

# Motions to unseat Arlington church ruled out of order

November 5, 2025

LUBBOCK (BP)—Three motions at the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention annual meeting to disallow messengers from Fielder Church in Arlington because of the church’s stance on women in pastoral roles were ruled out of order.



Pastor Jason Paredes is lead shepherd of Fielder Church in Arlington. (File Photo / Ken Camp)

As recently as July, staff positions at Fielder Church in Arlington—a congregation dually affiliated with the SBTC and Texas Baptists—used the term “pastor” for men and women. Those all since have been changed to “shepherd.”

Social media posts show Jason Paredes, Fielder Church’s lead shepherd, voicing his opposition in 2023 to the vote by Southern Baptist messengers to remove Saddleback Church from fellowship for employing women as pastors. Paredes further gives his unapologetic support for women serving as pastors.

Article IV of the SBTC Constitution states a church may be removed from the convention “by majority vote of the Executive Board or of the messengers at an annual session of the Convention after the following process is completed: (a) The church has received written notice of the matter prompting the Executive Board’s consideration of removal and (b) The Credentials Committee has attempted to resolve the matter by meeting

with the pastor and/or leaders of the church.”

## **‘Due process rights’**

The motions made at the SBTC annual meeting in Lubbock were dismissed on Parliamentarian Al Gage’s ruling that the two requirements for action were not satisfied.

The phrase “after the following process is completed” in the SBTC Constitution gives critical protections for churches subject to removal, Gage told Baptist Press in written comments.

“The due process rights to written notice of their pending removal and a meeting with the Credentials Committee to resolve the matter are requirements and protections for the church,” Gage stated. “Both conditions must be met for a church to be disaffiliated whether by the messengers or by the Executive Board.”

SBTC Executive Board meeting minutes from Aug. 5 include a Credentials Committee report containing information about a meeting with an unnamed church that used the title “pastor” for church staff positions filled by women.

“The church confirmed that they would change the title and no longer use ‘pastor’ for staff positions filled by women,” the report said.

The SBTC Executive Board voted at that time to form a committee to review the Constitution and Bylaws. The documents will be reviewed in their entirety, with a focus on polity and affiliation requirements as they relate to the office and title of pastor. Proposed amendments will be published 90 days before a messenger vote at the 2026 SBTC annual meeting.

The *Baptist Standard* requested a response from Fielder Church but did not

receive a reply prior to the publication deadline.

## **Continuing controversy in the SBC**

In the Southern Baptist Convention, the so-called Law Amendment, which addressed church affiliation in the SBC Constitution and the role of pastor being reserved for men, has been brought before messengers three times since 2023. Ultimately, it has fallen short of the two-thirds majority two years in a row required for passage.

SBC President Clint Pressley shared his thoughts about Fielder Church on social media. Pressley said he thinks the congregation is “in clear violation” of the 2000 Baptist Faith & Message.

He expressed confidence the matter will be discussed at the next SBC annual meeting in Orlando.

Pressley also reposted comments from Andrew Walker, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary ethics and theology professor who chaired the SBC Resolutions Committee at the 2025 SBC annual meeting.

Walker said that “our confessional standards say what they mean and mean what they say. The moment we start treating them like a ‘living constitution,’ we abandon both their authority and our integrity—and that never ends well.”

Southern Seminary President Al Mohler posted about the matter on social media, saying failure to address the issue directly “as a necessary principle of cooperation” would be akin to “surrender[ing] to unbiblical ambiguity.”

“The Southern Baptist Convention will not survive ambiguity on the question of female pastors, whatever they are called,” he wrote on X. “The Baptist Faith & Message is clear that the office of pastor is held only by men as called for in Scripture. This is clearly about both office and

function.”