

**HEALTHY MINISTRY RELATIONSHIPS  
PASTOR'S GUIDELINES  
UCC PARKER HILLTOP  
REV. DR. TRACEY DAWSON (Amended 1/8/2020)**

- I. **SCOPE OF CARE AND SERVICES.**
- A. I will provide pastoral care to active and inactive church partners and visitors of the Church (UCCPH), free of charge, on an as-needed basis, at my discretion. I will provide limited services to extended family members of the church, also at my discretion.
- B. Services provided are as follows:
1. limited counseling of a spiritual nature (no more than three sessions for one hour each for any single counseling request);
  2. hospital visits for hospital stays under 2 days with 1 overnight (as I am able), including a prayer at the time of surgery, if requested and I am available;
  3. hospital visits for hospital stays over 2 days (every 3 days or more frequently, depending on request and availability);
  4. rehabilitation/nursing home visits at least 1 time per month, unless a greater need is evident or expressed;
  5. emergency response to an emergency or to a death, as it occurs and I am notified, as best as I am able;
  6. home visits for shut-ins or by request at least 1 time per month, with a deacon or a Care and Nurture Team member accompanying me if to a single person's residence or as otherwise needed;
  7. pre-marital counseling for a wedding I will officiate, up to 3 sessions.
- II. **COMPETENCIES AND REFERRAL.**
- A. I am a pastor who counsels on spiritual and emotional issues. I am not a certified pastoral counselor, and I have no specialized training as a pastoral counselor. I do not belong to any pastoral counseling associations.
- B. I have limited competence to counsel persons who are troubled, grieving, experiencing losses, struggling with faith or theology, and those experiencing family distress. There are many emotional and psychological issues for which I am competent to render counseling services in the short-term, with recognition of underlying problems and referrals to specialized community resources.
- C. I will have professional supervision at all times and will disclose my sources of supervision.
- D. I will not counsel or attempt to counsel beyond my competencies. I will call 911 in the instance of a situation requiring immediate intervention for the prevention of self-harm or harm to others, or in the case of a medical emergency. I will not perform CPR or any other medical procedure on a person with whom I am in professional contact.

- E. I am a licensed attorney. At my sole discretion, I may give legal advice and may perform limited legal work for active church partners of the church, with the exception that I will prepare Medical Powers of Attorney in emergency situations to protect any parishioner, and I will serve as a notary. I will not charge any fees for these services, and they will be an extension of my ministry, not my law practice. If a person wishes to make a donation to the church in respect of my legal services, they may do so, but are never required to do so.
- F. From time to time I provide consultation services to the Church Conference, to Associations within the Conference, to LaForet, and to individual pastors and moderators, generally on the issue of clergy and lay leader ethics and boundaries. I charge for training sessions I lead for these denominational entities as well as for Iliff School of Theology, but I generally do not charge a fee for consultations over the telephone. I do this work as part of my global ministry and legal experience and not as the pastor of UCCPH.
- G. I will keep my HMR (healthy ministry relationships) training current (the current requirement is every five years) and will take advantage of continuing education in the fields of boundary training and pastoral competency. My most recent boundaries training was in August of 2019, and my certificates are kept by me and are available for review upon request.

III. **CONFIDENTIALITY, RECORD-KEEPING, AND MANDATORY REPORTING.**

- A. Ministry is a sacred trust, and I am a fiduciary of that sacred trust placed in me in my professional capacity as the pastor of the Church. I will not reveal confidences told to me in private pastoral care situations without the express prior permission of the counselee or care-receiver or unless the disclosure is required by law. If the information is told in the presence of another person, it is not automatically privileged, but if I am asked to keep the confidence, I will unless:
  - 1. the person threatens to harm him or herself or another, including me or my family;
  - 2. the person intends to commit a crime;
  - 3. the information is vital to the protection of the church community or building;
  - 4. I learn directly or through a reliable source that the person is the perpetrator of child abuse, including child sexual abuse or elder abuse, or abuse of an at-risk adult, in which case I am a mandatory reporter under Colorado state law and I will report;
  - 5. or, I learn directly or through a reliable source that the person is a minor or elder or at-risk adult and is being abused currently, in

which case I am a mandatory reporter under Colorado state law, and I will report.

- B. I will keep records of my pastoral care and counseling activities. In the case where confidentiality is not required, I will report my intentional pastoral care contacts by name, date, location, and purpose for the contact. If the contact was confidential or was for counseling purposes, I will report by numerical identification (and keep the identity separate and password protected). I will not keep notes of counseling sessions, except as to referrals given. If I take notes before or during the session, I will destroy them thereafter, unless there is an overriding need that they be kept, and then I will keep them separately with password protect.
- C. I will report on my pastoral care activities as requested or authorized by Council or by the Pastor Parish Team of the church, and I will provide limited information to the Care & Nurture Team as needed by them to help me with the task of pastoral care within the Church. I may also need to bring confidential information to the Pastor-Parish Team (a limited information access setting) for my protection or for the protection of the Church.
- D. I have access to giving records of congregants. I will never use that information for an improper purpose or to injure, belittle, pressure, or bully a congregant. I will not measure pastoral care by what a person gives or does not give financially to the church. I will not share said individual information except as explicitly allowed in the church Constitution and Bylaws, time to time as amended (currently, I may share with only the Financial Secretary and Chair of Covenant Commitment Team).

IV. **AVAILABILITY AND ACCESS.**

- A. I will be available for emergency contact 24/7, unless I am out of town, in which case I will have an on-call pastor available to handle emergencies.
- B. I will hold regular office hours each week in my church office and be available for meetings, confidential counseling sessions, or drop-ins during that time.
- C. I will, at my discretion, be available for pastoral counseling away from the church or during off-hours, but I will not counsel individual persons without another person being present in the building, out of earshot.
- D. I will be available to meet persons for discussion or counseling in a public place, out of the earshot of others, but not in my home, and not alone in the counselee's home.
- E. I will be available during my off-time for texting and emailing, but not for counseling purposes. Short exchanges only will be allowed. I will conduct church business by email and text, but I will identify confidential items specifically and limit the addressee list as needed.

V. **HEALTHY MINISTRY RELATIONSHIPS.**

- A. I will practice healthy ministry relationship at all times. I will not engage in unhealthy dual relationships, conflicts of interest, or unhealthy personal practices. I will take care to respect all persons and their personhood, I will remain open & affirming of all persons, and I will respect reasoned opinions that differ from my own. My communities will practice healthy relationships; specifically, I will avoid triangulation and pass-through comments. I will not accept or be guided by anonymous comments or comments that purport to represent that, “some people feel...some people are saying...”, etc.
- B. I will recognize red flags in counseling situations and seek immediate supervision. I will refer persons who engage in unhealthy transference or projection toward me, or for whom I feel a risk for my own countertransference or projection.
- C. I may have friends within the congregation, but I will not use those friendships for my personal aggrandizement or against the best interests of other church members. I may, from time to time, contract with church parishioners for work to be done on my behalf outside church. In those cases, parishioners will be paid their agreed fees, we will have a written contract, and I will not take advantage of them or of the pastoral relationship. Either party will be free to cancel the arrangement without recourse or negativity. If at any time the pastoral relationship, which is primary, is suffering due to the contracted work, the contracted work will be terminated. Currently, Julie Robuck occasionally house/dog sits for Chris and me, and Nick Land and Meg Brown are working with me to develop a private website for my wider church healthy ministry relationships work and independent writing. I am paying them their standard fee and we have a contract.
- D. I will accept reasonable honorariums for special services, and reasonable, small gifts given in appreciation of my ministry and service to the church, but I will not accept gifts in exchange for any deference on my part or special favors or treatment. Gifts offered to the church through me that come with an unhealthy or unreasonable quid pro quo will not be accepted.
- E. I will not drink alcohol at any church function or with any church members or at any church-sponsored event, and I will not stay in any place where recreational marijuana is being used. I will not consume any controlled substances for recreational purposes.
- F. I will practice self-care through regular exercise, retreat, days off, time with my spouse and family, and recreation.
- G. Sexual contact or sexual expression with any parishioner of the church is not a healthy ministry relationship practice, and I will not engage in this activity. I am married and I will be faithful at all times to my marriage vows. Sexual expression includes; grooming, flirting, sexual suggestion, sexual joke-making or receiving, sexual comments, sexual harassment, or any other behavior tending to concern others with reasonable powers of observation.

VI. **MINISTRY SUPERVISION.**

- A. I will at all times be supervised within the Church setting by the Church Council, by the Pastor-Parish Team of UCCPH, and to a limited extent, by the Care & Nurture Team. After opportunity for discussion and discernment, I will follow reasonable directives of the Church Council and the advice of the Pastor-Parish Team and the Care & Nurture Team, unless I strongly disagree with same, and then I will state my reasons for my chosen course of action. I will act always, first and foremost, according to the highest ethical and moral standards, in conformity with my faith, and not out of self-interest.
- B. I will additionally be supervised by objective professionals as follows:
1. By the Rocky Mountain Conference Minister (currently, Rev. Sue Artt);
  2. By a spiritual director or personal therapist. (as of 2015, I meet regularly with my spiritual director, Rev. Jane Vennard);
  3. By a peer support group of ordained ministers (I currently have such a group);
  4. By at least one pastoral mentor, where available (currently Rev. Dr. Holly Heuer , Rev. Dr. Richard Ward, and Rev. Nora Smith)
- C. I understand that the Pastoral Evaluation Team each year may want to speak or hear from persons to whom I have given the non-confidential service of pastoral care, and to that end, I will provide my Pastoral Care Log for the previous year.
- D. I will immediately seek supervision should I experience a problem with my mental or emotional health, or should I experience clergy burnout. Signs of burnout include: unreasonable temper, lack of sleep, lack of attention to detail, absence, unhealthy personal habits, such as substance abuse, over-functioning, irritability. I will be grateful if these symptoms are noted and brought to my attention. I will have regular medical check-ups and care, exercise, take time off from ministry duties, vacation, play, and spend quality time with my spouse and friends.

Signed and dated: \_\_\_\_\_

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Rev. Dr. Tracey Dawson  
Senior Pastor and Head of Staff