

Budget approved, officers elected in first online annual meeting

November 16, 2020

Texas Baptists handled essential business for the coming year—adopting a budget and electing officers—during a scaled-back online annual meeting.



Pastor Michael Evans of Bethlehem Baptist Church in Mansfield, president of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, presided over Texas Baptists' virtual annual meeting. (Screen Capture)

The Baptist General Convention of Texas held its first virtual annual business meeting Nov. 16. Texas Baptist leaders moved from an in-personal annual meeting to the online event, livestreamed from the Dallas Baptist University campus, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The online meeting drew 664 registered messengers.

A “practice vote” early in the session—a question to test the Zoom “polling”

function and familiarize messengers with procedures—revealed 72 percent of the messengers were age 50 or older.

Messengers OK \$34 million budget

Messengers from affiliated churches, who participated via a Zoom teleconference, approved a \$34,266,688 total Texas 2021 budget—a decrease of \$833,779 from the current year’s budget.

The approved 2021 budget projects a \$32 million net Texas budget—based on Cooperative Program giving and investment income—for 2021, down about \$500,000 from the 2020 budget.

It depends on \$27 million in Texas Cooperative Program receipts from churches, compared to \$27.5 million in the current year’s budget.

It also anticipates slightly more than \$5 million in investment income, comparable to the 2020 budget, and more than \$2.5 million in additional revenue from conference and booth fees, product sales, the Southern Baptist Convention’s North American Mission Board and other sources.

Messengers approved continued division of undesignated receipts from affiliated churches, with 79 percent allocated for the BGCT and 21 percent for worldwide causes.

An anticipated \$1.05 million in worldwide missions initiatives and partnerships will be allocated in this manner: \$350,000 for missions mobilization, \$210,000 for River Ministry and Mexico missions, \$125,000 for Texas Partnerships, \$60,000 for the Baptist World Alliance, \$50,000 for intercultural international initiatives, \$195,000 for Go Now Missions, \$25,000 for the Hispanic Education Task Force and \$35,000 for chaplaincy.

Most officers elected by acclamation

Jason Burden, incumbent first vice president and pastor of First Baptist Church in Nederland, was declared BGCT president by acclamation.

Adam Pardue, pastor of Highland Baptist Church in Lubbock, nominated Burden as president, calling him a man of impeccable character and a “gentle giant” with the “right disposition” to lead in challenging times.

Julio Guarneri, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in McAllen, was declared first vice president by acclamation.

In the only contested race, messengers elected Jordan Villanueva, pastor of Indian Hills Baptist Church in Grand Prairie, as second vice president. He received 376 votes, while Nebiye Kelile, pastor of Pathway Church in Dallas, received 200 votes.

Bernie Spooner of Irving, retired director of the BGCT Sunday School division and first dean of the Cook Graduate School of Leadership at DBU, was named secretary of the corporation by acclamation.

David Cozart, executive pastor of Meadowbrook Baptist Church in Robinson, was declared registration secretary by acclamation.

Ward Hayes will serve as recording secretary by virtue of his position as treasurer and chief financial officer of the BGCT.

Messengers approved without change the slate of nominations from the [Committee to Nominate Executive Board Directors](#), the [Committee on Committees](#) and the [Committee on Nominations for Boards of Affiliated Ministries](#).

Messengers approved a recommendation that the 2023 annual meeting be held in McAllen and scheduled as a “Family Gathering” in the summer. It

will be held in conjunction with the Hispanic Baptist Convention of Texas and African American Baptist Fellowship of Texas meetings. Messengers to previous annual meetings had approved Galveston as the site for 2021 and Waco as the location for 2022.

No resolutions were presented for consideration to the annual meeting.