

GuideStone **authorizes** **Mission:Dignity** **benefit** **increase**

August 2, 2021

NASHVILLE (BP)—GuideStone trustees at their recent meeting approved benefit increases across the board for Mission:Dignity recipients.

The neediest couples with at least 25 years of paid Southern Baptist service will see their benefits grow by \$150 each month—from \$600 to \$750—beginning in January 2022. Other couples will see their benefits increase by \$75 each month.

Widowed and single recipients will see their benefits increase either \$50 or \$100 each month, depending on their years of service and need.

The increase for Mission:Dignity recipients was made possible by the support of churches, Sunday school classes and individuals who give to the GuideStone ministry. Last year, Mission:Dignity raised more than \$10 million for the first time in its history. Current trends in giving indicate the ministry may eclipse that in 2021. Close to 1,000 new donors have begun contributing for the first time this year.

In the report of the Relief Committee, Chairman Dennis Adams from Arizona said the committee also approved higher asset limits for eligibility, from \$30,000 to \$45,000; an increased funeral benefit; and an increased grace period after the death of a spouse before having to reapply for benefits. Those enhancements take effect immediately.

Leadership transition



O.S. Hawkins

President O.S. Hawkins spoke to trustees about the transition of Hance Dilbeck to the role of president. In May, trustees unanimously named Dilbeck, then executive director of Oklahoma Baptists, as president-elect of GuideStone. By the end of the first quarter of 2022, Hawkins will assume the honorary role of president emeritus, and Dilbeck will become president and chief executive officer.

Hawkins noted he has been through transitions himself, most notably when he became pastor at the First Baptist Church of Dallas in 1993.

“W.A. Criswell was my biggest asset and my biggest supporter,” Hawkins told trustees. “I had the greatest predecessor anybody ever had in that position.”

Hawkins said he would strive to provide Dilbeck with the support Criswell offered him.

“He’s not going to have anybody who is a more encouraging person and [I’ll be his] greatest supporter as he assumes the stewardship,” Hawkins said.

Dilbeck shared with the trustees a significant goal of his ministry—the wellness of the pastors GuideStone serves.

“One of the things that COVID-19 has done is make our people more aware of and more honest about the challenges they face,” Dilbeck said.

“It’s an opportunity to speak of the wellness of their relationships to their mental health. It opens the door to advocate that if they are to serve well, they must be well.”