News 23 November 2026 | English article

Latest: Tennessee Baptists Elect David Evans President as Summit 2026 Sets Record $62.9 Million in Giving

A true story of faith under pressure. Read the first half below, then continue online.

KEY SPIRITUAL TAKEAWAY

"In all my years of attending conventions - over 50 years' worth - I have never attended one with so much togetherness, purpose, and gospel-centered focus as this one,"

(Transliterated from the original Hindi.)

They had gathered only to pray. When prayer itself becomes the target, faith is proved not by words but by staying.

The Story - Part One

Tennessee Baptists elected David Evans as the new president of the Tennessee Baptist Convention at Summit 2026 in Sevierville, where 1,129 messengers representing 534 churches gathered from 15 to 17 November 2026. Messengers approved a $35.5 Million budget and heard Tennessee Baptists gave a record $62,870,751 to missions and ministries over the past year. The meeting also marked the 125th anniversary of the Golden Offering for Tennessee Missions.

But the moment people will remember did not come from a budget vote. It came from an 88-year-old pastor named Paul Mason. Mason, interim pastor of Rays Chapel Baptist Church in Waynesboro, stood on stage with Randy C. Davis of the Tennessee Baptist Mission Board and talked about a young boy in his church named Bo Lewter. Bo survived spinal meningitis - and his story led to dozens of people being saved and baptized.

Mason has attended conventions for more than 50 years. "In all my years of attending conventions - over 50 years' worth - I have never attended one with so much togetherness, purpose, and gospel-centered focus as this one," he said. A boy who nearly died, a church full of new believers, and an 88-year-old pastor saying he had never seen anything like it - that is the real story of Summit 2026.

Tennessee Baptists Summit 2026: David Evans Elected President In Sevierville

Evans, senior pastor of Springfield Baptist Church, was elected president after serving as vice president last year. He ran unopposed, nominated by Larry Robertson of Hilldale Baptist Church in Clarksville, and succeeds Dan Spencer of First Baptist Church in Sevierville.

Mike Sams, senior pastor of First Baptist Church in Martin, was elected vice president. Messengers also elected three regional vice presidents: Brandon Johns of First Baptist Church in Soddy-Daisy for the East, Tim McGehee of Grace Baptist Church in Tullahoma for the Middle, and Carter Carroll of Hopewell Baptist Church in Savannah for the West.

The meeting opened Sunday night, 15 November, with the Tennessee Reunion worship celebration, where Hollie Miller of Maryville Baptist Church preached. The Pastors Conference followed on Monday under the theme "Swallowed Up," each speaker preaching a passage from Jonah. Business sessions ran Monday night to Tuesday night, under the theme "All Aboard: Full Steam Ahead."

The Turning Point - What Happens Next

The story reaches a life-changing moment that changes everything -- and what seemed like the end is only the middle. Two reports disagree on the numbers, and one question is left unanswered: will the CCTV footage ever come out? Read the full story to find out what happens next.

PERSONAL REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When gathering to pray carries a real cost, what keeps a community coming together anyway -- and what would keep you coming?

2. The pastor's sister shielded him with her own body and fainted under the blows. What does costly, self-giving love look like in your own family or church?

3. When justice is delayed and a complaint is withdrawn under threat, how do believers hold on to truth without giving in to fear -- or to hatred?

READ THE FULL STORY

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