of chaplains the usual procedures of the MCSA apply, subject to the Rector approving and appointing each chaplain as a member of the College's staff. One of the chaplains is appointed as the Superintendent Chaplain, who is a member of the College Council and College Executive Committee. Each chaplain is a member of the executive committee of the schools in which he or she works.

The chaplains are responsible for nurturing the spiritual lives of staff and students, for leading regular worship in the Chapel, and for co-ordinating and leading the teaching of the religious education curriculum in each school.

The Chapel

The Chapel is the spiritual heartland of the College, and is to be treated with respect and appreciation by all who enter its doors. Other places of spiritual gathering on the campus include the outdoor chapel and the labyrinth.

Staff and Students

The Rector of the College and the Heads of the Schools are required to be practising Christians who support the ethos and teachings of the Methodist Church, seek to live as Christian role models, advance the spiritual aims of the College and participate regularly in Chapel worship.

All staff are required to respect the Christian ethos of the College. It is expected that teachers attend chapel services along with the students in each school.

Students are encouraged to respect the Christian ethos of the College. Consistent with the participatory ethos of our schools, all students are required to attend chapel services and to participate in religious education classes and community engagement activities.

Religious Education

Consistent with the requirements of the Constitution of St Stithians College, and in advancing our mission as a church school, the curriculum includes religious education classes. The religious education curriculum is both formal and informal, providing diverse opportunities for the development of spirituality. Through religious education students engage with the Bible, the foundations of Christian theology and faith, the history and context of the Methodist Church, topical issues of choice and morality, and the study of other major religions. We seek to educate young people of intellect, courage, compassion and moral power.

Recognition of other faiths

In appreciation of our social and cultural diversity as a South African educational institution, we welcome and respect staff and students who are believers of other faiths. Alongside our expectation that staff and students participate in the Christian life of the College, we recognise that staff and students of other faiths should have appropriate opportunities to attend specific religious events or festivals held off campus.

Conclusion

The overall purpose of our Christian spirituality at St Stithians College is to tell the good news of God's love for humanity and our world. As we do so, we provide opportunities for one and all to commit ourselves to Jesus Christ as Saviour in our lives so that we may walk humbly with our God.

'Jesus said: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind". This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: "Love your neighbour as yourself".' (Matthew 22: 37-39)

Honour God. Honour Others. Honour Self.
Thanks be to God.

(Approved by the St Stithians College Council, 24 July 2014)