



Fall Term 2026
Pastoral Theology 220
The Practice of Pastoral Care and Counselling:
Equipping Congregational Leaders
with the Rev. Fr. Matt Koovisk
A Course in The Licentiate in Theology Diploma Program

Huron University College Land Acknowledgment

Huron is situated on the traditional lands of the Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, Attawandaron, and Lenape peoples, whose sharing and stewardship of the land has been governed by the Dish with One Spoon treaty since time immemorial. We are guided by this treaty in the spirit of peace, friendship, and respect. Huron University College acknowledges its past role in perpetuating colonial and exclusionary relations. Because religious and ecclesial institutions were instrumental in such relations, we consider it our particular responsibility as a Faculty of Theology to work towards justice and reconciliation.

Course Dates & Times: (Saturdays) September 12, 19, October 3 from 12:00 PM EDT to 4:30PM EDT

Delivery: Hosted via Zoom

Instructor: The Rev. Fr. Matt Koovisk BA, MTS, MDiv, ThM, FGMS, SCP

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(E-mail is the best way to contact me)

Course Description

Pastoral care and counselling is, at its heart, about relationship with others and not just having the “book knowledge” to care for others. It requires you to integrate into your own Christian life. In other words, you must interact with others to provide pastoral care.

This course will introduce participants to the theological foundations of pastoral care and counselling in relation to the roles of lay leaders, deacons, and priests within the Church. It will explore the tools of active listening, praying with others, personal spiritual practice, and self-awareness in the role of care practitioners to equip congregational leaders in their ministries.

Course Materials

Required Texts

The Holy Bible, New Revised Standard Version

Note: while the instructor uses the New Revised Standard Version in lectures, you're welcome to use whatever translation you wish.

Donald Peel. *The Ministry of Listening: Team Visiting in Hospital and Home*. Toronto, ON: Anglican Book Centre Publishing, 1982.

Order it here: <https://anglican.gilmore.ca/en/product/c02e321e-e50b-4383-9b2b-a0d95fd951c0>

General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada. *The Book of Alternative Services*. Toronto, ON: Anglican Book Centre Publishing, 1985.

Order it here: <https://anglican.gilmore.ca/en/product/5267ede2-95f3-4e9e-b516-754616149f74>

Read it here: <https://www.anglican.ca/wp-content/uploads/BAS.pdf>

General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada. *The Book of Common Prayer*. Toronto, ON: Anglican Book Centre Publishing, 1962.

Order it here: <https://anglican.gilmore.ca/en/product/92a3653a-9a5b-4747-a5cd-9ff5438a16db>

Read it here: <https://www.anglican.ca/wp-content/uploads/BCP.pdf>

NB: If you don't already have physical copies of the BAS and BCP, I highly recommend having them. They will serve you well.

Assorted articles, as found on ChurchX.

Optional Texts: Do You Want to Read More?

Barry, William A. & William J. Connolly. *The Practice of Spiritual Direction*. 2nd ed. New York: HarperCollins Publishing, 2009.

VanKatwyk, Peter. *Spiritual Care and Therapy: Integrative Perspectives*. Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier Press, 2003.

Roberts, Stephen, ed. *Professional Spiritual and Pastoral Care: A Practical Clergy and Chaplain's Handbook*. Woodstock, VT: Skylight Paths, 2011.

- **Note:** this book is geared towards those in professional pastoral care settings. The instructor used it in his 2nd Basic CPE Unit. The language is quite dense in this book and should be read with caution.

INTENSIVE COURSE SCHEDULE: WEEK 1 (SEPTEMBER 12, 2026)

Required Reading for Week 1

Matthew 25: 31-46, James 4: 13-16

Peel ch. 1-2

Optional Reading for Week 1

Gula, Richard. *Ethics in Pastoral Ministry*. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1996. 9-30.

Plummer, David. "Creating a Personal Theology to Do Spiritual/Pastoral Care" in *Professional Spiritual and Pastoral Care*. Stephen Roberts, ed. Woodstock, VT: Skylight Paths Publishing, 2012. 12-17.

Lecture 1: The Ministry of Pastoral Care

- What is Pastoral Care?
- Some Basic Thoughts
- Telling Our Stories

Lecture 2: Thinking Theologically about Pastoral Care

- Why do we do "pastoral care"?
- Biblical & Theological Foundations for Pastoral Care

WEEK 2 (SEPTEMBER 19, 2026)

Required Reading for Week 2

The Book of Alternative Services Baptismal Rites (p. 151-161), & the Ordination Rites for Deacon (p. 652-658) and Priest (p. 643-650)

Peel ch. 3-6, 14

Optional Reading for Week 2

McGrane, Kevin J. "The Deacon as Wise Fool: A Pastoral Persona for the Diaconate" in *Anglican Theological Review* 100. No. 4 (Fall 2018.) 777-783.

The Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples. "16. At the Side of the Sick and the Aged." From *Pastoral Guide for Diocesan Priests in Churches Dependent on the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples*.

https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cevang/documents/rc_con_cevang_doc_19971001_priests_en.html

Doehring, Carrie. *The Practice of Pastoral Care: A Postmodern Approach*. Louisville, Kentucky: John Knox Press, 2006, p. 47-63.

Lecture 3: Roles in Pastoral Care

- The Role of the Laity: Bless and Be a Blessing
- The Role of the Deacon: Serve the People & the World
- The Role of the Priest: Sanctify the People & Dispense the Sacraments

Lecture 4: Communicating as a Pastoral Caregiver

- Active Listening and Effective Communication
- Being a Compassionate Presence
- Basic Listening Skills
- Active Listening
- In Class Case Study

DUE THIS WEEK:

REFLECTION PAPER #1

WEEK 3 (OCTOBER 3, 2026)

Required Reading for Week 3

Peel ch. 9, 12

Optional Reading for Week 3

Baker McCall, Junietta. *A Practical Guide to Hospital Ministry: Healing Ways*. New York: The Haworth Pastoral Press, 2002. 45-72.

Gula, Richard. *Ethics in Pastoral Ministry*. NJ: Paulist Press, 1996. 117-152.

Friedman, Edwin H. *Generation to Generation: Family Processes in Church and Synagogue*. New York: The Guilford Press, 2011.
(chapters on “Family Systems Theory: Five Basic Concepts” & “Understanding Family Process”)

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Lecture 5: Self-Care

- Self Awareness
- Appropriate Boundaries

- Spiritual Practices
- In Class Case Study

Week 6: Some Basics Around Family Systems Theory

- Keeping The Temperature Steady
- Anticipating Responses to Big Feelings
- Triangulation

DUE THIS WEEK:

REFLECTION PAPER #2

DUE OCTOBER 15, 2026:

CASE STUDY: THE IN-PERSON VISIT

Assignments & Method of Evaluation of Assignments

Class Participation (15%)

Pastoral care is, at its heart, about relationship with others, and is not about just having the “book knowledge.” It requires you to integrate it into your own Christian life. In other words, you must interact with others to provide pastoral care. In order to get full marks for this, one has to intelligently participate in conversation, and not just talk about things that are not related to the topic at hand.

Reflection Paper: Receiving Pastoral Care (30%)

1 John 4:12 reads: “We love because He first loved us.” In a similar vein, we care because others have cared about us at some point. In this two (2) to three (3) page assignment (*double spaced, twelve point font*), students are to reflect on a time in their lives when they have received care from others. Questions that the student could consider in their reflection include:

- How did you feel cared for?
 - What kind of cues were there? Were there verbal ones (tone, words or phrases used)? Were there non-verbal ones (posture in chair, carer paying attention to what is being said?)
- How did the person encourage you to share your story?
 - How did they respond to the story you told them?
 - Did they share about their own life? Did their sharing help or did it overshadow the reason they were there?
- What was their general demeanour during the visit?
 - Were they happy to be there? Did they seem distracted?
 - Were there other things that made you comfortable?
- If not, what made you uncomfortable?
- In your estimation, what made this visit/carers so significant that you remember the visit?
 - Was it the carer? The circumstances of the visit?

It is due on **September 19th, 2026** unless previous arrangements have been made with the instructor.

Reflection Paper: Theology of Pastoral Care (30%)

In a minimum 2 (two) page, maximum 5 (five) page essay (*double spaced, 12 point font*), students are expected to describe their theology of pastoral care. Questions that may help you discern your theology of pastoral care include:

- Why do you do pastoral care? Where is pastoral care done?
- What does pastoral care look like for me? What do I do when I'm providing pastoral care to somebody? Is it the same every time?
- If I was asked in an elevator to describe pastoral care, what would I say?

If you're ordained (*or considering ordination to the diaconate or priesthood*), based on what you read in the ordination rites – how do you think these ministries intersect with pastoral care?

It is due on **October 3rd, 2026**, unless previous arrangements have been made with the instructor.

Case Study/Report: The In-Person Visit (25%)

Based on **one (1)** pastoral visit that has been done in their local context¹, students are expected, in a short paper (based on the format provided in the Dropbox link), be able to answer some of the following questions:

- 1) What's the background of this person? Is there family involved in the situation? Are there family dynamics at play? Is there other information in the case study that talks about the person's past?
- 2) What do they need from you? What are the issues that are prevalent in this case study?
- 3) What's your plan for the visit? How can you help them? Do they need just a listening ear, or are they wanting something more from you?
- 4) After the visit, what's your follow-up plan? How do you think you can provide pastoral care following the first visit?

It is due on **October 15th, 2026** unless previous arrangements have been made with the instructor.

¹ Please speak to the instructor if you can't think of a recent pastoral visit or are unable to do a pastoral care visit (either online or in-person) due to your circumstances.

Huron Grade Descriptors

A+	90-100	One could scarcely expect better from a student at this level
A	80-89	Superior work which is clearly above average
B	70-79	Good work, meeting all requirements, and eminently satisfactory
C	60-69	Competent work, meeting requirements
D	50-59	Fair work, minimally acceptable
F	below 50	Fail

Student Code of Conduct

Membership in the community of Huron University College and Western University implies acceptance by every student of the principle of respect for the rights, responsibilities, dignity and well-being of others and a readiness to support an environment conducive to the intellectual and personal growth of all who study, work, and live within it. Upon registration, students assume the responsibilities that such registration entails. While in the physical or online classroom, students are expected to behave in a manner that supports the learning environment of others. Please review the Student Code of Conduct at:

<https://huronatwestern.ca/sites/default/files/Res%20Life/Student%20Code%20of%20Conduct%20-%20Revised%20September%202019.pdf>.

Statement on the Recording of Class Activities

Students may not record or distribute any class activity, including conversations during office hours, without written permission from the instructor, except as necessary as part of approved accommodations for students with disabilities. Any approved recordings may only be used for the student's own private use.

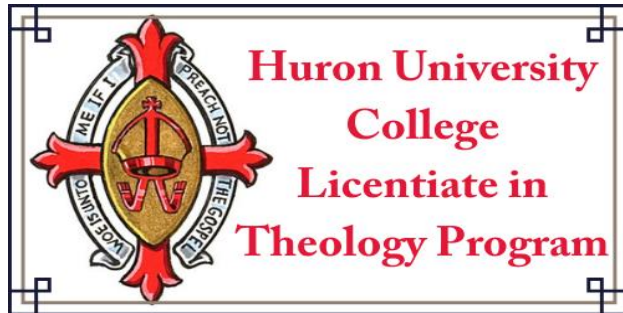
Online courses within the Licentiate in Theology Program are recorded for student engagement purposes. These recordings are only used by the registered students of the class and made available through a restricted video hosting site to respect both privacy and intellectual property. Should a student be uncomfortable with this practice, they can contact the course instructor or the LTh Program Director, Dr. Grayhame Bowcott at grayhame.bowcott@huron.uwo.ca

Statement of Prohibition on the Use of AI

As the primary purpose of Huron's Licentiate in Theology Program is to enable critical thinking, spiritual growth, the cultivation of individual ministry skillsets, and personal discernment for future ministry leadership, this means that we expect our students to offer up only their own ideas and original contributions of writing, assignments, and evaluative content. Any and all use of AI (Artificial Intelligence) is strictly prohibited within this program. Any student who violates this prohibition will be disqualified from receiving credit for the course they are taking. Any student who repeatedly violates this prohibition may risk expulsion from the LTh Program.

Support Services

For advice on course selections, degree requirements, and assistance with requests for medical accommodation, students should contact the LTh Coordinator, Chris Travers, at chris.travers@huron.uwo.ca



THIS COURSE HAS BEEN APPROVED BY HURON'S FACULTY OF THEOLOGY COMMITTEE
FOR THE FALL TERM OF THE LTH PROGRAM, 2026.