

Memphis Theological Seminary to Offer Course on Dementia Featuring Bishop Ken Carder

Memphis Theological Seminary is offering a course in the Spring 2023 semester focused on helping pastors and congregations understand and be present with those of their communities living with dementia. “Dementia Through a Pastoral Theological Lens,” PM306, will address what is happening to someone with dementia as well as their caregivers, the church’s discomfort with how to be present with those living with these diseases, and the theological implications of shifting the understanding of one’s worth from cognitive function to being. The purpose of this course is to move our words, actions, and beliefs within a theological framework of belonging, and to aid pastors and congregations with resources for how to be in ministry with these persons.

The course will be taught by Rev’d Dr. Johnny Jeffords, Director of The Center for Pastoral Wholeness & Chaplaincy Studies at MTS, and will be assisted by Bishop Kenneth L. Carder, retired bishop in The United Methodist Church, whose life experience and ministry in the field provide clarity to the challenges and opportunities this focused work provides. Bishop Carder’s book, “Ministry With the Forgotten: Dementia Through a Spiritual Lens,” is among the foundational texts for the course. His book tells the story of his own discovery and understanding of an incarnational theology as he experienced his wife, Linda’s, journey with dementia. Other resources for the course will include a hospice chaplain and a social worker.

Memphis Theological Seminary is very intentionally offering the course for the community’s awareness for those who may wish to audit, where you learn alongside fellow students without being responsible for assignments. The process for auditing includes an auditor application and application fee. The fee to audit the course is \$430. MTS alumni and persons over 65 pay a discounted rate of \$220. Go to memphisseminary.edu/project/auditing/ for more information including the auditor application.

The course will be on Monday nights, 6-8 p.m., beginning January 23. It will be taught in the Hyflex model, where students will be present in class and others will participate online. If you are local to MTS, your physical presence is preferred to help us facilitate meaningful dialogue through this journey. Contact Rev’d Dr. Jeffords at jljeffords@memphisseminary.edu for more information.

