

North Texas Conference of the United Methodist Church

Ethics in Ministry: *Our Calling to Wholeness and Holiness*

Presenter: Rev. Beth M. Crissman

Our Calling to a Broken and Hurting World

Perils of a Scarcity Paradigm: Challenges to Ethics in Ministry

Our Calling to Wholeness and Holiness:
Role of Ethics in Ministry

Healthy Boundaries for Wholeness and Holiness

- Boundaries for Functional Health
- Boundaries for Relational Health
- Sexual Ethics: Honoring Functional and Relational Boundaries
- Boundaries for Physical Health
- Boundaries for Spiritual Health

Reclaiming Sabbath as the Center

Our Calling to a Broken and Hurting World

The **calling** to be a leader of God's people is both sacred and scary, in demand and demanding, longed for yet lonely.



And in the midst of our leading God's people, we as pastors often fail to tend to ourselves, resulting in our own physical, relational, and spiritual struggles.

Question:

In what ways are we broken and hurting today?

Perils of a Scarcity Paradigm: Challenges in Clergy Ethics

Jesus himself reminded us:

Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches.

*Those who remain in me and I in them will produce
much fruit.*

But apart from me, you can do nothing.

John 15:5 NLT

And Paul spoke of this assurance in his ministry:

*For I have learned to be content with whatever I have. I know what
it is to have little, and I know what it is to have plenty. In any and
all circumstances I have learned the secret of being well-fed and of
going
hungry, of having plenty and of being in need. I can do all things
through him who strengthens me.*

Philippians 4:11-13 NRSV

So the Word teaches us to live in this paradigm of **abundance**,
ensuring us that we will have everything we need to accomplish what God has called us to do.

But the world teaches and reflects a paradigm of **scarcity** that convinces us there is not enough:
not enough time,
not enough money,
not enough help to accomplish what God has set before us.

This paradigm of scarcity also leads us to BANKRUPTCY where we want more and demand more...
leading to overindulgence and unhealthy desires.

Question: In what ways do we overindulge and have unhealthy desires in our ministries?
Our relationships? With our bodies?

Our Calling to Wholeness and Holiness

As clergy, we must acknowledge that:

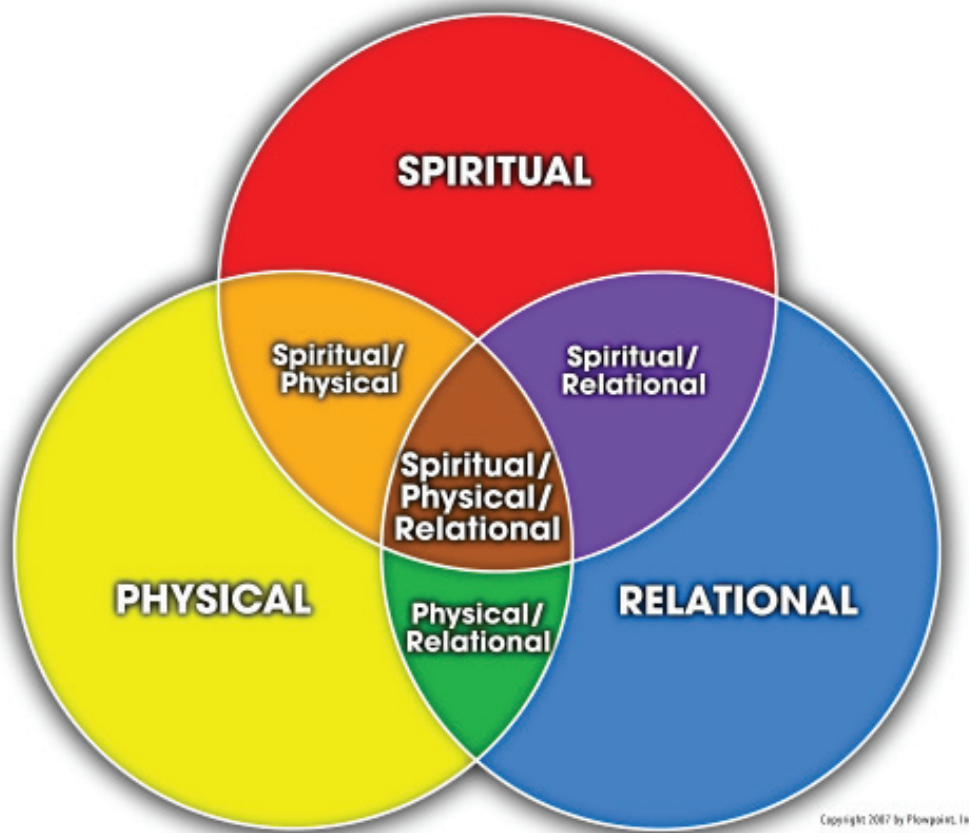
How We Lead, Others Will Follow!

So if we are leading our congregations from a state of bankruptcy,
then our congregations are at risk of physical, spiritual, and relational bankruptcy as well.

Care for the flock entrusted to you. Watch over it willingly, not grudgingly, not for what you will get out of it, but because you are eager to serve God. Don't lord it over the people assigned to your care, but lead them by your good example. And when the Head Shepherd comes, your reward will be a never-ending share in his glory and honor.

1 Peter 5:2-4 NLT

We are called to lead by good example by reclaiming **wholeness** and **holiness**
in our personal lives and ministries...



Healthy Boundaries for Wholeness and Holiness

Boundaries: That which is put in place to protect the integrity of the individual parts and the whole.

- Boundaries keep the “good in” and the “bad out.”
- Boundaries define what we are/are not about.

A body cannot survive, much less thrive, without healthy, intact boundaries.

Neither can our relationships or our ministries.

And when boundaries are violated or ignored, **chaos** happens!

Question: When have you seen **chaos** result from lack of or violation of boundaries in your personal life or ministry?

Two types of Essential Boundaries:

- Functional Boundaries
- Relational Boundaries

To be effective, boundaries must be:

- Established
- Communicated
- Embodied (put into practice)
- Enforced

Tending to our Functional Health: Living within healthy Functional boundaries

Functional boundaries communicate **who** is responsible for **what, where, when** and **how**.

Examples of Functional Boundaries:

- Ministry descriptions
- Work schedules
- Policies and procedures

Sample Ministry Description: Pastor

General Overview: In obedience to God's call and the Lordship of Jesus Christ, and under the guidance and supervision of the Staff Relations Committee and the District Superintendent, performs work related to providing spiritual leadership and overseeing the total ministry of John Wesley UMC in its commitment to faithful witness and service to the world.

Responsibilities:

- Provides pastoral support, guidance, and training to the lay leadership of the church.
- Equips the laity of the church to fulfill faithfully the ministry to which they are called.
- Preaches the Word and oversees and orders all acts and services of worship within the congregation.
- Teaches the Scriptures and oversees the faithful nurture, discipleship, and spiritual formation of the congregation through bible study, prayer, and Christian accountability.
- Administers the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper and all other means of grace (including counseling and guidance for individuals and families seeking baptism for themselves, infants, or children).
- Provides spiritual leadership for the stewardship of resources, including funding ministries of the congregation, encouraging faithful giving as a spiritual discipline.
- Leads the congregation in evangelistic outreach and ministries and equips and releases others to engage actively in evangelistic activities.
- Performs marriage ceremonies after sufficient pastoral counseling with the couple.
- Provides pastoral counseling for marriages and families to strengthen and maintain the integrity of their covenantal relationship.
- Counsels bereaved families and conducts funeral and memorial services as needed.
- Provides pastoral counseling for individuals struggling with personal, ethical, and spiritual issues.
- Provides pastoral care for individuals in their homes, especially the sick and aged, and equips others to assist him/her with this ministry of visitation.
- Participates in denominational, ecumenical and community activities to strengthen connections with the broader Church and the world.
- Provides pastoral leadership to order the life of the congregation, including:
- Participation in and provision of spiritual leadership for committees and leadership of the congregation
- Development of goals (and plans for implementation), in coordination with lay leadership, to fulfill the mission of the church
- Selection, equipping, releasing, and evaluation of lay leadership of the church.
- Supervises paid servants on staff including: (list other positions supervised here)
- Leads regularly scheduled staff meetings.
- Honors weekly Sabbath and daily Sabbath activities for strengthening personal relationship with God and others.
- Supports other staff members and ministries through personal prayer and cooperative efforts.

Employment Status: Full time (as appointed by the Bishop and Cabinet)

Acceptance of Ministry Parameters:

I understand and agree to the expectations of ministry as stated above and in accordance with *The United Methodist Church Book of Discipline*.

Tending to our Relational Health: Living within healthy Relational boundaries

Relational boundaries protect the integrity of our relationships and work together and communicate what is expected and acceptable.

Examples of Relational Boundaries:

- Marriage covenants/vows
- Baptismal vows
- Membership vows
- Clergy vows
- Relational covenants



Seven Skills for Healthy Storming

1 Seek first to understand
Philippians 2:3-8

2 Speak the truth in love
James 3:9-10

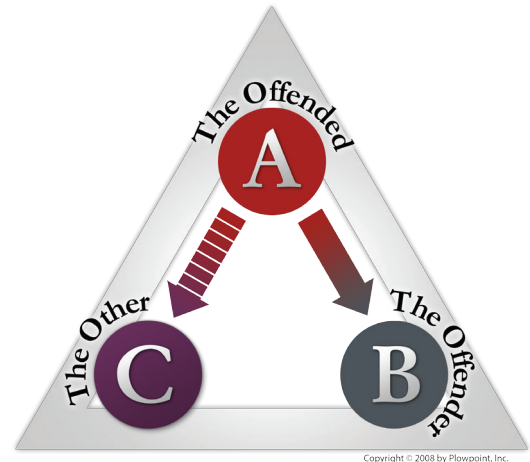
3 Listen for the truth in love
James 1:19

4 Move from the incidents to the issues
Philippians 3:12-14

5 Agree and disagree in love
1 Corinthians 1:10

6 Forgive
Matthew 18: 21-22

7 Reconcile
Matthew 18:15-20



¹⁵ If another believer sins against you, go privately and point out the fault. If the other person listens and confesses it, you have won that person back.¹⁶ But if you are unsuccessful, take one or two others with you and go back again, so that everything you say may be confirmed by two or three witnesses.¹⁷ If the person still refuses to listen, take your case to the church. If the church decides you are right, but the other person won't accept it, treat that person as a pagan or a corrupt tax collector.¹⁸ I tell you the this: Whatever you forbid on earth will be forbidden in heaven, and whatever you permit on earth will be permitted in heaven.¹⁹ I also tell you this: If two of you agree here on earth concerning anything you ask, my Father in heaven will do it for you.²⁰ For where two or three gather together because they are mine, I am there among them.

Sample Relational Covenant

As ones who belong to Jesus Christ and the Body of Christ, we are committed to living out our mission as evidenced in our love for Jesus, one another, and our neighbors. To honor and protect the integrity of our mission and relationships, we commit to relate to one another in the following manner:

- To be honest, open, and forthright with one another as we speak the truth in love.
- To regard one another with humility and kindness as we treat one another as we desire to be treated.
- To do and say all things in love so that our words and actions are encouraging and edifying to one another and the church.
- To honor and respect one another's opinions by listening for the purpose of seeking to understand each other's needs and views, even when we disagree.
- To create the sacred space and time to hear one another's needs, thoughts, and feelings before making important decisions.
- To strive for collaboration on all matters, but be willing to compromise, accommodate, or "let go" when collaboration does not seem possible.
- To seek to understand first God's desires then one another's remembering that all our decisions are to build up the Body of Christ and to serve God's purpose.
- To act decisively and to move forward boldly yet humbly once a decision has been made.
- To agree to disagree in love, and when we disagree on major decisions, to not take it personally as we remember that our decisions are to serve God's purpose and not our own.
- To go directly to the person in private who has offended us by following Jesus' process of reconciliation as taught in Matthew 18:15-20.
- To allow for one another's (and the church's) mistakes while holding one another accountable to our purpose and covenant together.
- To forgive one another when we do make mistakes and be willing and able to move on to God's promising future leaving behind the failures and mistakes of the past.

Sexual Ethics:

Honoring Functional and Relational Boundaries

In fact, some parts of the body that seem weakest and least important are actually the most necessary. And the parts we regard as less honorable are those we clothe with the greatest care. So, we carefully protect those parts that should not be seen, while the more honorable parts do not require this special care. So, God has put the body together such that extra honor and care are given to those parts that have less dignity. This makes for harmony among the members, so that all the members care for each other. If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it, and if one part is honored, all the parts are glad.

1 Corinthians 12:22-26 (New Living Translation)

The North Texas Conference of the United Methodist Church affirms the 2016 Book of Resolutions, Sexual Abuse Within the Ministerial Relationship and Eradication of Sexual Harassment in The United Methodist Church and Society, which states that sexual abuse within the ministerial relationship and sexual harassment within the Church are incompatible with biblical teachings of hospitality, justice, and healing.

Sexual misconduct, of any nature, violates the functional and relational boundaries established to protect the integrity and function of our relationships and ministries.

These violations are a direct assault on:

- Our commitment and mission of hospitality, where ALL are assured a safe and sacred environment
- Our sacred trust in the ministerial relationship as an abuse of power
- Individuals, ministries, congregations, the conference, the denomination, the Church universal. If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it.

Definitions:

- Sexual abuse: when a person within a ministerial role of leadership engages in sexual contact or sexualized behavior with a congregant, client, employee, student, staff member, co-worker, or volunteer.
- Sexual harassment: any unwelcome sexual advance or demand, either verbal or physical, that is reasonably perceived by the recipient as demeaning, intimidating, or coercive, including discrimination based on gender.

Response:

- Reporting
- Investigating
- Healing: CART Crisis Team

Tending to our Physical Health: Living within healthy physical boundaries and practicing physical disciplines

*Don't you know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit,
who lives in you and was given to you by God?
You do not belong to yourself, for God bought you with a high price.
So you must honor God with your body.*
1 Corinthians 6:19-20

Five Disciplines for Physical Health:

1. Eat well
 - Right food of balanced nutrients, fresh or whole foods, avoiding processed, packaged and fast foods when possible.
 - Right portions paying attention to serving size and total calories. American Heart Association guidelines: For females: 2,000-2,400 calories per day (less if sedentary, more if active). For males: 2,400 -3,000 calories per day (less if sedentary, more if active)
 - Right times encouraging more frequent and smaller meals throughout the day and avoiding the late night “empty” calories!
2. Stay hydrated
 - Drink 8-10 cups (8 ounces) of water every day
 - Beverages containing caffeine are counterproductive to hydration! So for every eight ounces of caffeinated beverage, you need to drink 3 cups (24 ounces) of additional water!
 - Increase water intake to replace water lost through exercise (8 additional ounces before and after exercise) or when ill.
3. Keep moving
 - Walk it out! Walk at least 30 minutes per day at a pace equivalent to how fast you would walk through an airport to catch a plane (without running).
 - Stretch it out! Stretching is the most effective way to prevent injuries both short term and long term. Stretch slowly, carefully and completely until you feel the muscle tighten, then release before you experience real pain.
4. Remove temptations and toxins from your life
 - Toss out the old unhealthy behaviors to make room for new behaviors.
 - You can't eat or drink what you don't have handy!
 - Consider anything potentially addictive or as an “idol” (of your heart, mind or body) if you wake up thinking about it or think about it throughout the day.
5. Rest well
 - Sleep at least 7-9 hours per night (allowing for at least 5 full REM or deep sleep cycles which typically take 90 minutes per cycle).
 - Avoid/minimize stimulants that interfere with sleep (including caffeine, late exercise, excessive noise, light, or other stimulation).
 - Remember that rest is essential for our physical, relational, and spiritual health... thus rest (or **Sabbath**) must be at the center.

Tending to our Spiritual Health:

The Practice of the Spiritual Disciplines

The spiritual disciplines, or what John Wesley called the **MEANS OF GRACE**, are ordinary practices or activities that place us in the right place, at the right time, in the right frame of mind so God can speak to us. These spiritual disciplines allow us to get into the Stream of God's Will and stay there.

Searching the Scriptures

All scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It straightens us out and teaches us to do what is right. It is God's way of preparing us in every way, fully equipped for every good thing God wants us to do.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

More from John Wesley

1. Set apart time in the morning and/or evening everyday to read your Bible.
2. Read from both the Old and New Testaments every day.
3. Read scripture with a single purpose – to know the will of God.
4. Look for connections between scriptures being read to identify the ideas essential to our life of faith.
5. Prayerfully ask the Holy Spirit to guide you and instruct you as you read the scriptures.
6. Commit to put into practice right away what God is teaching you in his Word.

(Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament)

Public Worship

I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the Lord." All the people of Israel – the Lord's people – make their pilgrimage here. They come to give thanks to the name of the Lord.

Psalms 122:1 and 4

More from our Wesleyan Connection

We worship and give allegiance to the Triune God.

In worship, we respond in gratitude and praise for God's mighty acts in creation, in history, in our communities, and in our personal lives. We often express this in our Acts of Praise, prayers, music and in our preaching.

In worship, we confess our sin against God and one another and receive God's gracious forgiveness.

From *Wesleyan Essentials of Christian Faith*

Prayer

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

Romans 8:26-27

More from Charles Wesley

I want a heart to pray, to pray and never cease, never to murmur at thy stay, or wish my sufferings less.

This blessing, above all, always to pray, I want, out of the deep on thee to call, and never, never faint.

From the hymn *Jesus, my Strength, my Hope*

Christian Conferencing

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another – and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Hebrews 10:24-25

More from John Wesley

Many now happily experienced that Christian fellowship.... They began to "bear one another's burdens," and naturally to "care for each other." As they had daily a more intimate acquaintance with, so they had a more endeared affection for each other. And "we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church. He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love."

From *A Plain Account of The People Called Methodists*
and Ephesians 4: 15-16

The Lord's Supper

²³*For I pass on to you what I received from the Lord himself. On the night when he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took some bread ²⁴and gave thanks to God for it. Then he broke it in pieces and said, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this to remember me."* ²⁵*In the same way, he took the cup of wine after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant between God and his people—an agreement confirmed with my blood. Do this to remember me as often as you drink it."* ²⁶*For every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you are announcing the Lord's death until he comes again.*
1 Corinthians 11: 23-26 NLT

"Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here and on these gifts of bread and wine. Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ, that we may be for the world the body of Christ redeemed by his blood. By your Spirit, make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world, until Christ comes in final victory, and we feast at his heavenly banquet."
United Methodist Hymnal, page 14

More from John Wesley

The grace of God given in Communion confirms to us the pardon of our sins, by enabling us to leave our sins. As our bodies are strengthened by bread and wine, so are our souls by these tokens of the body and blood of Christ. The bread and wine of Communion is the food of our souls.

This gives strength to perform our duty, and leads us on to perfection.

From the sermon *The Duty of Constant Communion*

The Communion bread is known as the grand channel whereby the grace of the Holy Spirit is conveyed to the souls of all the children of God.

From the sermon *Upon Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount Number 6*

Fasting

And when you fast, don't make it obvious, as the hypocrites do, who try to look pale and disheveled so people will admire them for fasting. I assure you, that is the only reward they will ever get. But when you fast, comb your hair and wash your face. Then no one will suspect you are fasting, except your Father, who knows what you do in secret. And your Father, who knows all secrets, will reward you.
Matthew 6:16-18

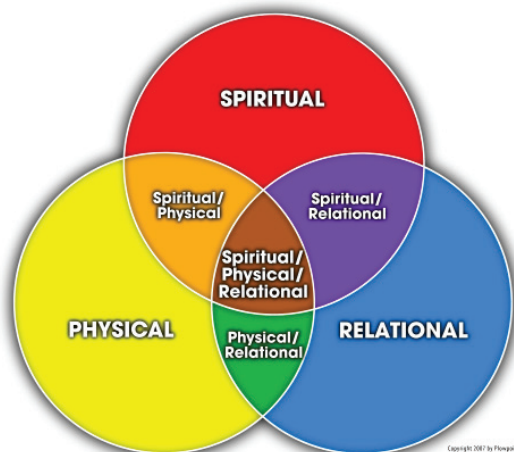
More from John Wesley

Here is the manner we are to fast, that it may be an acceptable service unto the Lord. First, let it be done unto the Lord, with our eye singly fixed on Him. Let our intention be this, and this alone,

1. to glorify our Father in heaven;
2. to express our sorrow and shame for our many transgressions of his holy law;
3. to wait for an increase of purifying grace, drawing our desires to things above;
4. to add seriousness and earnestness to our prayers;
5. to avert the wrath of God, and
6. to obtain all the great and precious promises which he has made to us in Jesus Christ.

From the sermon *Upon Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount Number 7*

Reclaiming Sabbath as the Center



From the beginning of time, God created all of life to function within godly boundaries and within a God-ordained rhythm: annual, seasonal, and lunar cycles, the ebb and flow of tides, the rising and setting of the sun, seasons of production and dormancy, breathing in and breathing out.

Breathing in = BEING / Breathing out = DOING

The world, in contrast, insists on a conflicting rhythm of doing, doing, doing... breathing out, breathing out, breathing out... until we ultimately “pass out” and find ourselves worn out and breathless. The first symptom of hypoxia is an inability to REMEMBER...

God's Command (and GIFT) of Sabbath:

Tell the people... 'Be careful to keep my Sabbath day, for the Sabbath is a sign of the covenant between me and you from generation to generation. It is given so you may know that I am the LORD, who makes you holy.

Exodus 31: 13-17 NLT

Purpose of Sabbath (THINK BOUNDARY!)

1. To protect and restore us physically, spiritually, and relationally.
2. To define what we are and are not about as God's people.
3. To define what we are and are not responsible for... in other words, to help us REMEMBER that God is God (and we are not!).

When boundaries are violated or ignored, CHAOS happens.

F.M.C.O.U.A.

Simple steps for reclaiming Sabbath as our center:

1. Establish a daily rhythm of “breathing in” by taking Sabbath moments each day. Every morning, set aside the sacred time and space to read a psalm reflecting on the message of Sabbath that God is bringing to you.
2. Identify a separate space and at least three ways that will help you “be still” and experience the Living Waters and Breathe of Life that the oasis of Sabbath offers.
3. Name your fears and concerns regarding taking a Sabbath day each week (a true 24 hour period free of work). Trust God to accomplish all that is before you – with or without you!
4. Decide which day each week is to be your Sabbath. Mark this day each week on your calendar to set it apart and to protect this time.
5. Focus on ways in which your relationship with God and others close to you can be nurtured during your practice of Sabbath.
6. Identify distractions that could prevent you from keeping Sabbath. Remove these distractions for that day (or time, if in the practice of daily Sabbath moments).

7. Pray Wesley's Covenant Prayer. Trust God to employ you or lay you aside according to God's will.



*Lord, make me what you will.
I put myself fully into your hands;
put me to doing, put me to suffering,
let me be employed for you, or laid aside for you,
let me be full, let me be empty,
let me have all things, let me have nothing.
I freely and with a willing heart give it all to your pleasure and disposal.*

John Wesley's Covenant Prayer