



Ministry for Mental Health: Caring for the Whole Church

CENTER FOR CONGREGATIONS MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVE

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Goals



Articulate a vision of holistic spiritual wellness that includes mental wellness



Identify strategies to convene conversation and spur action related to mental health in congregational life



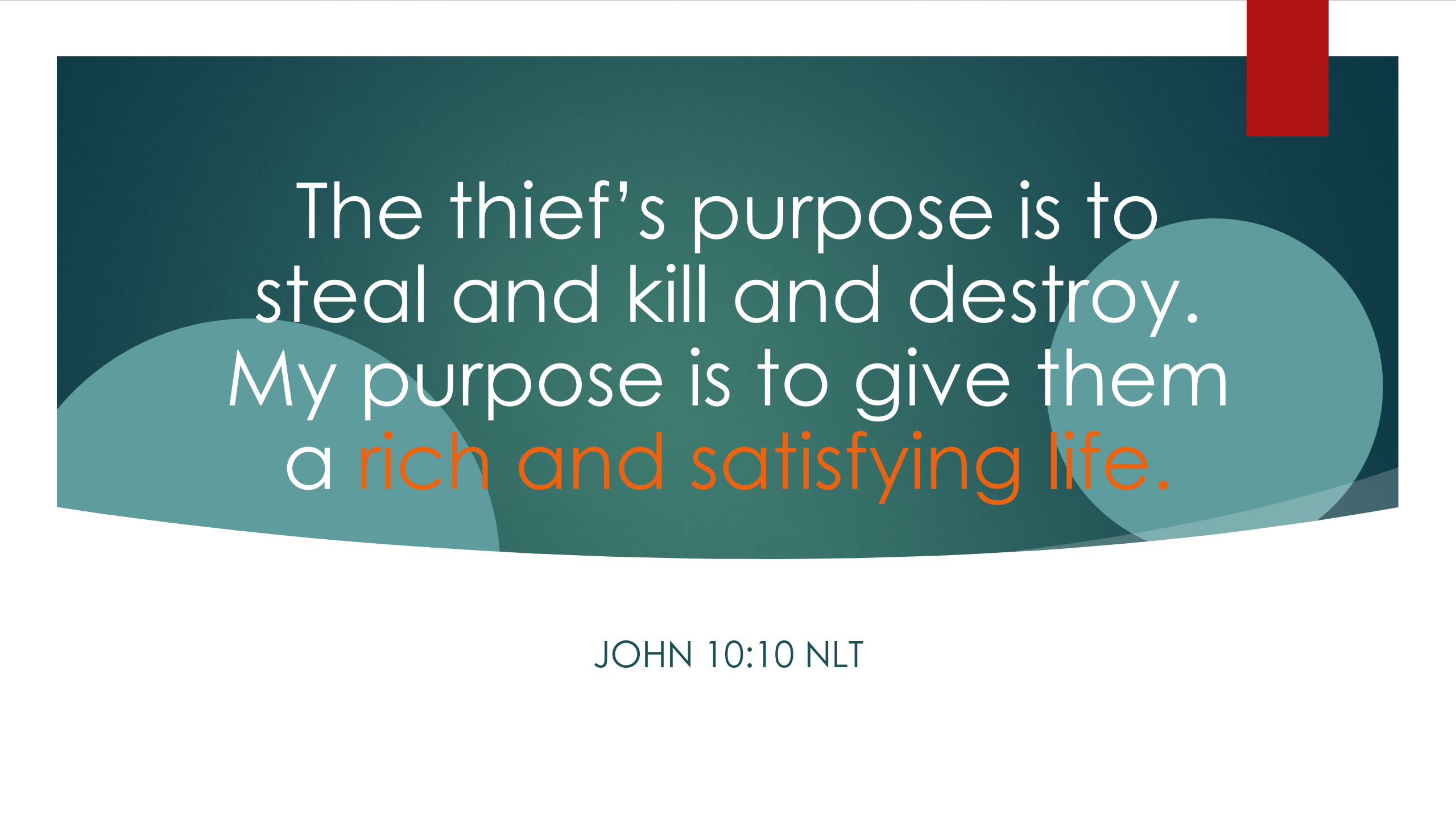
Explore the necessity of wellness for clergy and leaders



Identify strategies for maintaining flow while engaged in church work

A Note on Process

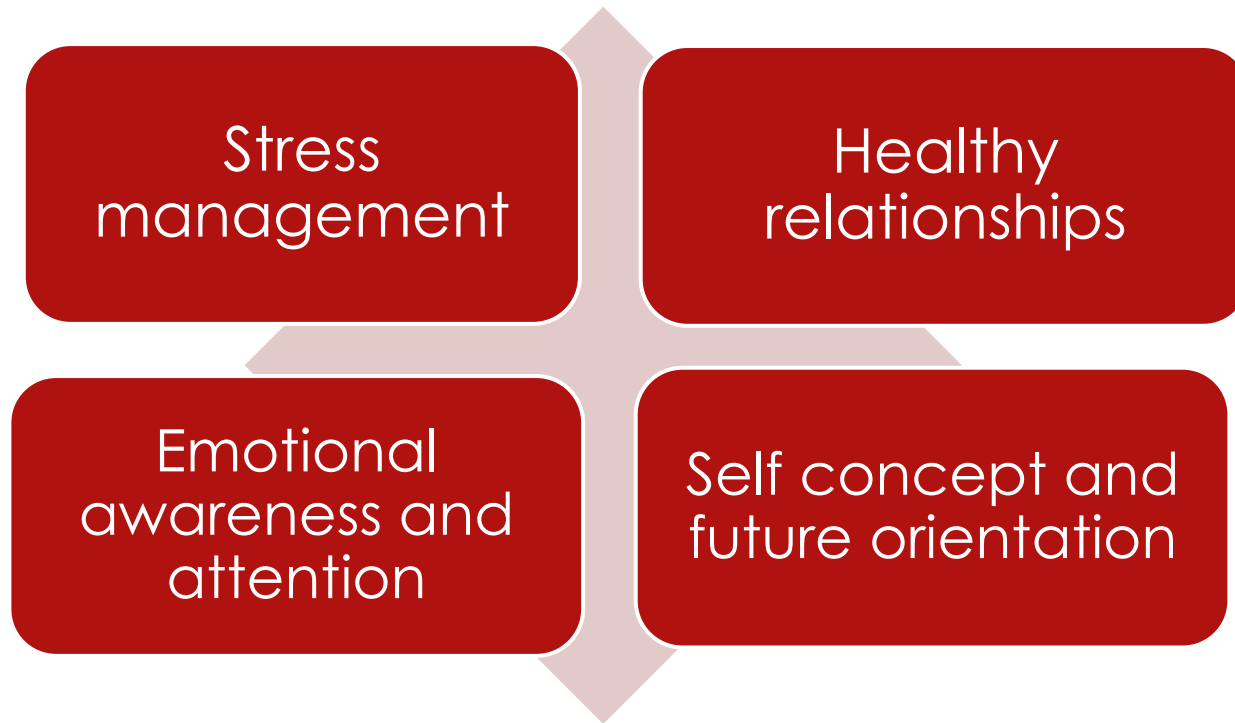




The thief's purpose is to
steal and kill and destroy.
My purpose is to give them
a rich and satisfying life.

JOHN 10:10 NLT

What is Good Mental Health?



Stress Management

Healthy Relationships

Spiritual
Wellness

Emotional
Awareness and
Attention

Self Concept and
Future Orientation

Stress Management

- ▶ We can't avoid stress
- ▶ Attend to the whole person (spiritual and nonspiritual needs)
- ▶ Understand the impact of stress on the body and on our judgment
- ▶ Recognize God's ability to operate through multiple pathways

I call on the LORD in my
distress, and he answers me.
Psalm 120:1 NRSVUE

What we can do

- ▶ Stop demonizing distress; normalize struggle
- ▶ Commit to being a hope dealer
- ▶ Journeying With

Healthy Relationships

Bear one another's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. For if those who are nothing think they are something, they deceive themselves. All must test their own work; then that work, rather than their neighbor's work, will become a cause for pride. For all must carry their own loads.

Galatians 6: 2-5 NRSVUE



Truth



Boundaries



Clear roles



Mutual concern



Conflict management

What we can do

- ▶ Create opportunities to talk about relational dynamics throughout the life of the church
- ▶ Transparency of leadership
- ▶ Setting reasonable expectations
- ▶ Proactive limits and boundaries

Self Concept and Future Orientation

- ▶ Who is God? How does God function in my life?
- ▶ I am made in the image of God. If God is good, I must be good.
- ▶ Am I a wretch, or am I God's beloved?

**For it was you who formed my
inward parts;
you knit me together in my
mother's womb.
I praise you, for I am fearfully
and wonderfully made.
Wonderful are your works;
that I know very well.
Psalm 139:13-14 NRSVUE**

What We Can Do

- ▶ Make space for people to dream and look forward
- ▶ Commit to an embodied ethic of the imago dei
- ▶ Calling in and communal accountability

Emotional Awareness and Attention

**O Lord, you have searched me and known me.
You know when I sit down and when I rise up;
you discern my thoughts from far away.
You search out my path and my lying down,
and are acquainted with all my ways.
Even before a word is on my tongue,
O Lord, you know it completely.
Psalm 139: 1-4**

- ▶ Emotions are not separate from our encounters with God, they are a part of them
- ▶ Emotions are information to learn more and guide behavior
- ▶ God already knows

What We Can Do

- ▶ Feel our feelings
- ▶ Recognize God's ability to intervene and attend to our feelings
- ▶ Use biblical models to support conversation with God about our feelings

The background features a dark teal gradient with two large, overlapping light teal circles. A red vertical bar is positioned in the top right corner.

In Small Groups

What is the “low hanging fruit” to address issues of mental health in your congregation?

BREAK



15 MIN

Why Clergy/Leader Wellness Matters

- ▶ You are God's own
- ▶ Models have more impact than words
- ▶ Your wholeness propels your faithfulness to your call
- ▶ Sustainability must be intentional

Self Reflection

- ▶ What parts of your work and life lead you to feeling most excited and engaged?
- ▶ Where are the areas where you actively feel the Spirit working in you and through you?
- ▶ What portions of your ministry seem to produce the most fruit?

Drains and Wells



Flow, not Balance

- ▶ Ministry from overflow, rather than exhaustion
- ▶ Attending to your daily rhythms
- ▶ Proactive preparation for challenge
- ▶ Planned time away

The goal: Avoid Getting to Empty

Strategies to Consider

- ▶ Spiritual Disciplines and the role of discernment
- ▶ Take control of your calendar
- ▶ A set of healthy, well explained boundaries
- ▶ Attend to your Body

What is your
through line?

- ▶ What is an image or metaphor that can guide your understanding of your current call? How does this inform your activities?

In Small Groups

What are
challenges we
face?

How can we
respond to
those
challenges?

Some Final Thoughts

- ▶ Context and culture matter
- ▶ Everyone can do something; no one can do everything.
- ▶ Think about small changes and sustainable processes that produce change over time.
- ▶ Needs and call evolve. Flexibility is key.



Questions?

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Resources

- ▶ *Why do Christians Shoot their Wounded?* By Dwight Carlson
- ▶ *Boundaries* by Henry Cloud and John Townsend
- ▶ *Rest is Resistance* by Tricia Hersey
- ▶ *Rest in the Storm* by Kirk Byron Jones
- ▶ *Leaders who Last* by Margaret Marcuson
- ▶ *Blessed are the Crazy: Breaking the Silence about Mental Illness, Family, and the Church* by Sarah Griffith Lund
- ▶ *Troubled Minds: Mental Illness and the Church's Mission* by Amy Simpson
- ▶ *Mental Health and Your Church: A Handbook for Biblical Care* by Helen Thorne and Dr. Steve Midgley
- ▶ *Sacred Self Care* by Chanequa Walker- Barnes
- ▶ *Making Space at the Well: Mental Health and the Church* by Jessica Young Brown