

Baptist leaders pray for Jimmy Carter

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ATLANTA (BNG)—Condolences and well-wishes worldwide followed an Aug. 12 announcement by former U.S. President Jimmy Carter that he has cancer.

“Recent liver surgery revealed that I have cancer that now is in other parts of my body,” the 39th president and Nobel Peace Prize winner said in a brief statement on the Carter Center website. “I will be rearranging my schedule as necessary so I can undergo treatment by physicians at Emory Healthcare. A more complete public statement will be made when facts are known, possibly next week.”

Along with his diplomatic and humanitarian work through the [Carter Center](#) and his volunteer work with Habitat for Humanity, the 90-year-old former president is famous for his Baptist faith. Running for president in 1976, he introduced the term “born again” Christian into America’s political lexicon, got into hot water for telling *Playboy* magazine he had “lusted” in his heart and joined First Baptist Church in Washington the first Sunday he moved to town.

An active post-presidency

After leaving office, Carter became well known for teaching Sunday school at his home congregation, Maranatha Baptist Church in Plains, Ga.

In recent years, he spearheaded, along with his longtime friend and one-time Southern Baptist Convention President Jimmy Allen, a New Baptist Covenant movement aimed at uniting U.S. Baptists long fragmented over matters of race, region and doctrine.

Cooperative Baptist Fellowship Executive Coordinator Suzii Paynter offered her condolences and prayers.

“I am deeply saddened by the news of President Carter’s condition,” Paynter said. “He is a true Baptist hero and has committed his life to living faithfully, championing human rights for all and encouraging peace and acceptance. As a Baptist family, we come around President Carter, his family and his church family with prayers for healing and comfort in this difficult moment.”

New Baptist Covenant Coordinator Hannah McMahan requested prayer for Carter and his family as he takes the next steps and begins treatment.

‘A champion for others’

“Throughout his life, President Carter has been a champion for others,” McMahan said. “He has brought peace where there is war, light where there is darkness, and hope where there is despair. He has certainly pushed us to move forward in this ministry of racial reconciliation and justice in the Baptist family. President Carter never ceases to lift up the people around him. It is now our turn to lift him up and undergird him and Mrs. Carter with our prayers and support during this challenging time.”

Maranatha Baptist Church posted a message online thanking all who have offered thoughts and prayers about Carter’s diagnosis.

“Throughout his many years of Christian service, President Carter has taught us much about having resilient faith in the midst of life’s trials and challenges,” the church said. “In the same way, Maranatha Baptist Church strongly believes that God’s Spirit will be present with ‘Mr. Jimmy’ during his upcoming treatment.”

Best wishes from President Obama

President Obama released a statement on behalf of himself and the first lady, conveying the couple's "best wishes to President Carter for a fast and full recovery."

"Our thoughts and prayers are with Rosalynn and the entire Carter family as they face this challenge with the same grace and determination that they have shown so many times before," Obama said. "Jimmy, you're as resilient as they come, and along with the rest of America, we are rooting for you."