

# Tennessee pastor Spencer nominee for SBC president

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SEYMOUR, Tenn. (BP)—Dan Spencer, senior pastor of First Baptist Church, Sevierville, Tenn., has become the sixth nominee for president of the Southern Baptist Convention at the 2024 SBC annual meeting June 11-12 in Indianapolis.

Chris Kendall, senior pastor of Oak City Baptist Church in Seymour, Tenn., informed the *Baptist and Reflector* April 11 of his intention to nominate Spencer, who has been the pastor at First Baptist in Sevierville since 2011.

Kendall said he is a Southern Baptist by choice, and he loves the SBC for two primary reasons—the autonomy of the local church and the spirit of cooperation.

“Over the past several years, our Southern Baptist network has been marked by controversy and contention. I believe that Dan Spencer is the unifier that would benefit our collective to refocus on what matters most. It’s the people that God has put before us to reach with the gospel and make disciples,” he said.

“His love for God and people has positioned him to make the necessary biblical decisions (as a leader) when it comes to faith and practice. ... Dan is competent to lead at the denominational level. He also has what’s most essential—the character to back it up.”

Spencer has a long Southern Baptist heritage. He is the great-great nephew of M.E. Dodd, “the father of the Cooperative Program” and the great-great grandson of George Martin Savage, who was president of Union University and Dodd’s father-in-law.

His father, Jerry Spencer, has been a Southern Baptist evangelist and pastor since 1957.

Spencer was called to ministry in 1986 while on a youth choir tour/mission trip to Toronto, Canada, from his home church of Brownsville Baptist Church in Brownsville, Tenn.

Spencer has been involved in Southern Baptist life more than two decades. He preached at the SBC Pastors' Conference in 2001 and was a member of the SBC Committee on Committees in 2005. Spencer served as president of the Georgia Baptist Convention from 2009 to 2011 and served as a director of the Tennessee Baptist Mission Board from 2015 to 2019.

During his tenure at First Baptist in Sevierville, the church has been one of Tennessee's leaders in baptisms and in giving through the Cooperative Program.

In 2023, the church gave \$542,915 through the Cooperative Program, or 9.09 percent of \$5,972,068 in undesignated gifts. Also last year, the church reported 64 baptisms and \$659,425 in gifts to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering.

Kendall believes Spencer has the ability to “rally the diverse collective of churches and pastors together to master and major on the main thing—the Great Commission.”

Kendall added he believes Spencer would complement the work of Jeff Iorg, the new president / CEO of the SBC Executive Committee.

“He would be the right fit for Dr. Iorg in this inaugural annual meeting for our new EC president,” he said.

Spencer joins fellow Tennessee pastor Jared Moore of Cumberland Homesteads Baptist Church in Crossville as a nominee, as well as Bruce

Frank, pastor of Biltmore Baptist Church, Asheville, N.C.; Clint Pressley, Hickory Grove Baptist Church, Charlotte, N.C.; Mike Keahbone, First Baptist Church, Lawton, Okla.; and David Allen, professor and dean at Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary in Cordova, Tenn.