



MARSHALL BAPTIST NEWS

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ONE YEAR IN: REFLECTIONS OF THE PAST YEAR

On March 17 of last year, I received the call asking if I would consider serving as the Associational Mission Strategist for the Marshall Baptist Association. By mid-April I stepped into this role, and now — nearly one year later — I find myself reflecting on what God has allowed me to observe, experience, and learn. One year is a short span of time. Yet it is remarkable how much the Lord can teach, stretch, and shape a person in twelve months.

The transition from serving as a pastor in the local church to serving alongside almost 100 churches across our association has been both humbling and energizing. Over this past year I've had the privilege of visiting many of your churches, preaching in your pulpits, sitting across from pastors hearing stories of God's work, helping connect pastors, leaders and churches to engage in mission projects, both locally and globally. All that and so much more. It's been a full year.

One thing I've learned is that Marshall County is filled with so many faithful congregations — all sizes, styles, and in so many different areas, but each one seeks to reach their communities with the gospel. Seeing that firsthand has underscored my belief in the beauty and necessity of cooperation among churches. That's why I believe the work of Baptist Associations like ours provide the best opportunity to fulfill the Great Commission. And I've discovered that Associational Leaders can be the most strategic Kingdom workers in SBC life.

As I reflect over my first year as your AMS, I've learned some lessons along the way:

Relationships are the Key.

Associational ministry is built on trust. Trust is forged in relationships. Over the past year I've had the privilege of connecting with pastors, church leaders, and ministry partners across our association. Some of the most meaningful moments have not been events or meetings, but simple conversations — listening, praying together, and encouraging one another in the work of the gospel. Many pastors carry burdens few people see. Being able to encourage them and their families, and remind them they are not alone, has become one of my greatest joys of this role.

Every Church Matters.

It's such a blessing to see the diversity of churches in our county. I say all the time, "It takes all kinds of churches to reach all kinds of people. And I'm grateful we have all kinds of churches." Some are thriving and expanding their ministry footprint. Others are faithfully serving small communities year after year. Some are experiencing fresh momentum, while others are wrestling with difficult challenges. But every one of these congregations matters deeply to the Lord. The Great Commission is too big for any one church to reach alone. That's why we're better together. That is the beauty of cooperation.

The Need for Encouragement Is Real.

If there is one word that summarizes what many pastors need today, it is encouragement.

Pastors face constant pressure — spiritual, emotional, and organizational. Many shepherd faithfully week after week while navigating cultural challenges, leadership demands, and personal burdens. Many of our pastors do all that while maintaining multiple jobs. That's why it's my great privilege to remind pastors that what they are doing matters and that they never have to labor alone.

Leadership Development Matters More Than Ever.

Across our churches I have seen the need to develop the next generation of leaders — future pastors, ministry leaders, elders and deacons, and especially disciple-makers. Healthy churches intentionally raise up leaders. They identify people with potential, invest in their training and development, and then send them out to serve. Our association wants to continue creating environments where leaders are encouraged, equipped, and released into ministry.

Many Churches Need Renewal but Rarely Ask for Help.

The need for renewal, revisioning, revitalization, and re-planting across our association is overwhelming. I would estimate that in Marshall County, close to 75% of churches need some form of renewal, yet only a small number reach out for assistance. One of the greatest victories I've experienced in associational work is when a church simply reaches out and says, "We need help." When that happens, it opens the door for the Association to come alongside with resources and partnership. I wish more of our churches understood just how much help is available through our Marshall Baptist Association.

Looking Ahead ...

While I am grateful for this past year, I believe the most exciting days for Marshall Baptist Association are still ahead. My prayer is that our churches will continue to grow stronger as we encourage pastors, equip leaders, and engage churches in the Great Commission.

Marshall County needs vibrant, gospel-centered churches in every community. And when our churches work together in unity, the impact of the gospel multiplies.

As I begin year two, I want to say thank you to every pastor, church leader, and ministry partner who has welcomed Sonja and me so warmly this year.

Serving alongside the pastors and churches in the Marshall Baptist Family of Churches has been one of the great privileges of my ministry life. For the past year, It has been an honor to labor together for the gospel. I can't wait to see all that God has in store for MBA as we Connect, Cooperate, and Collaborate together for His Kingdom.

For the Glory of God and the Good of His Church,

Dr. Eric Taylor, AMS
Marshall Baptist Association

ANNOUNCEMENTS

2026 VBS TRAINING AT ALBERTVILLE FBC

On April 26, 3-5PM, at Albertville First Baptist Church there will be an overview of facilitating a successful Vacation Bible School. General information and training will be offered regardless of curriculum. However, there will be a celebration of LifeWay's 2026 VBS: Illumination Station. No matter if you have 5, 50, or 500 kids, YOU CAN DO VBS — and it's always worth it! Call 256-878-2291 for more.



MARK CALENDARS FOR MINISTERS LUNCHEON

Mark your calendars on the THIRD THURSDAY of EVERY MONTH for **Pastor Leadership Luncheons!** This is a time of prayer, worship, equipping and encouragement from high capacity leaders. To learn more, please email eric@marshallba.com.

DR. JEFF IORG TO SPEAK AT MT. VERNON BAPTIST

Join us for an evening with Dr. Jeff Iorg on Sunday, April 26, beginning at 5 p.m. inside Mt. Vernon Baptist Church in Albertville. Dr. Iorg is the president of the SBC's Executive Committee and past president of Gateway Seminary in California. This will be a wonderful time of encouragement, engagement, and leadership development.



Check out our MBA website for more information on upcoming events and mission opportunities!

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