

Pastoral Residency

Volunteer | Part-Time | Flexible Schedule
Chester Baptist Church • Chester, Virginia

Who We Are & What We're Offering

We are a small, BGAV affiliated church with a heart for raising up the next generation of pastors. We believe that faithful pastoral ministry is grown over time, through relationship, experience, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and we want to be part of that journey for the right person.

This is not a traditional job posting. We are not hiring an employee. We are extending an invitation.

We are looking for someone who senses God may be calling them toward pastoral ministry, someone who may be at the very beginning of that journey, unsure of the path, but open to the process. We want to walk that road with you.

This is an unpaid, volunteer position. We recognize that is uncommon. We also recognize that the opportunity we are offering direct access to a lead pastor, hands-on experience in every area of church life, and a safe environment to grow into your calling is genuinely rare.

Our Vision: Planting Pastors

Many churches today are searching for qualified pastoral leadership. We want to be part of the solution. Our vision is to be a place where future pastors are cultivated, not just a church that consumes pastoral talent. Whether God ultimately leads you to plant a new church or step into an existing one, we want to play a meaningful role in preparing you for that calling.

We call this “planting pastors.”

What You Can Expect

This residency is built around you your gifts, your pace, and your preparation. Over the course of a 3–5 year journey, you can expect:

- Regular, intentional access to our lead pastor for mentorship, guidance, and accountability
- Hands-on experience in all areas of church ministry from children’s ministry and worship to pastoral care and preaching
- Exposure to the administrative and leadership side of church life, including finance, budget preparation, and board meetings
- Opportunities to preach, teach, lead, and serve in ways that align with your gifts
- A healthy, honest environment where you can ask hard questions, make mistakes, and grow
- Support as you discern the specific direction of your pastoral calling

Role & Responsibilities

We won't hand you a fixed job description, because this role is designed around who God has made you to be. What gifts, natural and spiritual, has He placed in you? That's where we will start.

That said, over the course of the residency, you will gain meaningful experience in areas that include:

- Preaching and teaching (congregational, small group, and other settings)
- Pastoral care and shepherding church members
- Children's and youth ministry
- Worship and congregational life
- Outreach and community engagement
- Church administration, financial stewardship, and board governance
- Biblical education and theological development, as appropriate

The goal is that, by the time your residency concludes, you will have touched every corner of church life, and you'll know how to lead in it.

Who We're Looking For

You don't need a seminary degree. You don't need a résumé full of ministry experience. You simply need:

- A genuine sense that God may be calling you toward pastoral ministry
- A humble, teachable spirit and a willingness to serve
- A personal faith in Jesus Christ and a life that reflects it
- The ability to align with BGAV doctrinal and cultural distinctives for the duration of your time with us (see below)
- A desire to be part of our church community, not just fill a role
- A prayerful and patient desire for what God has for you next

If you are currently employed full-time or part-time, that is not a disqualifier. We will shape the schedule around your availability. Life doesn't stop while you prepare for ministry and often, it's in the middle of regular life that pastors are formed.

Location & Schedule

We are in the Chester, Virginia. Living in or near our extended community is preferred, as genuine pastoral formation happens within the context of community life not just during scheduled church hours. That said, location will be part of the conversation as we discern together whether this is the right fit.

Schedule: Flexible, determined collaboratively based on your current commitments and the needs of the church. This residency is designed to fit alongside family, work, and education rhythms. Hours will be dependent on the season, the need and availability.

A Note on BGAV Alignment

We are a church affiliated with the Baptist General Association of Virginia (BGAV). We hold to Baptist convictions and the theological and cultural distinctives of our association. We do not

require that you come from a BGAV background only that, while you are with us, you are willing to serve in unity with those convictions. This is not about conformity; it is about covenant community.

If you have questions about what that means practically, we welcome the conversation.

What This Is Not

This is not an internship designed primarily for our benefit. Yes, your service will bless our church and we hope it does. But our primary commitment is to your formation. We are investing in your future, and we take that seriously.

This is not a fast track to a title. Pastoral readiness takes time, and we will not rush it. We are committed to sending you out well.

How to Apply

If this resonates with you, we'd love to begin a conversation. Please reach out with a brief introduction that includes:

- A little about yourself and your story
- What has stirred in you a sense of calling toward pastoral ministry
- Your current life situation (employment, family, location)
- Any questions you have for us

There is no formal application. This begins with a conversation, and we will discern together, prayerfully and honestly, whether this is the right path for both of us. Please send above information to search@chesterbaptist.com.

We are praying for the right person. Perhaps that is you.