

# GATHERING MODULES



## **Shepherding Souls: The Classic Model for the Care of Souls and Contemporary Practice [Senkbeil]**

The longer tradition of Lutheran pastoral work understands its work as *seelsorge*, or “care/cure of souls.” This session explores the implications of the historic role of the pastor as spiritual physician for informed, attentive and intentional ministry to people who wrestle with the complexities of life in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

Pastors will:

- a. Grasp the essential components of the cure of souls in distinction from modern paradigms for pastoral ministry.
- b. Learn the fundamental components in spiritual diagnosis and cure.
- c. Learn to design effective pastoral care plans and how to provide intentional intervention for spiritual problems.
- d. Explore some chronic spiritual ailments common in contemporary pastoral practice.

## **A Noble Task: A Christ-centered Paradigm for Pastoral Self-Care [Senkbeil]**

The nature of pastoral work often isolates the pastor spiritually and undermines his ministry from within. This topic examines the practice of meditation and prayer and how a pastor both cultivates and maintains a good conscience before God and man.

Pastors will:

- a. Explore the Christocentric formation of a good conscience and its central role for spiritual health.
- b. Learn the essential components in the practice of prayer and meditation upon the Word of God.
- c. Learn how to function as a spiritual sentry for himself, his family, and his flock.

## **Out of the Depths: Sadness, Despair, and Recovery [Senkbeil]**

**Recurrent bouts with sadness and occasional or chronic depression are rampant among clergy. This session examines the environmental and spiritual factors that exacerbate pastoral sadness and explores spiritual resources that lead to stability and recovery for fulfilling ministry.**

Pastors will:

- a. Explore the occupational hazard of loneliness and its impact among clergy.
- b. Identify the warning signals that indicate spiritual and emotional depletion.
- c. Learn to lament before God as a means of dealing with spiritual hurt.
- d. Grasp the unique dimensions of marriage, friendship, collegial relationships, and a brother/father confessor in combating spiritual isolation.

## **Authority vs. Power: the Pastoral Pitfall [Senkbeil]**

**Improper wielding of power in the church is destructive, while proper exercise of divinely-given authority is edifying. This session helps the pastor to distinguish headship from dictatorship and to cultivate patterns of leadership that flow from God-given order and authority within the church.**

Pastors will:

- a. Learn the crucial distinction between power and authority and the proper use of each.
- b. Learn to audit his subordination to God-given authority.
- c. Learn to evaluate the relational dimensions of his ministry.
- d. Learn to exercise authority with courage and sensitivity.

## **Deliver us from Evil: a Christ-centered strategy for exposing and fighting the devil's schemes [Senkbeil]**

**Flesh and blood are not the real enemy of Christ's church and her ministers. This session presents a scriptural and confessional paradigm for discerning and healthy ministry in the face of the attacks of the Evil One.**

Pastors will:

- a. Learn to handle conflict with discernment and tact.
- b. More fully appreciate his identity as steward of God's sacred mysteries.
- c. Become more alert to common spiritual attacks on his ministry.
- d. Explore scriptural and confessional strategies for spiritual protection and joyful ministry.

## Word, Sacrament and Psychotherapy [Yahnke]

**This module will explore the intersections as well as the clear distinctions between spiritual care and Christian psychology in matters of diagnosis, treatment formulation and outcome evaluations. The unique roles and functions of the pastor will be examined from the perspective of the parishioner seeking care.**

Pastors will:

- a. Identify unhealthy psychotherapeutic responses to real spiritual needs
- b. Examine models of response to human pain and the desire for happiness
- c. Review critical distinctions between care of the soul and cure of the soul
- d. Identify unhealthy pastoral responses to real psychological needs
- e. Explore how pastoral practice influences parishioners' willingness to seek individual care

## Pastoral Ethics and Spiritual Care [Yahnke]

**Clergy will be challenged to participate in a review of key ethical concepts that influence the practice of spiritual care. Pastors will also participate in casuistry to explore specific ethical issues that underlie pastoral counsel. Matters addressed will include: mandatory reporting, confidentiality, professional boundaries and ethical decisions making.**

Pastors will:

- a. Acknowledge the importance of "mindfulness" in reviewing one's own ethical practices
- b. Appreciate how an inequity of "power" influences all interactions with parishioners
- c. Examine the primary boundaries that are regarded as essential for ethical counsel
- d. Consider their pastoral habits regarding routine confidentiality and privacy of the confessional
- e. Review an ethical problem-solving template

## The Silent Epidemic: Compassion Fatigue [Yahnke]

**Pastors are accustomed to giving sacrificially of their time, love and energy. This module examines the necessity for pastoral self-care in light of research findings about the diminished health, well-being and capacity of "people who love too much."**

Pastors will:

- a. Become acquainted with the threats of compassion fatigue
- b. Explore to what extent, if at all, their lives are challenged by work-related stressors
- c. Become familiar with signs and symptoms of burnout
- d. Examine the impact that work environment may have on worker well-being
- e. Review coping strategies essential for response to major stressors
- f. Determine which resiliency-building options may be useful for personal and pastoral well-being

## **Depression, Dysfunction and Despair [Yahnke]**

**This conversation will explore how the biology and emotional states of depression can work to separate parishioners from an ability to take possession of God's good gifts. Clear discussion of depression and suicidal thinking equips pastors to detect how they can best bring the Word of God to people who suffer.**

Pastors will:

- a. Understand the common features and causes of depression
- b. Examine spiritual myths that often surround mental illness
- c. Review important ways of supporting individuals who are depressed
- d. Consider pastoral responses to best serve those who are depressed
- e. Become familiar with signs and symptoms that invite immediate referral

## **Lead Us Not Into Temptation: Sexual Misconduct [Yahnke]**

**Sexual misconduct is an ever-present temptation for all people. This module explores the specific personal and situational circumstances that increase one's vulnerability to sexual misconduct, identifying warning signs and suggesting pre-emptive strategies. The conversation will also examine the phenomenon of pornographic reliance/ addictions. Pastors are invited to do a personal self-assessment to both create mindfulness about their vulnerability to these temptations and to inform their counsel for others who struggle.**

Pastors will:

- a. Understand the scope of behavior regarded as "sexual misconduct."
- b. Examine specific risks and warnings about what increases one's risk of engaging in misconduct
- c. Review explicit prodromal characteristics identified with vulnerability to misconduct.
- d. Determine what proactive practices may help to defend boundaries in this area
- e. Become familiar with characteristics of sexual addiction