



online
PASTORS'
retreat

How to Make Online Pastor's Retreat An Actual Retreat

Retreat: An act or process of withdrawing especially from what is difficult, dangerous, or disagreeable. A place of privacy or safety: refuge. A period of group withdrawal for prayer, meditations, study, or instruction under a director. -Webster's Dictionary

I know an online retreat isn't what any of us are used to, or would imagine if we were thinking about attending a retreat. But just because we aren't used to something doesn't mean it can't work. And many of us - maybe most of us - have never needed a retreat more than we do right now.

I believe that you can learn this new way of retreating and it will end up becoming one of your favorite and most significant times of 2020. We hope you will learn some new information and strategies, find much needed resources for your mental health and the mental health of the churches you lead, and establish new, meaningful connections with others, while also growing closer to God.

Here are some recommendations to make this event a real retreat. With all the demands on your ministry, your family, and the unexpected challenges from this year, it will take some effort. But we are confident it will be worth the time and effort you invest in the #OnlinePastorsRetreat.

If you need help or have questions, email our team at onlineretreatsinfo@gmail.com.

Tip 1: Find A Space That Brings You Peace

You may be in a situation where you seldom leave your home or venture outside of your office. It may be a challenge to go somewhere like a coffee shop or restaurant, due to COVID-19 limitations. But we encourage you to treat this event as you would an in-person event. Approach this retreat with the mindset that you will be fed spiritually, mentally and emotionally.

If possible, go outside, or sit in a room free from distractions. Ask your family to give you time alone to focus on the purpose of this retreat, which is to help improve your own mental health needs. Taking care of yourself in this way will also benefit your family and your ministry.

If it is impossible to avoid distractions or find a private space, we encourage you to plug in headphones and ask your family for a dedicated amount of time alone. Closets and bathrooms can be excellent options if you do not have personal space available to you.

Tip 2: Set A Schedule

This retreat is online, so you will be able to customize your experience, including how you would like to schedule your viewing and participation in each session. We'll provide a watch guide and other resources to help you navigate how you choose to view each session, so you can focus on areas where you need resources or support.

The schedule is up to you. Options may be to choose a certain time each day when the new videos launch to review the content. Or if weekdays are too hectic, schedule times at night to watch the videos. You could even choose to watch all the videos over the course of a day or weekend. Be thinking through how you want to experience the retreat, then let others know that you will be blocking off this time for self-care. There isn't a right or a wrong way to set a schedule, just choose the approach that works best for you.

Tip 3: Invite Your Friends and Ministry Colleagues to Join In

One of the best things about retreats is the community that comes from it. It may seem impossible that this type of community can happen with social distancing, but technology will allow you to connect with others in discussions about the retreat's topics in meaningful ways.

Plan on watching the same sessions as friends, and then do Zoom or Facetime calls with them to discuss your big takeaways and answer any discussion questions. If your church is open for services and other ministry, use an available space to gather to watch together or meet afterwards for a discussion.

The other members of your ministry team need this retreat as much as you do. If you haven't already, invite your ministry colleagues to this retreat. When your friends or colleagues sign up for the retreat, there will be built in accountability for each of you to watch the sessions. And you will have trusted friends available to discuss the takeaways from each of the sessions.

Tip 4: Remove Distractions

When you go on a retreat or a conference, you naturally remove distractions. While this may be harder because you will likely be in a familiar space, here are some tips that may help:

- If you are watching the retreat videos on your computer, shut down all other open windows so all you can see is the session you are watching.
- If you have kids or other family at home, set expectations in advance that you need some time alone. Coordinate with your spouse or a friend to make sure your kids or other family are cared for so you can devote your full attention to this retreat.
- Turn your phone to airplane mode. Tell the support team at your church what your schedule is, so they will not contact you during your retreat schedule. There's a 99% chance that there won't be an emergency while you are on airplane mode. And 100% chance your phone won't distract you if it is on airplane mode.
- Ask your spouse or ministry colleagues to help you stay focused and distraction-free during your scheduled retreat times.

Think through any other distractions and plan ahead for solutions.

Share with other ministry leaders about this event, and how you are making it a retreat. Use #OnlinePastorsRetreat in your social media shares.

In His Service,

Dr. Steve Greerich

Host of #OnlinePastorsRetreat

President and Founder, Key Ministry; Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist; Author and Speaker



OPR WATCH GUIDE

DAY 1 SELF CARE

**WILLIAM VANDERBLOEMEN****REBUILDING YOUR BROKEN WORLD**

Has there been a year when it's been harder to be a pastor than 2020? On the whole, I don't think so, particularly in the US. During this talk, I'd like to explore some concrete steps I'm learning that I believe you can use to rebuild yourself and your church during a very broken year.

**KAY WARREN****TRUTH, SORROW AND HOPE IN MENTAL ILLNESS**

When you love someone who has mental health challenges it can make balancing your family life and ministry very stressful. In this message, Kay encourages you from her own story to engage with the reality of what you are facing, enter into grief and find a strong and certain hope that will carry you through tough times.

**MICHAEL LYLES, M.D.****SELF CARE : HOW TO BE A MARY IN A MARTHA WORLD**

Ministering to the spiritual and emotional needs of people in need can be all consuming. It becomes easy (and encouraged by many) to neglect your needs and the needs of those close to you, in the "service" of helping others. This presentation highlights the dynamics of how this can happen and describes ways of insuring that you are properly taken care of physically, spiritually and psychologically. This is especially critical during the current pandemic.

**PETE SCAZZERO****THE EMOTIONALLY HEALTHY PASTOR**

Who you are is more important than what you do. As pastors we so often get pulled into helping everyone else that we don't do the things to maintain our own health. That includes our physical, emotional and spiritual health. In this session Pete Scazzero will share from his personal experiences as a pastor as well as some practical application to begin the journey toward emotional health.

**PASTOR LYNDON WALL****THE MISSING ATTRIBUTE**

This presentation will explore how subtle changes in our practical belief system make us more vulnerable to mental health struggles. These changes are often undetected until a crisis unfolds but awareness and proactive strategies can prevent their damaging impact.

**PASTOR JOHN MEAUX****FIVE COMMUNITY STRATEGIES FOR PERSONAL CARE**

Pastor Meaux shares five important strategies and practices to help ministry leaders take care of their mental and emotional health needs, and the needs of their families.

**TONY ROBERTS****ALL THE FEELS: PRAYING THE PSALMS WHEN YOU FEEL MAD, SAD, GLAD, AND AFRAID**

Pastors are often encouraged to feel only a severely limited mood range: mainly, a milk-toast gladness. The Psalms show us that to live healthy and holy lives, we need to express our whole selves, perhaps especially those emotions we or others may consider ungodly. Tony and Pastor George Love share insights from Tony's life as a pastor with bipolar disorder and his long-term devotional study of the Psalms.



OPR WATCH GUIDE

DAY 2 - CHURCH CARE

MINISTRY LEADERS' PANEL

Heather Sells from CBN News will interview several pastors and ministry leaders to discuss their personal experiences with mental health, and share their observations about the best ways to minister to those navigating mental and emotional health issues.

Guests include Dr. Jack Graham, Prestonwood Church; Amy Simpson, Author of *Troubled Minds*; Joe Padilla, Founder of Mental Health Grace Alliance; Pastor Brad Hoefs, Founder of Fresh Hope for Mental Health and Pastor Dylan Dodson, Founding Pastor of New City Church, Raleigh-Durham, NC.

**PASTOR BRAD HAMBRICK****THE BIBLE AND TRAUMA: MINISTERING HOPE AT HUMAN PACE**

In Isaiah 42:3 God promises not to break a bruised reed. If you have provided pastoral care to someone who has experienced trauma, you know how precious this promise is and how hard it is to keep. In this presentation we will consider how to use the Bible effectively with someone who has experienced trauma. For every person in your congregation who has been the victim of abuse, serves as a first responder (i.e. police officer, medical professional, etc.), serves in the military, or couple who has lost a child, we encourage you to attend.

**REVEREND JERMINE ALBERTY, M. DIV.****EMOTIONAL, PHYSICAL, SPIRITUAL (EPS) CHECK-UP: YOUR WELLNESS MATTERS!**

Pastoring and leading in a ministerial capacity can be full of happiness, love, and unforgettable moments of great joy. Still, it can also be stressful and a source of anxiety, sorrow, and pain. During these uncertain and unstable times, it is paramount that faith leaders conduct a regular wellness check. We must ensure that we are emotionally, physically, and spiritually (EPS) healthy. We must continue to aim for not only surviving but thriving in life and ministry. Join Rev. Jermine Alberty, M. Div., for a workshop where you will learn the tools you need to do an EPS checkup utilizing Mental Health First Aid & create a self-care plan using a 5 Steps Self-Care Model.

**PASTOR DYLAN DODSON****FOUR PRACTICAL WAYS TO WALK THROUGH TRAGEDY WITH PEOPLE IN YOUR CHURCH**

Leading a church involves walking through suffering with people. But how can we do it in a way that is the most helpful and encouraging? In this presentation, Dylan shares four practical things you can do to help those facing tragedies of any kind.

**JAMES SELLS, PH.D.**

HUGHES ENDOWED CHAIR OF PSYCHOLOGY, COUNSELING AND CHRISTIAN THOUGHT SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY AND COUNSELING REGENT UNIVERSITY

THE CHURCH AS A PROVIDER OF MENTAL HEALTH CARE: A RENEWED APPLICATION OF A 2,000-YEAR-OLD TRADITION

Economic, social, and medical factors in the 21st century have led churches to reconsider and renew their role as a provider of mental health care as a core element of ministry. As this occurs it creates new applications of our definition of ministry, theological implications of care, and social definitions of mental health provision. These “new” applications have existed throughout the history of the Church. This presentation will focus on what is happening, and what it means to churches, clinicians, training sites and professional organizations.

**BEN O'DELL****COMPASSION IN ACTION GUIDE: HELPING FAITH LEADERS NAVIGATE MENTAL ILLNESS WITH CONGREGATIONS AND COMMUNITIES**

Tackling the complex issue of mental illness can be a daunting endeavor when leaders start to explore how to best care for those impacted by it. That's why the HHS Center for Faith and Opportunity Initiatives (The HHS Partnership Center) collected a compendium of faith-appropriate and comprehensive resources, examples of repeatable and relatable “best practices,” and innovative services—all to help our frontline faith leaders know how to best address mental illness in their congregation and communities.

The Partnership Center's Compassion in Action Guide—and its accompanying, five-part webinar series now available on YouTube®—considers seven key principles to equip faith leaders and congregations as they select the best approach to implement their preferred courses of action. Ben O'Dell, Mental Health liaison for the Center, will wrap-up this retreat segment with practical ways these principles also relate to the needs of today's clergy.

**DR. MATT STANFORD****GATEWAY TO HOPE TRAINING: ENHANCING THE CHURCHES RESPONSE TO INDIVIDUALS WITH MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES**

Gateway to Hope (GTH) is an interactive, evidence-based, mental health awareness training and education program offered online free of charge by the Hope and Healing Center & Institute to interested faith communities. GTH training, equips clergy, ministry staff, and volunteers to identify mental health problems early, refer distressed individuals to professional care, offer evidence-based psycho-educational services on site, and provide a therapeutic community in which to recover. In this presentation Dr. Stanford will give an overview of the GTH program and discuss how churches might use the training to enhance their ability to minister to those living with serious mental illness and their families.

**VICKY COFFEE****NUGGETS OF HOPE: STRATEGIES FOR SUPPORTING MENTAL WELLNESS IN YOUR PLACE OF WORSHIP**

Surely, you've thought about creating a place of worship where people feel supported emotionally as well as spiritually. Plan to leave this session with a variety of strategies for creating a faith environment that fosters, supports and encourages the emotional well-being of your congregants, ministry leaders and community.



OPR WATCH GUIDE

**DAY 3 - BECOMING A MENTAL
HEALTH FRIENDLY CHURCH**



DR. STEVE GRCEVICH AND CATHERINE BOYLE

DEVELOPING A MENTAL HEALTH INCLUSION STRATEGY AT YOUR CHURCH

Why Church is Difficult for Families and Individuals Impacted by Mental Illness

Research shows that individuals and families with common mental health conditions like anxiety and depression are highly likely not to be connected to a church community. This session will give you insight into seven common barriers that often prevent people with mental health needs from seeking connection with a local church.

A Process for Developing a Mental Health Inclusion Strategy in Your Church

Mental health ministry may feel like an overwhelming task for pastors and churches. But mental health ministry is more about mindset than programs. In this session, learn 7 simple steps that churches can take to support families and empower their staff and lay leaders for mental health ministry.

The Importance of a Mental Health Communication Plan

In the average church, the pastor mentions mental health needs less than once a year in the primary worship service, and mental health needs are seldom mentioned in other aspects of church ministry. In this session, learn how some churches are communicating to change perceptions, reduce stigma and increase support for individuals and families with mental health needs.

Practical Help for Individuals and Families Impacted by Mental Illness

Churches care well for the needs of their members and communities, but too often, practical needs associated with mental health are overlooked. Learn simple steps that your church's care and prayer ministries can do right now, as well as recommended connections to local mental health professionals that can benefit pastoral ministry.

EMERGING MODELS OF MENTAL HEALTH MINISTRIES:



EVAN OWENS

HEALING HEROES - NOW'S THE TIME FOR CHRISTIANS TO ANSWER THE CALL

Too many First Responders and Veterans never heal from trauma and it ends up controlling their lives. COVID-19, civil unrest and a barrage of economic challenges have pushed many heroes to the brink and they are looking to their neighbors for support. In this session we'll show you the exact steps you or your church can take to begin answering the call to stand with our First Responders and Veterans.



BRAD HOEFS

FRESH HOPE FOR MENTAL HEALTH

How to become a champion of hope for those in your church with mental health challenges.



DR. CHERYL SIMMONS AND ROSEMARY GRAHAM

FROM PULPIT TO PEW: A SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST PERSPECTIVE ON MENTAL HEALTH

The Seventh Day Adventist denomination, since its formation, has always taken a wholistic approach to ministry. Health is seen as the right arm of the gospel. In this short video, Dr. Cheryl Simmons and Rosemary Graham will explain what mental health looks like for pastors, leaders, and members within our faith group in the south-Atlantic SDA region.



DJ CHUANG

ERASING SHAME ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH IN ASIAN AMERICAN CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES

Asian Americans are three times less likely to seek mental health services than White Americans. This situation is compounded by the challenges of the shame-based Asian American cultures and also some Christian teachings that dismiss the psychological aspects of mental wellness. This talk presents culturally-relevant insights and vignettes from lived experiences so you can minister more adeptly with these people of color.