

2020 annual session of the Mississippi Baptist Convention postponed

By William H. Perkins Jr.

Editor

The 2020 annual session of the Mississippi Baptist Convention will be postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic, the convention's 100-member board learned during a meeting Aug. 25 at Garaywa Camp and Conference Center in Clinton. The original dates for the now-postponed annual session were Oct. 27-28.

"Due to the extraordinary and extraneous conditions caused by the current pandemic, as authorized by Article VI, Sec. 2 of the Convention's Constitution, the Convention President with the concurrence of the other Convention officers, including the Convention Board's Executive Director-Treasurer, deem it appropriate and necessary to postpone the 2020 Annual Meeting of the Convention, until further notice," announced Ken Hester, convention president and senior pastor of First Church, Pontotoc.

"The Convention President, the Convention Board's Executive Director-Treasurer, Convention Officers, and the Convention's 2020 Order of Business Committee will continue to monitor the pandemic in an effort to determine an appropriate time and place to conduct the annual meeting," he said, adding, "Notice of the postponement and potential rescheduling of the Convention shall be communicated to all Mississippi Baptist Churches."

Hester also noted, "In accordance with the Convention's Plan of Organization and Action, Article I, Sec. 1, 'The general work of the Convention is committed to a Convention Board which, unless otherwise provided for, shall have charge and

supervision of all interests of the Convention, including missions, education, social service, and benevolences, in the interval between annual meetings of the Convention.'

"Additionally, Article XIII. Sec. 3, states that, 'Vacancies on any board or commission of the Convention occurring between annual meetings of the Convention may be filled temporarily by the Convention Board or Executive Committee of the Board and those thus designated shall serve until the next annual meeting of the convention, at which time the Committee on Nominations shall jointly nominate with the sitting board of trustees of each respective institution, and the Convention shall elect a member to complete the unexpired part of the term. Vacancies occurring on boards of trustees of the institutions shall be filled in the above manner or as provided by charter.'"

Hester said the last times the convention did not convene annual sessions were during the days of the Civil War, in 1862 and 1863.

The pandemic that has ravaged every area of the country since early spring has also taken a heavy toll on Mississippi Baptist meetings and events, the annual session being only the latest. For more information, visit <https://www.mbc.org/coronavirus/>.

Shawn Parker, executive director-treasurer of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, also said at the meeting, "Article V of the Convention's Constitution, Sec. 4, states that, 'All officers of the Convention shall continue in office until their successors have been regularly elected.' Therefore, until such time as the Convention can reconvene and a formal election be properly conducted, the current Convention Officers shall remain in office."

Those presently serving as Mississippi Baptist Convention officers include:

- Hester.
- Scott Thomas II, first vice-president and senior pastor of North Oxford Church, Oxford.
- Whit Lewis, second vice-president and senior pastor of Longview Heights Church, Olive Branch.
- Michael Weeks, recording secretary and pastor of Pleasant Hill Church, Olive Branch.
- Jerry Bingham, missions director for Benton-Tippah Association, Ripley.

Hester closed his presentation to the convention board with four points: "We need to get the word out, as best you can, that the decision was made with great thought and prayer; that our intent is to consider the safety of our Mississippi Baptist messengers and their churches; that the convention is diligently following their governing documents to ensure that all convention business is handled appropriately; and that we need to prayerfully encourage and help all of the Mississippi Baptist family to continue to do the work of the Great Commission [Matthew 28:18-20]."

To view Hester discussing the postponement, visit <https://vimeo.com/msbaptists/annualmeeting>.