

# Killeen pastor to be nominated for BGCT president

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PORT ARTHUR—Killeen pastor Randy Wallace has joined the race for president of the [Baptist General Convention of Texas](#).

Wallace will face a previously announced candidate, Plano pastor Jerry Carlisle. The presidential election will be held during the BGCT annual meeting in Amarillo, Oct. 24-26.



Randy Wallace

A field of at least two candidates is good for Texas Baptists, said Kyle Morton, pastor of First Baptist Church in Port Arthur, who announced he will nominate Wallace.

"Randy and I have been talking and praying about this for about a month," Morton said, adding Texas Baptists historically have chosen from two or more presidential candidates.

"Jerry Carlisle is a great guy, a wonderful pastor, and he loves the Lord," he noted. "But we feel it would be good for Texas Baptists to have two good candidates that we could pray about and elect as God leads us."

Wallace has been pastor of [First Baptist Church in Killeen](#) for 11 years, Morton said. During that time, Wallace has baptized 517 new Christians, and more than 1,000 other people have joined the congregation.

During Wallace's tenure, the church has relocated its campus, Morton noted, adding the church also regularly opens its doors to feed 300 high school students as an outreach ministry.

"As a young pastor, I'm concerned about the future," said Morton, 31. "Texas Baptists do so many wonderful things, and we're kind of at a pivotal point right now. We need leaders who will speak the truth in love and ask the right questions so we can shift and prepare for the future."

Wallace can provide that kind of leadership, he added. "Randy has a real heart for evangelism and wants to see our convention move back to that. Texas Baptists have always had a legacy ... for evangelism, and that's where his heart is."

Wallace also would bring a "fresh perspective" to the presidency, Morton said. "Randy wants to build bridges between the churches and the convention—to see us come back to what we once were, not for our glory, but for building the kingdom of God," he explained. "We need stronger churches, and they're hurting. We want to see the BGCT be what it's been, and even more."

"We have a heart to see the convention get back to the main things, what Baptists can agree on. Evangelism, discipleship and missions are where we need to be."

Wallace expressed respect and admiration for Carlisle, but he said Texas Baptists' democratic process functions best with multiple candidates.

"I think our meetings are better served if we have choices to make. And I believe that so strongly, I'm willing to be a candidate," he said, noting a single-candidate election "diminishes the role of the messenger."

He reported his presidential priorities would be "a BGCT that's passionately connected to the churches" and an emphasis on evangelism. He also would commit time to help a new convention executive director, who should be selected in the next year, "connect with Texas Baptist churches," he said.

Wallace would emphasize evangelism, because leading people to faith in

Christ needs to be a priority for Texas Baptists, he said.

"There was a day and time when churches that were robust in baptisms were held up as models," he noted, lamenting what he sees as a declining emphasis on evangelism that dates to the late 1990s, when the convention split.

"Evangelism needs to be a priority," he insisted. "We need plans and models for evangelism that works."

Likewise, the convention needs to highlight its connection to churches, he added. That includes partnering to complete church initiatives, "whether that's church starts, food kitchens or whatever."

The convention needs to work alongside churches on the cutting edge of ministry, such as helping churches from various regions and backgrounds work together in ministry and evangelism, he said.

"That doesn't have to cost any money," he observed. "That's a matter of strategy and information."

Wallace, 48, has been pastor of First Baptist in Killeen since 2000. The church is located near Fort Hood, the U.S. Army's largest base, and it has maintained a thriving ministry to military families—including many of its own members—during ongoing deployment to combat zones.

He has raised \$250,000 to launch the Killeen Church Starting Center on the south side of the city. His goal is to start 10 congregations in as many years.

First Baptist in Killeen contributes 11 percent of its budget to Texas Baptists' Cooperative Program unified budget.

His previous pastorates include First Baptist Church in Frankston, which he also helped relocate, and Crossroads Baptist Church in Marshall. He

also has served as youth minister at churches in Arlington, Brownwood and Tyler.

He is a graduate of Baylor University, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and Baylor's Truett Seminary.

Wallace noted the arc of his life and ministry has been shaped by Texas Baptists. It includes participation in the Super Summer youth-training camps, where he committed his life to ministry, and to Baylor, where he first trained for ministry, and Truett Seminary, where he earned his doctorate. It also includes assistance from the BGCT in such varied aspects of church life as youth ministry, evangelism training, children's ministry, organizing choirs, discipleship resources, outreach ideas, fund-raising and architecture.

"Daddy used to say, 'When you see a turtle sitting on a fence post, you know he didn't get there by himself,'" he recalled. "I am forever indebted to God for calling and equipping me for a life of ministry. I am indebted to the BGCT for being there when I needed them."

He is a member of the BGCT Executive Board and led an associational task force for revitalizing declining churches. He served as a summer church planter with the Baptist Home Mission Board and has led mission trips to Alaska, Poland, Belize, Honduras and Mexico.

Wallace and his wife, Patty, are the parents of four children, John Harold, Tyler Randall, Nathan Samuel and James Britton.

Jerry Carlisle, the other presidential candidate, is pastor of First Baptist Church in Plano. Victor Rodriguez, the convention's current president, announced he will nominate Carlisle, its first vice president.

"I believe Jerry is going to be the person God will use for the future of our convention," Rodriguez said.

A profile of Carlisle's candidacy appeared in the [Aug. 1 edition](#) of the *Baptist Standard*.