

# An Unlikely Place to Start a Church

AYLETT, VA

The commitment and investment of a sponsoring church combined with the bold, faithful obedience of a church planter has resulted in three churches planted in eight years and scores of disciples made.



## In 2005, God brought Paul and Kimberly McDaniel on a journey to Virginia

to plant Family Life Baptist Church in Mechanicsville. That journey continues to bear fruit to this day. The vision God placed in Paul's heart was not simply to plant a church, but to plant a church that would continually multiply disciples and new churches. With the sponsorship of Salem Baptist Church of Chesterfield, Family Life began holding weekly worship services in Mechanicsville on Easter Sunday 2006. By 2008, God was leading them to start their first church 20 miles away in Aylett.

Among the launch team of Family Life Mechanicsville were Gus and Michelle

Agostino. Gus is a Bible college graduate and an employee at a local correctional facility. The Agostinos were also among a group of families at Family Life who were driving to church from King William County. When Pastor Paul noticed this, he asked the families, "Would you like to have a church just like Family Life in your town?" The answer was an overwhelming yes!

At first, Aylett didn't seem like a place one would choose to begin a new church. However, God had other plans and made it clear to Pastor Paul and the leadership at Family Life Mechanicsville that Aylett was to be the location of their first church plant. After much prayer, Gus was selected to be the

lead church planter, and a church planting team was commissioned to start the new church. Preview services were held in November 2008, and weekly worship services launched in January 2009. The new church met in the cafeteria of King William High School for the first couple of years until a 3,000-square-foot lease property, formerly a furniture store, became available a short distance away.

In late spring 2014, SBCV church planting strategist Mark Custalow stopped by to worship in one of two services at Family Life Aylett. After the service, Pastor Gus shared that there had been a combined worship attendance that day of 170 people, which made Family Life Aylett the highest-attended church in the county.



## Resource

For more information on taking practical steps to sponsor a new church, visit [sbcv.org/churchplanting](http://sbcv.org/churchplanting) to complete and return a Sponsor Church Interest Form.

The unlikely location for a new church was proving to be a part of God's plan. This past August, a 6,000-square-foot warehouse became available and, at the time of this article, is being remodeled to become the new home of the Aylett church.

The story of church planting multiplication for Family Life Baptist Church does not end there. Two years after the Aylett church was planted, Pastor Paul McDaniel handed off the original church plant in Mechanicsville to current pastor Glenn Hawkins and began working to start the newest Family Life Baptist Church in Ashland. The Ashland church launched weekly worship services in September 2011 and is still led by Pastor Paul. The next chapter of the Family Life story is already taking shape as well. The Ashland and Aylett

churches are making plans for a jointly sponsored new church in the Ladysmith area.

The commitment and investment of a sponsoring church combined with the bold, faithful obedience of a church planter has resulted in three churches planted in eight years and scores of disciples made. The story of Family Life Baptist Church, originally sponsored by Salem Baptist Church, stands as a living testament to the Kingdom impact of answering God's call to make disciples by planting new churches.

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**Dave and Shari Anderson** were invited to church by their son, who had joined the church baseball team. *“A requirement to play ball was periodic attendance of Family Life. We began attending because of his enthusiasm for [the church]. We were baptized, began to grow, and Dave later helped start the Men's Ministry as a result of attending the SBCV E412 Conference. We love the people here and the church.”* Shari says, *“I wish every day was Sunday!”*

**Steve Walsh** was invited to church by his teenage daughter. She was invited to church by a friend and loved it so much that she came every Sunday for the next six months. *“She prayed diligently for me to start attending with her. The first time I came was to attend movie night and saw the movie Courageous. I was saved early in life but did not walk with Christ. I was a workaholic and worked seven days a week. My goal in life was to provide for my family. I started coming regularly every Sunday after movie night. My wife, daughter, and I were baptized here, and I started walking with Jesus. When you think no one cares, they do. If the doors of this church ever shut, I don't know what I would do.”*

**Lindsay Heller** – *“I came to Family Life when it was meeting at the high school, and [I] was saved and baptized. I have a new understanding of God's unconditional love. I now work with the youth at Family Life because of the encouragement of Pastor Gus. God shows up when you need him and, because of this church, I am able to believe it more. Nothing is too big for God. Where we are going as a church is scary but indescribable. I have learned tithing through the messages of Pastor Gus, and I see a return on the money I give by the way God is growing the people, the church, and me.”*

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