

# Pastoral Counseling:

## *The professional integration of spirituality and psychotherapy*

- The word *therapy* means healing. Pastoral counseling is a healing ministry of our congregation, blending the best of both the historic traditions of the church and modern mental health trends and developments.
- **Pastoral Counseling is part of the history of the Christian church.** For centuries, pastors have provided spiritual and psychological counsel, using the tools of pastoral ministry – God’s Word, prayer, and the sacraments. Over the last three decades, pastoral counseling has emerged as a specific specialty within both the pastoral ministry and mental health fields.

- **Pastoral Counselors today are certified by the American Association of Pastoral Counselors (AAPC).** While all pastors provide spiritual counsel to their people using the elements of their tradition, ***pastoral counselors are trained and certified in professionally integrating spirituality and psychotherapy.***
- **All about the healing and hope of Jesus Christ.** Pastoral counseling is the art of bringing the healing power of a relationship with Jesus Christ into the lives of those who come for counseling, providing hope in the midst of life’s storms.
- **All about life.** Sometimes, the anxiety we experience comes out of the stresses and challenges of our lives. In those instances, the therapeutic goal is to reduce or eliminate the anxious feelings.  
  
At other times, we experience “existential anxiety.” This comes out of the human condition. As humans, we all struggle to find meaning

in life, to come to terms with death, to live in community and overcome isolation, and to responsibly and creatively exercise our human freedom. This “anxiety” we want to embrace, not reduce.

- **Open to all.** Ethical practice requires sensitivity to those who are of a different faith tradition from our own Lutheran Christian background.
- **For individuals, couples and families.** Pastoral counseling is available to individuals and families for a range of personal and relationship issues. Intervention strategies are behavioral, cognitive, and affective. With couples and families, the relationship is the focus of treatment, rather than individual members.

- **A ministry of our congregation.** Because many pastoral counselors are grounded in their faith communities, the cost of services is underwritten by the congregation. At Prince of Peace, pastoral counseling is available to members and non-members as a ministry service.
- **Grounded in the community of faith.** Pastoral counselors often work in their faith communities, providing spiritual direction as well as therapy.
- **A collaborative effort.** Referrals might be appropriate if your need warrants. In many instances, a consult with your medical doctor will be encouraged to ensure that we are addressing the full range of health issues.

**A FEW WORDS ABOUT  
PASTOR BUONO'S  
QUALIFICATIONS TO  
PRACTICE**

He has advanced degrees in both counseling (Montana State University, 1985) and ministry (Concordia Seminary, 1999; Phillips Theological Seminary, 2007). He is a professional member of the American Counseling Association and an associate member of the American Association of Marriage and Family Therapists.

He has recently completed an AAPC approved training and supervision program in pastoral counseling, and is now licensed to practice marriage and family therapy in the State of Kansas.

His pastoral counseling work is supervised by a licensed, clinical professional to ensure that he is providing effective and ethical care. All counseling is confidential.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION  
OR TO SCHEDULE AN  
APPOINTMENT, call the  
church office, 785-271-0808  
or contact him directly on his  
cell phone at 785-633-4857  
or by email:  
[revneil@princeofpeacetopeka.org](mailto:revneil@princeofpeacetopeka.org).**

**PASTORAL  
COUNSELING:  
A Ministry of  
Mental Health  
Offering Healing  
and Hope**

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**Rev. Dr. Neil Buono**

*Pastoral Counselor*

*Licensed Marriage and Family  
Therapist*

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