

MKWW BIBLE INSTITUTE

Freeport, New York

Chaplaincy Curriculum

FROM THE SHEPHERD'S SEAT

Grace, Discernment & the Heart of Pastoral Care

Instructor: Pastor Eric Brown

Curriculum: Chaplaincy Curriculum, MKWW Bible Institute

Format: Online, synchronous seminar

Meeting Time: Wednesdays, 6:00 PM

Term Dates: September 23 – December 16 (no session November 4)

Credit: 12 sessions, including midterm and final oral presentations

Course Overview

It is a common instinct to judge before we are called to serve. From the Shepherd's Seat is built on this founding premise: we are often quick to judge until the moment we are entrusted with someone's care — and it is in that moment that our perspective must change. This course exists to cultivate that change deliberately, before the moment of crisis arrives.

Pastoral care is not confined to those who hold the office or title of pastor. Anyone entrusted with serving, supporting, leading, encouraging, or caring for people in ministry can benefit from developing the heart and perspective of a shepherd. Offered within the Chaplaincy Curriculum at MKWW Bible Institute, this course is designed for pastors, chaplains, ministers, ministry leaders, church workers, and any student who desires to care for others with greater grace, wisdom, compassion, and discernment.

Across twelve weeks, students will examine how responsibility for the well-being of another reshapes judgment itself. Through biblical exposition, case-based discussion, and applied ministry scenarios, students will be formed toward the settled, tested posture of a shepherd — one who has moved from evaluating people to bearing them.

Chaplaincy & Pastoral Care: Similar, Not Identical

Chaplaincy and pastoral care share a common heart: both exist to bring the presence of God into the real, unscripted circumstances of a person's life — grief, sickness, crisis, transition — with grace, discernment, and compassion. In this sense, every chaplain practices pastoral care.

The two differ in setting, credentialing, and scope. Pastoral care is most often exercised within a congregation, by a pastor or ministry leader who typically knows the person over time, within an established faith community and its doctrine. Chaplaincy is typically exercised outside the congregation — in hospitals, hospice, the military, corrections, first response, or the marketplace — often with people the chaplain has just met, across faith backgrounds and none, and frequently under institutional credentialing and endorsement requirements the local

church does not impose. Week One establishes this shared foundation and this distinct application, which the remainder of the course will draw on throughout.

Course Premise

“We are often judgmental until we have to be a servant.” This course takes that tension seriously. Judgment is easy from a distance; service requires proximity. Each unit of study asks students to trade the comfortable seat of the observer for the exposed, humbling seat of the shepherd — where grace, truth, discretion, and endurance are no longer abstractions but daily disciplines.

Scripture Anchor: Matthew 7:1–5; Luke 15:25–32

The Story of the Elder Brother (Luke 15) — a son who kept every rule yet stood outside the party, unwilling to call the returning sinner “brother.”

Learning Outcomes

- Articulate a biblical theology of pastoral care applicable at every level of ministry, not solely to ordained pastors.
- Practice extending grace while upholding truth, accountability, and biblical correction.
- Handle confidential and sensitive information with discretion, trust, and integrity.
- Establish healthy boundaries that distinguish godly support from control or enabling.
- Navigate conflict, disappointment, criticism, and betrayal without forfeiting compassion.
- Recognize and minister to the spiritual, emotional, relational, and practical needs of the whole person.
- Demonstrate the capacity to care for pastoral leaders themselves, not only those under their care.
- Sustain a shepherd's heart — patient, enduring, and still willing to love — through the ordinary disappointments of ministry.

Course Schedule

Class meets online each Wednesday at 6:00 PM. There is no class session on November 4.

Session	Topic, Scripture Anchor & Story
Sept. 23	Week 1 — From the Shepherd's Seat: Course Introduction <i>An orientation to pastoral care and to chaplaincy as related but distinct callings. Students will define pastoral care, define chaplaincy, and examine where the two overlap in heart and mission and where they diverge in setting, credentialing, and scope of practice — establishing why the heart of a shepherd is essential to both, at every level of ministry.</i> Scripture Anchor: John 10:11–16; Ezekiel 34:1–6 The Story of the Good Shepherd (John 10) — a shepherd's motive contrasted with a hired hand's.
Sept. 30	Week 2 — Grace for Imperfect People <i>Learning to love, serve, and care for people while honestly recognizing their weaknesses, failures, and need for growth.</i> Scripture Anchor: Luke 15:11–24; Romans 5:8 The Story of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15) — a father's grace running out to meet a son still far off.
Oct. 7	Week 3 — Grace and Truth <i>Balancing compassion with correction, accountability, biblical truth, and restoration.</i> Scripture Anchor: John 8:1–11; John 1:14, 17

Session	Topic, Scripture Anchor & Story
	The Story of the Woman Caught in Adultery (John 8) — Jesus refuses both condemnation and compromise.
Oct. 14	Week 4 — When You Know Too Much <i>Understanding confidentiality, discretion, trust, and the responsibility of handling sensitive information.</i> Scripture Anchor: Genesis 45:1–15; Proverbs 11:13 The Story of Joseph and His Brothers (Genesis 45) — private knowledge held in trust, then released in mercy.
Oct. 21	Week 5 — Caring Without Controlling <i>Providing guidance and support without attempting to control people or their decisions, while recognizing when helping becomes enabling.</i> Scripture Anchor: Philemon 1:8–14; Galatians 6:1–2 The Story of Paul's Appeal for Onesimus (Philemon) — an apostle who chooses persuasion over command.
Oct. 28	Week 6 — Midterm Oral Presentation <i>Students respond to a pastoral-care scenario, demonstrating grace, discernment, biblical application, appropriate boundaries, and practical care.</i> Scripture Anchor: James 1:22–25
Nov. 4	No Class — Recess <i>No session held this week.</i>
Nov. 11	Week 7 — When Caring Hurts <i>Navigating disappointment, criticism, offense, betrayal, forgiveness, and the emotional realities of caring deeply for others.</i> Scripture Anchor: Jeremiah 20:7–9; 2 Corinthians 1:3–4 The Story of Jeremiah, the Weeping Prophet — caring for a people who resist the care offered.
Nov. 18	Week 8 — Grace With Boundaries <i>Developing healthy limits while recognizing what we should carry, what others must carry for themselves, and what must be entrusted to God.</i> Scripture Anchor: Mark 6:30–32; Galatians 6:5 The Story of Jesus Withdraws to a Solitary Place (Mark 6) — ministry sustained by deliberate rest.
Nov. 25	Week 9 — Caring for the Whole Person <i>Recognizing and responding appropriately to the spiritual, emotional, relational, family, and practical needs of others.</i> Scripture Anchor: Luke 10:25–37; 3 John 1:2 The Story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10) — care that addresses body, safety, and future in one act.
Dec. 2	Week 10 — Caring for the Shepherd <i>Understanding how ministers, leaders, members, and caregivers can support and care for their pastor while recognizing the person behind the pastoral office.</i> Scripture Anchor: Exodus 18:13–24; 1 Kings 19:5–7 The Story of Jethro Counsels Moses (Exodus 18) — a leader cared for before he burns out.
Dec. 9	Week 11 — Still Loving the Sheep <i>Maintaining compassion, patience, endurance, and a shepherd's heart through the challenges and disappointments of ministry.</i> Scripture Anchor: John 21:15–17; 1 Corinthians 13:4–8 The Story of Jesus Restores Peter (John 21) — “Do you love me? Feed my sheep.”
Dec. 16	Week 12 — Final Oral Presentation: From the Shepherd's Seat <i>Students demonstrate their understanding of pastoral care by applying the principles of the course to practical ministry situations and explaining how they can care for others with the heart of a shepherd, regardless of title or position.</i> Scripture Anchor: Acts 20:28–31; 1 Peter 5:2–4 The Story of Paul's Farewell to the Ephesian Elders (Acts 20) — a final charge to shepherd what was entrusted.

Assessment

- Midterm Oral Presentation (Week 6) — response to an assigned pastoral-care scenario, evaluated for grace, discernment, biblical application, boundaries, and practical care.
- Final Oral Presentation (Week 12) — application of course principles to a practical ministry situation, articulating a personal theology and practice of pastoral care.
- Weekly participation in discussion and case-based ministry scenarios.