

**The United Methodist Church**  
**Memphis/Tennessee/Holston Conferences Course of Study**

***Course: COS 323 — Congregational Care***

Dates: October 26-27 and November 9-10, 2018

Fridays: 6 p.m. — 9 p.m.

Saturdays: 8 a.m. — 4:30 p.m.

**Martin Methodist College**

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**Instructor:** Kathy Armistead, PhD  
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**About the Instructor**

I have been a member of the Tennessee Annual Conference since 1987 and am currently the Publisher at the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, The United Methodist Church. As a deacon, my secondary appointment is at Brentwood United Methodist Church in Brentwood, TN. Previously I served as Associate Publisher at HarperCollins Christian Publishing and as Lead Editor in the Bible, Leadership, Theology unit of Abingdon Press at the United Methodist Publishing House. With my husband, Skip Armistead, I have also served as the pastor's spouse in churches of all sizes in rural, urban, and suburban settings. My BA is in Zoology and Chemistry from Butler University in Indianapolis, IN and my MA and PhD are in Religion and Personality from Vanderbilt University. I enjoy teaching and hope to get to know you.

**Course Description**

**This course is designed to help you be a better pastor and make your church a healthier, more inviting place to worship and make disciples for Jesus Christ. The more you put into the class, the more you'll get out. It's that simple.**

This course introduces you to the theological and practical foundations for the ministry of congregational care. Congregational Care is a two-weekend course that combines practical and classroom learning. Practical learning enriches your reflection and ministry skills and contributes wisdom gained from lived experiences to the development of course competencies. The course is designed to deepen your appreciation of collaborative reflection on the practice of ministry while sharpening ministry skills. In order to deepen theological reflection on the practice of ministry, the course will draw upon sociocultural, ethical, historical, biblical resources, and life experience.

**Goals**

The fundamental goal is for you to gain practical wisdom and sharpen needed skills for the sake of ministry and to introduce students to select frameworks for the practical work of ministry in congregations. The course will focus primarily upon deepening your ability to reflect on the practice of ministry in congregational and public contexts, with an emphasis upon the contextual and communal

nature of congregational care. Related to this is the goal of helping you equip your churches for the ministry of congregational care.

The goal is that you will begin and/or deepen their ability to:

- Gain competency concerning practices of congregational care.
- Experience the importance of collaborative ministry with laity, reflecting with a community of leaders who are willing to wrestle together on issues of importance to each member of the group.
- Learn to use investigative techniques to assess the context, culture, and process of a community of faith, and use this learning as a basis for choosing ways to work within the congregation or other ministry contexts.
- Explore processes to help communities of faith practice what it means to be faithful disciples in the world.
- Gain a clear sense of yourself as a pastor, minister, and leader.
- Value and cultivate spiritual formation for yourself and others.

### **Teaching Methodology**

Classroom methodology includes lecture, large-group discussion, small-group discussion, reflective writing, case study presentations, and analysis of local church settings.

### **Grading**

Class Participation 20%

Pre-Course Assignment 25%

Mid-Course Assignment 25%

Final Paper 30%

### **Please Note: Attendance and Class Participation**

Complete all required assignments and come to class prepared to ask questions and make thoughtful comments. Participate with an appreciation and sensitivity to privilege the voices of others. Participate, as assigned, in learning experiences. Show respect for all persons in the class, including the instructor. The goal of small group and class exercises is to develop and expand your competency, knowledge, and pastoral presence.

**Required Texts** (Please buy these most recent editions. You can buy books from Cokesbury.com or Amazon.com).

*Crises Counseling in the Congregation* by Larry Webb, 9781426726989

*African American Pastoral Care and Counseling: Oppression and Empowerment* by Ed Wimberly, 9780687649495

*The Caring Congregation: Training Manual and Resource Guide* by Karen Lampe, 9781426793127

### **Supplementary:**

*Practicing Care in Rural Congregations and Communities* by Hoeft, Jung, and Marshall, 9780800699543

*Basic Types of Pastoral Care and Counseling*, Howard Clinebell, 9780687663804

*The Elephant in the Church: What You Don't See Can Kill Your Ministry* by Jeanne Stevenson-Moessner and Mary Lynn Dell, 9781426753213

### **Recommended Texts**

*A Pastor's Practical Guide to Funerals: Offering Help, Assurance, and Hope* by Lee Franklin, 9781426758195

*Preparing Couples for Love and Marriage: A Pastor's Resource* by Cameron Lee and James L. Furrow, 9781426753206

*What Do We Tell the Children: Talking to Kids about Death and Dying* by Joseph Primo, Abingdon Press, 9781426760495

*The Gift of Presence: A Guide to Helping Those Who Suffer* by Joe Pennel Jr., Abingdon Press, 9781426702143

*Please Don't Tell: What to Do with the Secrets People Share* by Emma Justes, Abingdon Press, 9781426772016

*Pastoral Care: An Essential Guide* by John Patton, Abingdon Press, 9780687053223

### **Pre-course Assignment**

Due: 6 p.m., Friday, Oct. 26, beginning of class

These assignments are designed to help you think more clearly about care and practice ministry more thoughtfully. Please remember that this is a graduate level course, so please turn in papers that reflect your professionalism. All papers should be double-spaced and free of spelling and grammar errors.

*Please note that lectures will draw from required, supplemental, and recommended texts.*

**1. Write your theology of care.** Compare your ideas with those expressed by Karen Lampe in her book, *The Caring Congregation*. Your paper should be at least 1500 words. You may cite examples from your previous experience and describe how you and your church currently offer care to members, guests, and people beyond the local church. Some considerations to be included in the paper are: What are your sources of authority and identity as a ministry leader? What cultural and personal experiences help form your theology of congregational care ministry?

**2. Write a short paper (500 words) that reflects on ways you believe that your self care and your congregational care can improve.** Be prepared to discuss this in class. What tools and resources do you need? How can your class members help you?

### **Mid-course Assignment**

Due: 6 p.m., Friday, Nov 9, beginning of class

**1. Write two case studies**, one should show how you and your congregation offered care at a wedding held in your church. The other should show how you and your congregation offered care at a funeral or to grieving members. Be prepared to discuss in class.

**2. Write 2 book reviews** from the required book list. Prepare to discuss the reviews in class. Each review should not be more than two double-spaced typed pages. Identify at least one chapter in each book that is instructive for your ministry and personal growth.

3. **Write an outline or rough draft of your final project.** We will discuss these in class. Each person will present their project and receive feedback.

### **Final Paper/Project**

Due: Thursday, November 15. Email your paper to me at [Kathy\\_armistead@yahoo.com](mailto:Kathy_armistead@yahoo.com). I will confirm receipt. If I don't confirm that I got it, I didn't get it.

#### **1. Design a congregational care plan for your congregation. (Please note: This plan is not to be a sermon series.)**

- a. Begin with your theology of what it means to be the church. And how you understand that your church is called to care for its members/staff (paid and unpaid), its community, our world? At minimum, your plan should include how the church will care for church members and staff and the community. It should also include a systemic plan of how you care for yourself, people who attend your church, and people beyond the local church.
- b. Analyze the needs of your church. What strengths does your church already have?
- c. Define the scope and nature of your congregational care plan.
- d. Your paper might include how you will set up a team of people to assist you in congregational care.
- e. Please describe the goals, steps, people, and resources you will need and how you can get them. Do you need training? If so, what?
- f. Include a timeline for implementation.
- g. If your church(s) already has/have a plan for congregational care, show how you will improve it.

This paper should be no longer than 12 pages, double-spaced. Your paper should also include a section about your own self care and your own family care (mind, body, spirit), relational) and how you understand yourself as part of the body of Christ, in others words, beyond the local church. Include congregational care practices that are important for your work and that expands your competency regarding ministry practices. What competencies have you honed as a consequence of the course? What are your growing edges? How does a Wesleyan theology guide spiritual development?

### **A Word about Attendance, Evaluation, Communication, and Deadlines**

Attendance is required at all sessions. If there is some emergency, please notify me at 615-554-2461. You may call but texting tends to work better. If you can't reach me, notify Barbara Nye at [bnye1@earthlink.net](mailto:bnye1@earthlink.net). *All assignments must be turned in on time.* Each late submission must be approved by the COS Director and the course professor in advance and will result in at least an automatic letter grade deduction.

'A' work is superior competency in content, form, and style. It is insightful, rigorous, well-reasoned, original, and thorough. A creative capacity to enter into generous discussion and generous listening must be evident, especially in the encounter with differences in culture. Course attendance and the achievement of all course objectives and requirements are excellent. All pre-course and course assignments must be excellent and submitted as required.

'B' work demonstrates exceptional competency in content, form, and style. All work demonstrates clear mastery of the course information, is well reasoned and original. Perfect attendance, and the achievement of all course objectives and requirements are exceptional. Work demonstrates an

awareness of cultural difference, and a willingness to engage difference. Demonstrates a capacity to participate and lead group activities. Completes and submit assignments as required.

'C' work demonstrates adequate competency in content, form, and style. All work demonstrates comprehension of the course information, is well reasoned and original, an awareness of cultural difference, and self-awareness. Course attendance and the achievement of all course objectives and requirements are adequate with no more than one absence. Demonstrates capacity to collaborate in-group activities, provide leadership, and to complete and submit assignments as required. There may be evidence of some misunderstanding of the contextual nature of congregational practices in ministry, an instance of late work submission.

'D' work demonstrates emerging adequacy in writing competencies in content, form, and style. Work and participation demonstrate emerging comprehension of course ideas, and may demonstrate difficulty to appropriate the function of congregational care and ministry. Course attendance and the achievement of most course objectives and requirements are barely adequate.

'F' demonstrates failure to complete the goals for the course, poor or no attendance, poor or no participation, may demonstrate lack of interpersonal skills, and/or failure to comprehend course content and methodology.

**Again: Your presence in class this week is crucial for not just your learning but for the entire class. In an extreme emergency, such as death, please notify the Director of the COS and the professor by email or text in advance.**

#### **Incomplete Policy**

To receive an incomplete, permission must be given by the director and/or the faculty member as soon as the circumstance arises.

#### **Policy on Plagiarism**

##### **Don't.**

Plagiarism is a serious ethical breach. Forms of plagiarism are:

- Copying from another student's work;
- Borrowing and presenting as one's own, without proper attribution, the composition or ideas of another.