

Lifeway's Ben Mandrell called as Bellevue pastor

July 17, 2025

CORDOVA, Tenn. (BP)—Bellevue Baptist Church in Cordova, Tenn., called Ben Mandrell as senior pastor. Mandrell has served as president and CEO of Lifeway Christian Resources since 2019.

"I cannot tell you how thankful we are for this moment," Mandrell, 48, said in a statement from the church. "This big hurricane of Bellevue love has just swallowed us up."

The July 13 vote came as the entire church met in an overflow worship service followed by a special-called business session. His first Sunday as pastor is scheduled for Aug. 10, according to church staff.

Bellevue has played a key role in the Memphis area and across the Southern Baptist Convention over the last century with pastoral leadership from R.G. Lee, Adrian Rogers and Steve Gaines, all former SBC presidents.

Gaines, 67, announced last September his desire for a pastoral transition process to begin at the church. He has served as Bellevue's senior pastor since 2005.

The pastor search committee began its work in November 2024, according to the release.

"In our first meeting, we spent most of our time in prayer," said Chad Hall, chairman of the pastor search committee, in the statement. "From that very first night, we began praying for our pastor. We prayed for his wife, his kids—his whole family. We didn't know who he was, and we didn't know where he was, but we knew God did."

According to 2024 Annual Church Profile data, Bellevue reported 7,382 people for in-person and online worship attendance, 329 total baptisms and \$26,276,186 in total undesignated receipts.

Earlier this week, Mandrell met with Lifeway staff to inform them of the potential call.

“Our entire family is deeply grateful for these years in Nashville with Lifeway,” he said. “This ministry is filled with salt-of-the-earth people, and it’s truly heartbreaking to think we won’t see their faces as often in the years to come. Even so, the Lord has made it crystal clear that it’s time for us to return to the pastorate and to join the Bellevue family.”

Lifeway trustees met July 15 and selected Joe Walker, Lifeway’s executive vice president and chief operating officer to serve as interim president and CEO until a new president is named, in accordance with Lifeway’s bylaws.

Mandrell has roots in West Tennessee, having served as pastor of Englewood Baptist Church in Jackson, Tenn., from 2006-2013. He also served as the church’s college pastor and as director of discipleship ministries at Union University in Jackson.

The Mandrells left Jackson in 2014 to help launch Storyline Fellowship in Denver, Colo. The church, planted through a partnership with the North American Mission Board and First Baptist Church in Orlando, Fla., grew to nearly 1,000 in weekly worship attendance prior to Mandrell’s departure for Lifeway in 2019.

A native of Tampico, Ill., Mandrell is a 1998 graduate of Anderson (Ind.) University. He also holds a master of divinity degree from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and a doctor of ministry degree from Union University.

Mandrell and his wife Lynley have four children.