

# Matt Queen resigns pastorate after guilty plea

November 13, 2024

GREENSBORO, N.C. (BP)—Three weeks after pleading guilty to a charge of making false statements to federal investigators as part of a sexual abuse investigation stemming from his time as a seminary administrator, Matt Queen has resigned as pastor of Friendly Avenue Baptist Church, the church announced Nov. 8.

In a press release, the church said: “Dr. Matthew Queen is stepping down from his role as Lead Pastor at Friendly Avenue Baptist Church, effective immediately. While this has been a challenging season, we continue to trust in God’s sovereignty and remain focused on our mission. As we move forward, we encourage our congregation and the wider community to stay focused on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith.”

Queen pleaded guilty to making false statements to federal investigators on Oct. 16 after he had previously pleaded not guilty to federal charges in May.

Sentencing for Queen is set for Feb. 26, 2025.

Church leaders placed Queen on administrative leave after his initial plea of not guilty in May. After Queen changed his plea in October, church leaders said in a statement that they were “reviewing these recent developments as it works to complete its investigation and submit a recommendation to the church membership concerning Dr. Queen’s status and relationship with Friendly Avenue Baptist Church, all in accordance with the church’s governing documents.”

Prior to being called as pastor of Friendly Avenue Baptist Church in

February, Queen served as interim provost at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

During Queen's tenure at Southwestern, the seminary was part of a broader investigation by the U.S. Department of Justice into allegations of sexual abuse and misconduct involving the Southern Baptist Convention and its entities.

The investigation included Southwestern Seminary's handling of a report of an alleged sexual assault by a student. Investigators said Queen provided false information to them in the form of written notes in a notebook during the investigation.

Following Queen's guilty plea in October, Southwestern issued a statement that said, in part: "From the beginning, Southwestern Seminary has fully cooperated with the Department of Justice in its investigation of sexual abuse in the Southern Baptist Convention. We remain resolute in our commitment to continue to do so."

The statement said the seminary is praying for "victims of sexual abuse and remains committed to doing everything possible to protect all members of the seminary community from sexual abuse and harassment."

The statement also offered prayers for "Matt Queen and his family, as well as for others who have been involved in this process."