



# FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH MARION, NC

Community, Church, & Pastor Profiles

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## Community Profile – Marion, North Carolina

Marion, the county seat of McDowell County, lies in the scenic foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains. With about 7,500 residents in the city and around 45,000 in the county, Marion blends small-town character with regional influence. The area offers mountain recreation, historic charm, and a close-knit community life. Lake James State Park is 15 minutes from Marion, the Blue Ridge Parkway is less than 45 minutes, Biltmore Estate is 45 minutes, and the Great Smoky Mountains National Park is a 2-hour drive.

### Community Snapshot

- Population: 7,500 (city), 45,000 (county)
- Median Age: 44 years | Median Household Income: mid-\$50,000s
- Economy: Healthcare, education, manufacturing, retail, and tourism
- Education: McDowell County Schools & McDowell Technical Community College
- Religious Life: Predominantly Protestant; churches are central to civic and social life

### Demographics & Economy

McDowell County's population is predominantly White non-Hispanic with small Black and Hispanic communities. Major employment sectors include healthcare, manufacturing, education, retail, and public administration. Wages are lower than in urban centers, yet local industries and the community college offer steady employment opportunities. 26% of the workforce commutes outside of McDowell County.

### Education & Workforce

McDowell County Public Schools serve Marion and McDowell County. There are eight elementary schools, two middle schools, a STEM-focused middle school, and three options for high school: McDowell High School, the McDowell Early College, and a STEM-focused high school, McDowell Academy for Innovation. There are some private schools. McDowell Technical Community College provides workforce training, adult education, and associate degrees leading to four-year degrees at regional universities.

### Religious & Social Landscape

Faith remains a central part of community life. Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, and other non-denominational Protestant churches are prevalent.

### Community Strengths

- Historic downtown and strong civic pride
- Outdoor amenities include nearby state parks, greenways and trails, waterways for boating and paddling, and tourism.
- Strong family-oriented culture
- Active city leadership promoting revitalization and greenway and trail development

### Challenges & Needs

- Aging population
- Limited high-wage job opportunities
- Food insecurity and family support needs
- Substance use and mental health services demand
- Need for affordable housing

Economic transition, aging demographics, and workforce development needs are ongoing challenges. Churches play a vital role by partnering with other organizations addressing poverty, mental health, and family support gaps.

### Ministry Opportunities

- Senior outreach and caregiving support
- Youth and family ministries in partnership with schools
- Workforce development and mentoring through local institutions
- Recovery and counseling partnerships
- Community engagement through events and downtown presence

### Vision for Ministry

A senior pastor at First Baptist Church of Marion will find fertile ground for relational ministry, community leadership, and collaborative outreach. Our church values ecumenical partnerships with several local churches. Building bridges among congregations and civic life aligns with the city's emphasis on renewal and shared growth.



# Church Profile - First Baptist Church of Marion

## Who We Are

Founded in 1862, First Baptist Church of Marion (FBC Marion) is a vibrant, multi-generational congregation rooted in a rich history of faith and service. Our church family includes approximately 150 active members, with an average Sunday attendance of 105.

We are located on North Main Street in the heart of Marion, North Carolina—a warm, growing community nestled in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains and just 30 miles east of Asheville, North Carolina. Our downtown setting positions us to be a visible and active presence in the life of our community.

## Mission and Values

First Baptist Church of Marion exists to be God's people and presence throughout the world. Following the leadership of Jesus Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we strive to:

- Worship God in word and action
- Love and support one another
- Share the Good News locally and globally

## We value:

- Authentic, traditional worship
- Deep commitment to biblical teaching and spiritual formation
- Active involvement in local and global missions
- Partnership with Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of North Carolina, and Baptist World Alliance
- A heart for community outreach and service

## Worship and Ministry Life

Our Sunday schedule includes:

- 9:45 AM – Sunday School for all ages
- 11:00 AM – Traditional Worship Service
- 5:30 PM – Youth Koinonia

Our music ministry is a vital part of our congregational identity, featuring:

- Adult choir
- Handbell choir
- Children's choir
- Rich history of traditional sacred music

We maintain active programs for children, youth, and seniors, weekly gatherings, and engaging senior adults in ongoing ministries.

## Leadership and Staff

FBC Marion embraces a collaborative, lay-empowered leadership model supported by strong staff and committees.

### Current Staff Team:

- Associate Pastor for Children and Discipleship (Full-time)
- Director of Music (Part-time)
- Organist (Part-time)
- Youth Minister (Part-time)
- Children's Center Director (Full-time)
- Office Administrator and support staff (1 full-time, 2 part-time)

### Lay Leadership:

- Active Deacon Ministry
- Various committees guiding ministry areas through shared decision-making and congregational input.
- Sunday School and Bible Study Leaders

## Financial Health

- Annual Budget: \$507,000 (2025)
- Debt-Free Facilities
- Strong Mission Giving
- Three months of operating reserves
- Conservative fiscal management with full transparency

## Facilities and Location

- Downtown location on North Main Street
- 300-seat sanctuary
- Educational spaces for all ages
- Blanton Family Ministry Center – multipurpose fellowship hall with capacity for 300 guests available for community use
- Youth and children's ministry areas
- First Baptist Children's Center, licensed to serve 99 children

These facilities are well-maintained and serve as both a ministry hub and a community resource.

## Congregational Demographics and Strengths

- Membership spans multiple generations
- Stable, long-term membership base with growing new families
- Strong reputation in the community for hospitality and service
- Robust music and worship tradition
- Sunday School is an important part of faith formation and discipleship
- Active children's ministry
- Active senior adult's ministry and small group discipleship
- Deep commitment to missions—local, national, and international

### Current Challenges and Opportunities

As we look toward the future, we recognize both the opportunities and the needs of our congregation and community:

- Expanding children, youth, and young adult ministries
- Reaching a growing local population by expanding local missions into Marion and McDowell County
- Balancing our strong traditional roots with evolving ministry needs
- Building partnerships with community organizations
- Communicating our identity as a Cooperative Baptist church in a region with predominantly Southern Baptist and non-denominational congregations

### Looking Ahead: Our Vision for the Future

FBC Marion seeks to build upon its strong foundation while embracing new opportunities for ministry and growth. Key priorities include:

- Expanding digital and media ministry
- Developing next-generation leaders
- Strengthening community partnerships
- Enhancing discipleship pathways
- Growing our local mission impact
- Bringing the Kingdom of God to our community



# Pastor Profile

## Overview

The next pastor of First Baptist Church of Marion will be a Christ-centered shepherd who combines biblical preaching, genuine pastoral care, and visionary leadership to guide a multi-generational congregation into its next chapter of ministry.

The congregation desires a pastor who is both rooted in Scripture and tradition and open to new ideas, capable of building bridges across generations and engaging the wider community with compassion and authenticity.

## Core Traits and Qualities

### 1. Strong Pastoral Care & Relational Presence

- Warm, approachable, and genuinely interested in people's lives
- Regularly visits homes, hospitals, and care facilities
- Accessible during life's critical moments
- Known by the congregation and the community—not just on Sundays

### 2. Biblical Preaching & Teaching

- Preaches the Word of God with depth, clarity, and relevance
- Sermons rooted in Scripture, spiritually challenging, and applicable to daily life
- Comfortable connecting with people of all ages and backgrounds through preaching and teaching
- Engaging and passionate communicator

### 3. Visionary Leadership & Strategic Thinking

- Provides clear direction for church growth and renewal
- Encourages committees and lay leadership to flourish, without controlling them
- Inspires others to serve and use their gifts
- Leads with transparency, humility, and collaboration

### 4. Inclusive & Welcoming Spirit

- Open toward all people, reflecting Christ's love without barriers
- Supports women in leadership and welcomes people of all backgrounds
- Creates a church culture of belonging, not just attendance
- Balances progressive openness with respect for traditional worship and values

### 5. Adaptability & Innovation

- Willing to evolve ministries and worship to reach new generations
- Comfortable bridging traditional and contemporary styles
- Embraces new ways of communicating and connecting
- Open to flexible worship formats and creative ministry approaches

### 6. Personal Character

- Humble, kind, and spiritually mature
- A good listener with strong communication skills
- Has a sense of humor and healthy emotional balance
- Models Christ-like love and service in everyday interactions

### Experience & Background

- Leadership experience in church ministry
- Master's of Divinity (MDiv) Degree or equivalent
- Strong biblical and theological foundation

### Ministry Priorities

#### 1. Church Growth & Outreach

- Build authentic relationships beyond the church walls
- Increase community visibility and engagement
- Work with the congregation to reach and retain young families and younger generations

#### 2. Congregational Unity & Spiritual Depth

- Foster a deeper sense of community and shared purpose
- Emphasize discipleship through small groups, prayer gatherings, and spiritual formation opportunities
- Promote intergenerational connections within the church

#### 4. Community Presence

- Be a visible, active participant in civic and cultural life in Marion and McDowell County
- Represent the church with grace and integrity
- Comfortable engaging with the broader community and building partnerships

#### 5. Stewardship & Leadership Development

- Provide strong staff leadership and support
- Empower lay leaders and committees
- Steward resources wisely and transparently

### Summary

First Baptist Church of Marion seeks a pastor who will love deeply, lead wisely, and preach faithfully. The ideal candidate will reflect the compassionate pastoral care of a shepherd, the clarity and conviction of a teacher, and the vision of a leader eager to help a historic congregation embrace its future.