

Barber and Wellman issue statement on amendment

November 3, 2022

NASHVILLE (BP)—A commitment to affirm Baptist polity and the 2000 Baptist Faith and Message remains central during a discussion over women serving as pastors, Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee Chairman Jared Wellman of Arlington and SBC President Bart Barber of Farmersville said.

“Both of us have the responsibility to protect the messengers’ rights, answer the messengers’ questions and implement the messengers’ instructions,” reads the statement issued Nov. 2.

A [public document written by Mike Law](#), pastor of Arlington Baptist Church in Arlington, Va., has received more than 800 signatures in support of Law’s motion to amend the SBC Constitution.

Law originally made the motion at the 2022 SBC annual meeting to amend Article III, Section 1 to add an exclusion for any church that affirms women as pastors. The Committee on Order of Business referred the motion to the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee is expected to take up the referral at its February 2023 meeting.

“As offered and referred to you at this past June’s annual meeting, the enumerated 6th item would read: ‘6. Does not affirm, appoint, or employ a woman as a pastor of any kind,’” the letter states.



Jared Wellman, lead pastor of Tate Springs Baptist Church in Arlington, is chair of the SBC Executive Committee.

The document addressed to the SBC Executive Committee is titled “Re: A Call to Keep Our Unity.” In addition to pointing to the Baptist Faith and Message 2000, it also cites the [1984 Resolution On Ordination And The Role Of Women In Ministry](#) messengers to the SBC annual meeting in Kansas City passed with 58 percent in favor.

The statement by Wellman and Barber reads:

“As President of the SBC and Chair of the SBCEC, both of us have the responsibility to protect the messengers’ rights, answer the messengers’ questions, and implement the messengers’ instructions. With regard to current conversations within the SBC regarding women serving as pastors, together we say:

“We affirm our polity. Although we did not reach a moment in Anaheim where the messengers were able to vote on these questions, as far as it lies within our authority to do so, we are committed to letting these questions come before the messengers at our 2023 Annual Meeting in New Orleans. We plan to protect the messengers’ rights to discuss and decide these questions. This is how we resolve conflict and answer questions; we trust this process to give us the clarity we need.

“We affirm our statement of faith. We believe that the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture. These words represent our own individual doctrinal convictions. More importantly, these words represent the sentiments of the messenger body in their past decisions. As we discharge our own duties, we will do so in ways that implement these past decisions that the messengers have given to us.”

Law’s document references Ephesians 4:3 and Psalms 133:1 in terms of the importance of unity. 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; Acts 20 and 1 Peter 5 are cited as to the office of elder and overseer.

“Ushering women into the pastoral office in Southern Baptist churches unsettles our Convention’s unity,” he wrote. “We, therefore, urge [the Executive Committee] to act on Biblical and Missional grounds already well-established and agreed upon by Southern Baptists in order to keep our unity.”