

Baptists participate in presidential inauguration

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WASHINGTON (BP)—At least five Southern Baptist pastors—including three from Texas—participated in inaugural activities for President Donald Trump.

Robert Jeffress, pastor of First Baptist Church in Dallas, preached from the Old Testament book of Nehemiah on “When God Chooses a Leader” during a private Jan. 20 worship service for the families of Trump and Vice President Mike Pence at St. John’s Church, near the White House. The service is a pre-inauguration tradition dating back to the 1933 inauguration of Franklin Roosevelt, according to the U.S. Capitol Historical Society.

A Jan. 21 national prayer service at the National Cathedral in Washington included Jack Graham, pastor of Prestonwood Baptist Church in Plano, who led in prayer “for those who serve,” and Ramiro Peña, pastor of Christ the King Baptist Church in Waco, who led in reciting the Lord’s Prayer. Arkansas pastor Ronnie Floyd and California pastor David Jeremiah each read Scripture at the national prayer service.

Jeffress, Graham, Floyd and Jeremiah all serve on Trump’s 25-member Evangelical Executive Advisory Board.

The inauguration ceremony itself featured prayers, a Scripture reading by evangelist Franklin Graham, two Bibles used for Trump’s oath of office and a continuation of the tradition of presidents’ invoking God in their inaugural addresses.

Franklin Graham’s appearance was the sixth at a presidential inauguration by either Graham or his father, evangelist Billy Graham. Richard Nixon’s

1969 inauguration was the first time Billy Graham offered an inaugural prayer.

To take his oath of office, Trump placed his hand on two Bibles—one used by Abraham Lincoln in 1861 and again by President Obama at both of his inaugurations, as well as another given to Trump by his mother in 1955.