



MARSHALL BAPTIST NEWS

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STOP APOLOGIZING FOR BEING SMALL

One of the most common misconceptions in church life is that **bigger automatically means better**. Somewhere along the way, churches began to apologize for their size — “We can’t do that, we’re just a ‘small church,’” as if being “only” 50 or 100 people meant they were somehow less valuable to God’s Kingdom.

But here’s the truth: **most churches are small**. What we call “small” is really a normal (or Normative) size. Statistically 70% of Southern Baptist churches are under 100. Of that 70%, 43% are under 50 people. And that’s not a problem that needs to be fixed. It’s the normal, healthy pattern of church life. In fact, within the **Marshall Baptist Association**, most of our churches are rural, smaller in size, and most are led by **bi-vocational pastors**. That’s not a sign of weakness—it’s a unique strength that God can use in powerful ways. Saying you’re “just a small church” is like saying you’re “just normal height.” You shouldn’t feel the need to apologize for being what God designed you to be. You are strategically placed, purposefully equipped, and deeply loved by God, no matter the size.

And here’s the good news: **a smaller church can do things a large church simply can’t**.

The Strengths of a “Normal-Sized” Church

1. You Know People—Not Just Faces

A congregation of 60 people doesn’t just recognize faces — you know *stories behind those faces*. You know who’s struggling, who’s celebrating, and who needs encouragement. In an age of isolation, people long for authentic connection.

2. You Can Shepherd Deeply

In many larger congregations, the pastor can’t know every name or need. But in smaller churches, pastors walk with their people—through hospital visits, family struggles, and celebrations. That kind of shepherding reflects the heart of Jesus.

3. You Feel More Approachable

A church of 100 or less can feel safe and inviting for someone who’s nervous about faith or church culture. Some people would never step into a large sanctuary filled with hundreds — but they’ll find comfort in your congregation where they’re noticed and loved from day one.

“It Takes All Kinds of Churches to Reach All Kinds of People”

I shared that phrase a couple of weeks ago at our Annual Meeting. I believe it captures the heart of who we are as the **Marshall Baptist Association**.

We have large churches, small churches, rural and city churches. We have traditional and contemporary styles — and we need *all of them*. Because in Marshall County, we

have **all kinds of people** who need Jesus.

If every church leans into its God-given strengths, we can reach our communities more effectively *together* than any one church (large or small) could do alone.

How a Small Church Can Make a Big Impact

Here are a few ways your congregation can make a lasting difference:

1. Focus on Relationships

You may not have multiple programs, but you can have multiple **touchpoints**. Invite your neighbors for a meal. Visit the sick. Follow up with guests personally. People don’t stick because of programs—they stick because of relationships.

2. Disciple Intentionally

Be intentional about personally walking with another believer through God’s Word to help them grow and multiply as Christ Followers. Find a few and begin to walk with them through God’s Word. Help them to pray, read the Bible, and share their faith.

3. Engage the Community

Partner with schools, serve at local events, or adopt a neighborhood to pray for and bless. You don’t need a big budget to make an impact—just compassion and consistency.

4. Partner with Other Churches

Don’t do ministry alone. Collaborate with other MBA churches. Share resources, co-host events, or serve together on mission trips. We’re one family of churches, serving one mission. I’ve spoken to some of our larger churches and they would welcome a partnership with smaller churches to fulfill the great Commission.

5. Go Global from Right Here

Support missions through the Cooperative Program and local association efforts. Pray for missionaries. Consider sending a few members on a short-term trip. A small church can make a global difference when it prays, gives, and goes.

The Takeaway

Celebrate who you are and what God has entrusted to you. A healthy church of 50 can have just as much Kingdom impact as a church of 500 if it leans into its strengths — faithfulness, relationships, flexibility, and love.

In the Marshall Baptist Association, we believe every church — large or small — has a vital role in reaching our communities and the nations.

Because **it takes all kinds of churches to reach all kinds of people**.

And together, we can make it *hard to go to hell from Marshall County*.

For His Glory,

Dr. Eric Taylor, AMS
Marshall Baptist Association

ANNOUNCEMENTS



THIRD THURSDAYS

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.

On Nov. 20, our speaker will be **Craig Carlisle**, AMS for the Etowah Baptist Association and current president of the Alabama Baptist State Convention, as well as second-Vice President of the Southern Baptist Convention. To learn more, please email eric@marshallba.com.

PASTORS AND WIVES’ CHRISTMAS FELLOWSHIP

Join us Dec. 9 at 6 p.m. at Local Joe’s in Albertville for a great meal, wonderful fellowship, and an encouraging time to gather and bless you, because you bless so many by serving your church so well! Learn more, contact us at 256-582-2882.

SCHEDULE YOUR FALL 2026 PICNIC AT MBRC

The opportunity to reserve the Marshall Baptist Retreat Center (MBRC) for your church’s 2026 Sunday picnic or outdoor service is now open! Schedule your events from now through November to secure your preferred date.

www.marshallbaptistretreat.com

Check out our MBA website for more information on upcoming events and opportunities, as well as open church positions!

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