

Prayer, evangelism and stewardship stressed at SBC annual meeting

April 24, 2017

PHOENIX (BP)—Southern Baptist Convention President Steve Gaines insists fellow Southern Baptists should anticipate emphases on prayer, evangelism and financial stewardship at the June 13-14 SBC gathering in Phoenix.

This year's annual meeting theme is "Pray! For such a time as this," based on Luke 18:1 and Esther 4:14. Gaines hopes a commitment "to fervent, frequent, faith-filled prayer" will cause the SBC to become "a catalyst for spiritual awakening and revival."

"I believe Southern Baptists can be used of God to spark a mighty movement of prayer, evangelism and discipleship across our nation and around the world," said Gaines, pastor of Memphis-area Bellevue Baptist Church in Cordova, Tenn. "If we will pray and abandon ourselves to the Lord, he will use us exponentially to take the gospel to people."

In addition to several seasons of prayer, Gaines said, annual meeting highlights will include a personal evangelism emphasis led by California pastor and evangelist Greg Laurie and a panel discussion on financial stewardship.

Regarding stewardship, Gaines stressed Southern Baptist churches cannot give more to SBC missions and ministries than church members give through their local congregations.

"The solution for increased funding for world missions begins in the heart

of every individual believer in Christ,” Gaines said. “Southern Baptists need to get our financial houses in order.”

Crossover evangelism events scheduled

Crossover evangelism efforts in Phoenix will center on a June 11 Harvest Crusade led by Laurie. Crusade organizers will work with volunteers to help local churches conduct door-to-door visitation across the city, engaging residents in gospel conversations and extending personal invitations to attend the Sunday night event.

Event coordinators with the North American Mission Board and Arizona Southern Baptist Convention are praying the crusade and other outreach efforts, which will lead up to the SBC annual meeting, will result in more than 5,000 decisions for Christ.

For more information about the Crossover events, click [here](#).

Messengers gathering in Phoenix will consider a variety of recommendations during the annual meeting.

Proposals include recommendations that:

- The SBC bylaws be amended to grant one Executive Committee representative each to the Dakotas, Iowa, Minnesota-Wisconsin and Montana, even though they currently have too few church members to apply for representation.
- The International Mission Board be permitted to adopt a fiscal year of Oct. 1-Sept. 30 and that the convention amend the SBC Business and Financial Plan to reflect the change.
- The convention approve a \$192 million 2017-18 Cooperative Program allocation budget. The budget would maintain current Cooperative Program allocations to all convention ministries. However, the formula for distributing any overage of gifts above

the budget would be amended to increase the IMB's portion from 51 percent to 53.4 percent and decrease the SBC operating budget portion from 2.4 percent to 0 percent.

There's an app for that

Annual meeting participants once again can stay updated by using the "SBC Annual Meetings" mobile application. The app will include a listing of speakers for the SBC Pastors' Conference and SBC annual meeting, as well as the daily program schedule, daily events, exhibitor listing, convention center maps, 2017 Book of Reports and more. Download the app on a mobile device by accessing the App Store, Google Play or click [here](#).

Interested individuals also can follow on Twitter @SBCMeeting, @BaptistPress, @SBCLife, @sbccp and @SB CPastorsConf for the latest annual meeting updates. Many social media users will employ the hashtag "#sbc17" in their posts about the annual meeting.

In other program notes:

- This year's June 11-12 SBC Pastors' Conference in Phoenix, with the theme "Above Every Name," is centered on 12 pastors of average-sized Southern Baptist churches preaching through the New Testament book of Philippians.
- The SBC annual meeting will feature a "Sending Celebration" as the International Mission Board celebrates missionaries, along with their church families, at 8:30 p.m. June 13 in the Phoenix Convention Center.
- On June 12, the IMB will sponsor a dinner prior to the final session of the Pastors' Conference. The dinner will be held in the Phoenix Convention Center, Room West 301A/B/C, and tickets will be available at the IMB booth in the exhibit hall.
- The North American Mission Board will report opportunities for

churches to engage locally and throughout North America in compassion ministries as well as church-planting efforts. NAMB will highlight these opportunities at its Send Luncheon for pastors, June 12, and as part of its presentation at the annual meeting June 13. Pastors who wish to attend the luncheon should register for a free ticket in advance by clicking [here](#).

- Authors and speakers Kelly Minter and Kay Warren will headline this year's events for ministers' wives in the North Ballroom of the Phoenix Convention Center. Three women's events—a Pastors' Wives Conference, a Ministers' Wives Luncheon and a Women's Expo—are tied together with the theme "Brave" based on Proverbs 31:25.
- The Pastors' Wives Conference is a free event with no registration and will be held during the morning session of the Pastors' Conference June 12 from 8:45 to 11:45 a.m.
- The annual Ministers' Wives Luncheon, open to all wives of ministers, pastors, staff members, chaplains, missionaries and denominational workers, will be held June 13 at noon. Luncheon tickets cost \$15 per person and can be purchased online [here](#).
- GuideStone Financial Resources will make available its Wellness Center June 12-14. This year, rather than having participants move from one station to another, the Wellness Center will offer participants one-stop biometric readings. Additionally, GuideStone staff will be available during all exhibit hall hours to meet with participants about their retirement plans or insurance coverage.

How to register

Register for the SBC annual meeting online [here](#). Messengers, exhibitors and guests need to be registered and properly badged for entrance into the general sessions June 13-14.

After completing online registration, each individual will receive an eight-

digit registration code to present at the annual meeting's express registration lane. There, the registration code can be entered into a computer, and a nametag will be printed.

Messengers planning to propose resolutions must submit them no later than 15 days prior to the annual meeting. Resolutions may be submitted online [here](#) but must be followed up by a letter of credentials from the submitter's church.

Registration is open for preschool childcare, Giant Cow Children's Ministries, Children in Action Missions Camp and Youth on Mission in conjunction with the annual meeting.

Southern Baptist disaster relief childcare volunteers will care for preschoolers; Giant Cow Children's Ministries will lead the 5- to 12-year-olds; and Woman's Missionary Union will guide Youth on Mission curricula and activities.

All activities for children and youth will be housed at the Phoenix Convention Center, the annual meeting site. Youth who have completed grades 7-12 will begin their days at the convention center with worship before going into the community for hands-on mission projects.

Pre-registration is required. Click [here](#) to register. The deadline is May 5 or whenever the space limitation of 120 children is reached. Registrations will not be taken on site.

Discounted tickets are available for Southern Baptists to attend daily Arizona Diamondbacks baseball games June 6-11 at Chase Field. Tickets, which range from \$5-\$30, may be purchased [here](#).