

PRITCHARD CHURCH MESSENGER

APRIL 2026 | VOLUME 61 | ISSUE 4

One of the most important functions of a church is pastoral care. Now, when I use the term "pastoral care" I would imagine that there are as many definitions of that as there are people who read it. Which can present an issue. Is pastoral care only care that pastors provide? Does it only count if it's provided by an ordained minister? Or does it only count if it is provided by the senior most minister of a staff? How would pastoral care work then in the early church, before ministers were vocational? How does it work in churches without paid staff? How many people could one pastor honestly provide care for? When do people need pastoral care, when they are grieving or do they also need it at other times?

Here is how I understand pastoral care - pastoral care is the spiritual care that every human being needs in order to grieve and to celebrate all the various events and challenges in life. There is more I could add to that, but to me that short summary helps us to understand that we all need pastoral care in our lives- EVEN pastors! So, if that is the case, then what should we do as a church community in order to better care for one another?

One way churches do pastoral care is that it is often *reactive only. Reactive pastoral care waits for tragedy, setback, challenge, conflict, and then at that time responds to those difficulties with visitation, care, and help. To be sure, we will all need reactive pastoral care in our lives. But I want to suggest that isn't the only kind of care, and if we ONLY practice reactive pastoral care then we will be fairly chaotic, and those among us that seem to be doing ok will wither and struggle, often in silence.

Another understanding is *proactive pastoral care. This is the care that happens when we are regularly involved in Connect Groups, home

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Differences



Dialogue



APRIL 12

**5:00-6:00 PM
DISCUSSION & COMMUNION**

**6:00 PM
DINNER**

DOORS OPEN AT 4:45 PM, AND CHILDCARE WILL
BE AVAILABLE FOR INFANTS -5TH GRADE FROM
4:45-6:00 PM.

unity



groups, even committee meetings or single meetings with others from our church. This helps us to be cared for and loved BEFORE we need that care. With good proactive care, I would argue that then reactive care means more and is more effective.

So, with all that, what is the plan at Pritchard to provide pastoral care?

You likely realize that providing pastoral care for all of the... 250 regular attenders of worship, or the 400+ people on our roles, is too much for any one, or two, or even six individuals to provide. Done well, each of those people needs some form of pastoral care for an hour or two EVERY SINGLE WEEK! So, if you had, say, six ordained ministers and those ministers ONLY ever did pastoral care, dedicating 2 hours per person for EACH of those attenders, then those six ordained ministers would be doing about 83 hours of pastoral care EVERY WEEK, without doing anything else at all, not even answering emails.

However, as we are discipled and as our spirits are formed, we start to see that pastoral care is the work of the entire church. And each of us is able to care for someone else in some way. We start to see that the phone calls we make, the flowers we send or the meals we share, each of these is a piece of pastoral care.

So, what is the plan at Prichard for pastoral care?

We have several layers when we speak about the practice of pastoral care, and it requires all of us working together to adequately care for one another. This is a major piece of the work of the church. For the best pastoral care, I would argue someone needs: a group that they belong to (whether that is a Sunday morning Connect Group, or a home group or one of the prayer breakfasts during the week), that group helps provide the most regular and encouraging form of pastoral care, a deacon body that seeks to serve, a pastoral team that is both discipling and visiting, all working together because none of those single entities or groups can possibly provide for all the spiritual, physical, and emotional needs of any one person.

I encourage you: each of us has a part to play in the pastoral care of our church. We need one another. So make sure you have a place to belong, make sure you let your deacon know if you have a need, and make sure you let the staff know when you can. God gave us one another for a reason, and that's because this work is way too big for any one of us to do alone!

Chris Richardson

A Summary of the Pritchard Church Monthly Generosity Report

FEBRUARY 2026

A copy of the full report is available on request.

	<u>FEBRUARY</u>	<u>YEAR-TO-DATE</u>
Generosity (Tithes & Offerings)	\$ 67,785	\$126,539
Other Income	<u>\$ 27,039</u>	<u>\$ 53,172</u>
Total Revenue	\$ 94,824	\$179,711
Expenses	\$122,238	\$267,365
Net Income	-\$ 27,414	-\$ 87,564

Exceptions. Depending on the exception, we sometimes love them and sometimes do not. No one gets ice cream, except Rusty! (I like that one!)

Sometimes exceptions can be confusing. "I" before "E" except after "C" was an easy exception. Then we learned that there are exceptions to the exception with words like weird, seize, leisure, protein, caffeine, their, neighbor, height, and those with "cien" like science, conscience, and ancient, showing "ie" after "c" or "ei" when it doesn't sound like "ee." So confusing. No wonder English is difficult for some of us!

Sometimes, there are no exceptions.....ever. When people say, "But what about _____," there is nothing that can go on that line that gets around the fact that there is no exception. In John 14:6, "Jesus told him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.' Jesus is the only way to God. That's it. No exceptions.

Here is another one. God calls His children, Christians, to be generous. There is no workaround. There is no exception. No demographic gets a "get out of being generous" card, and as you would guess, this includes being generous with our financial resources. We see in scripture that even the very poor gave financially.

Have you somehow rationalized away the fact that part of your Christian duty is to be financially generous and support the work God has called Pritchard to do with your tithes and offerings?

If you do not financially support the church you call yours, why not? If you desire to be the person God desires for you to be, this would be a positive step in that direction.

Saved to Serve,
Rusty Thomaston

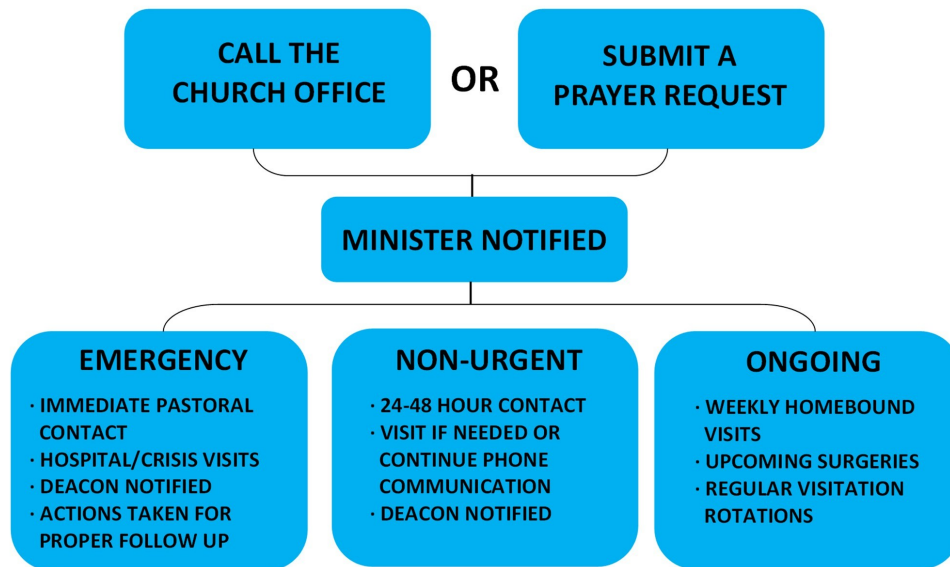
Pritchard Church Pastoral Care Plan

At the heart of the Pritchard Church community is a deep commitment to care for one another in every season of life. For years, this is how Pritchard has shown the love of God, by loving and caring for others. Whether you are walking through a moment of crisis, facing a challenging situation, or simply in need of encouragement and prayer, you are not alone. Our Pastoral Care Plan is designed to ensure that every need is met with timely, compassionate, and thoughtful support.

If there is one thing that I want to stress the most, it is that we are ALL pastoral caregivers. Pastoral care will only survive if we all participate - deacons, connect group leaders, lay people. Everyone has a distinct role to play.

We have all been created for community, and it is through community that we will grow in likeness to the Kingdom. This plan is not just a process on paper, but instead it is a reflection of who we are as Christ followers. There will be bumps in the road, but I just ask that you give grace and step up when needed. Feel free to reach out to me with any concerns or questions about this new process.

With Love, Rev. Grace Sykes



Sharon Memorial Park

We have been given four plots in the Garden of the Good Shepherd section of Sharon Memorial Park. The plots are contiguous and can be sold either as a lot of four or as two lots of two each. The church will be listing these plots for sale with a broker, but the Stewardship and Endowment Committees also wanted to make them available to anyone within Pritchard who wishes to purchase them. Photos and maps are available if you want to know more about the location. Please contact Rusty Thomaston if you are interested in purchasing these plots.

Thank you,
Stewardship Committee

MAUNDY THURSDAY SERVICE

April 2 • 6:00pm • Fellowship Hall

This service invites us to slow down, remember the last supper, and reflect on the depth of Jesus' love and sacrifice. Through worship, scripture, and quiet moments, we'll prepare our hearts for the cross and the hope of Easter. Come as you are. Come ready to reflect.

FLOWERING OF THE CROSS

Easter Sunday • April 5

Don't forget to bring fresh cut flowers, from your garden or purchased, on Easter Sunday morning to flower the cross. The cross will be located at the South Blvd entrance. There will be members available to assist you with placement of your flowers.

WITH DEEPEST
Sympathy

- David and Donna McDuffie in the passing of Donna's sister, Jane.
- The family and friends in the passing of Jean Freeman.
- Kaye Talbert and family in the passing of her son, Greg Talbert.
- The family and friends in the passing of Joseph Sirianni.



Wednesday, April 1

6:30am—Men's Prayer Breakfast (Tryon House)
 10:00am-4:00pm—Thrift Store open
 6:30pm-8:00pm—Choir Rehearsal

Thursday, April 2

6:30am—Men's Prayer Breakfast (Jonathan's in Matthews)
 10:15am-11:15am—Sunago Singers
 6:00pm—Maundy Thursday Service

Friday, April 3...GOOD FRIDAY

Saturday, April 4

5:00pm—Pritchard Youth Upper Room

Sunday, April 5...EASTER

9:00am—Children and Youth Programming
 9:15am—Connect Groups
 10:30am—Worship

Monday, April 6...CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED

Tuesday, April 7

10:30am—Women on Mission
 2:00pm—Afternoon Bible Study Group
 12:30pm-3:00pm—Pickleball

Wednesday, April 8

6:30am—Men's Prayer Breakfast (Tryon House)
 11:00am-1:00pm—Sweet Spirits

Thursday, April 9

6:30am—Men's Prayer Breakfast (Jonathan's in Matthews)

Friday, April 10

Saturday, April 11

5:00pm-7:00pm—More Than Conquerors

Sunday, April 12

9:00am—Children and Youth Programming
 9:15am—Connect Groups
 10:30am—Worship
 11:45am—Missions Meeting

5:00pm—All on the Table

Monday, April 13

6:30pm—Deacons Meeting

Tuesday, April 14

10:00am—See 'n Sew
 12:30pm-3:00pm—Pickleball

Wednesday, April 15

6:30am—Men's Prayer Breakfast (Tryon House)
 10:00am-4:00pm—Thrift Store open
 6:30pm-8:00pm—Choir Rehearsal

Thursday, April 16

6:30am—Men's Prayer Breakfast (Jonathan's in Matthews)
 10:15am-11:15am—Sunago Singers

Friday, April 17

Saturday, April 18

11:00am—Women's Ministry Bowling
 5:00pm-7:00pm—More Than Conquerors

Sunday, April 19

9:00am—Children and Youth Programming
 9:15am—Connect Groups
 10:30am—Worship

Monday, April 20

Tuesday, April 21

12:30pm-3:00pm—Pickleball

Wednesday, April 22

6:30am—Men's Prayer Breakfast (Tryon House)
 6:30pm-8:00pm—Choir Rehearsal

Thursday, April 23

6:30am—Men's Prayer Breakfast (Jonathan's in Matthews)
 10:15am-11:15am—Sunago Singers

Friday, April 24

Saturday, April 25

5:00pm-7:00pm—More Than Conquerors

Sunday, April 26

9:00am—Children and Youth Programming
 9:15am—Connect Groups
 10:30am—Worship

12:00pm—Pritchard Kids Family Lunch at Capishe

Monday, April 27

Tuesday, April 28

10:00am-12:00pm—Volunteers to Crisis Assistance
 12:30pm-3:00pm—Pickleball

Wednesday, April 29

6:30am—Men's Prayer Breakfast (Tryon House)
 8:30am—Women's Prayer Breakfast (Tryon House)
 6:30pm-8:00pm—Choir Rehearsal

Thursday, April 30

6:30am—Men's Prayer Breakfast (Jonathan's in Matthews)
 10:15am-11:15am—Sunago Singers

Happy Birthday!

Jasper Evans	4/2	Kelsie Elder	4/21
Joncie McCall	4/4	Tanya Mazingo	4/21
Edith Parker	4/5	Meredith Lawrence	4/22
Scarlett Jessup	4/5	Jorge Arroba	4/24
Piper Mumpasi	4/6	Marilyn Billmeyer	4/24
Nancy Elder	4/10	Debbie Price	4/25
Debra Morgan	4/11	Wes Livingston	4/25
Melissa Wisor	4/14	Clay Sams	4/26
Garrett Elder	4/16	Paul Miner	4/27
Rusty Thomaston	4/16	Chris Hursey	4/28
Doug Evans	4/17	Marshall Bessinger	4/29
Charles Huffstetler	4/19	Linda Grady	4/30