



SMYRNA BAPTIST CHURCH  
building community • equipping believers • serving Jesus

# SMYRNA SCROLL

## PASTOR'S CORNER

January 2026

### Dates to Remember

- \* 1<sup>st</sup> - HAPPY NEW YEAR - Church office closed
- \* 4<sup>th</sup> - New Kids SS Teacher Training begins 6:00 PM
- \* 7<sup>th</sup> - All Wednesday evening activities resume starting with dinner at 5:30PM
- \* 11<sup>th</sup> - Smyrna U evening classes begin at 6:00PM
- \* 14<sup>th</sup> - BOP Luncheon @ 11AM
- \* 15<sup>th</sup> - Pastor's Book Club @ Smyrna 11:30 AM
- \* 18<sup>th</sup> - Deacon Ordination Service @ 11:00 AM



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I write this entry from my kitchen table surrounded by sick people! Ashley and two of my girls have been down for a few days with the flu which has created quite the challenge for me. Whenever my bride gets sick (which isn't often, praise the Lord), I am quickly reminded of all that she does for us. She lives her life serving us in a myriad of ways. It is overwhelming to me to think about: the cooking, the cleaning, the schooling, the organization, the encouraging and the like but it is also easy to take the grace of a good wife for granted.

This being so, I write today to ask us to consider whether we are guilty of the same sin in other arenas. Christmas is a time to remember the joy and beauty of the beginnings of God's plan of redemption. He came to live among us, to die for us and to rise in order to give us hope. He came to save us and reconcile us to the Father and now, by His grace, you and I enjoy a relationship with Him that will not be severed and guarantees our future.

You know, we give gifts at Christmas to be reminded of the gift we have been given in Christ. Jesus has done far more for us than we could ever do for ourselves or anyone else but I wonder if we don't treat Him and His work the way I can easily treat others in my life. Have you taken His work for granted? Do you celebrate the presence of the Spirit in your soul? Do you thank Him for the gift of eternal life? Do you thank Him for resurrection or, like me, are you guilty of simply assuming all that He has done and is doing as you go about your day?

My challenge to you is to take a moment to reconsider His gift to you! Please don't fly through this season without stopping to reflect upon and worship our great God. He has done far more for you than you could even comprehend, He continues to intercede for you right now and, therefore, He deserves our conscious praise and adoration!

Blessings,  
**Pastor Aaron**  
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Dear Smyrna Family,

I know as you pick this up and read there may still be a few days left in 2025. Still, I want to wish you a happy new year. Welcome to the year 2026. On a personal note, this is the year, Lord willing, that I will turn 59 years old, I will have been pastor here at Smyrna for 25 years, my last child and only daughter will be married, and Lord only knows what else.

On a ministry note, I am excited to see just how far under one million dollars we will bring our mortgage. We should be very close to getting under that mark in the first 4 months of the year and then I hope that we can run hard to the finish to pay this debt off. What a glorious day that will be. I look forward to sharing some ministry and fellowship opportunities with the senior saints again. By the way, for any of you interested, we may plan another cruise in 2027, so you start planning and saving. My hope right now is that we will take a 3-day 2-night trip to Lancaster, PA. mid-June to take in the story of Joshua at Sight and Sounds Theatre as well as take some extra time to do some sightseeing around some of the Amish towns in the area.

Another goal for 2026 is to choose, promote, and develop a mission trip or two for 2027 as well. I hope to work out many of the details including where God would have us serve in the coming months and then provide you plenty of time to plan vacations, get your passport, and save a little money so that you can be a part of taking the gospel to the nations and across our state and country.

One of the many reasons that I look forward to the days when we pay our mortgage off is because it will free up the finances for upkeep on our current facilities. We are so thankful for each of you and the sacrifices you continually make to support our church family and to serve alongside us in our efforts to bring glory to God as we build up a community of equipped saints to answer the call. Please know that Pastor Aaron and I know that so many of you sacrifice and do the best you can and that is why we try not to come to you so often with needs and wants that we wish we could do. For now, we simply trust the Lord's timing and are trying to grow healthier and more mature as a church body so that when He does release us to do more things, they will be the right things done the right way.

Beloved, I pray that we will all have a good year and that "the lines will fall for us in pleasant places" (Ps. 16:6). Undoubtedly, the Lord will call home some friends and family that we love dearly. Every year is filled with incredible blessings as well as valleys in which we struggle to walk through. I praise God that through all of it, He is ever present and always faithful. Learn to number your days so that you enjoy them, are filled with gratitude, and soak it all in as you fight that tendency to take His blessings for granted. I step into another year confident that He is leading us and that we will be alright because our Father is always good!

Hopeful and Expectant,

**Pastor Robert**

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During the month of December, I read *Shepherding God's Flock*. This book is edited by Benjamin L. Merkle and Thomas R. Schreiner. This work traces the theme of a pastor as shepherd throughout the Bible. It also gives a brief sketch of how the ideas of pastoring developed throughout church history and in a few different denominations. This is a summary work that covers a vast amount of time. All of the authors involved in this work bring the shepherd motif front and center as one of the key aspects of what it means to be a pastor.

Many works that have been written on the topic of pastoring tend to focus mainly on 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus. This makes sense because the bulk of the New Testament teaching about pastors comes from these letters. In fact, in these three books, Paul instructs Timothy and Titus directly about what their responsibilities are as pastors. That is why these three New Testament books have often been referred to as the Pastoral Epistles. Other books in the New Testament do address pastoral duties in a briefer manner, 1 Peter and Hebrews for example.

One helpful perspective that *Shepherding God's Flock* emphasized was investigating Jesus as the ideal shepherd, in the Gospels. By carefully looking at the four Gospels together, it is hard to miss this vital role that Jesus fulfilled. What this means for us is that our understanding of a shepherd is not an idea that was dreamed up by men. God Himself, in His Son, demonstrated what it means to shepherd people.

I understand why many authors jump straight into the New Testament letters to discuss the responsibilities pastors have to carry out. Yet, Jesus walked among humanity in flesh and showed His disciples what it looks like to shepherd people. The other authors of Scripture, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, have given us further instructions about how to pastor. We must keep both of these revelations in mind, the life of Jesus and the words from the Spirit, if we are going to develop a more complete understanding of what a biblically faithful shepherd looks like.

Sincerely,

**Daniel Watson**

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# YOUTH

We had the joy of hosting our youth Christmas party this past week. The Christmas gathering has become a very special tradition at Smyrna and, in many ways, it serves as an important mile marker every year, demonstrating how far this ministry has come.

I recall the first time I walked into our youth room some 2 and ½ years ago. Without going into too much detail, it was clear to me that we needed a bit of joy and Godly encouragement in the room! Over the past two and a half years, we have attempted to organize in such a way as to bring in parents who love Jesus and their students. We have attempted to laugh and cry and, frankly, study the Bible with depth. We have raised up teachers who love God's Word and teach with precision and concern and the result has been a deepening fellowship and growth!

Last Wednesday, we welcomed nearly 50 students to our Christmas party. If you consider the fact that several were sick and others serve in AWANA and, therefore, can't join us, you will begin to get a bit of the picture of what God has done in our midst. Additionally, and just as importantly, the environment for our gathering looked markedly different. Gone are the days of dull and drab duty. Instead, our students love to laugh with one another and, obviously, care about each other and their church and this was clear, yet again, on Wednesday night. After we were able to set up and once the games began, the Lord was gracious to allow me a moment to just take it all in. Every year's party has seen improvement. We have observed more laughter, better relationships and more joy and this year is no exception. We have come so far and I'm thankful that I get to be apart of the ride.

It is a joy to see them interact with their peers and other adults. It is gratifying to watch them serve in various ministries (BMen, AWANA, the nursery, choir, band, etc.) in these ways, I have great hope that we are seeing God raise up another generation of Godly men and women who can serve and lead His church well.

Blessings,  
**Pastor Aaron**

## Pastor's BOOK CLUB

We invite you to join our Pastor's Book Club as we read "[The Sin of Empathy](#)" by Joe Rigney. Together, we'll explore important biblical truths and engage in meaningful discussion led by our pastor. Everyone is welcome—no matter where you are in your faith journey. We meet once a month at Smyrna to enjoy a meal together and discuss what we have read.

Our first meeting  
 for 2026 is Jan. 15<sup>th</sup>  
 @ 11:30 am



What a joy it was to finally present our Christmas music on Dec. 21! I'm so grateful for the flexibility of everyone to adjust their schedules in order to worship our Savior through the music that we had worked hard on for months! God's sovereign plan was for the music to be presented that day even though we missed some of our choir members due to illness this year. We are so grateful for our band, instrumentalists and our sound and media team that made the day even more special!

We will kick off 2026 making plans for Easter music, which is earlier this year on April 5. That means the date for our Easter music will be on Palm Sunday, March 29. That being said we need to get started as soon as possible. Wednesday, January 7, will be a great time for anyone considering being a part of the choir to start rehearsals that evening at 6:30 p.m. or 8:15 p.m. The children's choirs start back up the same evening at 6 p.m.

I recently ran across an article written by Ryanne Molinari for The Gospel Coalition, a musician and worship director. In the article she makes the following points: "Ephesians 5:19 call Christians to address one another in song, The word translated 'addressing' in that verse refers to speaking, telling, preaching, and even boasting. We're to sing not only with but to one another with boldness and vigor." She points out ways to do that, which we incorporate many times in our worship services. Here are some excerpts from her article and my own thoughts on ways we sing to one another.

- ◆ Include question-and-answer songs. A couple of examples of this is Andrew Peterson's "Is He Worthy", which is more conversational, leaders ask questions that the congregation answers. ('Do you feel the world is broken – we do). An example of a well know hymn with the question/answer format is "Nothing But the Blood" (What can wash away my sin – nothing but the blood of Jesus)
- ◆ Feature a cappella sections. We do this many times singing a verse or chorus without any instrumental accompaniment.
- ◆ Gender specific verses. An example of this is "Behold Our God" where the men sing the bridge by themselves, the ladies sing their bridge themselves and then we join together. (Men-He will reign forever, Ladies-Let His glory fill the earth). A verse of a song can be sung by men first then the next verse by the women, and even the next by children!
- ◆ Change the point of view. Not use I/me/my exclusively in a worship song, but include we/us/our. Second-person pronouns, you/your/yours, makes it clear that our singing isn't just vertical but horizontal; we glorify God as we acknowledge one another.
- ◆ Use of a choir. Having a group of singers stand facing the congregation provides a greater sense of reciprocity than a single leader or band alone.
- ◆ Singing beyond Sundays. Sing the Doxology after a Bible study or opening a prayer meeting with a song. Incorporate singing into weekly events makes addressing one another in song on Sundays more comfortable.

We look forward to joining our voices together each week as we address one another and exalt our great God!

*"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God." Colossians 3:16*

Singing His Praises,  
**Melodie Parsons**



## A MESSAGE FROM ERICA CHAPLIN , CHILDREN'S DIRECTOR

Happy New Year! January invites us to begin again—to reset our rhythms, refocus our hearts, and step into a new season with hope and expectation. As we look ahead, we're grateful for the ways God has been faithful in the past year and excited for what He has in store for our children and families.

There's something refreshing about the start of a new year. January gives us space to pause, reflect, and reset the rhythms of our daily lives. It's a natural time to reestablish routines, create meaningful moments, and intentionally invite God into the ordinary parts of each day.

Small habits—like praying together before school, sharing a gratitude at the dinner table, or reading a short Bible story at bedtime—can quietly shape faith in powerful ways. As we step into this new year, our prayer is that families feel encouraged, supported, and reminded that spiritual growth often happens in the simple, consistent moments we share together.

Intentional faith in everyday moments can leave a legacy far greater than we realize. The start of a new year often brings goals, hopes, and aspirations—for our children and for ourselves. January is a meaningful time to pause and ask thoughtful questions: *How are we spending our time? What are we prioritizing? Where is God inviting us to be more present?*

One word that has surfaced again and again lately—in conversations, Bible study, prayer, and even in an AWANA lesson this week—is **intentional**. It's a simple word, but a powerful one. Being intentional invites us to slow down, choose purpose over autopilot, and steward well the time, relationships, and opportunities God has given us.

As a family, we've chosen to let that word guide us this year—using it as a simple way to pause, reflect, and realign how we spend our time and energy. Not for perfection, but for awareness and growth. As parents and caregivers, modeling intentional faith—even in small, imperfect ways—we can leave a lasting impact. Whether it's setting aside time for prayer, choosing connection over distraction, or serving together as a family, those intentional moments quietly shape hearts. We invite you to consider choosing a word, Scripture, or prayer your family can return to throughout the year—a gentle checkpoint on busy days and a reminder of what truly matters.

We're excited to welcome everyone back as AWANA resumes on January 7<sup>th</sup>! Regular attendance helps kids feel confident, connected, and encouraged as they grow together. Please remember to use the check-in system each week. This helps our team and Security Ministry care for your children well and ensures a safe, welcoming environment for everyone. Thank you for partnering with us in making safety a shared priority.

As we begin a new year together, please join us in praying for:

**Our children:** That they grow in confidence, kindness, and curiosity about God.

**Our families:** That homes are filled with peace, patience, and purpose.

**Our volunteers:** That they feel renewed, supported, and joyful as they serve.

**Our ministry:** That God continues to guide, protect, and grow the work happening here.

As we step into this new year, may we remember that God's mercies meet us every single morning—fresh, faithful, and full of grace. My prayer is that 2026 would be marked not by perfection, but by intentionality as we invest our time, love, and energy in ways that honor the precious gifts God has entrusted to us.


May we continually return to Him as we evaluate how we live, love, and lead our families, trusting that He is faithful to guide us every step of the way.

“The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.” —Lamentations 3:22–23

With gratitude and anticipation,

**Erica Chaplin**

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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 Office Closed Conley Davila Heidi Shifflett	2 Kristin Andrs Jeb Bowers	3 Eustace Baker Randy Cheely
4  Kids Sunday School Teacher Training-6:00 PM Jessica Harris	5 Anthony Gammon	6 Kristen Berry	7 ★★ See Wed. Night Schedule below	8	9 Alise Russell Beverly Steed	10 Mason Wells
11 Kids Sunday School Teacher Training-6:00 PM Jessica Harris	12 Kevin Thomason	13 Jeanie Wells	14 ★★ BOP Lunch @ 11:00 am	15 Book Club at Smyrna @ 11:30AM Kim Lane	16 Kevin Barnhouse Ethan McCoig Fiona Rose Wamsley Allen Woods	17 Adaline Williamson
18 Kids Sunday School Teacher Training-6:00 PM Derrick Temple Deegan Steed	19 Trinity Greene Sharon Long	20 Finley Chappell	21 ★★ Wyatt George Charlotte Hoyle Breanna Pierce Avery Tucker	22 Chris Neville	23 Jacob Mitchell	24 Paula Pemberton
25 Kids Sunday School Teacher Training-6:00 PM Reese Miller	26 Deacon's Meeting @ 6:30 PM John Taylor	27	28 ★★ Gerry Howard Vera Mitchell	29 Brianna Perkinson	30 Wayne Joyner	31 Edward Poarch



**★★ WEDNESDAY NIGHT SCHEDULE starts Jan. 7th**

- 5:30-6:15 - Dinner
- 6:00 - 6:30 - Kidz Choir
- 6:30 - 7:30 - Mid-Week Bible Study
- 6:30 - 8:00 - AWANA, Youth & Worship Ministry Practice
- 8:00 - 8:45 - Worship Ministry Practice

**SUNDAY SCHEDULE**

- 9:45 am - Sunday School
- 11:00 am - Worship Service
- 6:00 pm - Smyrna U classes (Begins January 11<sup>th</sup>)



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MISSION STATEMENT

Smyrna Baptist Church exists for the purpose of building up a community of fully equipped believers who give glory to God with every aspect of their lives.

## January 2025 - Children's volunteer schedule

DATE	9:30 - 10:45		10:45 - 12:15				
	CHECK-IN DESK	NURSERY	CHECK-IN DESK	NURSERY	1'S & 2'S	3'S	CHILDREN'S CHURCH
4 <sup>th</sup>	Angie Adkins	Terri Shell	Chuck Page	Sariah Williamson	Scotty & Heather Leshar	Janna Cobb & Candi Cornett	Linda Mohr & Savannah Taylor
11 <sup>th</sup>	Audrey Erdmann	Gina Perkinson	Chuck Johnson	Brandy Barchanowicz	April & Clara Green	Nathan & Brokke Daniels	Derrick & Carla Temple
18 <sup>th</sup>	Kim Davis	Alicia Dalton & Sharon Long	Kim Davis	Melissa Snellings	Kyle & Alyssa Pitcock	Monica Shifflett & Vera Mitchell	Matthew & Nikki Russell
25 <sup>th</sup>	Pam Kissner	Catherine Parson	Amanda Joyner	Laura Hoyle	Scotty & Heather Leshar	Randy & Faith Driggers	Brittney Chappell & Alyssa Long

**UPCOMING EVENTS FOR JANUARY**

- 04** COMMUNION SUNDAY
- 11** SMYRNA 'U' WINTER SESSION BEGINS
- 15** PASTOR'S BOOK CLUB @ SMYRNA
- 18** DEACON ORDINATION SERVICE @ 11AM



SS Class Dinner Schedule

- ◇ 7<sup>th</sup> - Growing Families
- ◇ 14<sup>th</sup> - High School Youth
- ◇ 21<sup>st</sup> - Men's & Ladies Classes
- ◇ 28<sup>th</sup> - Generations & Aging Gracefully