**2022 ANNUAL REPORT**

**Georgia Baptist Convention**

**Section II**

**Proceedings of 2022 Annual Meeting**



**PROCEEDINGS**

**2022 Georgia Baptist Convention**

200th Annual Meeting

Warren Baptist, Augusta

Monday Evening Session

6 – 9:00 PM November 14, 2022

The 200th session of the Georgia Baptist Convention was called to order by President Kevin Williams at Warren Baptist, Augusta, on Monday evening, November 14, 2022.

The GBC Worship Choir, under the direction of Cliff Duren and Rhon Carter, led messengers in a time of Congregational Praise.

Vice Presidents serving the 200th session was Kyle Walker, First Baptist, Cartersville; Rafael Valter, Iglesia Bautista Agape, Stone Mountain; Brian Moore, New Providence Baptist, Smarr, and Brian Parker, First Baptist, Kingsland.

**Recording Secretary, Danny Henson**, New Liberty Baptist Church, Ringgold, provided a report of the **Enrollment and Organization**. He moved that the 838 messengers already registered, plus all others registered would constitute the 200th session of the Georgia Baptist Convention. The **motion** was seconded and **was adopted**. **Darey Kittle**, Salem Baptist, Dalton and **Tom Vann**, Rentz Baptist Church, Rentz, served as **Assistant Recording Secretaries**.

The following persons served as Tellers for the 200th session of the Georgia Baptist Convention: Randy Ray, Jay Moore, Calvin Halcomb, Samuel Dingler, Terry Ryan, Mike DeLoach, Doug Bingham, Ben Moore, Darren Talley, Lewis Miller, Charles Rogers, Michael Gazaway, Kris Crider, Shane Pierce, and Matt Haywood.

**Robby Foster**, Northside Baptist in Valdosta, and the chairman of the 2022 Order of Business Committee, presented the Provisional Program for adoption. The **Order of Business was adopted**.

President Kevin Williams thanked Warren Baptist Church and host pastor, David McKinley, for their hospitality and generosity in hosting the 200th meeting of the Georgia Baptist Convention. Kevin Williams welcomed messengers and stated what a privilege it is to serve Georgia Baptists. Tim Batchelor, Associational Mission Strategist of the Hephzibah Baptist Association, greeted messengers and welcomed them to the Convention. Dwayne Boudreaux, Associational Mission Strategist from the Augusta Baptist Association, let the messengers in prayer.

Executive Director, W. Thomas Hammond, Jr. welcomed the messengers to the 200th Birthday of the Georgia Baptist Convention. He expressed his appreciation to Warren Baptist for their hospitability. He informed the members over the next two days they would hear about the history of the Convention, and we would also be discussing the future of where we are going and planning for the days ahead in leaving a legacy for those who come behind us. He expressed his thankfulness to be a Georgia Baptist and reminded the members God is not done with any of us yet. He stated his hope and prayer is our hearts are stirred to go back to our Jerusalem and reach the state with the Gospel of Christ.

Thomas Hammond introduced videos welcoming members to the Convention from Willie McLaurin at the Southern Baptist Convention and Kevin Ezell from the North American Mission Board. A video from Governor Brian Kemp was shown to the members and Governor Kemp thanked Georgia Baptists for the impact they have in our state.

Andy Perryman, Associational Mission Strategist from the Georgia Baptist Association, introduced a “History Moment Video” on associations and the vital role they have served in the life of Georgia Baptist for the past 200 years.

The Georgia Baptist Worship Choir under the direction of Cliff Duren led messengers in a time of praise and worship.

Alex Cosio, Iglesia Nuevo in Woodstock, introduced Josh Smith, Prince Avenue Baptist Church in Bogart, who would be bringing the Missionary Sermon. Alex Cosio read the scripture and prayed before the Missionary sermon.

Josh Smith, Prince Avenue Baptist Church in Bogart, preached from the scripture in John 7:37-39 and the title of his sermon was “Rivers of Living Water”. Josh stated in this scripture John gives us a vision on how to live not out of duty but for the glory of Christ. He encouraged the members to live accordingly not only because it’s the right thing to do but because you want God to be evident in your life. Josh challenged the members to drink from the living water until all that is flowing out of us is the Spirit of the living God to bring revival.

The GBC Worship Choir, under the direction of Cliff Duren led messengers in a time of praise and worship.

Kevin Williams, Convention President, shared a video with the members recognizing the past presidents of the Convention. He asked those who were present to stand so the Convention could recognize them.

Jeff Crook, Christ Place in Flowery Branch, introduced Wayne Robertson, Morningside Baptist in Valdosta, who would be bringing the Doctrinal Sermon. Jeff Crook read the scripture and prayed before the Doctrinal sermon.

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**Wayne Robertson** shared the scripture from 2Corinthians 2:4-11 and spoke on “The Doctrine of Forgiveness”. He talked about the grief of sin, and the struggle of forgiveness. He reminded the members of the necessity of obedience and the consequences of not obeying. He encouraged the members to always forgive.

There was a video shown from Shorter University students thanking Georgia Baptists for their support.

There was no Miscellaneous Business or announcements presented from the floor.

The Benediction was provided by Kyle Walker, 1st Vice President and Pastor at First Cartersville.

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ANNUAL MEETING SESSION

9 AM – 12:00 AM TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 15

Rafael Valter, 2nd Vice President and Pastor at Iglesia Bautista Agape, opened the session in prayer.

Jamey Hunt, Pastor at Sonoraville Baptist in Calhoun, and Chair of the Education Commission introduced a “History Moment Video” on higher education and the key role our three schools have played in the history of Georgia Baptists.

The GBC Worship Choir led messengers in a time of praise and worship.

Kevin Williams introduced Bill Calhoun of 1025 Church, who led the Memorials Observance remembering Georgia Baptist pastors and leaders who have died since the 2021 Annual Meeting. He asked that we remember those who went before us, their testimony and honor their memory. The following names were included in the video shared with messengers: Jamie Ash (Appalachee), Hoyt Johnson Abbott (Appalachee), Shawn Creamer (Atlanta Metro), Don Wheless (Augusta), Ralph S. Estes (Bethel), Ernest Purcell (Bowen), John Brown (Coastal River), William Turner (Coastal River), Lowell Cliatt (Columbus), Ron Stephens (Conasauga), Bruce Connor (Daniell), Argin Floyd (Flint River), Swayne Poole (Flint River), Lance Fendley (Friendship), Wayne McDonald (Grady County), Gerald J. Metzdorf (Laurens), Don Moreland (Lookout Valley), Pete Jones (Mell), Maurice Crowder (Middle), Steve Skates (Northwest Georgia), Wendell Hammrick, Sr. (Pulaski-Bleckley), Kelly Pritchett (Pulaski-Bleckley), Hershel Sizemore (Rehoboth), Earl Best (Savannah), Wallace Willis (Summerhill), Bill Price (Troup), John A. Jones (West Metro), Robert “Bob” Wiley (West Metro), and Leonard Dupree (Georgia Baptist Mission Board).

The GBC Worship Choir led messengers in a time of praise and worship.

Austin Williams, Connections Pastor at First Baptist Villa Rica, introduced his dad, Dr. Kevin Williams and prayed before Dr. Williams gave the President’s Address.

Kevin Williams preached from Phillippians 3:12-14, and the title of his sermon was “Forward”. He shared with the members about Forward Thinking and Forward Pressing specifically noting the fact pressing forward is an action. Another point he shared was Forward Forgetting encouraging the members to forget the past sins, past failures, and also past successes. He shared about Forward Reaching and Forward Marching stating you must have a plan and press for the prize. The last point Kevin shared was Forward Calling. He ended by encouraging and challenging the members to continue moving forward because we are not done yet.

Kevin Williams introduced W. Thomas Hammond, Jr., Executive Director and Josh Saefkow, Chairman of the Executive Committee and Pastor of Flat Creek Baptist in Fayetteville, to present the Executive Committee Report.

**Josh Saefkow introduced Steven Taylor,** McConnell Memorial in Hiawassee, and chairman of the **Church Membership Committee** who reported the following list of 15 new churches and 2 new missions that were added to the Convention between November 1, 2021, and October 31, 2022. Members present from these churches and missions were recognized.

**Association Church**

Augusta…………………………………………………………………………………………………………Anchor Church

Chattahoochee…………………………………………………………………………………………………….La Cosecha

Chattahoochee…………………………………………………………………………………………….....Purpose Church

Fairburn…………………………………………………………………………………Crossroads Church of South Fulton

Greater Atlanta Baptist Network……………………………………………………………….....Redemption City Church

Gwinnett Metro…………………………………………………………………………Adelphos World Missionary Church

Gwinnett Metro…..……………………………………………………………………………………….Agape Deaf Baptist

Gwinnett Metro…………………………………………………….............................................Glory of the Lord Korean

Gwinnett Metro…………………………………………………………………………….Iglesia Cristiana Elevation Point

Gwinnett Metro……………………………………………………………………………….Kingdom Kulture International

Gwinnett Metro………………………………………………………...........................New Song Korean Baptist Church

Morgan County…………………………………………………………………………………..Legacy Church of Madison

Noonday……..………………………………………………………………………………………………City View Church

Noonday………………………………………………………………………………………………………...Family Church

Roswell……………………………………………………………………………………………………...Sommos Ecclesia

**Association** Mission

Noonday Ark of Salvation Church

Rehoboth Mar de Galilea

A video report from Mike Griffin, Public Affairs, was shown to the members. Mike stated there had been a Great Pastors Day at the Capital and churches were making a difference with legislation. He thanked the members for their prayers and support of the Public Affairs ministry.

**Micah Hamrick, Chairman of the Committee on the Prevention of Sexual Abuse** presented the final report of this committee to the members. The report is as follows:

“At the request of the Georgia Baptist Mission Board’s Executive Committee, Georgia Baptist Convention President Dr. Kevin Williams announced the creation of the Special Committee on the Prevention of Sexual Abuse in December of 2021. The Committee was asked to make recommendations for developing programs, best practices, and to provide policy guidelines for preventing sexual abuse.

Dr. Williams announced the committee appointees to the Mission Board’s Executive Committee during their meeting in December of 2021. There are 6 appointees representing the 6 geographical areas of Georgia. The Committee is made up of the following members: Craig Bowers, Lindsay Bowley, Micah Hamrick (Chair), Jessica Mathisen, Billy Puckett, and Michelle Sterling. Other members of the committee are Williams, Executive Committee Chairman Josh Saefkow and, as an ex-officio member, Georgia Baptist Mission Board Executive Director W. Thomas Hammond Jr.

The special committee was directed to present its report to the Executive Committee at their meeting in November of 2022 and to messengers at the Georgia Baptist Convention annual meeting also held in November of 2022 in Augusta, Georgia.

Over the past 11 months, the committee met on 7 different occasions either by video call or in person. During the first meeting, it became clear to the committee that the initial work to be done should concentrate on education and training. It was determined that the main goal and objective was to provide resources to reduce opportunities for sexual abuse in our churches and to support survivors of such abuse. We realize that some church staff members that receive reports of sexual abuse or some survivors of sexual abuse may not know the next steps that should be taken. With that in mind, we have chosen the following 3 areas as the baseline of concentration and reason for the committee’s existence:

1. Prevention of Sexual Abuse
2. Responding to Sexual Abuse
3. Ministering to Sexual Abuse Victims

Although it’s a monumental task, if sexual abuse can be prevented, there will be no need to respond to sexual abuse cases or to minster to sexual abuse victims. The committee believes that preventing sexual abuse is the first step in our process to make our churches as safe as possible and that most, if not all congregants, can take an active role in helping achieve this goal by being made more aware of and better trained in sexual abuse behavior.

Should sexual abuse occur on any of our church contexts, the next step is to make sure all those involved understand the importance of a proper response to the sexual abuse and to make sure they have the proper resources to effectively respond in the proper manner.

Once the response has been initiated, it is critically important that the sexual abuse victim be ministered to and cared for to ensure they are prioritized, remembered, and accepted.

As the committee began to think about what resources were needed to educate and train Georgia Baptists, we quickly realized that many great resources were readily available. The issue was that these resources and training aids resided in many locations. As we talked through the process of being able to make resources available, it was determined that the committee spend time vetting the most appropriate resources available. Once identified we could then capture and maintain those resources on a webpage dedicated to sexual abuse on the Georgia Baptist Mission Board’s website. The intent of this webpage is to provide Georgia Baptists a platform to make them more aware of the problem of sexual abuse, a platform to receive training aids, and a platform to provide options for consideration as they work to develop policies and procedures that fit the need of each local church. That webpage is under construction and will be made public early in 2023.

A second need the committee identified as critical was a hotline phone number for people to call when assistance is needed. The Georgia Baptist Mission Board is securing a dedicated 24/7 phone number for those to call who are seeking assistance or needing to report an incident of non-emergency sexual abuse. This number will be monitored by trained professionals who will be able to give counsel, advice, or refer them to the appropriate assistance. This number will be going live with the webpage release in early 2023.

The Georgia Baptist Mission Board has been a leader among Southern Baptists in providing training to prevent sexual abuse for many years through a partnership with MinistrySafe. Although the MinistrySafe training modules are geared more toward child sexual abuse, the foundation and baselines for behaviors and watch indicators are consistent with those behaviors toward adults. Gregory Love with MinistrySafe made the following statement on October 13, 2021, during a Child Protection Workshop: “I work with religious organizations all over the country and world and there has not been one more active religious organization that has tried to communicate to its stakeholders more than the Georgia Baptist Mission Board. Since 2012, we have done countless events, live, online, and in writing. The Georgia Baptist Mission Board has been a champion for child sexual abuse prevention and healing and the redemption part as well.”

Since 2015, MinistrySafe has helped train a total of 6,947 Georgia Baptist users, and 5,459 of those people have completed their training. Although these numbers are a great start, we are in no way saying that enough has been done. This is only to point out that while great work has been done on sexual abuse among Georgia Baptists, we must build on, fine tune, and continue to look for every means possible to address the issue of sexual abuse.

Realizing the issue of sexual abuse will not be resolved with committee work done over a 1-year period, it is the committee’s prayer that this initial year’s work will continue to expand, grow, and mature in the coming years with the goal of making all Georgia Baptist churches a safe place to attend and worship.

The committee encourages the Georgia Baptist Mission Board to continue the engagement with the State Legislature, through the Public Affairs office, to continue to encourage lawmakers to look for ways to tighten Georgia law even more as it relates to sexual abuse. This partnership has certainly helped influence past decisions, and we believe it will continue to do so into future years.

Although essential baseline work has commenced, the committee feels it is vitally important that time and resources be allocated to continue to build on the existing deliverables as well as tackle other areas of opportunity in coming years with one goal in mind, and that is to keep all Georgia Baptists safe on Georgia Baptist church campuses.”

Josh Saefkow thanked the committee for their hard work on this report.

Josh Saefkow introduced Thomas Hill, Chairman of the Cooperative Program Budget Committee to assist David Melber in presenting the recommended 2023 Cooperative Program Budget. This included the instructions, directions, procedures, and recommendations (*Book of Reports*, pages 47-50). The 2023 Cooperative Program Budget, instructions, directions, procedures, and recommendations were approved.

Josh Saefkow reminded the members of a motion that was voted on at the September Executive Committee meeting which was to form a committee to review the Constitution of the Georgia Baptist Mission Board. **Josh Saefkow and Parliamentarian Barry McLarty** explained the process of appointing a committee to Review the Constitution of the Georgia Baptist Convention The committee was to be made up of four messengers and six Executive Committee members from around the state of Georgia. Josh announced the following people who were to serve on the committee. As messengers there would be Frank Cox, Steve Parr, Jerry Speer, and Darrell Paulk. Members serving from the Executive Committee would be Chris Allen, Steve Browning, Chad Rising, David Lambert, Doug Bingham, and Tony Pagliarullo. A motion was made to adopt the recommendation to review the Constitution and approve the members of the task force. A vote was taken, and the motion passed.

Josh Saefkow turned the floor over to Executive Director Thomas Hammond to present his Executive Director Report.

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Thomas Hammond started his Executive Director showing a video with history from the past 200 years of the Georgia Baptist Convention. He reminded the members in 200 years Georgia Baptists have seen times of incredible growth and expansion and days of loss and disappointment. We have seen seasons of success and failure. Times of revival with the Spirit moving across our state and times of spiritual drought that created overwhelming disappointment and even despair….but God is not through with Georgia Baptists yet.

Thomas Hammond invited Dr. J. Robert White, past Executive Director, who led the Mission Board for over 10% of their existence. Thomas talked with Dr. White about different challenges and seasons he had while serving as the Executive Director. Dr. White encouraged all Georgia Baptists to stay together as that is the key. Thomas and Dr. White both encouraged the members to be more committed than ever to reach Georgia with the Gospel.

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Thomas Hammond reminded the members the Georgia Baptist Mission Board exists to serve churches to advance the Gospel. He stated everything we do at the GBMB runs on two rails – 1. Church Strengthening and 2. Pastor Wellness. Thomas shared with the members we are seeing fewer baptisms, lower attendance, less churches, and mission giving has dramatically decreased. He encouraged the members to remember our mission, the task is not finished and we are not done yet.

Thomas gave a report to the members on the ACTS2 network which is a theologically sound television network which features Bible teaching, Christian living programing, and family-friendly entertainment with a great commission focus. This is an exciting television alternative which will highlight the work of Southern Baptists and other evangelicals around the globe to encourage others to live on mission for Jesus.

Thomas Hammond invited four BCM campus ministers to share how God is working at their BCM campus. Tommy Fountain (UGA), Keith Wade (North Georgia), Chris Bryan (Georgia Southern), and David Williams (Valdosta State) each shared with the members different ways God is working on their campuses. Tim Oliver, Pastor at Lakeside Baptist in Milledgeville, also shared how his church is partnering with their local BCM to minister and reach students.

Pastor Wellness was the next area of focus for Thomas Hammond to talk about. Thomas shared some statistics on pastor wellness and also the overall health of pastors in Georgia. A video was shown featuring a Georgia pastor and his wife, discussing how Pastor Wellness assisted and ministered to their family through a recent addiction. It was a moving testimony of God allowing Pastor Wellness to walk through a hard time alongside a pastor and his family. Thomas asked the members to remember the Georgia Baptist Mission Board is here for each pastor and his family.

Thomas discussed church planting with the members and shared some interesting facts that churches planted in Georgia. First they were planted by another church in Georgia. Second the mother church chose the area in which to plant the church and last the church plant was nurtured by the mother church until they were strong enough to stand on their own.

Beth Ann Williams, Lead Strategist for Georgia Baptist Women, and Larry Wynn, CEO of the Georgia Baptist Health Care Ministry Foundation, addressed the Convention next. They shared about the partnership Mission Georgia has with the Braves organization. Beth Ann Williams also shared about the way Mission Georgia is ministering to women through the Tiny Hones program. She shared a video or a woman who chose not to have an abortion and her story of people who ministered to her during this time. Last a Russian pastor in Georgia shared how his congregation and others are ministering to Ukrainian refugees.

Thomas Hammond gave text numbers to the members they could use to sign up to get involved with any of the areas that had been mentioned or talked about. He ended his report stating this was the time for action as God is not finished with Georgia Baptists yet.

There was a video shown concerning Vacation Bible School thanking Georgia Baptists for their support and assistance.

There was no Miscellaneous Business.

The morning session Benediction was provided by Brian Moore, GBC VP, New Providence Baptist Church, Smarr.

**ANNUAL MEETING SESSION **

2:00 – 5:30 PM TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 9

The Tuesday afternoon session began with Brian Parker, GBC VP, Kingsland Baptist Church, inviting Nathan Hill from Agape Deaf Baptist Church and his interpreter to pray over the start of this session of the Convention.

Lauren Sullens, State President of Georgia WMU, introduced a “History Moment Video” on Georgia Baptist women and the impact and significant part of what God has done over the past 200 years and continued work in Georgia Baptist life.

The GBC Worship Choir led messengers in a time of praise and worship.

Beth Ann Williams and Lauren Sullens presented a report on Baptist Woman’s Missionary Union of Georgia. They presented a brief history through words and pictures of different areas and organization of the Baptist Women in Georgia. Today, Georgia WMU has a presence through an age-level missions organization in over 1,500 Georgia Baptist churches. Beth Ann and Lauren shared how hundreds of women were equipped this year in missions and ministries through leadership development opportunities. They shared with the members about Pinnacle and the impact the retreat center has on young girls who attend camp there. A video testimony was shared about a young girl who accepted Jesus and then shared her newfound faith and commitment to Christ with others in her family. The report ended encouraging the women to remain committed to missions giving, mission going and to remain faith in praying as they go forward to advance the Gospel by making disciples of Jesus who live on mission.

Kevin Williams, GBC President, presided over the nominations for the office of President. Stephen Fountain, First Baptist Buford nominated Dr. Josh Saefkow, Pastor at Flat Creek Baptist in Fayetteville. There were no other nominations, therefore Dr. Josh Saefkow was elected and affirmed President of the Georgia Baptist Convention by acclamation.

President Williams received nominations for persons to serve as a Vice President. Byung Bak Choi, messenger from Atlanta Dream Baptist, nominated Daniel Chon, messenger and Pastor from Macon Korean Baptist Church. David Miller, messenger from First Baptist Thomson, nominated David Lambert, messenger and Pastor from First Baptist Thomson. Mel Blackaby, messenger from First Baptist Jonesboro, nominated Ruben Torres, messenger, and Pastor from Iglesia Bautista Victoria en Cristo in Jonesboro. Wade Lott, messenger from Macedonia Baptist in Hiawassee, nominated Steven Taylor messenger and Pastor from McConnell Memorial in Hiawassee. Tommy Fountain, Sr., messenger from 1025 Church in Monroe, nominated Anthony Wilson messenger and Pastor from Church 180 in Hampton.

President Williams received nominations for Recording Secretary. Tommy Fountain, messenger from 1025 Church, Monroe, nominated Danny Henson, messenger from Liberty Baptist Church, Ringgold. There were no other nominations and Danny Henson was elected and affirmed by acclamation. Danny Henson nominated Darey Kittle, messenger from Salem Baptist Church, Dalton and Tom Vann, messenger from Rentz Baptist Church, Rentz to serve as Assistant Recording Secretaries. There were no other nominations and Darey Kittle and Tom Vann were elected and affirmed by acclamation.

The GBC Worship Choir led messengers in a time of praise and worship.

Kevin Williams, First Baptist Villa Rica, introduced Speaker Dr. Tony Evans, Pastor at Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship in Dallas, Texas. Kevin Williams prayed before Dr. Evans came to bring a message to the Convention.

Dr. Evans preached from 2 Chronicles 15:3-6 asking the question “What on Earth is Going on”? He stated we are living in a day of brokenness with our families and our personal lives. He reminded the members only God is the solution to what is happening in our world today. He encouraged the members to strive for unity and search the Word of God to hear the voice of God. He challenged the members if the body of Christ comes together unified just think about the impact they could have on our world.

Convention President, Kevin Williams, invited Paul Cowles, Friendship Baptist in Warner Robins, and Chairman of the Preachers Committee to present the following Preachers Committee Report. The report was approved.

201st Annual Meeting: November 13-14, 2023 at Church on Main in Snellville

Hosting Association: Gwinnett Metro Baptist Network

Doctrinal Sermon: Chuck Chambers, Woolsey Baptist, Fayetteville

Alternate: Brad Whitt, Abilene Baptist, Martinez

Missionary Sermon: Jason Dees, Christ Covenant, Atlanta

Alternate: Jimmy Blanton, Associational Mission Strategist, Columbus

202nd Annual Meeting: November 11-12, 2024, at First Baptist in Statesboro

The following report from the 2022 Committee on Nominations was presented by the committee chairman, Darey Kittle, Salem Baptist, Dalton. The report was adopted by messengers.

**2022 REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON NOMINATIONS**

**CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE**

Terms to Expire 2025

Lane Lowery, Warren Baptist, Augusta, Augusta Baptist Association

Dustin Hutto, Oakland Baptist, Consolation Baptist Association

Kenny Sexton, Satilla Baptist, Fitzgerald, Ben Hill Irwin Baptist Association

Clinton Watson, First Baptist Chattahoochee, Greater Atlanta Baptist Network

Brad Parker, Hunter Road, Catula, Pine Mountain Baptist Association

\*Meagan Heisler, The Grove, Acworth, Noonday Baptist Association

John David Hardwick, Northside, Columbus, Columbus Baptist Association

Scott Parrish, Emmaus Baptist, Resaca, Conasauga Baptist Association

**COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC AFFAIRS**

Terms to Expire 2025

Brad Hughes (Chair), First Baptist Blakely, Bethel Baptist Association

Dawn Parker, 1025 Church, Monroe, Appalachee Baptist Association

Jimmy Blanton, Gentian Baptist, Columbus, Columbus Baptist Association

\*Suzanne Guy, First Baptist, Woodstock, Etowah Baptist Association

Tyson Griffin, First Baptist, Tunnel Hill, Conasauga Baptist Association

Term to Expire 2023

Rick Biesiadecki, Crosspoint City, Bartow Baptist Association

**EDUCATION COMMISSION**

Terms to Expire 2027

Chuch Jonas, Reidsville Baptist, Reidsville, Tatnall Evans Baptist Association

Don Wilhite, Second Baptist, Columbus, Columbus Baptist Association

Term to Expire 2026

Wes Taylor, Northside Baptist, Hahira, Valdosta Baptist Association

**HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

Terms to Expire 2027

\*Rick Crawford, Victory Baptist, Rockmart, Polk Haralson Baptist Association

Wesley Hunt, Bethesda Baptist, Calhoun, Gordon Baptist Association

James Brownlee, Salem Baptist, Dalton, Conasauga Baptist Association

Term to Expire 2025

Scott Parrish, Emmaus Baptist, Resaca, Conasauga Baptist Association

**MEMORIALS COMMITTEE**

Terms to Expire 2023

Bill Harrell, Abilene Baptist, Martinez, Augusta Baptist Association

Charles Rogers, McFarlin Hill, Dalton, Conasauga Baptist Association

**ORDER OF BUSINESS COMMITTEE**

Terms to Expire 2023

Tim Jones (Chair), Britt David, Columbus, Columbus Baptist Association

Cameron Ford, Green Acres, Athens, Sarepta Baptist Association

Chad Williams, Highview Church, Villa Rica, Carrollton Baptist Association

Lee Lacey, First Baptist, Sandersville, Washington Baptist Association

Casey Matthews, First Baptist, Warner Robins, Rehoboth Baptist Association

Brian Boyles, Church on Main, Snellville, Gwinnett Metro Baptist Network

Marty Godfrey, Burnt Hickory, Powder Springs, Noonday Baptist Association

\*Jackie Hardy, First Baptist, Social Circle, Appalachee Baptist Association

Rudy Camp, First Baptist, Comer, Sarepta Baptist Association

Brady Fortenberry, Fellowship, Rome, Floyd County Baptist Association

**PREACHERS COMMITTEE**

Terms to Expire 2023

Josh Price, (Chair), Fortified Hills, Dallas, Noonday Baptist Association

Jerry Pickard, First Baptist, Milledgeville, Washington Baptist Association

Greg Carter, Walkerville Baptist, Blackshear, Piedmont Baptist Association

Anthony Wilson, Church 180, Hampton, Statewide Association of Baptist Assemblies

**RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE**

Terms to Expire 2023

John Barber (Chair), First Baptist, Calhoun, Gordon Memorial Baptist Association

Ed Kvietkus, Rose Hill, Columbus, Columbus Baptist Association

John Sansom, Abilene Baptist, Martinez, Augusta Baptist Association

\*Melisa Sanchez, Northside, Valdosta, Valdosta Baptist Association

Stephen Chambers, Woolsey Baptist, Fayetteville, Flint River Baptist Association

Jared Thompson, First Baptist, Buford, Gwinnett Metro Baptist Network

**TRUSTEES OF AGENCIES AND INSTITUTIONS**

**GEORGIA BAPTIST ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE**

Terms to Expire 2025

Brady Fortenberry, Fellowship Baptist, Rome, Floyd County Baptist Association

**GEORGIA BAPTIST FOUNDATION**

Terms to Expire 2027

\*Kirk Jarrett, Sonoraville Baptist, Gordon Memorial Baptist Association

Jason Lumpkin, Love Bridge Church, Austell, Noonday Baptist Association

**BAPTIST RETIREMENT COMMUNITIES OF GEORGIA**

Terms to Expire 2027

Tom Jones, Ebenezer Baptist, Toccoa, Tugalo Baptist Association

Term to Expire 2025

Crystal Bice, Villa Rica, Carrollton Baptist Association

**BAPTIST VILLAGE RETIREMENT COMMUNITIES**

Terms to Expire 2027

Brad Butler, Shellman Bluv, Townsend, New Sunbury Baptist Association

Gary Hadden, Sherwood Forest, Leesburg, Mallory Baptist Association

\*Teresa Padgett, Tabernacle Baptist, Cartersville, Bartow Baptist Association

**BREWTON-PARKER COLLEGE**

Terms to Expire 2027

\*Susanna Meredith, First Baptist, Vidalia, Daniell Baptist Association

\*David Sikes, First Baptist, Vidalia, Daniell Baptist Association

\*Ginger Morris, Tabernacle Baptist, Vidalia, Daniell Baptist Association

\*Billy Moses, First Baptist, Dublin, Laurens Baptist Association

\*Nancye Alloway, Hickory Valley Baptist, Chattanooga, Tennessee

Jim Perdue, Second Baptist, Warner Robins, Rehoboth Baptist Association

Term to Expire 2026

\*Gary Braddy, First Baptist Mount Vernon, Daniell Baptist Association

**BARON REAL ESTATE FOUNDATION**

Term to Expire 2027

\*Blanche Carswell, First Baptist, Mount Vernon, Daniell Baptist Association

**GEORGIA BAPTIST CHILDREN'S HOMES AND FAMILY MINISTRIES**

Terms to Expire 2027

\*Buddy Brown, Mountain Park, Stone Mountain, Gwinnett Metro Baptist Network

James Kelly, Smyrna Baptist, Vienna, South Central Baptist Network

Wade Lott, Macedonia Baptist, Hiawassee, Hiawassee Baptist Association

\*Sue Wyatt, North Metro, Lawrenceville, Gwinnett Metro Baptist Network

Leroy Williams, First Baptist, Pelham, Tucker Baptist Association

\*Justin Carroll, Dykes Creek, Rome, Floyd County Baptist Association

Term to Expire 2024

\*Carmen Caldwell, New Mercy, Griffin, Flint River Baptist Association

**SHORTER UNIVERSITY**

Terms to Expire 2027

\*Russ Brown, Canaan Baptist, Birmingham, Alabama

Cliff Duren, First Baptist, Woodstock, Noonday Baptist Association

Stacy Dyer, Temple Baptist, Blue Ridge, Morganton Mountain Baptist Association

\*Jerry Emerson, Dykes Creek, Rome, Floyd County Baptist Association

Steve Parr, Mount Zion, Snellville, Gwinnett Metro Baptist Network

\*Larry Maxey, Armuchee Bpaitst, Armuchee, Floyd County Baptist Association

Term to Expire 2023

Ted Fuller, Pleasant Valley South, Rome, Floyd County Baptist Association

**TRUETT-MCCONNELL UNIVERSITY**

Terms to Expire 2027

Matthew Slemp, First Baptist, Atlanta, Greater Atlanta Baptist Network

\*Matthew Gambill, Tabernacle, Cartersville, Bartow Baptist Association

Bucky Kennedy, North Hall, Gainesville, Chattahoochee Baptist Association

\*Phillip Jones, Hopewell Baptist, Gainesville, Chattahoochee Baptist Association

\*James Usry, First Baptist, Social Circle, Appalachee Baptist Association

Keith Joseph, First Baptist, Jackson, Kimbell Baptist Association

Term to Expire 2026

\*Kevin Cooke, Roopville Road, Roopville, Carrollton Baptist Association

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Terms to Expire 2027

**Appalachee:** Chad Mantooth, First Baptist, Winder

**Atlanta Metro:**  Jim Haskell, Bridgepoint Church, Decatur

**Ben Hill Irwin**: Dennis Gay, Irwinville Baptist, Ocilla

**Bethel**: Nathan Ziglar, Cuthbert First Baptist, Cuthbert

**Columbus**: Buddy Lamb, Schomburg Road, Columbus

**Dodge:** Lewis Miller, Grace Baptist, Eastmon

**Greater Atlanta Baptist Network:** Troy Bush, Rehoboth Baptist, Stone Mountain

**Gwinnett Metro Baptist Network**: Jay Hackett, Peachtree Corners, Peachtree Corner

**Hebron**: Kevin Vaughn, Rock Branch Bpatist, Royston

**Laurens:** Darrell Paulk, First Baptist, Dublin

**Mercer**: Jim Pitt, Morven Baptist, Morven

**Middle**: Eric Green, First Baptist, Springfield

**Morgan County:** Griffin Gulledge, Madison Baptist, Madison

**Noonday**: Marty Godfrey, Burnt Hickory, Powder Springs

**Savannah**: Steve Blake, First Baptist, Bloomingdale

**Smyrna**: Christian Colson, Eastside Baptist, Douglas

**South Central Baptist Network:** Terry Ryan, Penia Baptist, Cordele

**Thomas County:** Judson Maxwell, Fredonia Baptist, Thomasville

**At Large**: Pete Mattix, Lake Country, Eatonton

**At Large**: Trea Brinson, Eagles Landing, McDonough

**At Large**: Chris Humphries, First Baptist, Bainbridge

**At Large**: Landon Dowden, Hebron Baptist, Dacula

Term To Expire 2023

**Bowen:** Cory Thomas, Flat Creek Baptist, Colquitt

**Conasauga:** Tyson Griffin, First Baptist, Tunnel Hill

**Tucker:** VACANT

**Notla River:** Matthew Jones, Mount Lebanon, Suches

Term to Expire 2025

**Kimbell**: Doug McBee, Macedonia Baptist, Jackson

The report from the 2022 Committee on Resolutions was presented by the chairman, Chris Sanchez, Northside Baptist, Valdosta. The following resolutions were adopted:

REPORT OF THE 2022 COMMITTEE ON RESOLUTIONS

Members: Chris Sanchez, John Beam, John Bryan, Sean Wegener, Anita Strickland, Mitch Adams

2022 RESOLUTIONS REPORT

The 2022 Committee on Resolutions has received several communications. We acknowledge each proposal and convey our thanks and appreciation to those who have exercised their right of free and open communication by presenting their views to this convention. The committee has taken each of these proposed resolutions under prayerful consideration and has been unanimous in its deliberations. Christopher Sanchez, chairman of the Committee on Resolutions, presented the report.

Resolution of Appreciation

Submitted by the 2022 Committee on Resolutions

Members: Christopher Sanchez, John Beam, Jr., John Bryan, and Anita Strickland

**WHEREAS**, the 200th Annual Session of the Georgia Baptist Convention met at Warren Baptist Church Augusta, Georgia on November 14-15, 2022 in which the messengers representing Georgia Baptist Churches were greeted with Christian grace and warm Southern hospitality; and

**WHEREAS**, the pastors of Warren Baptist Church, the church staffs, church members and many volunteers have tirelessly served the needs of every messenger to the Georgia Baptist Convention in fellowship of the Lord: *“Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and reaching forward to what is ahead, I pursue as my goal the prize promised by God’s heavenly call in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 3:13-14 CSB);* and

**WHEREAS**, the musicians, choirs and worship leaders have provided thrilling praise and uplifting celebration in every convention session; and

**WHEREAS**, Dwayne Boudreaux and the Augusta Baptist Association, Andy Perryman and the Georgia Baptist Association, and Tim Kilpatrick of Hephzibah – Kilpatrick Baptist Association have demonstrated second-mile cooperation, service, and hospitality in preparation for and during the meeting; and

**BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED,** that we, the messengers of the 200th session of the Georgia Baptist Convention, offer sincere appreciation to the leaders and members of Warren Baptist Church, together with Pastor David McKinley the churches of the Augusta, Georgia and Hephzibah-Kilpatrick Baptist Association together with Dwayne Boudreaux, Andy Perryman, and Tim Kilpatrick for their hospitality and service; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** that we, the messengers of this session of the Georgia Baptist Convention, express our loving appreciation for and extend our heartfelt gratitude to Dr. Kevin Williams, president of our beloved Convention; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** that we, the messengers of this session of the Georgia Baptist Convention, extend honor and thanksgiving to the officers and platform leaders for their guidance and service throughout this meeting; and we express gratitude to Mrs. Patrice Williams and family for their loving support of our president and Convention during this past year; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** that we also express our sincere appreciation and gratitude to God for those who serve on the Georgia Baptist Executive Committee, as well as Georgia Baptist Mission Board staff who faithfully serve the causes of Christ here in Georgia and around the world; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** that we commend the Committee on Order of Business and Josh Johnson, Chairman, for the preparation of this inspirational program; and

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED,** that we, the messengers of thisConvention, join our President Kevin Williams and Executive Director, Thomas Hammond, in continuing to emphasize and practice the challenging theme, *Refocus: Proverbs 16:3 “Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and he will establish your plans.”*

**Resolution on the Georgia Baptist Convention’s 200th Anniversary**

Submitted By: Charles Jones, Messenger Beech Haven Baptist Church, Athens, GA.

**WHEREAS,** the Georgia Baptist Convention is observing its 200th Anniversary, in session at the Warren Baptist Church, Augusta, Georgia, November 14th & 15th, 2022; and

**WHEREAS,** the Convention was established in 1822; “to devise and recommend scheme for the revival of experimental and practical religion; for the promotion of uniformity in sentiment, practice and discipline; for the extension of the gospel by missions and missionaries, by Bibles and tracts,”; and

**WHEREAS,** it was furthermore established; “To afford an opportunity to those who may conscientiously think it their duty to form a fund for the education of pious young men, who may be called by the Spirit and their Churches to the Christian ministry.”; and

**WHEREAS,** it was charged to; “the fulfilment of that scriptural injunction, ‘provoke one another to love and to good works.’” (Hebrews 10:24); and

**WHEREAS,** the Georgia Baptist Convention has for 200 years endeavored to cooperate, build upon and support the work of faithful servants and missionaries in Georgia and beyond; and

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED,** that we, the messengers of the Georgia Baptist Convention meeting at Warren Baptist Church Augusta, Georgia, November 14-15, 2022, that we remain diligent in the spreading of the gospel; steadfast in the face of cultural or economic adversity; bold in the pursuit of unity; committed to the development of the next generation of leaders; and

**BE IT FUTHER RESOLVED,** that we call on Georgia Baptists to be faithful ambassadors of reconciliation in their personal relationships and local communities as they demonstrate the power of the Gospel to reconcile all persons in Christ; and

**BE IT FUTHER RESOLVED,** that in the spirt of Hebrews 10:24 we continue to “provoke one another to love and good works,”; and remain diligent and passionate to share the gospel until Christ’s return.

**THEREFORE, BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED,** that the Georgia Baptist Convention, at this 200th Anniversary, in humble reflection and adoration to the One who has accomplished this work, echo the refrain, “to God be the glory, great things He hath done!”

**Resolution on Opposing Title IX**

**Regulations Imposing Gender Identity Policies**

Submitted By: Carl Metzger, Messenger from Lenox Baptist Church, Lenox, GA.

**WHEREAS**, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 was enacted to ensure that “No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance”; and

**WHEREAS,** original and existing Title IX regulations acknowledge “physiological differences between the male and female sexes”; and

**WHEREAS,** on June 23, 2022, the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) released proposed changes to Title IX regulations which would contradict the plain language of the law, which we find to be of questionable constitutionality; and

**WHEREAS,** the proposed regulations would prohibit schools that receive federal funds, including public, charter, private, and parochial schools, from “adopting a policy or engaging in a practice that prevents a person from participating in an education program or activity consistent with their gender identity,” thereby compelling schools to deny biological reality; and

**WHEREAS**, under the proposed regulations, schools and/or staff could be subject to civil litigation and loss of federal funds for “sex-based harassment” if a student or staff member uses a child’s legal name and biological pronouns rather than the child-selected preferred name and pronouns; and

**WHEREAS**, the proposed regulations would require that K-12 schools socially transition minor children to a different gender (i.e., treat the child as a member of the opposite sex) without requiring parental notification or involvement; and

**WHEREAS,** Georgia law, the United States Constitution, and legal precedent recognize the right of parents to direct the education, upbringing, and physical and mental health of their children; and

**WHEREAS,** all persons are created in God’s image and are made to glorify Him (Genesis 1:27; Isaiah 43:7); and  
  
 **WHEREAS,** God’s design was the creation of two distinct and complementary sexes, male and female (Genesis 1:27; Matthew 19:4), representing the fundamental distinction that God has embedded in the very biology of the human race; and  
  
 **WHEREAS,** distinctions in masculine and feminine roles as ordained by God are part of the created order and should find expression in every human heart (Genesis 2:18, 21–24; 1 Corinthians 11:7–9; Ephesians 5:22–33; 1 Timothy 2:12–14); and   
  
 **WHEREAS,** the Fall of man into sin and God’s subsequent curse have introduced brokenness and futility into God’s good creation (Genesis 3:1–24; Romans 8:20); and

**WHEREAS,** for many parents the male and female nature of the human person created by God is a deeply held religious belief; and

**WHEREAS,** children are harmed when parents are barred from making decisions to protect their child’s physical, mental, and spiritual well-being; and

**WHEREAS,** a high percentage of children who are permitted to socially transition will then pursue medical and surgical interventions which have irreversible, life-altering consequences, interrupt a child’s healthy growth and development, and come with significant risks, including loss of bone density, infertility, cognitive impairment, dangerous blood clots, cardiovascular disease, and cancer; and

**WHEREAS,** under the proposed regulations, schools would be required to grant access to sex-separate restroom and locker room facilities based on gender identity rather than on biological sex, which would invade the privacy of girls and women and place them at increased risk for harassment and sexual assault by males who claim a female identity; and

**WHEREAS,** USDOE’s proposed regulations pertaining to athletics would require sports teams to be based on gender identity rather than biological sex, forcing girls and women to compete on an unfair basis against males for athletic opportunities and scholarships; and

**WHEREAS,** Governor Brian Kemp signed into law HB 1084, which allows the Georgia High School Association to protect girls’ sports by designating athletic competitions on the basis of biological sex; and

**WHEREAS,** in guidance issued May 5, 2022, and in a rule promulgated on June 14, 2022, the U.S. Department of Agriculture announced that it will interpret the prohibition on sex discrimination found in Title IX and the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 to include discrimination based on gender identity; and

**WHEREAS,** Georgia public schools, nonprofit private schools, and residential childcare institutions could now be forced to choose between adopting federally mandated gender identity policies or foregoing federal funding to provide subsidized free or reduced-price meals; now

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED,** that we, the messengers of the Georgia Baptist Convention meeting at Warren Baptist Church Augusta, Georgia, November 14-15, 2022, declare our unequivocal opposition to the proposed regulatory changes released by the U.S. Department of Education on June 23, 2022, and to the rule promulgated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture on June 14, 2022; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** that the Georgia Baptist Convention calls upon Congress to enact appropriate legislation consistent with this resolution; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** that the Georgia Baptist Convention calls upon the Legislature, the Governor, the Attorney General, and the State Superintendent of Education of the state of Georgia to declare that Georgia public schools will not comply with the recent proposed and final rules of the U.S. Departments of Education and Agriculture that reinterpret the definition of sex discrimination, as those rules are unconstitutional and harmful to the students and employees of Georgia public schools; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** that the Georgia Baptist Convention calls upon the General Assembly to assist local districts in combatting this federal overreach by proactively approving stopgap funding of necessary programs should the proposed regulations take effect; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** that the Georgia Baptist Convention calls upon the General Assembly to safeguard the rights of parents and the wellbeing of children by requiring that schools and districts disclose information to parents whenever their child claims a discordant gender identity, questions his or her gender identity, requests alternative names or pronouns, or otherwise indicates mental or emotional distress about his or her gender identity; and

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED,** that the Georgia Baptist Convention stands resolutely with parents, schools, and districts in rejecting harmful, coercive, and burdensome gender identity policies, procedures, and regulations.

**Resolution on The Church in The Post-roe Era**

Submitted By: Suzanne Guy, Messenger from First Baptist Church, Woodstock, GA.

**WHEREAS**, with Roe v. Wade overturned, the church is now going to be called upon like never before for help in caring for mothers and babies. It must be understood that caring for mothers and babies should not be an “extracurricular activity,” but rather it should be the part of the “core” of what we're called to do; and

**WHEREAS**, in the book of Esther, Mordecai asks Esther, “And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?” As Christians we need to have those kinds of thoughts about the life issue; and

**WHEREAS**, in the book of First Chronicles the author reminds us that the Sons of Issachar “understood the times and they knew what to do.” It's important as Christians that we “know the times” and “know (what God is calling us) to do; and

**WHEREAS**, the book of James (1:27) reminds us that “pure and undefiled religion is to care for the orphans and the widows…” This kind of ministry is not new. This verse demonstrates that the Church is to be the “safety net” in our society; and

**WHERAS**, since Georgia’s heartbeat bill has become law, almost all abortions have been outlawed after approximately six weeks of pregnancy. This means that life will become a much more favorable alternative to women facing challenging circumstances; and

**WHEREAS**, so much of the difficulty that we find today in our culture is because, practically speaking, we have lost the family in America. Most of the issues that we are facing today related to abortion, foster care and adoption go back to the breakdown of the family.

**WHEREAS**, in many cases, when women are asked why they are going to abortion clinics, they indicate it is because they feel like they have nowhere else to go. Therefore, the church can step up and make sure that these women know the Body of Christ (the Church) is where you can go first for help; and

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that we, the messengers of the Georgia Baptist Convention meeting at Warren Baptist Church Augusta, Georgia, November 14-15, 2022, recognize that this whole process of loving and caring begins with proper biblical teaching on sexuality and the proper role of marriage and family in the lives of all people; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** that unconditional love will be at the center of what the Church must express no matter what the circumstances are regarding mothers, fathers and babies needing to be cared for with unplanned pregnancies. This kind of love is what gives greatest evidence to the love that Jesus demonstrated toward us by what He did on the cross.

**BE IT FUTHER RESOLVED**, that churches show love through providing things like help for women and men who have had a post-abortion experience; tangible help for childcare and housing; provide discipleship and friends to walk alongside of them; baby showers; help with prenatal diagnoses; partner with Pregnancy Resource Centers, and post-abortion healing ministries; create LIV (Life Initiatives and Values) groups in churches to educate about life issues and to care for those in need. Each of these are great opportunities to minister and share the gospel and love of Christ.

**BE IT FUTHER RESOLVED,** that all Georgia Baptist churches should participate in the Mission Georgia Emphases that has three of its primary focuses on needs such as: 1) post and prenatal care, 2) foster care and adoption and 3) human trafficking that impact mothers and children in a post-roe era; and

**BE IT FUTHER RESOLVED,** that all Georgia Baptist Churches should educate and promote foster care and adoption services, so that mothers have loving and caring options when not being able to care for their children; and

**BE IT FUTHER RESOLVED**, that Christians engage the culture, politics, and government policy because while Roe v. Wade has been overturned, the issue of abortion is still not over. The fight for protecting mothers and babies has now been moved primarily to the state level in policy and elections; and

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED,** that every Christian realize that they have been called by God to be “salt and light” (Matt. 5:13-16) in **every area** of life. God wants us to be active in every area of life because Jesus is Lord of every area of life

**Resolution on Sex Abuse Prevention in the Church**

Submitted By: Billy Puckett, Messenger from First Baptist Church, Vidalia, GA.

**WHEREAS,** God has created all people in His image, with equal value and dignity (Genesis 1:26–27); and

**WHEREAS,** any harm perpetrated against one of God’s image bearers is an attack on God Himself (Genesis 9:6); and

**WHEREAS,** God detests all forms of sexual abuse and calls His people to defend abuse victims (Psalm 82:4), to stand for justice (Psalm 82:3; Proverbs 31:8–9), and to deliver victims of sexual abuse from the hands of their oppressors (Proverbs 6:17; 24:10–12); and

**WHEREAS,** sexual abuse refers to sexual activity that involves the use of physical force, manipulation, coercion, or deception; involves the abuse of authority by a perpetrator over a victim; or takes place with a minor or other person who is presumed legally incapable of consent; and

**WHEREAS,** we are grieved by the findings of the Guidepost Solutions investigation. The report submitted through the SBC’s Sexual Abuse Task Force revealed disturbing and egregious acts committed on some of our most vulnerable; and

**WHEREAS,** we walk through this difficult time together as Southern Baptists, may we completely depend upon the Lord for wisdom while carefully weighing the recommendations and considering our next steps; and

**WHEREAS**, this abuse has occurred in churches and homes—which ought to be places of shelter and safety—and it has happened at the hands of family, educators, ordained ministers, and ministry workers—who ought to be trusted persons of authority; and

**WHEREAS,** the Georgia Baptist Convention is extremely dedicated to the tasks as related to the Prevention of, Responding to and Ministering to those affected by sexual abuse in our churches; and

**WHEREAS**, beginning in 2013 and continuing thereafter, outside experts have been engaged to train all Georgia Baptist Mission Board staff regarding sexual abuse prevention and reporting; and

**WHEREAS**, the professionals at MinistrySafe have been engaged to provide over 40+ regional Church Safety Workshops over the past several years – those efforts are ongoing. In a Church Safety Workshop, ministry leaders are trained to understand facts about sexual abuse and sexual abusers, the grooming process, common grooming behaviors, peer sexual abuse, impact of abuse on child victims and adult survivors, Georgia reporting requirements, and more; and

**WHEREAS**, together with FBC Atlanta, the Georgia Baptist Mission Board hosted the first-ever Sexual Abuse Summit – an all-day event providing in-depth instruction to ministry leaders, including understanding sexual abuse risk in ministry, creating an effective safety system, how to identify an abuser through an effective screening system, changes in the law, and the importance of reporting; and

**WHEREAS**, both live and online, the Georgia Baptist Mission Board has provided Sexual Abuse Awareness Training to over 7,000 leaders that serve churches, camps, disaster relief efforts, schools, daycares, and other ministries – those efforts are ongoing; and

**WHEREAS**, the Georgia Baptist Mission Board’s financial investment is over $250,000 since 2013; the staff time invested is extraordinary – both efforts are ongoing; and

**WHEREAS,** the Georgia Baptist Mission Board was the only major Georgia denomination to support the passage of HB 17, the 2015 Hidden Predator Act and other such legislation that holds abusers accountable and provides improved access for victims to the justice system in Georgia; and

**WHEREAS**, the current Georgia Baptist Convention President, Kevin Williams has appointed a Special Committee on the Prevention of Sexual Abuse, chaired by Micah Hamrick, Executive Pastor at First Baptist Church Villa Rica, to help assist Georgia Baptist churches with recommendations on safety policies, guidelines, and procedures; and

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED,** that we, the messengers of the Georgia Baptist Convention meeting at Warren Baptist Church Augusta, Georgia, November 14-15, 2022, call upon Georgia Baptists to stand with our Lord Jesus in loving and protecting children and adults as He does; and   
  
 **BE IT FUTHER RESOLVED**, that we remind all Georgia Baptists of their legal and moral responsibility to report any suspicions or accusations of child sexual abuse to authorities in addition to implementing any appropriate church discipline or other administrative processes; and  
  
 **BE IT FUTHER RESOLVED**, that we likewise call upon all Georgia Baptists to cooperate fully with law enforcement officials in exposing and bringing to justice all perpetrators, sexual or otherwise, who criminally harm children placed in our trust; and

**BE IT FUTHER RESOLVED**, that we strongly urge Georgia Baptist churches to utilize training resources to provide appropriate instruction to all potential staff and volunteer workers, particularly those who minister to children and youth; and   
  
 **BE IT FUTHER RESOLVED**, that we strongly urge Georgia Baptist churches to utilize background checks, databases of sexual predators and other relevant resources in screening all potential staff and volunteer workers, particularly those who minister to children and youth; and   
  
 **BE IT FUTHER RESOLVED**, that we encourage pastors and church leaders to develop and implement sound policies and procedures to protect all those participating in church events and ministries; and  
  
 **BE IT FUTHER RESOLVED**, that we encourage all churches and church leaders of the Georgia Baptist Convention to utilize the highest sense of discernment in affiliating with groups and or individuals that possess questionable policies and practices in protecting our children from criminal abuse; and

**BE IT FUTHER RESOLVED,** that we recognize the courage of survivors who continue to share their stories and bravely pursue action from their leaders. We also must pray for God to provide strength and healing for all survivors as well as wisdom for everyone dealing with abusive situations.    
  
 **BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED,** that we urge all Georgia Baptists to commit ourselves to doing all we can so that every place of worship is a safe place for everyone and strong witness for demonstrating and proclaiming the Gospel.

**Resolution Opposing Sports Gambling in Georgia**

Submitted By: John Yarborough, Messenger from Hopewell Baptist Church, Gainesville, GA.

**WHEREAS,** the Georgia Baptist Convention has often stated its opposition at least 21 times since 1963 to the gambling industry, and the devastating effects of gambling upon the moral and economic life of our state and nation; and

**WHEREAS,** there are many Scriptures, beginning with the Ten Commandments that talk about the supremacy of worshiping God (Ex. 20:3; Deut. 18:9-12; Matt. 6:33). Because gambling is basically more about “luck” and not skill, it encourages people to put their trust in “chance” and “superstition”; and

**WHEREAS,** the Bible indicates that man is to work creatively and use his possessions for the good of others (Eph. 4:28); gambling fosters a something-for-nothing attitude. The Bible calls for careful stewardship; gambling calls for reckless abandon. The Bible condemns covetousness and materialism (Matt. 6:24-34); gambling has both at its heart. The Christian work ethic is damaged by gambling; and

**WHEREAS,** the Scripture says in Galatians 5:17, “*For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.”* Gambling, however, encourages a compulsion to a behavior that once a person is “hooked”, it becomes uncontrollable. Anywhere predatory gambling is expanded, addiction exponentially explodes!

**WHEREAS**, studies have shown repeatedly that the legalization and promotion of vices like sports gambling could increase addiction rates by at least another 110% in our state.

**WHEREAS,** sports gambling, while it is being done illegally in our state now, will be exponentially worse if made legal, especially in terms of addiction. An addiction hotline in Tennessee has seen as much as an 800 percent increase in calls since sports gambling was legalized.

**WHEREAS,** the American Psychiatric Association’s “Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders ” (DSM 5) classifies gambling as an addictive product likened unto heroin, opioids, alcohol, and cocaine.

**WHEREAS,** we already know that each new addicted gambler costs the taxpayers $28,000 to $104,000 per year, and like drug addicts, each gambling addict negatively affects the lives of between seven and 17 other people.

**WHEREAS,** it is a well-established fact that for every $1 in new revenue from gambling, the cost to taxpayers, DHS agencies, and governments is at least $3 to $5. Gambling creates no new product and is profitable only via constant increases in human misery.

**WHEREAS,** in Australia, the online gambling establishment has children starting to gamble at age 11. In the U.K. there are 55,000 problem gamblers who are under 16 years old, and 28 million U.K. kids were illegally targeted by gambling companies, resulting in a 15% increase in problem gambling in kids.

**WHEREAS,** in the U.S., the Campaign for Gambling-Free Kids reports that “more than half of 16-year-olds have gambling apps on their smartphones.”

**WHEREAS,** there is no amount of taxation, regulation and economic gain that would justify the harm that legalized sports gambling would have on individuals, marriages, families, and children.

**WHEREAS,** aggressive actions by gambling interests and legislators in recent years make it abundantly clear their intention of seeking to expand legalized gambling in Georgia, including not only pari-mutuel gambling on horse racing, casino gambling, but also, Sports Gambling; and

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED,** that we, the messengers of the Georgia Baptist Convention meeting at Warren Baptist Church Augusta, Georgia, November 14-15, 2022, urge the members of the Georgia Legislature to cease and desist with any efforts to open the State of Georgia to additional legalized gambling like Sports betting; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** that we urge state legislators to have the moral courage to oppose the efforts by representatives of the lucrative sports gambling industry, who seek to exert their influence in the political process by convincing the legislature that state sponsored predatory gambling is somehow something good for our citizens and the state’s economy; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we pray for and lend our aid and support to Mike Griffin and our Public Affairs Ministry as we confront this menacing issue at the Capitol and that our churches and pastors educate and speak out on this evil industry in our communities; and

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED,** that copies of this Resolution be forwarded to Georgia’s Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, the Speaker of the House and the sitting state senators and representatives who represent the people of Georgia.

**Resolution on Equal Access for Deaf People**

**S**ubmitted by: Barbara Coffan, Messenger, First Baptist Church Peachtree City, GA

**WHEREAS**, according to the International Mission Board deaf people are some of the least evangelized people in the world; and

**WHEREAS,** the Gospel needs to be preached to them in their own language, and

**WHEREAS,** deaf people all over Georgia are seeking the Truth, but it is not being made accessible to them in their own language, and

**WHEREAS,** deaf pastors and leaders want mentoring and training from colleagues, and

**WHEREAS,** deaf believers in Baptist churches scattered throughout the state of Georgia are yearning for training on how to reach those of their own language and culture, and

**WHEREAS,** Paul wrote in Romans 10:13 – 14, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.  How then can they call on the One they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the One Whom they have not heard?  And how shall they hear without someone preaching to them? “, and

**WHEREAS,** Jesus instructed us in His “Parable of the Great Banquet”, saying that a certain man prepared a great banquet and invited many guests.  Soon all his servants came back and reported that all the rich friends that he invited had made excuses as to why they could not come. Then the owner of the house became angry and ordered his servants to bring in the marginalized people of the town until his house was full.

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED,** that the messengers of the Georgia Baptist Convention Annual Meeting at the Warren Baptist Church in Augusta, Georgia, November 14 – 15, 2022, strongly appeal to the organizers of associational, regional, and statewide events, to reach out to Deaf people and invite them to participate.

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED,** that the Georgia Baptist Convention encourages all churches and leaders to secure fluent, and qualified and/or certified interpreters for their conferences, trainings, fellowships, and events whenever requested, in order that people of every nation, tribe and language become fully devoted followers of Christ (Revelation 7:9).

There was a motion to accept the report. The **2022 Report from the Resolutions Committee was adopted as presented.**

There was no Miscellaneous Business.

The GBC Worship Choir led in special music. They presented a special song written by Lee Black and Cliff Duren, arranged and orchestrated by Cliff Duren entitled “Not Done Yet”. This song was written specifically for the Georgia Baptist Convention 200th Anniversary,

President Williams expressed appreciation to the vice presidents, Convention Parliamentarian, Barry McCarty, and others who had provided support and assistance as he served the past year as the Convention President. President Williams announced Ruben Torres was elected 1st Vice President with 573 votes, Anthony Wilson was elected 2nd Vice President with 516 votes, Steven Taylor was elected 3rd Vice President with 507 votes, and David Lambert was elected 4th Vice President with 487 votes.

The Benediction for the final session of the 2022 Georgia Baptist Convention Annual Meeting was provided by Kevin Williams, President of the Georgia Baptist Convention.

**2013 BOOK OF REPORTS**

Convention President, Kevin Williams adjourned the 200th Convention Annual Meeting of the Georgia Baptist Convention of the State of Georgia with 978 messengers attending.