

**The Presenters:**

Rev. Mark Pell is a minister member of North Central Iowa Presbytery, a graduate of Pittsburgh Theological Seminary (PA) and now serving as Supervisor of Spiritual Care at Covenant Health System, Waterloo and is a Board Certified Chaplain with Association of Professional Chaplains. Mark has trained in Critical Incident Stress Management and is experienced in Spiritual Assessment. He currently serves on the NCI Presbytery Committee on Ministry.

Rev. Phil Somsen has been Chaplain and Coordinator of Spiritual Care at Trinity Regional Medical Center in Fort Dodge since July 2000. He grew up in northwestern Wisconsin and graduated from Northwestern College in Orange City, Iowa and Western Theological Seminary in Holland, Michigan. He has served Reformed Church in America parishes in Minnesota, California, and South Dakota. He is Board Certified with the Association of Professional Chaplains and holds a certificate in Healthcare ethics from Rush University. Phil and his wife Evy have three daughters and three grandsons.

**The Course**

This course will explore how individuals, families, and communities experience various forms of loss. Central to ministry will be the discernment of the meaning(s) of these various loss experiences. We will look to bring imagination to our time together through the use of resources from the arts: Drama/cinema, music, painting, architecture, fiction, poetry, among others. Imagination will be a pathway to tapping into the soul and spirit of experiences of loss and change. Trans-generational family systems theory will be utilized to help us understand the complexity of the human dynamics and to understand some healthy, effective ways to intervene and minister. We will plan to address loss issues surrounding those caught up in addiction (those addicted, their families/partners/loved ones). We will look to help prepare persons for experiences of loss so that they can grow through those losses.

**Preparation for the Course**

Many persons like to read to prepare for courses. These works will prove useful, though I see them as "Suggested, Not Require."

*Forgiving the Unforgivable: Overcoming the Bitter Legacy of Intimate Wounds.* By Beverly Flannigan. This resource is highly recommended.

ISBN 0-02-032230-5; New York, NY: Hungry Minds, Inc. 1992/1994

*Praying Our Goodbyes* by Joyce Rupp.

ISBN: 0-87793-370-7 or ISBN: 0-8041-1060-3 paperback

*Into The Light* by Ron DelBene with Mary & Herb Montgomery

ISBN: 0-8358-0576-X

[There are several other short, excellent volumes in this series by DelBene and the Montgomerys]

*Agents of Hope* by Donald Capps.

ISBN: 0-8006-2578-1

*Crisis Counseling* by Howard Stone.

ISBN: 0-8006-2760-1

*Final Gifts* by Maggie Callanan and Patricia Kelley.

ISBN: 0-553-56139-1

*Life Is An Attitude! Staying Positive During Tough Times* by Elwood N. Chapman, Menlo Park, CA; Crisp Publications, Inc. 1992. ISBN 1-56052-138-4.

I would encourage participants in this course to review favorite cinema films which deal with loss and change. Some that come to mind are, among others; *Forrest Gump*, *Life As A House*, *A Walk To Remember*, *A River Runs Through It*, *The Horse Whisperer*, *About Schmidt*, *Steel Magnolias*, and *Places In the Heart*. Theater goers who have experienced Tennessee Williams' "Cat On A Hot Tin Roof", Greek Tragedies, Shakespearean Tragedies, and modern drama such as "The Crucible," "Death of a Salesman," and "Our Town" will have within riches with which to face loss and change. Imaginative architecture can help us to confront profound losses, as anyone who has witnessed the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, D.C. can attest. Popular music with its poetic lyrics can tap our innermost emotions to engage loss and change experiences. Don McClean's "American Pie" comes to mind, abundantly rich in symbolism. Michelangelo's "Pieta" captures without words the depth of a mother's grief. The student is encouraged to use his/her imagination in exploring the virtually limitless riches in the arts to prepare for this course. Participants will be encouraged to share their favorites with the group during discussions. Of particular interest will be works in the areas which depict a strong, healthy spiritual centering; and spiritual community which is hopeful and healing in nature.