

Pastoral Care Guidelines at East Taieri Church

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Pastoral care involves caring for the practical, emotional and spiritual needs of people in the congregation. While pastoral care can involve all aspects of church life (i.e. worship, preaching, community) this document deals with specific needs and/or specific pastoral care situations.

1. The Goal of Pastoral Care

The goal of pastoral care is to love and care for our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ.

2. Structures and systems

We are committed to a team-approach to pastoral care. There are four key groups involved in giving pastoral care: the congregation, our small group structures, the pastoral care team, the pastoral care leadership team.

a. The congregation

The congregation is tasked with mutually caring for one another. For many pastoral care needs, an astute and compassionate member of the congregation is able to help/pray for someone else. This is the base level of our pastoral care but is the most important because it represents the body of Christ functioning in a healthy way.

b. Small group structures

Small groups form a vital part of East Taieri Church. We expect that those who belong to a small group will find their primary care coming from the people within their own small group.

c. Pastoral care team

The pastoral care team is tasked with responding to particular pastoral care needs for those who aren't part of a small group and/or situations that may require a higher level of pastoral response. Most of the members of the pastoral care team also visit people on the homecare list. The pastoral care team meets approximately 4 times a year to connect and support one another. The pastoral care team is led by the pastoral care leadership team.

d. East Taieri care leadership team (ETCLT)

The pastoral care leadership is tasked with oversight of pastoral care in the parish. This team is led by the Associate Pastor. They meet together weekly to discuss particular pastoral issues and if a sufficient response hasn't already been executed will discern the best way to give care. From these meetings a monthly snapshot document will be produced that indicates the pastoral issues of the month and the particular responses to each issue.

3. Appropriate pastoral care responses

We are committed to offering appropriate pastoral responses. In all the following things wisdom and discernment is necessary.

a. Funerals

We will provide someone who can officiate a funeral if the family asks.

If some members of that family are associated with ET, then it will be expected that the person who officiated the funeral will make pastoral contact with the family around six weeks after the funeral. They also could keep a diary and make contact a year after the funeral as well.

If the person is associated with ET but no one else in the family is, then the ETCLT or another appropriate person will discern whether it is appropriate for the person officiating the funeral or another suitable person will make contact with the family.

The Associate Pastor is the primary contact for funerals.

b. Deaths/bereavements

Sometimes someone associated with ET will pass away and we will not be asked to provide someone to officiate the funeral.

If no other member of the family is associated with ET, then someone from ET will attend the funeral, but there is no expectations they will make contact with the family.

If someone in the family is associated with ET, then there will be an expectation that someone from the Pastoral Care team if possible will make contact with the family associated with ET before the death, make contact a day or two after death, will attend the funeral and make contact with the family about 6 weeks after the funeral. Unless there is an obvious person, the PCLT will discern who should reach out to the family of the deceased.

c. One-off pastoral issues

One-off pastoral issues are things that occur which are immediate. These may include sickness, surgery, car accident etc

The expectation is that someone will visit or phone the person in need depending on the severity of the situation. A 'primary' carer will be designated. That person will have to exercise wisdom as to what an appropriate level of care is (For example, if one parishioner is having surgery it might be good for the carer to visit a day or two before the surgery and pray with that person and see them a couple days after as well).

Unless there is already an obvious person who should give care in this situation, the PCLT will discern who should reach out to the person in need of care.

d. Ongoing pastoral issues

Ongoing pastoral issues are things that occur which are long lasting. These may include cancer, marriage difficulties, poverty, addictions, etc.

The expectation is that someone will keep in regular, on-going pastoral contact with the person in need of pastoral care. The level, regularity and nature of pastoral visits or phone calls will depend on the nature of the pastoral issue. For example, some pastoral counselling may be required for a couple experiencing marriage difficulties. Whereas, someone going through chemo may simply need someone to pray with them.

Someone will be tasked with caring for that person in their situation, and they will need to exercise wisdom as to what an appropriate level of care is. That person will be responsible for making sure pastoral care and contact is made. Unless there is already an obvious link as to who should give care in this situation, the PCLT will discern who should reach out to the person in need of care.

e. Homecare List

There are some people who have been associated with ET in the past who can no longer attend Sunday worship. These people are put on the Homecare List. Each person on the Homecare List is assigned a visitor. The expectation is that regular visits will occur on a regular basis. While each carer may determine how often they should visit, the general recommendation would be at least monthly.

The PCLT is responsible for regularly updating and keeping an eye on the Homecare List, and assigning visitors to each person.

f. Serious pastoral issues and emergency visits

At times we may be confronted by a more severe or pressing pastoral issue (i.e. suicide attempt, severe marriage difficulty, a really difficult death, someone hours from death). In these cases—unless there is an obviously better response—the responsibility for responding to the pastoral issue will be upon one of the pastors or a pastoral care team member.

g. Births

The birth of a child is an important part of a family's life. We aim to have a member of the pastoral care team to visit within a day or two of the birth. They can also take with them or have a few meals arranged for the family. Unless there is an obvious person to do this, the PCLT will discern who should visit the family.

ET also provides the option for babies to be baptised, dedicated or blessed. More information on the difference between those three things, and what is appropriate for any given family, can be found in a pamphlet entitled 'How Can I Celebrate the Gift of my Child?' in the foyer of East Taieri Church.

h. Small groups

Small groups form an integral part of pastoral care. If someone who has a pastoral need attends a small group then it may be that the small group caring for that person will be designated the 'primary' carer and tasked with ensuring an appropriate level of care is given. In this case, there is no expectation that someone else will visit that person. The PCLT will discern whether a small group pastoral response is sufficient.

i. People joining and leaving ET

People are always coming and going. For people seeking to make ET their home church, someone will visit after they have been coming to ET for several weeks. This visit will include an invitation to join a small group, take part in an Alpha course, get contact information for the database and pray with them. If there are enough new people, we will also run a newcomers lunch at ET once a term. Newcomers is a particular responsibility of Rose Langley and her team.

People leaving ET will be offered an exit interview by someone from the Ministry Leadership Team. This is particularly important for people who are staying in the same area but choosing to go to a different church. The exit interview will ask why they are leaving, whether they have any issues with ET and what could ET have done better. Sometimes there is some hurt on one or both sides. The exit interview will hopefully help bring some closure and a sense of finishing on good terms.

4. Expectations of Carers

There is a level of expectation and responsibilities placed upon people who are engaged in pastoral care.

a. Responsibility

If someone has assumed the responsibility of giving pastoral care, the PCLT will designate that person as the primary carer and they will have full responsibility for ensuring the person is appropriately cared for. Others of course can pray with and give care to that person, but it will be your responsibility to ensure that person has been given an appropriate level of care. This helps safeguard people from falling through the cracks.

b. Wisdom and Judgement

Everyone is different and every need is different. Some people prefer a higher level of care, while others require much less. While some have unrealistic levels of expectation (i.e. it's not a real pastoral visit unless the Senior Pastor visits me), our care and the level of care given will be up to the primary carer to decide. This requires discernment and wisdom. To help in the discernment process, it is always helpful to ask the person you are caring for, 'What type of support would be helpful?' You can always ask the Associate Pastor or another member of the PCLT to establish what a realistic level of care would be. We want to support you the best we can in your ministry.

c. Communication

One of the biggest difficulties in a team approach to pastoral care is communication. It is expected you will communicate regularly with the Associate Pastor or someone else on the ETCLT. For non-urgent, ongoing pastoral issues or homecare visits it would be helpful to communicate about every six weeks. This helps to ensure that pastoral care is being done and nobody is slipping through the cracks. The easiest way to do this is through a written 'report'. This doesn't need to be complicated, but simply mention who you have visited and any particular notes you feel may be important (i.e. Mr Smith is looking poorly). Please text or email Sue Macaulay with this.

For more urgent pastoral matters, it will be helpful to be in contact sooner.

If you do hear of other pastoral issues eg someone in hospital, please let a member of the ETCLT know so that we may be able to act accordingly.

d. Confidentiality

The flipside to communicating is the need for confidentiality. Some pastoral issues may not be confidential at all (i.e. visiting someone on the Homecare List) while others may be highly confidential (i.e. adultery). Please respect the privacy of the person you are caring for.

However, it's still important the ECLT are aware of there are pastoral issues. Ask permission – "Is it alright if I tell the ETCLT about this?" We hold all pastoral care issues with the highest degree of confidentiality. This doesn't mean we need to know every detail. A quick overview is sufficient. If you are unsure what to do, then have a conversation with the Associate Pastor.

e. Keeping everyone safe

Most of the time, giving and receiving pastoral care is a safe practice. Much of the time it's a simple prayer or listening as someone talks. However, special care should be taken if giving care to either a child or someone of the opposite sex. If you are uncomfortable about visiting someone by yourself, then ask if you can bring someone else along. If you find yourself in a situation where you feel uncomfortable, then find a confidant you can talk to straight after the event. Make sure you exercise caution and wisdom. You need to be familiar with the Code of Ethics in Pastoral Care (see Appendix 2). Pastoral visitors will have a police check every three years.

f. Knowing when to refer

Sometimes we come across complicated pastoral issues where we don't have the training or ability to help that person navigate through them. It's important to know your limits and know when to refer. See below for a list of ministries and services you can refer to.

g. Being able to say 'no'

Sometimes we are too busy to pick up new things. If you have been asked to visit someone which you feel you don't have the capacity for then you can say 'no'. We want to deliver a high level of

care for our people, but we also want you to have a life. As with anything, take a balanced approach to pastoral care.

5. Resources

There are many resources we can draw on to assist us in our pastoral care.

Please see the website for the people who are currently responsible for overseeing these if you wish to contact them.

The following are ministries or people within ET that can aid our pastoral care:

- **The ET Care Leadership Team**
- **Turning Point Counselling Services** (including Marriage Counselling)
- **ET Cares Meals Ministry:** Leanne Shaw –4897786 or craigshaw@xtra.co.nz
- **FUEL Meals Ministry:**
- **Firewood ministry:**
- **Small groups**
- **Marriage & Parenting Courses:**
- **Mainly Music**
- **Sugar & Spice:**
- **Go-Girls:**
- **Prayer Chain**
- **Youth Pastoral needs:**
- **Children Pastoral needs:**
- **Hospital Chaplain:**
- **Pastoral point person for each congregation**
- **Newcomers**
- **Funerals :**
- **Other ministries**

The following are ministries outside of ET that can aid our pastoral care:

- The Foodbank
- Shop on Taieri

Referral options

At times we may encounter issues that are beyond our capabilities. When this happens it's important we refer people to professionals. This doesn't mean we cease our engagement with the person, but it means we allow others with more experience and training to do what we cannot. The following are people and organisations we can refer people to:

- Turning Point Counselling Services
- Work and Income NZ
- Child Youth and Family Services
- Family Mental Health Services Mosgiel—489 3728
- EPS (Emergency Psychiatric Services) if urgent – through hospital switchboard (4740999)
- Their GP

6. Managing expectations

There are as many expectations of what pastoral care will look like as there are people in the church. Therefore, it's important we manage unfair expectations.

a. Pastors

Traditionally, the pastor would do most of the pastoral care in the parish. This has the dual effects of creating too much work for the pastor to do it all—especially in a parish that's the size of ET—and it disempowers others who are capable of giving pastoral care. However, it is expected the pastors will still make pastoral connections. While there are no hard and fast rules around what this might look like much of their pastoral caring will come through informal means—the connections, conversations and prayers for others that occurs through their day-to-day ministry. There may be times where a pastor may want to visit someone on their death beds or have a particular feeling they should visit with someone. However, the nature and frequency of such visiting is up to the discretion of the pastors.

b. Frequency of visits

Even if they are receiving pastoral care, sometimes people have the perception they are not being visited enough. Sometimes we may need to gracefully and lovingly confront unrealistic expectations.

c. 'It's not a visit unless it's from someone in the pastoral care team'

Sometimes a pastoral issue will surface where the person is in a small group. Generally, our response is that their primary form of pastoral care will come from their small group. To help dispel some of the feeling of being abandoned or forgotten about, it would be worth someone from the small group assuring that person they are representing the pastoral care team.

7. Informal pastoral care

Much of our pastoral care thinking and resources are geared toward a particular system as has been outlined. However, pastoral care occurs as much, if not more, in informal ways than they do in formal ways. Pastoral care can occur when two people meet up and start sharing life with each other. Pastoral care can occur when someone helps another with a particular financial difficulty. These moments of organic care often happen outside of the prescribed systems but are hugely important in the authentic life of the church. These acts are encouraged and should form the day-to-day culture of ET.

(Guidelines Updated Feb 2019)

Appendix

1. A Theological Vision of Pastoral Care for East Taieri Church

'With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God's grace was so powerfully at work in them that there were no needy persons among them.'

-Acts 4:33-34a

Our Care Ministry seeks to care in the manner of Christ. This means that pastoral care is undertaken from a point-of-view of the life, death, resurrection and future return of Jesus. This differentiates pastoral care from other care professions (i.e. counselling, psychiatry, nursing). This doesn't mean that counselling and psychological theories and practices should be disregarded in our practice. Rather it means that those theories and practices should find their place within the love of Christ that is shared in pastoral care. In other words, they are tools to be utilised as we look at caring for others through the lens of Christ. The Care Ministry that is being described here is primarily—though not exclusively—to Christians.

Our Care Ministry occurs in the context of the church. This means at least three things. First, care is deeply interconnected with the other ministries of the church (i.e. worship, small groups, preaching, community ministry, discipleship). In many ways, those ministries are a part of pastoral care. At the very least, though, Care Ministry is undertaken in relationship with them. Secondly, being in Christian community means that we have the responsibility to take the initiative to reach out and provide care to those who are in need. We are under no compulsion to wait for them to come to us. Instead, we have the privilege to actively reach out and lend a hand. Thirdly, the entire congregation in some way should be engaged in pastoral care. Every one of us needs to both care for our fellow human and to be cared for. An important distinction needs to be made between intentional care ministries and individuals caring for one another. However, it's important that our church develops a culture of mutual care.

Pastoral care should be holistic. It needs to engage every part of a person: psychological, emotional, physical and spiritual. The church needs to be charged with responsibility to help care for all issues that arise including but not limited to: addiction, marriage, sickness, depression, old age, loss and grief, crisis and newcomers to the church. Therefore, the individual ministries that make up the broad statement of Care Ministry include: welcoming/newcomers, hospitality, visitation, structured 'care' sessions and meals. This means that our approach to Care Ministry must have a 'team' mentality.

We need wise carers who are well-trained in their respective ministries (note: not all caring ministries will need the same level of training as others). This will develop an ability to relate well with the ones that we are caring for as well as empowering and equipping the one who is or team that is caring. This should also include training in what it means to care in the manner of Christ, how to keep yourself and the one who is being cared for safe, considerations around privacy issues and confidentiality and teach some of the counselling and psychological theories/practices that will be relevant for their ministry.

2. PCANZ Code of Ethics

1. The PCANZ, as a part of the church of Jesus Christ, is committed to conducting itself in accordance with the Gospel so that all people are treated with honesty, transparency, dignity, and respect.
2. People representing or working for the PCANZ (“*the Church*”) are required to abide by this *Code of Ethics*. This includes *ministers, employees, and volunteers*.[\[1\]](#)
3. This Code is to be read in the context of, and along with, *the Book of Order* and the Church’s *Conditions of Service Manual*. It reflects the standards of conduct expected because of the special relationships of pastoral care and ministry in which the Church is engaged. It is supported by subordinate documents that address particular areas of practice within the church.

4. People representing or working for the Church will:

4.1 Demonstrate high ethical standards of behaviour at all times. This recognises obligations of truthfulness and confidentiality towards people the Church deals with, together with an acknowledgement that it is unacceptable to subject people to exploitation, harassment, or abuse, whether financial, sexual, physical, psychological, spiritual, cultural or otherwise in any discriminatory way, nor to take advantage of any vulnerability of others. All dealings with others will be characterised by compassion and natural justice.

4.2 Demonstrate appropriate levels of competence commensurate with the role and task undertaken. This recognises obligations of using appropriate supervision; regular opportunities for spiritual growth; stewardship of time and talents; personal upskilling and recreation; awareness of strengths and limitations; collegiality and respect for others within the Church; recognition and respect for boundaries; and the need to ensure the health, safety, and wellbeing of those with whom the Church interacts is protected and enhanced.

4.3 Comply with the laws and usages of the Church and the laws of the communities in which the Church operate.

Issued by the Council of Assembly 17 March 2018

[\[1\]](#) These terms are defined in the PCANZ Conditions of Service Manual.