

Care Ministry Evaluation

What is the current state of your church care ministry? Take time to fill out this evaluation to gauge where you may need to make changes to your current care ministry program.

How do you perceive care in your church? Who “does” your care ministry, and how is it “done?”

What systems for communication and organization do you have in place for care ministry?

Who conducts visits for members and guests who are in hospitals, nursing homes, rehab centers, and home-centered? How often do they visit and is there any follow-up care? Who coordinates these visits and follow-up care for those?

What does care look like for children and youth in your church and community?

Do you have a prayer ministry, and how do you follow up with prayer requests? What tools, if any, do you use?

What areas of care are needed that don’t exist within your church and what underlying concerns need to be addressed? (i.e., Grief group, recovery ministry, justice ministry, elder care, home-centered care, extending the communion table, prayer ministry, organization).

What care needs do you see outside the church's walls in the community?

What resources and organizations do you (or could you) partner with, in your community, that align with the work of care?



Five Essentials for Organizing Your Congregational Care Ministry

1. **Recruit and Equip:** Choose and train the laity to become Congregational Care Ministers (CCMs) or “Care Ministers” for short.
2. **Define Roles and Responsibilities:** Choose triage/dispatch volunteers for prayer requests, hospital calls and nursing home care. These are key volunteers who will help the pastor deploy the other CCMs.
3. **Establish the Documentation System:** Create confidential documentation systems that may be both electronic and paper. The electronic versions are typically Google Docs or a spreadsheet. These are primarily used for hospital and care home documentation. Samples of the paper versions are found throughout *The Caring Congregation Ministry: Care Minister’s Manual*.
4. **Evaluate:** Evaluate current care classes and support groups. What is needed for your community? Evaluate each year how the programs are working.
5. **Build the Congregational Need:** Communicate and affirm to the congregation the need and importance of this ministry.

UMBRELLA OF CARE



Who and what will be under your team's umbrella of care?



Discussion/Reflection Questions

EQUIPPING CARE MINISTERS

Introduction: (p.xvi*)

1. What is God calling you to do?
2. How will your story help the ministry to grow?
3. What are the resources you need to initiate this ministry?
4. Who can help you organize?

Theology: (p.56*)

1. How is the Christ-like way lived out in your context?
2. How would you describe the collective consciousness of your faith community? Is it full of grace, understanding and welcoming? Do you sense some pain or grief that persists?

In All Things Pray First: (p.77*)

1. What is your daily prayer routine?
2. What does it mean to “pray without ceasing”? (*1 Thessalonians 5:16-18*)
3. How could your ministry benefit from an increased focus on prayer?

Boundaries: (p.85*)

1. What is God calling you to do?
2. What are your priorities and goals?
3. Who can help you?
4. What are the ways you can accomplish each goal?

Listening and Spiritual Guidance: (p.100*)

1. Whom do you consider to be a good listener? Why?
2. What is your prayer routine before, during and after meeting with someone seeking care?
3. Using the listening guidelines in this chapter, evaluate your listening skills.
4. What is working well? What needs improvement?

Visitation: (p.119*)

1. What communication channels are available to alert you to a person who seeks care in the hospital, rehab or care home?
2. What is your protocol for visiting people in the hospital in normal times as well as in times of social distancing?
3. What is your protocol for care extended to someone who is infectious and in quarantine or hospitalized for COVID-19?

Leading Through the Valley of the Shadow: (p.142-143*)

1. How do you articulate your personal theology about death and resurrection?
2. How would you extend care to the family after a loved one dies?
3. How do you articulate the gospel message of hope to people who are non and nominally religious?

*page #'s refer to those in the *Implementation Guide*

ESTABLISHING A CARE MINISTRY

Recruitment: (p. 12*)

1. What does an ideal CCM look like in your context?
2. Who comes to mind when you think of the ideal CCM?
3. Brainstorm a list of laity that exhibit the gifts that align with that ideal CCM.

Roles: (p.18*)

1. Which of the three roles might your CCMs fit into?
2. Are there additional roles necessary in your context?
3. What might that look like?
4. How will all of the roles collaborate to provide the best care possible?

Documentation (p.31*)

Intake and Dispatch

1. Articulate how congregants can request care at your church.
2. Who receives those requests, and what happens next?
3. Develop a predictable & reliable weekly flow for CCMs to guarantee care.

Follow Up

1. What are the ways that CCMs will follow up?
2. What tools will you offer to CCMs so that they feel well-equipped to discern how to handle all types of prayer and care requests?

Documentation

1. Consider usability for CCMs when documenting - what might work for them best?
2. How will all information be stored?

Evaluate (p.40*)

1. What are your church's current primary needs?
2. What are your community's current primary needs?
3. What resources already exist in the community that would be good to share with your CCMs?
4. How might your church offer a faith-based response to those needs?
5. What needs do you anticipate in the coming years?
6. What exists, what needs to be pruned?
7. What is your big goal, and what would it take for that dream to become a reality?

Building the Vision for Your Church (p.46*)

1. What will be your consistent messaging?
2. Who do you need to have conversations with?
3. Through which channels will you communicate the shift to the CCM model?
4. How will you incorporate building the need in your sermons?
5. What is your timeline?



Breath Prayer Practice

1. In this feeling of anger, resentment (5 minutes)

Acknowledge it
 Begin to see where it came from
 What are the lower reactions you might have
 Be aware-don't judge, criticize

2. In this moment I am feeling (5 Minutes)

But it is not who I am
 I am not this anger
 Who I am is a child of God
 Light can come from me
 My soul is connected to God eternal
 I can choose to be different
 Distance between you and the anger
 Take attention from it

3. Focus of breath (5 minutes)

The light of Christ coming up
 Holy Spirit rising up and moving throughout
 Breathe in.....breathe out
 Calm...connect to that light
 Let that light expand within you
 It expands in your center as you hold your breath-continue that focus
 Let that light rise up in you until anger has gone, reaction receded

4. Visualize peace, compassion, response,--how you would like it (5 minutes)

Breathe in Love
 Breathe in Peace

What Serves God? What
 Serves You?
 What Serves the Relationship?

I am LOVE

I am GRACE

I am PEACE

Surrender yourself to this love.

Let God lead you



The Man on the Bridge: A Fable about Breaking Free of Codependency

NARRATOR: Rabbi Edwin Friedman tells the story of a man who had given much thought to what he wanted from life. After trying many things, succeeding at some and failing at others, he finally decided what he wanted. One day the opportunity came for him to experience exactly the way of living that he had dreamed about. But the opportunity would be available only for a short time. It would not wait, and it would not come again. Eager to take advantage of this open pathway, the man started on his journey. With each step, he moved faster and faster. Each time he thought about his goal, his heart beat quicker; and with each vision of what lay ahead, he found renewed vigor. As he hurried along, he came to a bridge that crossed through the middle of a town. The bridge spanned high above a dangerous river. After starting across the bridge, he noticed someone coming from the opposite direction. The stranger seemed to be coming toward him to greet him. As the stranger grew closer, the man could discern that they didn't know each other, but yet they looked amazingly similar. They were even dressed alike. The only difference was that the stranger had a rope wrapped many times around his waist. If stretched out, the rope would reach a length of perhaps thirty feet. The stranger began to unwrap the rope as he walked. Just as the two men were about to meet, the stranger said...

STRANGER: Pardon me, would you be so kind as to hold the end of the rope for me?

NARRATOR: The man agreed without a thought, reached out, and took it.

STRANGER: Thank you...two hands now, and remember, hold tight.

NARRATOR: At that point, the stranger jumped off the bridge. The man on the bridge abruptly felt a strong pull from the now-extended rope. He automatically held tight and was almost dragged over the side of the bridge.

MAN: (SHOUTING) What are you trying to do?

STRANGER: (SHOUTING) Just hold tight!

NARRATOR: This is ridiculous, the man thought. He began trying to haul the other man in. Yet it was just beyond his strength to bring the other back to safety. Again, he yelled over the edge,

MAN: (SHOUTING) Why did you do this?

STRANGER: Just remember, if you let go, I will be lost.

MAN: But I cannot pull you up!

STRANGER: I am your responsibility

MAN: I did not ask for it

STRANGER: If you let go, I am lost.

NARRATOR: The man began to look around for help. No one was within sight. He began to think about his predicament. Here he was eagerly pursuing a unique opportunity, and now he was being sidetracked for who knows how long. Maybe I can tie the rope somewhere, he thought. He examined the bridge carefully, but there was no way to get rid of his new-found burden. So, he again yelled over the edge,

MAN: What do you want?



STRANGER: Just your help.

MAN: How can I help? I cannot pull you in, and there is no place to tie the rope while I find someone else who could help you.

STRANGER: Just keep hanging on, that will be enough.

NARRATOR: Fearing that his arms could not hold out much longer, the man tied the rope around his waist and then continued the conversation.

MAN: Why did you do this? Don't you see who you have done? What possible purpose could you have in mind?

STRANGER: Just remember, my life is in your hands.

NARRATOR: Now the man was perplexed. He reasoned within himself; if I let go, all my life I will know that I let this other man die. If I stay, I risk losing my momentum toward my own long-sought-after salvation. Either way this will haunt me forever. As time went by, still no one came. The man became keenly aware that it was almost too late to resume his journey. If he didn't leave immediately, he wouldn't arrive in time. Finally, he devised a plan.

MAN: Listen, I think I know how to save you. You can climb back up by wrapping the rope around yourself. Loop by loop, the rope will become shorter.

NARRATOR: But the dangling man had no interest in the idea.

MAN: I don't think I can hang on much longer,

STRANGER: You must try; if you fail, I die.

NARRATOR: Suddenly a new idea struck the man on the bridge. It was different and even alien to his normal way of thinking.

MAN: I want you to listen carefully, because I mean what I am about to say.

NARRATOR: The dangling man indicated that he was listening.

MAN: I will not accept the position of choice for your life, only for my own; I hereby give back the position of choice for your own life to you."

STRANGER: (AFRAID) What do you mean?

MAN: I mean, simply, it's up to you. You decide which way this ends. I will become the counterweight. You do the pulling and bring yourself up. I will even tug some from here.

NARRATOR: He unwound the rope from around his waist and braced himself to be a counterweight. He was ready to help as soon as the dangling man began to act.

STRANGER: (UPSET) You cannot mean what you say; you would not be so selfish. I am your responsibility. What could be so important that you would let someone die? Do not do this to me.

(A LONG PAUSE). MAN: (SLOWLY) I accept your choice.

NARRATOR: In voicing those words, he freed his hands and continued his journey over the bridge.



CARE CARDS

25 DIGITAL CARE CARDS
A vital resource for life's challenges



Scan to receive a free
set of digital care cards
sent to your phone!

Printed versions available
to order on our website:



SCAN ME

thecaringcongregation.com/resources



FOUR PRACTICE CARE SCENARIOS

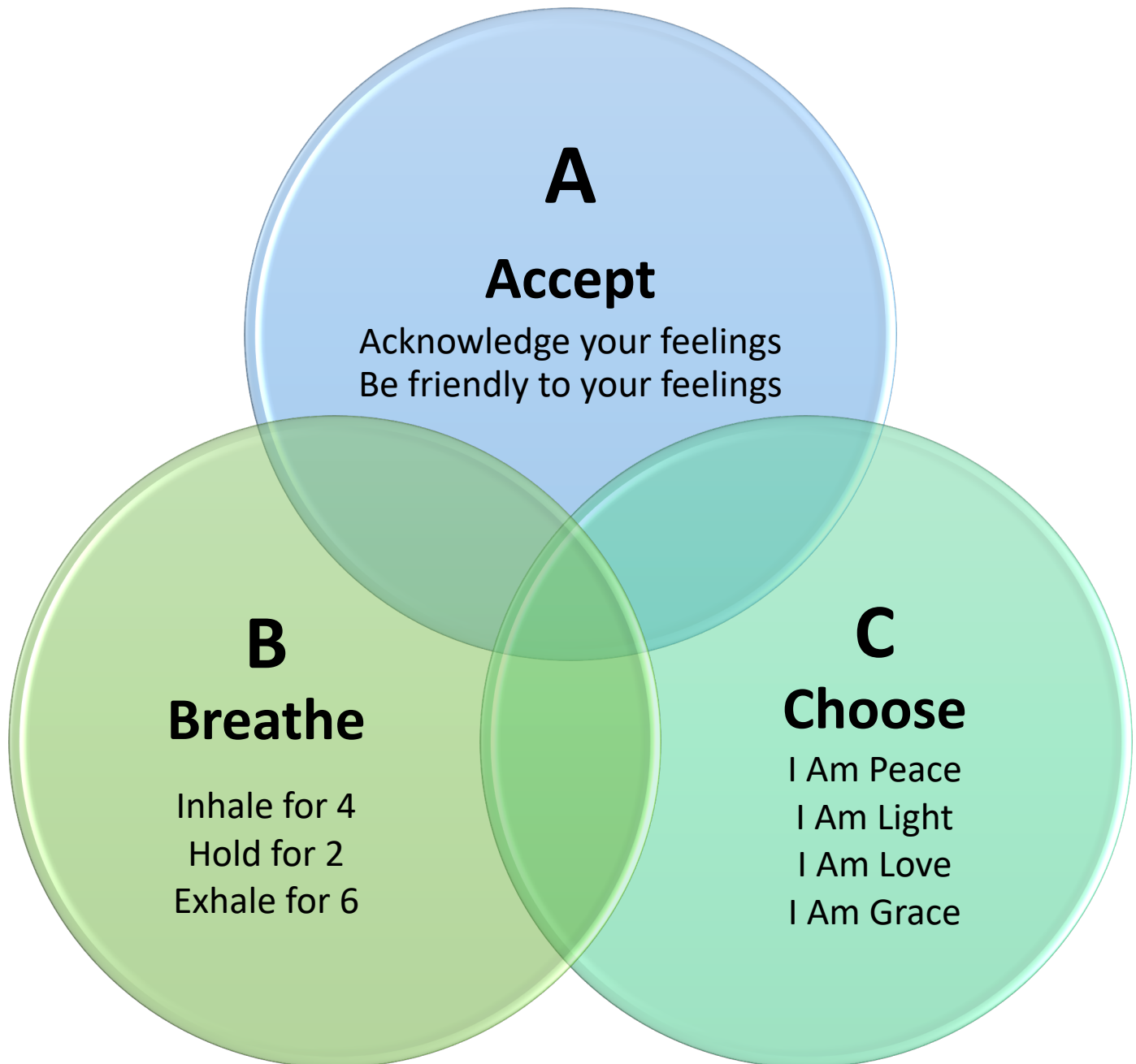
(p.60-61 *Care Minister's Manual*)

CARE SCENARIO 1: You've been assigned to a congregant that has recently gone through a very difficult divorce, has a small child and is experiencing financial difficulty. She has reached out for financial assistance from the church and was not happy with the result. She feels the church has let her down. You have met with her a couple of times to encourage her and pray with her. She starts calling you often, at times more than once a day and expects you to be available immediately. She's frantic for help and for someone to listen to her. How can you best support her in your role as a CCM?

CARE SCENARIO 2: You have been asked to reach out to a man that lost his job. His wife put in a prayer request and has explained her husband is agreeable to meeting with someone. You have called and left a phone message and e-mail. He has not responded to your call or e-mail in two days. You phone him and leave another message. You do not hear back. What do you do?

CARE SCENARIO 3: You are participating in a class that has been meeting for a few weeks. A new person joins the class and begins to share their story that is very tragic. He explains he is needing support but is trusting in God to provide. He then shares a theological opinion that doesn't go over well with a majority of the group. People become argumentative and open their Bible's to point to scripture as to just why he is wrong. They are really on attack mode. You sense the man is very distraught and angry. What do you do?

CARE SCENARIO 4: You met with a woman for the first time and she shared with you she is living with a husband that abuses her. She shares she is a devout Christian and can't possibly leave her husband because of the covenant she made and the scriptures she's read that tell her she must remain a loyal and dedicated wife. What do you do? How can you shift her thinking from feeling oppressed or victimized to confident and capable?





Name: _____

Date: _____

- What is your first memory of church?

- What church has been most foundational in your life? Why?

- Were you baptized? Describe that experience.

- When did you first attend our church? Describe that first day.

- Describe the connections you have made within the church. Why are they important?

- What are your three favorite Scriptures? Why are these significant to you? What do they say about your life?
 - 1.

 - 2.

 - 3.



- What are your three favorite hymns/faith songs? Why?
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
- Do you have daily spiritual practices? If so, what are they?
- What is the most important thing you have done in your life?
- What is your legacy?
- At the end of your life celebration, what are the three most important things that people hear about you?
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
- Miscellaneous:

Anointing

In the United Methodist tradition, anointing with oil offers an opportunity for spiritual healing affirmed by scripture in James 5: 13–15. This **Prayer of Faith** says, “Is any one of you in trouble? He should pray. Is anyone happy? Let him sing songs of praise. Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up.” (NIV)

The **United Methodist Book of Worship** notes that “anointing the forehead with oil is a sign signifying the healing love of God. The oil points beyond itself and those doing the anointing to the action of the Holy Spirit and the presence of the healing Christ, who is God’s Anointed One.”

Anointing gives the opportunity for spiritual healing, which is a wholeness of body, mind and spirit. The oil reminds us of God’s promise of presence with those who are sick or suffering. Anointing offers **healing** and not **curing**, being made whole in the love of Christ.

Anointing people is a powerful reminder of God’s triune presence in their life journey, offering the peace that they do not travel alone.

The United Methodist Book of Worship (1992). Nashville, TN:
The United Methodist Publishing House, p. 614.

When Anointing Someone...

Explain anointing and get their permission (or the permission of family present.)

The person may not be familiar with anointing in the United Methodist tradition. Explain what it is and how you will do it. Ask them if this is something they would like to experience.

Read the passage from James 5: 13–15.

After reading the passage, remind them that this is not offered as curing, but instead as inviting the Holy Spirit to be present with them, offering wholeness in the love of Christ.

Anoint with oil in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

With anointing oil on the thumb, make the sign of the cross on the person’s forehead, saying, “I anoint you with oil in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.”

Pray The Lord’s Prayer

Pray the Lord’s Prayer together.

Read Psalm 23

When Death is Imminent

KEY SCRIPTURES TO USE (in this order)

■ **Revelation 21:1-5** (*a new heaven and a new earth*)
Begin by explaining what we believe as Christians and what they are about ready to experience. Do this by reading from Revelation that Jesus is on the throne, the old has passed away and God is about ready to make all things new. Even if they cannot respond, ask the person if they've already begun to see visions of heaven or who has gone on before them that will be there to greet them.

■ **1 Corinthians 15:51-57** (*Where, O death is your victory?*)

Next, explain what it might be like to leave this reality. In terms that everyone can comprehend, talk about how death is like taking off an old coat that is completely used up and that God has prepared a new garment for us. This new body is perfect and pain free.

When Death is Imminent

■ **John 14:1-6a** (*Do not let your hearts be troubled*)
Next, ask the family what kind of place they think God has prepared for the person. Do they like certain foods, or colors, or do they like to be at the beach? God has something absolutely perfect waiting for them.

■ **Romans 8:38-39**
Show this scripture to the family and confirm that "nothing can separate us from the love of Christ," ending with, "For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." Assure them with a sentence that their loved one will be with God and even as they close this chapter, they will be reunited.

■ **Psalms 23 or the Lord's Prayer (closing)**
Lastly, move quickly to anointing the person and closing with prayer. Pray for the time ahead to be filled with sacred moments for the family, comfort for everyone, decreased pain and God's perfect timing. We thank God for the person and at the end of this prayer close either with the Lord's Prayer or the 23rd Psalm.



SAMPLE GRIEF NOTES

Below are samples of notes you can mail to a grieving person at four crucial times during the first year after a loved one dies. They may also accompany grief booklets from a series called *Journeying Through Grief* (available from StephensMinistry.org) which focus on what the person is likely experiencing at that point in grief—offering understanding, empathy, compassion, and hope.

FIRST NOTE

We are so sorry to hear of the death of (name). Such sadness is a heavy and terrible burden for anyone to have to carry. Please know that we are praying for you and your family; and hope that you will feel God's presence during this time of grief. Just remember that you are not alone in your grief.

OPTIONAL: Enclosed is a booklet that we hope will bring you comfort. You will receive additional booklets throughout the year to assist in the healing process. Should you prefer not to receive additional booklets, please let us know by calling (phone #) so that we can respect your request.

SECOND NOTE

We hope that as you've moved through this difficult year that you have been comforted by feeling God's presence as He begins to bring peace and healing to your grief. May (name) be well remembered by friends and family through happy memories of times shared. Please know that we are continuing to pray for you.

OPTIONAL: Enclosed is a booklet that we hope will bring you comfort. You will receive additional booklets throughout the year to assist in the healing process. Should you prefer not to receive additional booklets, please let us know by calling (phone #) so that we can respect your request.

THIRD NOTE

We know grief is individual to all people and we hope that this year has brought healing and a sense of greater peace to you. May your memories of (name) be abundant and joyful. Know that God has never, and will never, leave your side through this journey.

OPTIONAL: Enclosed is a booklet that we hope will bring you comfort. You will receive additional booklets throughout the year to assist in the healing process. Should you prefer not to receive additional booklets, please let us know by calling (phone #) so that we can respect your request.

FOURTH NOTE

Losing a loved one is one of life's saddest experiences. Each person's grief is their own and we know there is no timetable to the healing process. We hope that over these past months you've been able to move into a place of greater comfort and have felt God's presence throughout this year. We will continue to pray for you and hope that sad moments will be replaced with peaceful and treasured memories.

OTHER SUGGESTIONS:

On behalf of Pastor _____ and his/her Congregational Care Team, please know we continue to pray for you and your family as you grieve the loss of your _____ (name). Please remember "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted." Matt. 5:4. Wishing you comfort, Your Name, Congregational Care Minister

Please know your church family continues to hold you in prayer. May memories of your _____, bring comfort to you during your time of grief. May the hope that Christ gave us in his victory over death and his promise of eternal life sustain you. In Christ's love, Your Name, Congregational Care Minister