



Supporting the spiritual vitality of  
pastors and ministry leaders

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### UPCOMING EVENTS

#### *Soul Focus*

May 11, 2023

Half Day Retreat

(includes breakfast)

Other dates – September 21,  
November 16

#### *Unfinished Business*

Thrive's next Unfinished Business

Group happens

Sept - Dec 2023.

Participants may join us in person  
or online.

#### *Ministry Wives*

Small group meets monthly



Visit [www.thriveministries.ca](http://www.thriveministries.ca)  
for more information or email  
[info@thriveministries.ca](mailto:info@thriveministries.ca) to register  
for these retreats and groups.

# update

spring | 2023

## Another Year Supporting the Spiritual Vitality of Pastors | Cathy Gates

The number of pastors who have seriously considered quitting full-time ministry has risen dramatically over the past few years. In March 2022, Barna Research reported an unprecedented 42% of pastors had considered leaving ministry in 2021. Almost one quarter of them said their own spiritual formation has taken a back seat to pastoral duties and only 1 in 10 prioritize their own self-care.

Thrive Ministries is uniquely positioned to address these challenges and support the personal spiritual vitality of pastors and ministry leaders. We know that when the life of a leader is positively impacted, their families, ministries and communities benefit as a result.

During 2022, Thrive Ministries support for pastors, ministry leaders and their spouses focused on two critical areas: personal spiritual formation and self-care. Here are some of the supports provided by your generous donations:

- More than 200 individual **pastoral care** contacts addressing several areas including personal spiritual formation, burnout, healing from past ministry and life experiences, current ministry and life challenges.
- Four Soul Focus personal **spiritual retreats**
- Encouragement** visits and gifts provided to 13 couples/families
- Nine **Soul Care** (mini retreat) Resource emails provided to more 250 recipients
- Two 14-week **Unfinished Business** groups (one men's and one women's) assisted participants to deepen their personal spiritual connection to the Lord as they sought healing from life and ministry events.
- Ministry Wives** group meeting monthly
- Monthly pastoral **couple mentoring**
- Retreat** presentation for ordination candidates on the Importance of Spiritual and Emotional Health of Pastors
- Follow up** support groups for those who have participated in Unfinished Business

The appreciation expressed over and over by those we serve is captured well in this statement:

**"Having a safe place like this for people in ministry is rare and precious"**

In 2023 our Soul Focus retreats will be accessible to more church staff, ministerial groups, missionaries and Christian nonprofit leaders as we work with them to customize the retreat and deliver it to them, wherever they are. Please consider making a tax-deductible donation toward the cost of providing safe spaces for pastors, ministry leaders, and their spouses, to pursue personal spiritual vitality in life and leadership.

## Pastors Day 2023

We welcomed pastors ministry leaders and their spouses from seven denominations to Pastors Day. Our theme, *Simple Faith*, was offered in response to an expressed longing we were hearing from pastors and ministry leaders.

### Simple Spiritual Practices

Designed as a personal spiritual retreat, attendees were invited to stop, contemplate, and deepen their experience with God in the moment through several simple spiritual practices. Thrive's ministry team provided thought-provoking teaching about simple presence, gratitude, scripture, and prayer. Participants engaged in personal reflection activities to practice what they were learning including a 15-minute period of silence during lunch. Not a small feat for a group of pastors!



### Deeper Engagement

Experiential areas provided opportunities to deepen engagement with each Spiritual practice. A prayer area offered visual reminders of the Lord and scriptural truths to inspire prayer. The Praying Scripture activity produced a colourful sand sculpture that represented the prayers of the entire group.



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Deeper Still

Two free books were provided to encourage the continuation of spiritual practices beyond that day: Ruth Haley Barton's *Sacred Rhythms* and *Invitation to Retreat*.

Simple Joy

Pastors Day would not be Pastors Day without great food and some playful activities for laughs. Seared Catering provided a wonderful Asian-themed lunch including decadent homemade desserts. Simple joy was experienced as everyone received a gift card or event pass provided by our generous prize donors.

At the end of the day, leaders commented on how glad they were to have taken the time out of busy schedules to attend and for the way God spoke personally to them during the day.



Free Books at Pastors Day

A THRIVE STORY

From the Edge of Burnout | Darren West

Thrive Ministries pastoral care was recommended to me by a close friend and I'm so happy I followed through on connecting with them. Words cannot express how much they helped me during one of my most challenging times in life and ministry. In the throes of burnout, I was empty, discouraged and ready to call it quits as far as pastoring and church ministry was concerned.



With the help of one of Thrive's tremendously knowledgeable and experienced leaders, I was allowed the opportunity to process with the Lord and discover how I ended up at the place I was in. The one-on-one conversations were not simply cognitive, but rather they were filled with the wisdom and understanding of the Holy Spirit. During the process of healing, I was carefully guided through the pain and disappointments ministry life had brought and came out the other

side restored and refreshed. The spiritual practices I had studied and learned previously became more of a reality during my sessions as they captured my heart, not just my head (I also learned some new practices). I highly recommend Thrive Ministries to any pastor or ministry leader who, like me, didn't know where to turn for help!

We're Growing! 

Thrive Welcomes Bonnie D'Elia to Our Ministry Team

We are thrilled to welcome Bonnie D'Elia as leader of our Pastors Wives Ministry. Bonnie has long had a passion for encouraging and supporting Christian leaders and their families.






With 45 years' experience in leadership roles both in ministry and the marketplace, Bonnie knows first hand the challenges that accompany leadership. Her gifts of hospitality, humour, and communication enable her to create safe spaces for open, honest dialogue. She asks thought-provoking questions, is an empathic listener, and believes playful application of biblical truth will bring wisdom, guidance, clarity, and perspective. Bonnie is looking forward to shaping the future vision of the Pastors Wives Ministry.



Bonnie D'Elia  
Pastors' Wives Ministry

Bonnie resides in Vineland with Perry, her husband of over 47 years. They have three married sons and eight grandchildren.

Thrive is Ready to Serve You

-  Do you want to be part of a monthly Women in Ministry Small Group?
-  Would you like to speak with one of our ministry team members?
-  Are you challenged with a sense of being overloaded or overwhelmed?
-  Being bullied? Visit [www.churchbullying.org](http://www.churchbullying.org) and/or email us.
-  Do you know someone in church leadership who may benefit from our services?

Please connect with us

[thriveministries.ca](http://thriveministries.ca) [info@thriveministries.ca](mailto:info@thriveministries.ca) 905-228-3043

Did you know?

Through different settings our volunteers provide church leaders with pastoral care, resources and support when they need it most. We focus on spiritual, relational and emotional wellbeing through specialized groups and, services and individual conversations. Thrive's exceptional team of volunteers has a range of ministry leadership experience and understand what ministry can be like.

Your donations help to

**Deepen**  
church leaders' connections to God through Soul Focus Retreats.

**Equip**  
church leaders to deal with the stresses of ministry.

**Support**  
our annual Pastors Day Retreat.

How to Donate

**From our website:**  
Paypal, e-transfer, Credit Card. Visit:  
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**Or by Cheque:**  
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