

Voices: The winds of change blow

July 17, 2019

Do you remember how the Mary Poppins movies begin? Everything is going along as usual, and then the wind picks up, and it's pretty clear that something different is about to take place. Well, that's somewhat the way life is at our Texas Baptists offices right now. The winds of change are blowing through our staff.

Last fall, after 40 years of wonderful service, Bruce McGowan retired as state director of the Baptist Student Ministry. Fortunately, God had prepared Mark Jones to step into that role, and he is now serving us all so well.

Earlier this year, my dear friend Delvin Atchison left his position as director of the Great Commission Team to return to the local church as pastor of the wonderful Westside Baptist Church in Lewisville. I am grateful for his obedience to the Lord and his love for Texas Baptists and the church.

Back in May at our Executive Board meeting, our faithful and loyal servant, Dr. Steve Vernon, announced his retirement after many years as a BGCT pastor and the past 11 as associate executive director. I have so enjoyed the privilege of serving alongside Steve. He became much more than a colleague but a trusted friend and adviser. He and Donna will enjoy living in Central Texas when his service days conclude at the end of this year. Steve: Finish Strong!

A couple of years ago, our CFO Jill Larsen began to sense God leading her in a new direction but was unsure what that might be or where. She continued to work and pray for God's leading. The Lord has brought to her a very unique opportunity to take on the challenging assignment of CFO of

VisitDallas. She starts there on August 5. You will join me in wishing her well and know she'll be a positive Christian witness in her new workplace. Please come join us for a "send-off" reception on Monday, July 29 at 2 p.m. in our Texas Baptists offices.

As the days move ahead, we will seek the right people to come on board and fill these roles and, perhaps, others. Thank you for praying for us during this season of change. We have been so blessed, and the Lord will continue to bless as we seek his will and way. God bless you all.

David Hardage is the executive director of the Baptist General Convention of Texas. The BGCT and Baptist Standard are independently related partners.