

# SPC SESSION STATEMENT

Recognizing that we are living in an unprecedented time in our country and world, the Session of SPC has been considering what it means for us to walk in the way and in the spirit of Jesus in this time and place. Since January, we have been exploring how our core values of Radical Hospitality, Holistic Spirituality, and Engaged Compassion guide us not only today but into the future. We engaged in conversation regarding the meaning of each value, how we act on it, how the value is currently threatened, and how SPC might more boldly embody our values. Then, at its May meeting, Session voted unanimously to affirm the Session Statement which follows.

We invite you to read this statement and reflect on it, as together we live into our calling to be a faith community committed to love, justice, and peace.

The Session of Shepherdstown Presbyterian Church

---

**In this time of national and international division**, distrust, and despair, the Session of Shepherdstown Presbyterian Church reaffirms the core values – Radical Hospitality, Holistic Spirituality and Engaged Compassion -- that drive this congregation as we walk in the Way and in the Spirit of Jesus. As the world around us changes and looks less like the beloved community, we affirm that our values, grounded in our faith, will not change. To paraphrase Martin Luther, “Here we stand. We can do no other.”

## **RADICAL HOSPITALITY: “We Choose Welcome”**

*John 6:37. Everything that the Father gives me will come to me, and anyone who comes to me I will never drive away.*

We believe that everyone and everything, and every part of ourselves, are included in the circle of God’s love. We believe that imperfection and suffering are integral to the spiritual path. We try, we fall short, we gain wisdom, and try again. Because of these beliefs, we welcome everyone to participate fully in the life of our congregation. We embrace one another in good times and in bad – in the joys of life as well as when we encounter life’s challenges.

This value is under attack in our current national environment, where hate speech, fear tactics, and violence are being used daily to divide people and communities. False

narratives paint the “other” as the enemy, eroding trust among neighbors. Attacks on vulnerable groups create a climate of fear for all.

As people who walk in the Way and in the Spirit of Jesus, we at Shepherdstown Presbyterian Church affirm that we continue to welcome all people into the life and work of this congregation. We stand and we sing in protest against inequity and injustice, we march in solidarity with those at the margins who are rendered voiceless, and we use the power of the ballot to help guarantee the well-being of all people. No matter who you are, no matter where you have been, you are welcome here. We seek partnerships with others who enable us to maximize our resources and impact.

### **HOLISTIC SPIRITUALITY: “Everything Belongs”**

*Micah 6:8. He has told you, O mortal, what is good, and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God?*

We believe that the Way of Jesus is a path of transformation, and that doubt and questions are essential to faith. We are on a journey of discovery. We embrace multiple wisdom traditions and sources, believing that the truths of many other faith traditions give further depth and meaning to our own.

This value is under attack in our current national environment, where Christian Nationalism promotes a narrow view of the Christian faith, demonizing Christian and other traditions where the understanding of faith differs from theirs.

As people who walk in the Way and in the Spirit of Jesus, we at Shepherdstown Presbyterian Church are committed to engaging with those of other faith traditions that share our core values. We invite conversation and collaboration with Interfaith partners who, joining with us, may speak as one, united in love to do justice for all.

### **ENGAGED COMPASSION: “God is Love”**

*1 John 4:16. God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them.*

We believe that the Way of Jesus is a way of being in this world, loving, serving, and making things whole. Loving God means loving all of creation in demonstrable ways. We believe that we each play a part in restoring God’s good creation through loving action. We take care of the planet God has designed, we speak up for others, and we care for those who are most vulnerable.

This value is under attack in our current national environment, where social safety nets are being weakened as funding is removed from programs that support the poor and marginalized, where protections for the earth are steadily stripped away. Rather than addressing the systemic social and economic challenges of our time, those in authority too often blame vulnerable individuals and groups, further dividing us from one another.

As people who walk in the Way and in the Spirit of Jesus, we at Shepherdstown Presbyterian Church are committed to being at work in the world. Acting humbly but without hesitation, we advocate for clean water and wise land use. We serve food to those who often go without, offer shelter to the unhoused, and provide a safe place or a compassionate word if that is all that is required. We turn swords into plowshares. We invite alliances with others who share our values in order to maximize the support we will provide.

**This we declare to the world we live in.**

Session, Shepherdstown Presbyterian Church  
May 14, 2026

## **The Session of Shepherdstown Presbyterian Church**

**Suellen Myers – Clerk**  
**Lynn Coddington**  
**John Gonano**  
**Mary Anne Hitt**  
**Keri Mahoney**  
**Julie Slonaker**  
**Wanda Stewart**  
**Anne Teresa**  
**Adam Ware**  
**Carolee Youngblood**