

PASTOR JEFF'S OFFICE HOURS

Since the invention of cell phones, Pastors are “in the office” just about at all times because everywhere we go our cell phone (i.e. our office) goes with us. Though I am at the church throughout the week I also visit and have meetings out in the community. In addition, I try to break my workday up into three blocks (morning, afternoon, and evening) and work two of the three so that I maintain good care of self and family, realizing that emergencies may come up any hour of the day or night. This means, for instance, I may be visiting in the mornings, off in the afternoon, and attending meetings in the evening or any number of combinations. On Mondays, I meet with staff from 1:30-2:30 to preview the week(s) ahead, coordinate schedules, and be in prayer for you. I then usually meet with Deacon Kathleen from 2:30-3:15 for a review of ministry obligations and planning. Our Office Administrator, Rhonda Kirlaw, therefore, is aware of my schedule and can also assist you in making an appointment with me if you wish. Still, if you need to see me or would just like to chat, it is always best if you call or text me directly at 803-514-8950 so that we can coordinate a time. I am happy to meet you at the church, your home, or out in the community. I try to take Fridays as my day off and make Saturday my Sabbath time, so please see the article “When Does Your Ministry Team Visit” for more information as to how to get in touch with me in case of an emergency. Also, as we have so many new to St. Paul, you can go to this link where I have recorded a video to give you the history of how St. Paul has configured its staff through the years to meet the ministry needs of the congregation. You will find it at the bottom of the page at <https://stpaulaiken.360unite.com/church-leadership>. As it is on the member's side of the website if you cannot access it, please call or email our Office Administrator Rhonda Kirlaw so she can guide you through how to set up your account so that you can access that portion of the St. Paul website.

Walking With You In The Grip Of God's Grace,
Pastor Jeff

When Does Your Ministry Team Visit?

Your ministry team visits to bring the presence of the risen Christ. Both, Pastor Jeff & Deacon Kathleen, visit in the home of any member who requests such a visit and as mutual schedules allow. Deacon Kathleen and Pastor Jeff also work with our Stephen Leaders to ensure that persons needing a brother or sister in Christ who have experienced a divorce, the death of a loved one, job loss, and other life transitions are paired (if they wish) with a Stephen Minister either from St. Paul or within the community who can convey the presence of Christ by walking with them more intentionally over time.

Many times, but not always, hospital visits are made early, around times when doctors routinely make rounds so the person's family may not be present. **Hospital visits** have changed since the pandemic and are now as follows:

- a. As needed for regular patients.
- b. At least twice during the week for ICU or PCU. (*These are usually shorter in duration and focus on brief reading of scripture and prayer*).
- c. As needed for persons who have been discharged from the hospital to a rehabilitation unit, but generally once every two weeks. Visits convey the presence of Christ through Scripture reading, prayer, and Holy Communion.

In most of these cases, visitation is done by Pastor Jeff, however, as scheduling conflicts arise a person may be seen by Deacon Kathleen with Pastor Jeff doing follow-up OR seen by Pastor Jeff and Deacon Kathleen doing follow-up.

Members under **Hospice Care** are visited at a frequency that increases from once a week to daily as the need grows. Visits to those in hospice care are meant to support both the one under care and the family in the home. Scripture reading, prayer, and Holy Communion are the items brought to convey the presence of Christ in the visit.

The list of members who are not able to leave their homes or reside in an institutional setting (**i.e. "shut-in"**) has grown beyond one pastor's ability to see monthly. These persons are now visited both by Pastor Jeff and our Eucharistic Ministers on a rotating basis to ensure persons can receive the presence of Christ through Scripture reading, prayer, and Holy Communion monthly from one or the other. The visits of our Eucharistic Ministers or Deacon are intended to supplement, not replace, pastoral visits. They also bring the presence of the risen Christ.

Pastor Jeff and Deacon Kathleen visit either with family or the affected member or both in a multiplicity of crisis situations. These include emergency rooms, pre-operating rooms, and surgery waiting rooms in Aiken and Augusta. In these **cases of medical emergencies or crises of faith**, it is always recommended that one call (not text) the emergency on-call number to notify of the need. 803-617-1979 will reach the minister on-call. In most cases that will be and is Pastor Jeff. However, there are certain instances when Pastor Jeff knows he will be unavailable and has transferred the on-call to Deacon Kathleen or Pastor Fred Klinker of St. James Lutheran with whom he has a reciprocal arrangement. If you receive the voice mail of the person on-call, it is important that you leave a message with your name and call back number as their phone will not identify your number only that it is a call from the St. Paul on-call number.

In the event someone other than Pastor Jeff responds, we encourage you to remember that though it is not unrealistic to expect your pastor to be available, it is to expect that there never be a time he is not. The central concern is that persons receive the reassurance of Christ's presence in these situations. Through baptism, God has empowered each of us to do this one for another.

Finally, it is important to remember that your ministry team does not have special mind-reading powers. They count on people speaking directly with them about their needs, wants, and desires rather than assuming they should know, that others have or will inform them or that they have seen it on Facebook or even within the prayer book.