

Baptist Briefs: Registration open for SBC annual meeting

March 20, 2015

Registration for messengers and local hotels has opened for the [Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting](#), June 16-17, at the Greater Columbus Convention Center in Ohio's capital city. Churches can register their messengers online. Each messenger registered online will receive an eight-digit registration code to present at the express registration lane in Columbus. Registration also is open for preschool child care and children's and youth programs in conjunction with the SBC annual meeting. For more information, visit <http://www.bpnews.net/44176/sbc-childrens-youth-registrations-open>.

Alabama Baptist church ousted over minister's gay marriage views. An association of Southern Baptist churches in Alabama voted to dismiss a Huntsville church over its pastor's support of same-sex marriage. The executive board of Madison Baptist Association voted 74-5 to withdraw fellowship from [Weatherly Heights Baptist Church](#) in Huntsville, Ala.



David Freeman The association of 85 churches affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention investigated Weatherly Heights, which is primarily affiliated with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, after an unpaid staff member ordained by the church officiated at a same-sex wedding. Discussions revealed the church's pastor, David Freeman, also does not believe the Bible necessarily prohibits "adult, loving, monogamous, same-sex relationships" at the center of the marriage debate, and he is open to officiating a same-sex marriage. A statement

issued by Madison Baptist Association called the ouster of Weatherly Heights “truly a sad evening for Southern Baptists and Madison Association Baptists,” but the executive board “deemed it necessary that we remain true to the biblical definition of marriage in belief and practice.”

New England Baptists elect executive director. The board of directors of the [Baptist Convention of New England](#) unanimously elected as executive director Terry Dorsett, who served 12 years as a director of missions in Vermont and since 2012 as a church planting catalyst based in Connecticut. He has served on church staffs in Vermont, South Carolina and Virginia, planting one church in Vermont and revitalizing another. He holds a doctor of ministry degree from Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, a master of religious education from Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary and a bachelor of science from Liberty University. Dorsett, who succeeds the retiring Jim Wideman, will assume his new role April 1.

Historically American Baptist college elects gay president. [Franklin College](#), a small liberal-arts college about 20 minutes south of Indianapolis in “voluntary association” with the American Baptist Churches USA, selected Thomas Minar, an openly gay administrator at American University, as its 16th president effective July 1. Minar, vice president of development and alumni relations at Methodist-affiliated American University in Washington, is married to Frank Becker, an academic physician at Northwestern University and director of pulmonary and critical care at Northwestern Lake Forest Hospital in Chicago.

LifeWay closes Abilene store. [LifeWay Christian Stores](#) will close its Abilene location May 9. The store, located at 3533 Catclaw, opened as a LifeWay store in February 2005. LifeWay officials chose not to renew the lease on the site.