



First  
Presbyterian  
Church  
of Waynesboro, Virginia

# The Columns *Online*

March 1 2023 | Waynesboro, Virginia | *a newsletter supplement*

## **Megachurch Kicked out of SBC** **Saddleback Church and four other congregations are the first to be expelled** **since the ban on women pastors was instituted in 2000.**

*by Bob Smietana | Religion News Service*

(RNS) — The Southern Baptist Convention made international headlines last week after its Executive Committee voted to oust one of the nation’s largest and best-known churches for having a woman preaching pastor. On February 21, Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, California, was “deemed not to be in friendly cooperation” with the SBC for having Stacie Woods — wife of newly appointed senior pastor Andy Woods — as a regular preacher. Her role conflicts with a section of the denomination’s statement of faith, the Baptist Faith and Message, which restricts the office of pastor to men. Saddleback had previously been reported to the SBC’s credentials committee, which reviews the status of churches, for ordaining several longtime women staffers in 2021.



Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, California, June 12, 2022. RNS photo by Bob Smietana

Four other churches were also removed for having women pastors, including New Faith Mission Ministry in Griffin, Georgia, whose pastor has since claimed the church was never part of the SBC.

*continued*

## Megachurch, continued

Those congregations were the first to be expelled from the SBC on a national level for having women pastors since the ban on women pastors was instituted in 2000.

Churches have been removed in the past from Baptist state conventions or local associations for having women pastors. In 2009, the Georgia Baptist Convention disfellowshipped First Baptist Church of Decatur for hiring a woman pastor, then followed up in 2010 by kicking out Druid Hills Baptist Church for the same reason. In 2015, a Tennessee Baptist local association removed Greater Tabernacle Missionary



Moore.

Baptist Church in Lawrenceburg for having a woman pastor. Local or regional groups often have different rules for how closely churches have to follow their doctrines. Some require churches to completely agree with the Baptist Faith and Message. Some use other statements of faith.

At the Convention level, the rules have been more flexible. Founded in 1840, the denomination didn't have an official statement of faith till 1925. That same year, the SBC started the Cooperative Program, which pools money from churches to fund missions, seminaries and other ministries around the country.

Though the language of having only male pastors was added to the Baptist Faith and Message in 2000, Southern Baptists repeatedly resisted calls to add language to the denomination's constitution to bar churches with women pastors. However, in 2014, the denomination's constitution was amended to include only churches with "a faith and practice which closely identifies" with the Baptist Faith and Message. That 2014 rule change opened the door for more churches to be removed from the SBC, including for issues like racism and mishandling sexual abuse. As part of additional rules passed in 2019 to name those issues, the credentials committee was given the job of deciding whether or not a church is in "friendly cooperation" with the denomination.

The push to kick out churches with women pastors — that have women preaching in them — gained momentum in 2019 after former Southern Baptist Bible teacher Beth Moore tweeted about speaking in a church on Mother's Day. That led to outrage by SBC leaders like seminary President Al Mohler, who had helped draft the Baptist Faith and Message changes two decades earlier. The debate was intensified by the country's increased polarization, which has eroded much of the trust that made the SBC's work possible in the past.

Some Southern Baptists, like Mohler, say that no woman can have the title of pastor. Others say that only the senior pastor role is limited to men alone, while other women on a church staff could be referred to as pastors.

*continued*

## Megchurch, continued



Warren.

Things came to a head in May 2021 after former Saddleback senior pastor and bestselling author Rick Warren announced that the church had ordained several women as pastors. Not long afterward, a messenger at the 2021 SBC meeting called for the church to be investigated.

This disagreement left the credentials committee in a pickle since they did not know exactly how the beliefs about pastors should be applied. At the 2022 SBC meeting in Anaheim, California, Linda Cooper, chair of the credentials committee, asked messengers to form a study group to look at how local churches use the term “pastor.”

That request led to heated debate, with Mohler arguing that Southern Baptists know exactly what the word “pastor” means, while Greenway supported the idea of a study group, saying it should be expanded to look at how closely churches need to follow the SBC statement of faith.

Bart Barber, current SBC president and pastor of First Baptist Church in Farmersville, TX said voting Saddleback out was the only way for local church messengers to have a say in the matter. SBC rules allow two options for challenging a church’s status. If a messenger does so at an annual meeting, the credentials committee can either rule immediately or take time to look into the matter, said Barber. If they decide against an immediate ruling, then the committee makes a recommendation to the Executive Committee. If anyone disagrees with the recommendation, they can start the process over again.

Now that the Executive Committee has voted to oust Saddleback, they or another of the other disfellowshipped churches can appeal to the upcoming annual meeting this June in New Orleans. Saddleback is expected to appeal, setting up a vote on the issue.

“In June we will find out what the messengers feel about Saddleback having a woman pastor as part of the regular preaching team,” said Barber.

## OUR WORSHIP CHANNELS

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# LENT 2023

2/22

ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE



3/01

LENTEN SERIES: THE PARABLES  
BROWN BAG LUNCH

3/29



4/06

MAUNDY THURSDAY SERVICE  
SIMPLE MEAL & COMMUNION

ALL EVENTS ARE AT NOON.



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# Music Notes for March 5

The opening hymn for this Sunday will be *I To the Hills Will Lift Mine Eyes*, with text from Psalm 121. It is set to the tune DUNDEE, which first appeared in the 1615 edition of The Scottish Psalter. Just a few years later, in 1621, Thomas Ravenscroft (1592-1635) harmonized the tune and published it in his *Whole Booke of Psalmes*. The music is named for the city of Dundee, known as the “Scottish Geneva” during the Scottish Reformation.



Ravenscroft.

The closing hymn for this Sunday will be *At the Name of Jesus*, with music was written by Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958). The English composer spent many years traveling through the English countryside to document folk music. He amassed a collection of over 800 tunes, the essence of which wove its way into his original music. *At the Name of Jesus* is one of those pieces, published in 1925 in a collection called Songs of Praise. The music, known as KING’S WESTON, is named after a manor house on the Avon River near Bristol, England.

## Worship This Week:

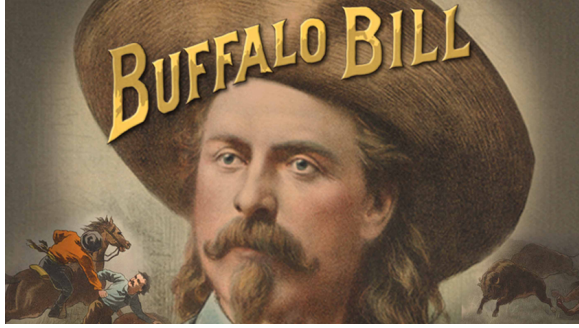
**Psalm 121**

**John 3: 1-7**

**“Fresh thoughts on familiar words.”**

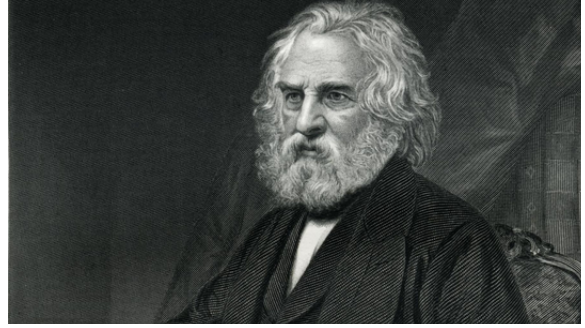


# This Week in History.



American frontiersman and showman William Cody is born in Scott County, IN. As a young man, he claimed to have killed over 4,000 buffalo within 17 months. His Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show would famously tour the world.

**February 26, 1846**



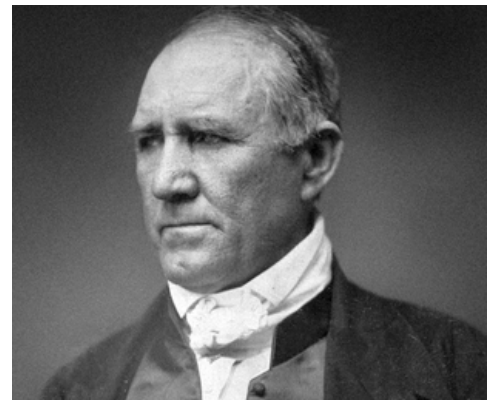
American poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow is born in Portland, ME. His best known works include *Paul Revere's Ride*, *The Song of Hiawatha*, and *The Wreck of the Hesperus*.

**February 28, 1807**



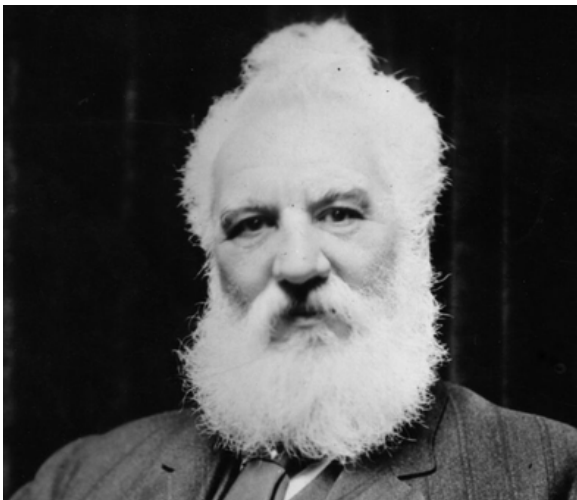
American band leader Glenn Miller is born in Carilinda, IA. His dance band gained enormous popularity during the 1940's. In 1942 he is commissioned a Major in the Army Air Forces. December 15, 1944, his plane would disappear over the English Channel while en route to performances in liberated Paris.

**March 1, 1904**



American soldier and statesman Sam Houston is born in Rockbridge County, VA. A Congressman and Governor of Tennessee, he would move to Texas in 1832, becoming commander in the War for Texan Independence. After defeating the Mexican army at the Battle of San Jacinto in 1836, he would be elected President of the Republic of Texas; later he serves as Senator and Governor of the state of Texas. He was removed in 1861 after refusing to swear allegiance to the Confederacy.

**March 2, 1793**



Alexander Graham Bell is born in Edinburgh, Scotland. A pioneer in teaching the deaf to speak, Bell would develop the telephone using a vibrating membrane to transmit sounds electrically. His first phone call on March 10, 1876, was to his assistant: "Mister Watson, come here, I want you."

**March 3, 1847**



American football player and coach Knute Rockne is born in Voss, Norway. He would coach the Notre Dame Football team for 13 seasons, amassing an overall record of 105 wins, 12 losses and 5 ties before dying in an airplane crash on March 31, 1931, over Kansas

**March 4, 1888**