



FAQs about the Atlantic Shores Baptist Church affiliation with the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) and Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia (SBCV)

- 1. What is the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) and who are Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia (SBCV)?*

The Southern Baptist Convention is the largest protestant denomination in the world with nearly 50,000 affiliating churches. For almost 175 years, Southern Baptists have sought to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all people everywhere. The SBC of Virginia is a fellowship of more than 700 churches dedicated to the fulfillment of the Great Commission. The convention began in 1996 based on a belief in the inerrancy of Scriptures and committed to church planting as a means to reach the world for Christ.

- 2. What prompted the leadership to consider this affiliation at this current time? Is there a timeline for making a decision on affiliation?*

The pastors have been discussing, off and on, affiliation with Southern Baptists for more than two years. As we have seen other respected churches recently affiliate, we continued our discussion. Earlier this year, the pastors brought the discussion to the elder body, and then the elder body involved the deacons. After both the elders and deacons approved, we decided to get input from the church family. We have not been in a hurry to make a decision. However, we plan to wrap up our due diligence this fall.

- 3. Why is Atlantic Shores considering an affiliation with the Southern Baptist Convention and Southern Baptists Conservatives of Virginia?*

Fellowship is the first reason. Atlantic Shores and Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia (SBCV) have enjoyed a friendly ministry relationship for many years. One example of that is our relationship with Dr. Brian Autry who serves as the Executive Director of Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia (SBCV). Dr. Autry has spoken at Shores many times.

Partnership is another reason we are considering an affiliation. Together, we can accomplish so much more for the gospel. In the SBC, nearly 50,000 churches partner in world missions through the International Mission Board and in church planting through the North American Mission Board. In Virginia alone, there are more than 700 Southern Baptist churches that partner in gospel ministry.

Stewardship is the final reason we are considering an affiliation. As we continue to grow toward giving ten percent of our budget to missions, we are looking for proven ministries in which to invest financially and with whom we share theology, philosophy of ministry, and vision for fulfilling the Great Commission (Matthew 28:16-20).

4. *What impact will the SBC/SBCV affiliation have upon our present missionaries and missions organizations that we support financially?*

An affiliation with SBC/SBCV only adds to our portfolio of global ministries we support through the Atlantic Shores missions budget. All current Shores missionaries and other non-SBC ministries will continue to receive financial support to the extent that they continue to meet the requirements for such support.

5. *Will Atlantic Shores be participating financially in the Cooperative Program of the Southern Baptist Convention? If yes, how much will we give and from where does it come in the ASBC budget?*

Financial participation in the Cooperative Program of the SBC/SBCV is voluntary. In the 2018-19 budget year, we planned to invest in world missions and church planting through the SBC/SBCV at \$500 per month or \$6,000 annually.

6. *By affiliating with the SBC/SBCV, will Atlantic Shores lose any of its independence?*

Atlantic Shores will not lose any of its independence by affiliating with SBC/SBCV. All Southern Baptist churches are autonomous. Member churches voluntarily choose to work together in missions and in church planting in order to fulfill the Great Commission (Matthew 28:16-20). Article VI of the Southern Baptist Convention's confession of faith clearly states, "A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is an autonomous local congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the Gospel."

7. *Will the church staff be participating in Guidestone health insurance and retirement plans? If so, what is the cost to the church?*

Churches affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention have voluntary access to health insurance and retirement plans made available to pastors and staff through GuideStone. However, Atlantic Shores always shops the marketplace for the best and most affordable plans that we can make available for the staff.

8. Thirty percent of SBC churches embrace Calvinism. Is Atlantic Shores adopting Calvinism, also known as Reformed theology?

For more than thirty-five years, Atlantic Shores Baptist Church has adopted a historically Baptist theological position. We have no plans to change our Baptist-oriented statement of faith, nor does an affiliation with SBC/SBCV require us to do so. We see synergy between the Atlantic Shores statement of faith and the Baptist Faith and Message (2000) of the SBC/SBCV. The Baptist Faith and Message (2000) does not reflect Calvinism or Reformed theology. In fact, the more robust Baptist Faith and Message (2000) enhances the Atlantic Shores statement of faith. Because all SBC/SBCV churches are autonomous, some choose a more Reformed statement of faith, but they still find ways to partner with the broader movement within the Southern Baptist Convention.

9. Where can I go to learn more about the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) and Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia (SBCV)?

Visit the following websites to learn more:

[Southern Baptist Convention \(SBC\)](#)

[Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia \(SBCV\)](#)

[International Mission Board \(IMB\)](#)

[North American Mission Board \(NAMB\)](#)

10. Does a decision to affiliate with the SBC/SBCV require a church vote?

The Atlantic Shores Baptist Church Constitution and By-laws does not require a vote of the church family to affiliate with Southern Baptists. However, the pastors discussed the matter and then brought it to the elder body for further discussion. Afterwards, the elder body invited the deacons into the conversation. After both bodies approved, we decided to get input from the church family. This has happened slowly over a two-year period of time.