

Mandrell elected as LifeWay president

July 1, 2019

ATLANTA (BP)—LifeWay Christian Resources trustees unanimously elected Ben Mandrell as the organization's 10th president during a called meeting June 28 in Atlanta.

"I am grateful for the opportunity to lead in such an important season for LifeWay," Mandrell told trustees during the plenary session. "My first priority is to get our family to Nashville and begin loving the people at LifeWay. There is already an amazing team in place, and I can't wait to roll up my sleeves and work alongside them."

When God calls, 'we have to answer'

Mandrell, 42, comes to LifeWay from his role as lead pastor at Storyline Fellowship in Arvada, Colo. Two days after the June 21 announcement of his nomination to lead LifeWay, Mandrell preached a sermon to his congregation explaining his decision to relocate his family to Nashville.

"All through Scripture, we learn that God is a calling God," Mandrell said in his sermon. "He dials our number, and we have to answer. We have to take his calls."

When considering the decision to accept the search committee's nomination, Mandrell said, he had "a wrestling match with God like I have never experienced before."

Mandrell has been lead pastor of Storyline Fellowship since its founding in 2014.

Committed to providing resources for churches

“This is a significant and momentous day in the history of LifeWay,” trustee Chairman Jimmy Scroggins said as he thanked the search committee for their hard work and commitment to the task.



Ben Mandrell

“Ben is a man of character, integrity, godly strength and humility,” said Scroggins, lead pastor of Family Church in West Palm Beach, Fla. “I appreciate his relentless commitment to seeing people come to know Christ and to see churches that preach the gospel have the resources they need to advance the kingdom.”

Kent Dacus, who led the presidential search committee, said the process of finding the next CEO of LifeWay was extensive, methodical and deliberate, with the team examining a diverse field of candidates from a wide variety of backgrounds.

“All throughout the process, we were focused solely on the best person for the position and for the person God was already preparing to lead LifeWay in this new season,” Dacus said. “We found a man who is deeply committed to God’s word and has an incredible passion for the local church.”



LifeWay Christian Resources presidential search committee gathers around Ben and Lynley Mandrell following the unanimous election of Ben Mandrell as LifeWay's 10th president and CEO. (Photo by Aaron Earls)

Dacus praised the search committee for their prayerful and steadfast effort the past 10 months.

"These men and women have worked in one accord and sought the Lord's guidance every step of the way," he said.

LifeWay's presidential search committee, appointed in August 2018, included Brad McLean, senior pastor of First Baptist Church in New Braunfels. Others were Bill Langley of Kentucky, Millie Burkett of Oregon, Madeline Harris of Pennsylvania, Todd Fannin of Oklahoma and Luther McDaniel of Tennessee.

SBC leaders voice support

When Mandrell's nomination was announced, several Southern Baptist leaders expressed their support.

"Ben Mandrell is the kind of visionary, disruptive leader that LifeWay needs

just at this moment,” said SBC President J.D. Greear. “I am thrilled with this choice.”

Kevin Ezell, president of the North American Mission Board, echoed Greear’s enthusiasm, saying: “Ben Mandrell has proven himself as an incredible church planter, pastor and innovative leader. He has a passion to connect and communicate Jesus to a lost world.



Ben Mandrell (center) answers questions during a press conference following his election as president and CEO of LifeWay Christian Resources, with Board of Trustees Chairman Jimmy Scroggins (left) and Presidential Search Committee Chairman Kent Dacus. (Photo by Greta Reynolds)

“Ben has invested his life in equipping new believers to grow and walk faithfully in the Lord. He has a unique ability to connect with people of all ages and will be an outstanding steward of LifeWay’s future.”

David Uth is senior pastor of First Baptist Church Orlando, which served as the sending church for Storyline Fellowship. Uth described Mandrell as a strong leader with insight and discernment, saying he “has a deep passion

for following Jesus and an incredible resolve to do exactly as the Lord leads him.”

Ronnie Floyd, president and CEO of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee, said Mandrell is a leader with a “compelling vision to reach all people in our generation. How exciting it is to have a pastor like Ben Mandrell called straight from the church to lead LifeWay to assist and resource churches all around the world for gospel advancement.”

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 been married 18 years. The couple has four children: Ava, 15; Max, 13; Miles, 12; and Jack, 11.