BGAV Focuses on Responding to God’s Call at 194th Annual Meeting

The 194th Baptist General Association of Virginia (BGAV) Annual Meeting took place November 13-15, 2017, in Hampton, VA. Ministers and lay leaders from many BGAV churches gathered for fellowship, worship, training, and business.

Forty-three exhibitors participated in the ministry fair, offering resources to attendees. On Monday afternoon, several breakout sessions were offered.

Monday evening, a Spirit-filled worship service at Ivy Memorial Baptist Church featured praise and worship bands from the church and Sixth Mount Zion Baptist Temple. Messengers and guests watched videos and heard personal testimonies of the BGAV’s recent ministries in disaster relief and racial reconciliation. BGAV Executive Director John Upton offered an interpretation of the meeting’s theme, “Answering God’s Call… Now What?” He likened the BGAV’s calling to that of the first disciples in Matthew 4:18-22, commenting that Jesus is calling and awaiting our response, and we have to decide, “Are we in, or are we out? Are we going to take the risk or just stay where we are?” In each day’s meetings, speakers and worship leaders focused on how individuals and churches can respond to God’s call during the literal and figurative storms of life.

Tuesday began with the BGAV welcoming the McAfee School of Theology of Mercer University as a new partner, and also renewing a longstanding partnership between the BGAV and Woman’s Missionary Union of Virginia. Resolutions of appreciation were presented for Fred Anderson, who retired as executive director of the Virginia Baptist Historical Society after 38 years of service, and for Ron Crawford, who retired as president of Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond. John Upton and David Washburn gave the Executive Director’s and Treasurer’s reports, respectively.

The Coastal Community Church praise and worship band led in a time of worship following an intermission, and Leith Anderson, president of the...
National Association of Evangelicals, gave an inspiring and informative keynote address. That afternoon, attendees went to regional meetings and then chose from 11 breakout sessions.

Evening worship on Tuesday was led by The Millers. Nathan Taylor and Fred Anderson offered historical reflections of notable Baptists who responded to God’s call during difficult times—paving the way for generations of Christians ahead of them to boldly answer God’s call. In his evening message, Leith Anderson addressed six ways to become the kind of leaders God wants his people to be.

The annual meeting concluded Wednesday with a business session and closing worship. During the business session, members voted to approve the 2018 budget of $10 million with a unanimous affirmative vote. Rev. George Fletcher, retired pastor of several BGAV churches and current BGAV 1st vice president, was nominated and elected to serve as president in 2018. Richard Martin was elected as 1st vice president, Brooke Holloway was elected as 2nd vice president, and Fred Anderson will serve as clerk for a 36th year. The body also approved new Mission Council members.

Kevin Meadows was approved as chair of the Executive Board. Shirley Cobb, Lora Gravatt, Tamara McBride, Bryan Taliaferro, and Kevin James were all nominated to serve on the Executive Board.

Wednesday’s worship was led by BGAV’s Uptick Artists. Leith Anderson brought the closing message, and participants shared in a time of communion.

The 195th Annual Meeting of the BGAV will be held November 12-14, 2018 at Mount Vernon Baptist Church in Glen Allen (Richmond area).

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How is your church reaching the community for Christ? Share your story with your fellow BGAV churches! Contact Nathan White at nathan.white@bgav.org.

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