

East Texas pastor to be nominated for BGCT 1st VP

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By Ken Camp

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East Texas pastor Mike Massar—whose church launched a satellite campus and has become involved in extensive hands-on worldwide missions under his leadership—will be nominated for first vice president of the Baptist General Convention of Texas at the BGCT annual meeting in Amarillo, Oct. 29-30.

Roger Paynter, pastor of First Baptist Church in Austin, announced his intention to nominate Massar, saying First Baptist Church in Tyler has “broadened the scope of its ministry” to an “amazing” degree during his 10 years as pastor.

Mike Massar

During the past decade, the church has built health clinics in Mexico and participated in missions ventures in the Dominican Republic, Belize, Kenya, Kosovo and India.

Locally, First Baptist Church started the Tyler Family Assistance Center, the Niños de Promesa preschool program for Hispanic children and was integral in launching the Bethesda Health Clinic. Through the clinic, more than 250 physicians donated their services to provide care for nearly 12,000 patients last year.

In addition to helping start four churches in the last 10 years—two Hispanic, one African-American and one Anglo—First Baptist Church also built its south campus, while continuing to maintain its historic downtown location.

“Essentially, he has been pastoring two churches,” Paynter said.

In addition to providing East Texas representation, Massar can bring “a healing presence” to the BGCT during a tense time, Paynter added.

“He brings a lot of wisdom to everything he does,” Paynter said. “He is a unifying and reconciling person.”

Massar cited “a sense of calling” and loyalty to the BGCT as his reasons for allowing his nomination for the vice president’s post.

“Holding an elected office has never been on my radar,” he said. “It’s never been an ambition of mine.”

Massar wants to see renewed emphasis on cooperative missions through the BGCT—particularly communicating the importance of shared ministries to the emerging generation.

In the process, he wants to be “a peacemaker, of sorts,” he said.

“I’d like to see us focus not so much on criticizing each other but more on the mission Christ has given to us,” Masser said. “It’s time for less pointing of fingers and time for more rolling up of sleeves.”

Masser, 58, was born in Big Spring and graduated from high school in Midland. He earned degrees from Baylor University, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and the Graduate Theological Foundation in Notre Dame. He also has completed advanced studies at Oxford University's Mansfield College and numerous other institutions.

Before he arrived at First Baptist Church in Tyler, he was pastor at First Baptist Church in Clemson, S.C.; pastor of Wildewood Baptist Church in Spring; and minister to students and associate pastor of Seventh & James Baptist Church in Waco.

He and his wife, Lisa, have three grown children: Matthew Dann, Patrick Clark and Meredith Leigh.

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