

2025 Proceedings

Baptist General Convention of Texas

140th ANNUAL SESSION

Abilene, TX

Live Out GC2

November 16

Sunday Evening

Worship Session 1

1. Pre-session music provided by Abilene Community Choir under the direction of Eric McElhaney.
2. Video shown from Buckner International.
3. Julio Guarneri, Executive Director, Texas Baptists, welcomed attendees and introduced Arnie Adkinson, VP, Chief Development Officer, Buckner International.
4. Adkinson welcomed and read from Psalm 84, gave scripture and prayer.
5. Guarneri welcomed Cory Liebrum, Director, Discipleship and Next Gen team, Texas Baptists.
6. Liebrum recognizes Leadership Texas Baptists Cohort 9 members.
7. Guarneri recognized John Wheat, Pastor, Trinity Baptist Church of Kerrville.

8. Wheat discussed flood recovery in efforts in Hunt, TX.
9. Guarneri introduced Dennis Wiles, Pastor, First Baptist Church Arlington.
10. Congressional worship Abilene Community Choir.
11. Noe Trevino, Director, Center for Missional Engagement, Texas Baptists, highlighted the groups benefitting from Worldwide offering. Trevino recognized Mario Gonzales, Director, River Ministry, Texas Baptists, and offered prayer for the offering to be collected for Worldwide Missions.
12. Music by Abilene Community Choir.
13. Video featuring River Ministry.
14. Wiles spoke from Psalm 1 (NIV) about loving God and seeking to develop Psalm 1 people.
15. Guarneri invited everyone to attend Monday's events.
16. Guarneri offered special recognition and presented flowers to Becky Brown, executive assistant to the executive director, upon her retirement and gave thanks for her 35 years of service.
17. Benediction led by Kenneth Jackson, Pastor, New Light Baptist Church, Lubbock.

November 17

Monday Morning

Business Session 1 and Worship Session 2

18. Pre-session music provided by 317 Collective.
19. A video on Guardian Financial Group was shown.

20. President Ronny Marriott declared the 140th Annual Meeting of the Baptist General Convention of Texas to come to order.
21. Keely Rule, Principal Partner, gave an overview of Guardian Financial. He read from Ephesians 4:1-7 and led in prayer.
22. Marriott reminded messengers the taking of votes during business meetings will be conducted by the chair by asking the messengers to raise and lower ballots or by standing unless a ballot vote is necessary.
23. Marriott recognized Michael Evans, Sr., Registration Secretary, for a report.
24. Evans announced as of 9:30 a.m., November 17, 2025, there were 1,039 messengers enrolled and 679 visitors duly registered. He moved that the messengers who have been enrolled as of this time be seated. Motion was approved.
25. Marriott stated if anyone wishes to challenge the seating of messengers from churches they would need to do so in writing to the Committee on Credentials. It would be referred to the Executive Board and reported back next year at the Annual Meeting.
26. Marriott recognized John Whitten, Chair, Committee on Annual Meeting (COAM). Whitten moved the Standing Rules of the Convention as printed on page 36 of the *Bulletin* be approved as printed. Please note that on page 38 To Propose A Resolution that the committee be available in rooms 207/208 on the second floor of the Abilene Convention Center. All resolutions must be submitted to any member of the Resolutions Committee by noon Monday, November 17, 2025. The Standing Rules are adopted.

27. Whitten then moved that the Order of Business as printed on pages 8-12 of the *Bulletin* be adopted for the Convention. Marriott mentioned the times stated were general orders and are intended for guidance only. The Order of Business was adopted.
28. Marriott asked anyone planning to make a nomination for President, First Vice President or Second Vice President to come to the stage.
29. Marriott stated anyone desiring to make a motion should refer to page 37 in the *Bulletin*, calling attention to the note on page 38. He noted that a motion will not be considered by the Convention until a messenger has submitted it to the delegates during the Annual Meeting.
30. Marriott recognized students from San Marcos Academy for serving as pages at the microphones.
31. Marriott stated a Resolution is an “expression of opinion” as opposed to a motion calling for action. Additional information can be found in the *Bulletin* on page 38. Any resolution must be received by the Committee of Resolutions no later than noon, Nov. 17, 2025.
32. BGCT Second Vice President Joseph Adams announced the time for the election of the BGCT President for the year 2025 – 2026. Adams recognized Ronnie Marriott, pastor and messenger, First Baptist Church, Richardson.
33. Marriott nominated Debbie Potter, children’s minister, Trinity Baptist Church, San Antonio.
34. Shawn Brewer, messenger, First Baptist Church, Paradise, nominated Kevin Burrow, pastor, First Baptist Church, Eastland.
35. Adams called on Ward Hayes, CFO/Treasurer, Texas Baptists, to explain the ballot process.
36. Marriott called for nominations for candidates for First Vice President.

37. Marriott recognized Bill Skaar, messenger, First Baptist Church, Grand Prairie.
38. Skaar nominated Joseph Adams for First Vice President for the 2025 – 2026 term. There were no other nominations for First Vice President. Adams was elected by acclamation for the 2025 – 2026 term.
39. Marriott called for nominations for candidates for Second Vice President.
40. David Lowrie, messenger, First Baptist Church, Decatur, nominated Ariel Martinez, Del Sol Church, El Paso, Second Vice President for the 2025 – 2026 term. Martinez was elected by acclamation for the 2025 – 2026 term.
41. Marriott recognized Heath Kirkwood, BGCT Executive Board Chair, for a report from the Executive Board.
42. Kirkwood reported some highlights of the year; approval of the 2024 proceedings of the 139th annual session at the Texas Baptists Annual Meeting on Nov. 10-12 in Waco; a recommendation to organize a Texas Baptists Insurance Program and the creation of the Texas Baptists Indemnity Program, Texas Baptists Risk Management and Covenant Solutions, each of which are separate from the BGCT but each company's board of directors is elected by the Executive Board; approval of a recommendation for at least one director of missions and one BGCT pastor to serve on the board of each company; a recommendation to affirm the convention's longstanding practice to receive into harmonious cooperation churches that affirm traditional Baptist beliefs as generally stated in either the 1963 or 2000 Baptist Faith and Message, or a similar Baptist confession statement; approved two recommendations related to institutional relations: the adoption of a special relationship agreement between Dallas Baptist University and Texas Baptists

and the restated articles of incorporation of STCH Ministries; approved recommendations from the Sexual Abuse Prevention and Response Task Force; approved recommendations to fill vacancies on various institution boards and committees.

43. Marriott recognized Craig Christina, Associated Executive Director, Texas Baptists, to bring a report on the Texas Baptists Indemnity Program.
44. Marriott recognized Ward Hayes, Treasurer/CFO, Texas Baptists, to present the financial report.
45. Hayes presented the Treasurer's Report for 2024. Cash and investments totaled \$267M and total liabilities decreased by over \$5M. BGCT Cooperative Program giving was lower at 98% of prior Year. Cooperative Program budget expenditures were below budget thanks to the good stewardship by Texas Baptists staff. For 2025 ending September 30, net assets have increased by \$22M. Texas CP gifts are at 96.3% of prior year.
46. Hayes presented the 2026 Proposed Budget. CP gifts are needed to be \$28 million with investment income expected at \$8 million and donor designated revenue at \$8.6 million for a total budgeted revenue of \$47.9 million which is 105% of the 2025 budget.
47. Marriott called on Kirkwood to make recommendation to adopt the 2026 budget in the amount of \$37.5 million as found on page 55 of the *Bulletin* and asked for any discussion.
48. Mike Miller, messenger, Central Baptist Church, Jacksonville, made the following amendment. "I move that the BGCT immediately cease directing all funds to Baylor University until the University and/or any of its colleges, schools, or departments: 1) Permanently revoke the charter of the Prism student group. 2) Cease all funding, partnerships, sponsorships, and affiliations with the organization Baptist Women in

Ministry. 3) Terminate and refuse any current or future affiliation and/or endorsement of any group or organization that affirms or approves the LGBTQ agenda and lifestyle.”

Amendment seconded.

49. Marriott stated that since this motion brings up items not pertaining to the budget, it would be better brought up during miscellaneous business and be out of order at this time.

50. Steve Wells, messenger, South Main Baptist Church, brought a point of order.

51. Marriott stated the Amendment is out of order, so the point of order would not be pertinent.

52. Bruce Webb, messenger, First Baptist Church, The Woodlands, spoke against overruling the amendment.

53. Marriott asked for a vote to overrule the chair. Motion failed.

54. Kody Alvarez, messenger, Oak Grove Baptist Church, China Spring, brought the following amendment. “I move that the Baptist General Convention of Texas terminate its partnership with the Baptist World Alliance and remove all funding allocations designated for the BWA from the upcoming BGCT budget.”

55. Marriott stated since there are no budget monies designated for BWA this motion would be better served as miscellaneous business.

56. Marriott called for approval of the 2026 budget as presented. Motion passed.

57. Kirkwood brought the recommendation to adopt the 2026 Texas World Missions Initiatives and Partnership Allocation as shown on page 56 of the *Bulletin*.
58. Marriott asked for any discussion.
59. Mike Miller, messenger, Central Baptist Church, Jacksonville, made the following amendment. "I move that the BGCT immediately terminate its membership in and cease all funding directed to or through the Baptist World Alliance." Amendment seconded.
60. Marriott stated the funding would be pertaining to the budget the membership would not.
61. Miller spoke for the amendment.
62. Dennis Wiles, messenger, First Baptist, Arlington, spoke against the amendment.
63. Kody Alvarez, Oak Grove Baptist Church, China Spring, spoke for the amendment.
64. Ross Chandler, First Baptist Church, Marble Falls, spoke against the amendment.
65. Marriott called for a vote in favor of the Amendment. The amendment failed.
66. Marriott called for a vote on the motion. Motion passed.
67. Kirkwood presented a recommendation from the Executive Board that this body approve the recommendation to adopt the relationship agreement between the Baptist General Convention of Texas and Dallas Baptist University found on page 57 on the *Bulletin*. Motion passed.

68. Kirkwood brought a recommendation for the affirmation of BGCT's current practice in regard to the affiliation of churches and their respective confessions of faith as found on page 58 of the *Bulletin*. Motion passed.

69. Marriott introduced the time for miscellaneous business and opened the floor for messengers to make motions that were germane to Convention business. Motions may be made on any topic except those issues that were otherwise delegated by the Constitution or Bylaws. Further information can be found on page 37 of the *Bulletin*. Motions to amend the Constitution and Bylaws could also be made at this time. Motions made today will not be acted upon until the second Business Session tomorrow. They will be referred to the Committee on the Annual Meeting for review and they will be taken up in the order in which they were presented.

70. Mike Miller, messenger, Central Baptist Church, Jacksonville, brought the following motion "I move that the messengers to the BGCT 2025 Annual Meeting direct the Institutions Relations Committee of the Executive Board to evaluate the Special Relationship Agreement with Baylor University, specifically with respect to Baylor's endorsements of and partnerships and affiliations with any organizations that advocate for or affirm the LGBTQ lifestyle and agenda and report back any findings, actions, or recommendations to the messengers to the BGCT 2026 Annual Meeting."

71. Kody Alvarez, Oak Grove Baptist Church, China Spring, made the following motion. “I move that the Baptist General Convention of Texas direct the Institutional Relations Committee to examine all BGCT affiliated educational institutions for alignment with the GC2 Summary of Faith, as adopted and emended by the messengers at the 2021 Annual Meeting, and to require that all professors in religion and theology departments sign an affirmation of the GC2 Summary of Faith as a condition of continued cooperation and BGCT funding. Institutions found out of alignment shall have two years to make necessary corrections, after which any school that refuses or chooses to retain professors who reject the GC2 Summary of Faith shall forfeit all institutional funding and scholarship support provided by the Convention.”

72. Marriott recognized Stacy Conner, Chair, Committee on Committees, who moved for the election of the persons nominated by this committee found on page 44 of the *Bulletin*, with one correction to remove the name of Jonathan Hernandez, Jr. The persons nominated were elected.

73. Marriott recognized Jase Waller, member of the Committee to Nominate Executive Board Directors, who moved for the election of the persons nominated by the committee found on page 44 of the *Bulletin*. The persons nominated were elected.

74. Marriott recognized Ryan Chandler, Committee on Nominations for Boards of Affiliated Ministries, who moved for the election of the persons nominated by the committee found on pages 45-48 of the *Bulletin*, with one correction. Joseph Sullivan's name will be removed. The persons nominated were elected.

75. Marriott announces the results of the vote for President. Debbie Potter received 430 votes, and Kevin Burrow received 320. Debbie Potter elected President for 2025 – 2026.

76. Gregory Love, founder of MinistrySafe, shared a message titled "Love your Neighbor: Protecting Children." He reminded churches that "they will not accidentally get their protection policies right; it will require priority, intentionality and training."

77. 317 led in continued worship.

78. Rolando Aguirre, associate pastor of teaching and Spanish language ministries at Park Cities Baptist Church, Dallas, shared a message titled "Love your Neighbor: Justice, Mercy and Humility." Referencing Micah 6:8, he shared the three dimensions of God's justice — making wrong things right, making mercy your way and making humility your practice.

79. Rhoda Gonzalez, pastor's wife, North Dallas Family Church, Dallas, led the benediction.

80. Marriott adjourned the business and worship session.

November 17

Monday Evening

Worship Session 3

81. Pre-session music provided by Jeff Walsh and the First Baptist Church Midland Worship Team.

82. Video shown featuring HighGround Advisors.

83. Guarneri welcomed everyone to worship. He introduced David Slover, senior vice president and chief strategy officer, HighGround Advisors.

84. Slover brought greetings and led in prayer.

85. Texas Baptists Annual Meeting Promotional video was shown.

86. Guarneri introduced Tamiko Jones, executive director, WMU of Texas, and Mickey Lenamon, CEO, Texans On Mission.

87. Jones reported that in the last year, the leaders and volunteers of Christian Job Corps sites across Texas served 1,976 participants, with 1,365 graduates, 108 professions of faith and over

600,000 volunteer hours. Jones said \$3.2 million in gifts was raised through the Mary Hill Davis Offering.

88. Lenamon brought greetings and showed video of Hill Country rebuilding after Kerr County floods.

89. Jeff Iorg, President, CEO, Executive Committee, Southern Baptist Convention, brought greetings on behalf of the Southern Baptist Convention. He thanked attendees for their contributions to the Cooperative Program.

90. Guarneri and Iorg celebrated the 100th anniversary of the Cooperative Program, and recognized Green Acres Baptist Church for being the top giving church to the Cooperative Program. Michael Gossett, Pastor, Green Acres Baptist Church, accepted the recognition and encouraged churches to remain faithful to giving to the Cooperative Program.

91. Guarneri recognized the top giving churches of the last 25 years to the Cooperative Program and led prayer.

92. Congregational worship led by Jeff Walsh and the First Baptist Church Midland Worship Team.

93. Video shown featuring First Baptist Church Marble Falls.

94. Guarneri brought the Executive Director's Report. Guarneri announced the GC2 Strong Discovery Process which allows churches to learn, pray, assess and pursue a pathway to focus on strengthening their churches, missions and leaders in the Great Commandment and Great Commission.

95. Video shown featuring the Texas Baptists/Ukrainian Baptist Union partnership agreement to provide post-war ministry.

96. Irene Gallegos, director, Hunger and Care Ministries, Christian Life Commission, Texas Baptists, highlighted the Texas Baptist Hunger Offering and offered prayer for the offering to be collected for the Hunger Offering.

97. Video was shown featuring The Mustard Seed Cafe, a ministry of the Hunger Offering.

98. Guarneri introduced Elijah Brown, General Secretary, Baptist World Alliance.

99. Brown shared a message on "The Great Commandment meets the Great Commission." Referencing Acts 2:41-47, he shared that there 5 pathways to be involved in collaborative global missions: the witness path, the Bible path, the care path, the freedom and justice path and the neighbor path.

100. Closing remarks from Guarneri.

101. Eric Bruntmyer, president, Hardin-Simmons University, led the benediction.

November 18

Tuesday Morning

Business Session 2

102. John Davis from Hardin-Simmons opened with a memorial, honoring his late wife Connie, and read her favorite scripture, Jeremiah 29:11, emphasizing hope and God's plans for the future.

103. A prayer was led by Rick Cadden, First Baptist Church Burleson, asking for blessings over the families of those memorialized and gratitude for their legacy and example. Thanks given for the foundation and service of past and present church members, aiming to inspire continued commitment to kingdom work. The importance of honoring those who have significantly contributed to the community was stressed, with hopes for new leaders to emerge.

104. Ronny Marriot introduces Wesley Shotwell, to present resolutions.

105. Wesley Shotwell, Ash Creek Baptist Church, calls upon Becky Biser to present Resolution 1.

106. Becky Biser, Tarrant Baptist Association, presents resolution 1 (appreciation to Abilene churches).

107. Danny Quintanilla, STCH Ministries, presents resolution 2 (commission officers).

108. Jordan Villanueva, Howard Payne University, presents resolution 3 (pornography).

109. John Whitten, Pioneer Drive Baptist Church, Abilene to present the Committee on Annual Meeting. Reminder given about previously approved future meeting locations: 2026 in Waco and 2027 in Tyler, with 2028's venue still under consideration.

110. John Whitten presents the two motions from messengers.

111. Mike Miller, Central Baptist Church in Jacksonville, brought the 1st motion requesting an evaluation of Baylor University's alignment with BGCT values regarding LGBTQ+ affiliations and a report at the next annual meeting. Debate followed, with arguments for accountability and concern over Baylor's partnerships, while opponents cited Baylor's official biblical stance and warned against unnecessary controversy.

112. Mike Miller, Central Baptist Church in Jacksonville, speaks in favor of motion 1 and directs the IRC to evaluate its relationship with Baylor.

113. Ross Chandler, FBC Marble Falls, speaks against motion, he supports Baylor and does not want to sever ties. Chandler states: "Baylor represents Texas Baptists churches."

114. Kody Alvarez, Oak Grove BC in China Spring, speaks for motion He states: "The goal is for the IRC to review the relationship."

115. Howard Batson, speaks against the motion.

116. Matthew Jones, Reliance Baptist Church in Bryan, speaks for the motion.

117. The motion was defeated by majority vote.

118. John Whitten, Pioneer Baptist Church, Abilene brings 2nd motion, proposed by Kody Alvarez.

119. Kody Alvarez, Oak Grove Baptist Church in China Spring, proposed alignment checks for all BGCT-affiliated educational institutions and required professors in relevant departments to affirm the GC2 Summary of Faith.

120. The committee ruled the motion out of order, stating it would require a constitutional amendment.

121. Ronny Marriott shifted to elect a Secretary of Cooperation and introduced Steve Vernon to nominate this role.

122. Steve Vernon, Director of Church Relations, UMHB moves to nominate Bill Arnold.

123. Bill Arnold was elected Secretary to the Corporation by unanimous consent, recognized for his decades of service and expertise.

124. Ronny Marriott calls upon Joe Fields, New Beginnings Baptist Church, Lewisville to nominate the role for Registration Secretary.

125. Michael Evans, Sr., Bethlehem Baptist Church was nominated and elected as Registration Secretary, with accolades for his commitment, ministry, and past leadership roles.

126. Julio Guarneri introduces Delvin Atchison, Westside Baptist Church, Lewisville who will be preaching after the worship session.

127. Tiffany Stotts, HSU Worship Leader, reads Revelation 4:11.

128. Delvin Atchison, Westside Baptist Church brings a message, "Lead Like Jesus" and reads from John 13: 1-17.

129. HSU Choir comes back out to worship as Delvin closes his sermon.

130. Ronny Marriott comes on stage to announce some Lost and Found items that are kept in the office.

131. Ronny shares some closing remarks as he reminisces on his time as BGCT President. He thanks the convention and churches for their support. Ronny reads from John 17:20-23. Ronny challenges Texas Baptists churches to show the world the strength and unity amid diversity for the glory of God. Ronny ends his closing remarks with a prayer.

132. HSU Choir goes back out to lead worship.

133. Hendrick Health video plays.

134. Julio Guarneri comes on stage and reminds everyone to download the Bless App. Tells them how they can register their church and share it with their congregations. Guarneri announces 2026 Annual Meeting in Waco, TX, November 15-17, 2026.

135. Julio recognizes the outgoing President and his wife: Ronny and Robin Marriott.

136. Julio introduces the new incoming officers: President, Debbie Potter and her husband.

Joseph Adams (VP), Ariel Martinez, Bill Arnold, Michael Evans Sr. Julio prays over the new incoming officers.

137. Dan Woolridge, retired pastor of Crestview BC in Georgetown, closes the session in prayer.