

GuideStone trustees elect Dilbeck as next CEO

May 21, 2021

DALLAS (BP)—In a called meeting May. 20, the GuideStone board of trustees unanimously elected D. Hance Dilbeck Jr. as president-elect.

Dilbeck will begin service July 1 alongside current GuideStone President O.S. Hawkins. After a transition period, Hawkins will become president emeritus and Dilbeck will become president and CEO in the first quarter of 2022.

Dilbeck, executive director-treasurer of Oklahoma Baptists since 2018, accepted the call and gave thanks to the Lord, his family and trustees for the opportunity to serve at GuideStone.

Steve Dighton, retired pastor of Lenexa (Kan.) Baptist Church and chair of the presidential search committee, said the committee bathed the process in prayer to seek out the Lord's candidate in this process. He said 15 candidates were recommended.

"We established a process where we were determined to only consider prospects recommended to us from our Southern Baptist family," Dighton said. "We solicited feedback for three months, and even added one more month to give time for more recommendations to come in."

Hawkins expressed his confidence to trustees in their selection.

"Hance Dilbeck is one of the most respected men in Southern Baptist life," Hawkins said. "He has pastored all sizes of Southern Baptist churches, has a heart for serving pastors from small, medium and large churches; he understands the dynamics and complexity of GuideStone's ministry, and he

is a quick learner.

“And he is among the humblest men I’ve ever known, so he’ll be one who has a learner’s heart as he embarks on this new calling from the Lord. Susie and I are holding Hance and Julie in our hearts and prayers, and we invite Southern Baptists to join us in lifting them up.”

Dilbeck’s wife, Julie Dilbeck, has served as a GuideStone trustee since 2019. She resigned her post at the called meeting and did not vote in the selection process.

Background in pastorate, denominational service

Dilbeck has served Oklahoma churches as pastor for more than 30 years. He was pastor at Quail Springs Baptist Church in Oklahoma City for 15 years before being called in 2018 to lead Oklahoma Baptists. During that time, the church tripled in size even as it took part in planting 32 churches.

He has been active in denominational life, having served as chairman of the board of trustees at Oklahoma Baptist University, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and the International Mission Board. He is a past second vice president of the Southern Baptist Convention.

“Julie and I have a clear sense of the Lord’s calling to GuideStone,” Dilbeck said. “We are grateful for how the search committee and their prayerful process helped confirm this calling. Dr. Hawkins has been a faithful steward and transformational leader for almost 25 years. He has assembled a world-class team.

“I am asking our Father for grace to be faithful with this stewardship and effective with the platform; serving those who serve the Lord.”

‘Bittersweet’ for Oklahoma Baptists

Todd Fisher, senior pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church in Shawnee, Okla., and the current president of Oklahoma Baptists, called the news “bittersweet.”

“We are excited for this new opportunity for Hance and know he will do an excellent job leading GuideStone,” Fisher said. “We are proud that one of our fellow Oklahomans will be at the helm of a national entity in the SBC.

“At the same time, Hance’s departure leaves a big void for us. His leadership these last three years has been stellar and visionary in keeping our state convention focused and well situated to advance the gospel together in unity.

“He will be sorely missed, but we are confident of great days ahead for GuideStone and Oklahoma Baptists.”

Dilbeck also offered his thanks to and love for Oklahoma Baptists for the opportunity to serve as their executive director-treasurer.

“We are grateful for the opportunity to serve as the pastor of great churches in Oklahoma for 30 years,” he said. “The Lord used these people to give me a shepherd’s heart. Serving as executive director put me in a position to learn from godly leaders in churches and ministries of all sizes. I have developed a burden for encouraging pastors and ministry leaders to give careful attention to their own wellness and the wellness of their families.”

Born in Pawhuska, Okla., Dilbeck earned his undergraduate in religion from Oklahoma Baptist University. He holds two degrees from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary—a Master of Divinity obtained in 1992 and a Doctor of Ministry earned in 2002.

The Dilbecks have three grown and married sons and eight grandchildren.