

Pastors' Views on Economic Impact

A SURVEY OF AMERICAN PROTESTANT PASTORS

Lifeway research

Methodology

- The phone survey of 1,003 Protestant pastors was conducted August 8 – September 3, 2024
- The calling list was a stratified random sample, drawn from a list of all Protestant churches. Quotas were used for church size
- Each interview was conducted with the senior pastor, minister or priest at the church
- Responses were weighted by region and church size to more accurately reflect the population
- The completed sample is 1,003 surveys
- The sample provides 95% confidence that the sampling error does not exceed $\pm 3.3\%$ This margin of error accounts for the effect of weighting
- Margins of error are higher in sub-groups

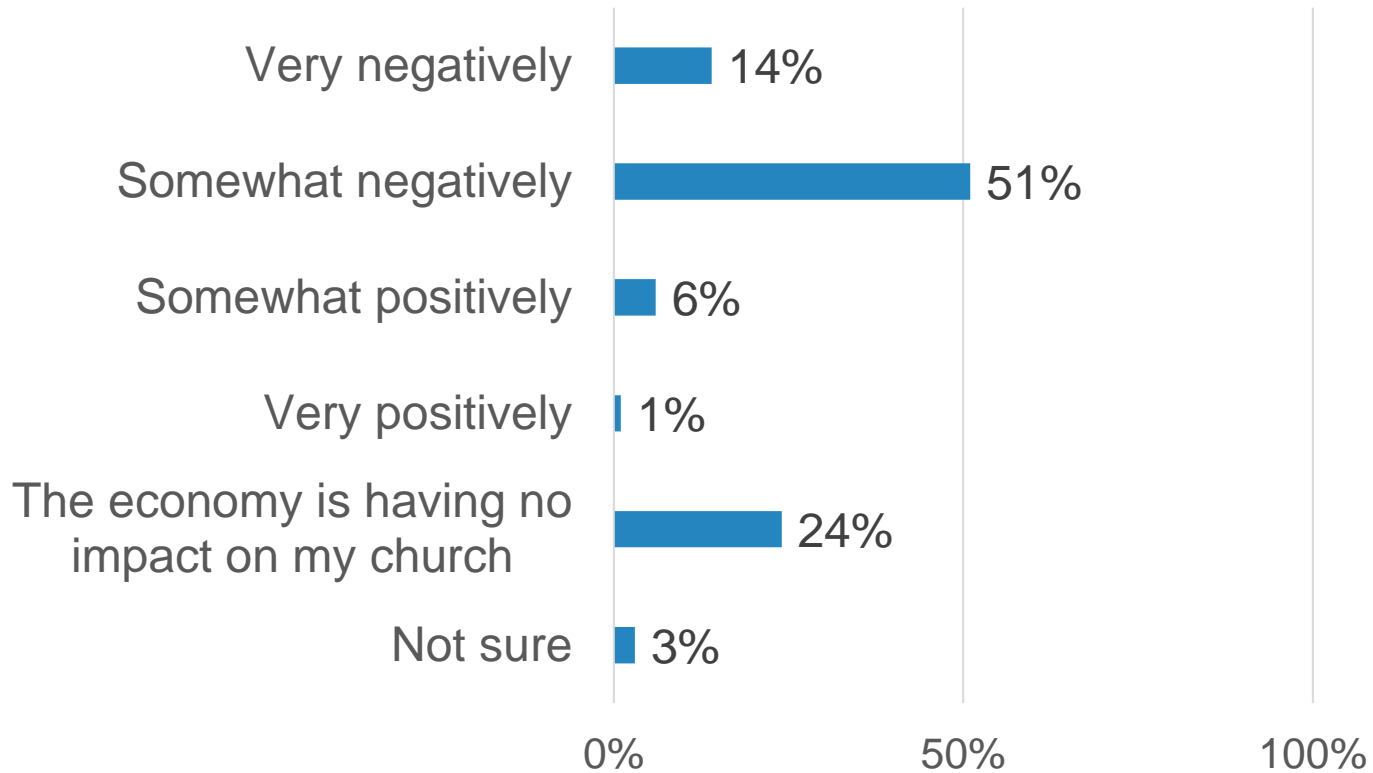
Methodology

- Comparisons are also made to the following telephone surveys using probability sampling:
 - 1,002 pastors conducted November 5-12, 2009
 - 1,000 pastors conducted March 1-9, 2010
 - 1,000 pastors conducted October 7-14, 2010
 - 1,002 pastors conducted January 17-27, 2011
 - 1,000 pastors conducted May 18-25, 2011
 - 1,000 pastors conducted May 23-31, 2012
 - 1,000 pastors conducted September 11-18, 2014
 - 1,000 pastors conducted January 8-22, 2016
 - 1,000 pastors conducted August 30 – September 18, 2017
 - 1,000 pastors conducted August 29 – September 11, 2018
 - 1,000 pastors conducted August 30 – September 24, 2019
 - 1,007 pastors conducted September 2 – October 2, 2020*
 - 1,000 pastors conducted September 1-29, 2021
 - 1,000 pastors conducted September 6-30, 2022
 - 1,004 pastors conducted August 29 – September 20, 2023

*Mixed-mode telephone and online

66% say that the current economy is having a negative impact on their church

Among Protestant Pastors



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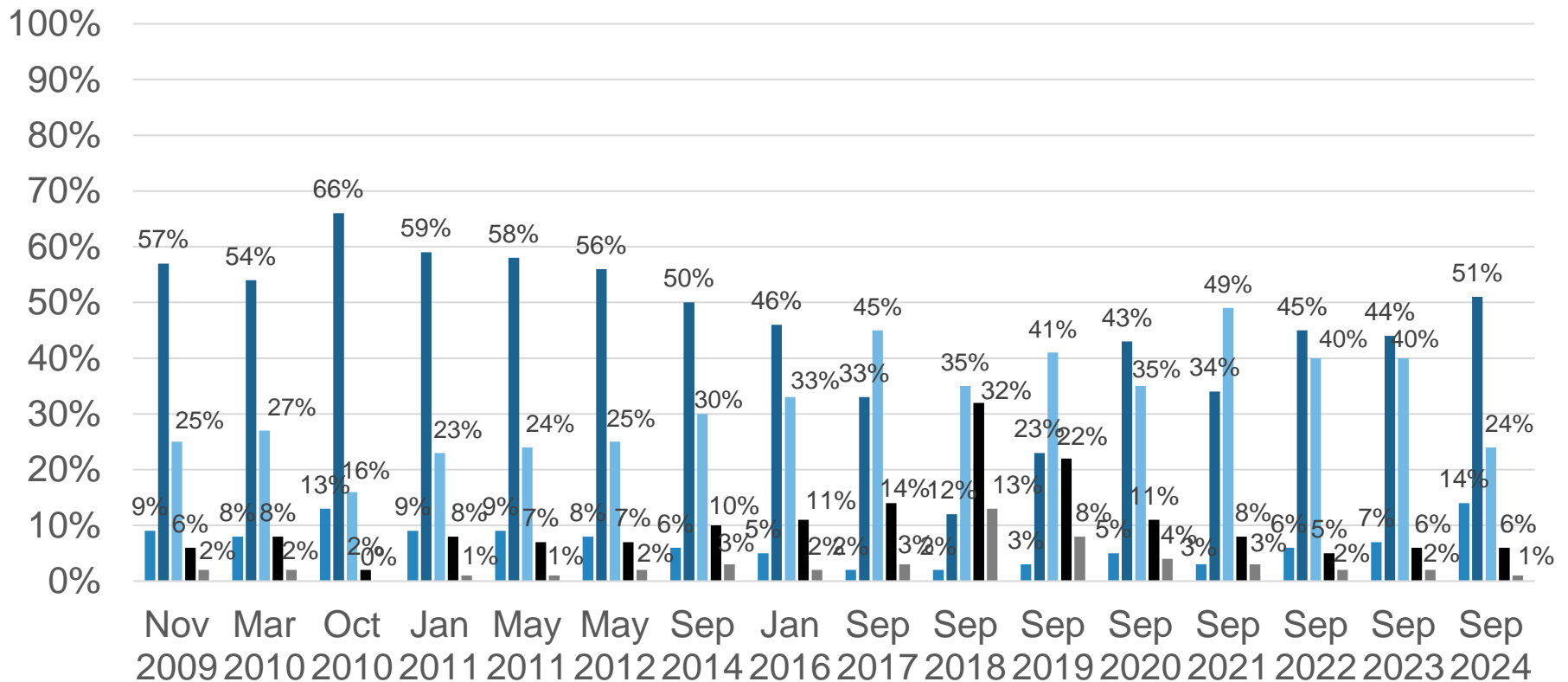
Q: "How is the current economy impacting your church?" n=1,003

Pastors' perceptions of negative economic impact is the highest since 2011

(14% Very negatively is the highest recorded)

Among Protestant Pastors

■ Very negatively ■ Somewhat negatively ■ No impact ■ Somewhat positively ■ Very positively

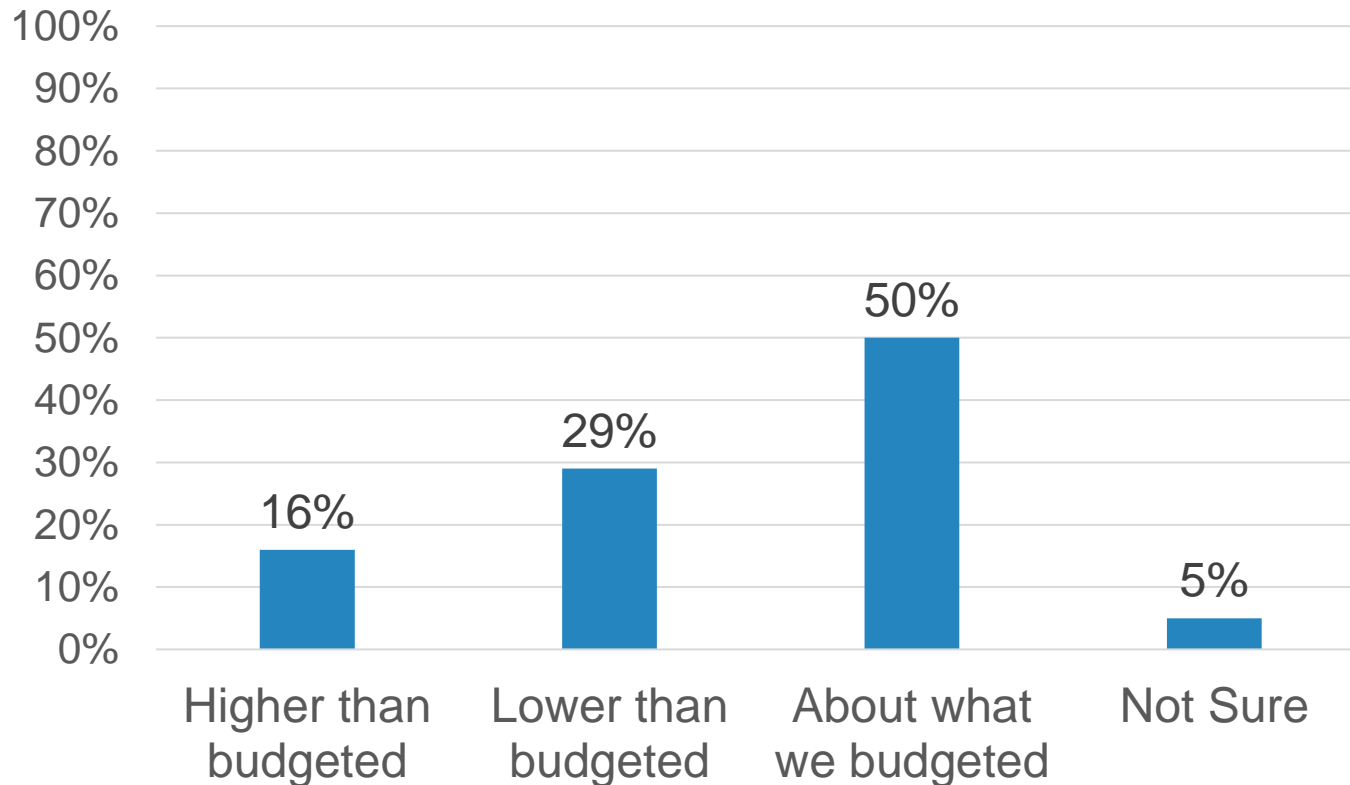


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Q: "How is the current economy impacting your church?"

50% say that giving for 2024 is about what was budgeted; 29% say it is lower than budgeted

Among Protestant Pastors

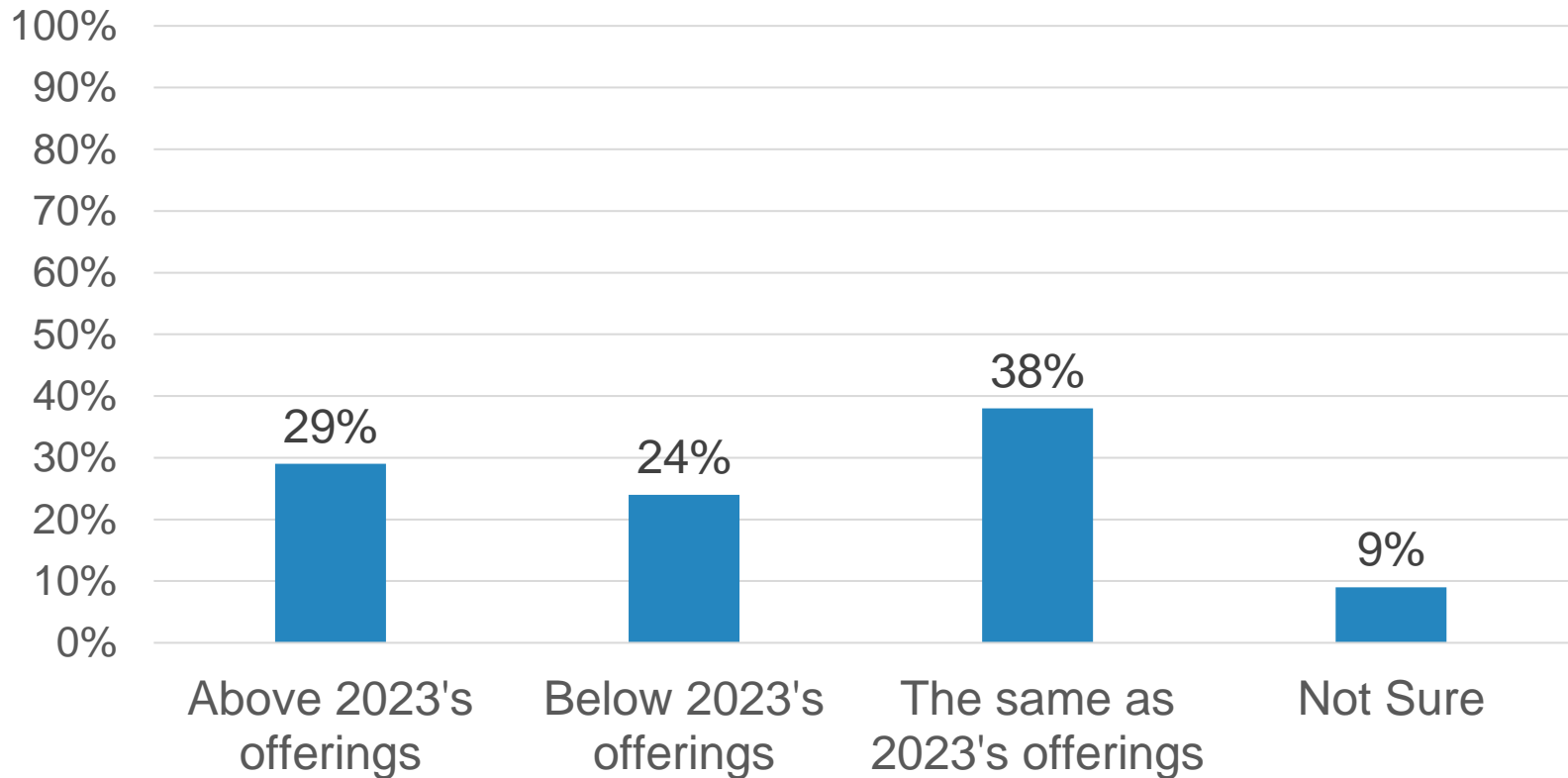


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Q: "Since the beginning of 2024, have your offerings been ..." n=1,003

29% say that giving for 2024 is higher than 2023

Among Protestant Pastors

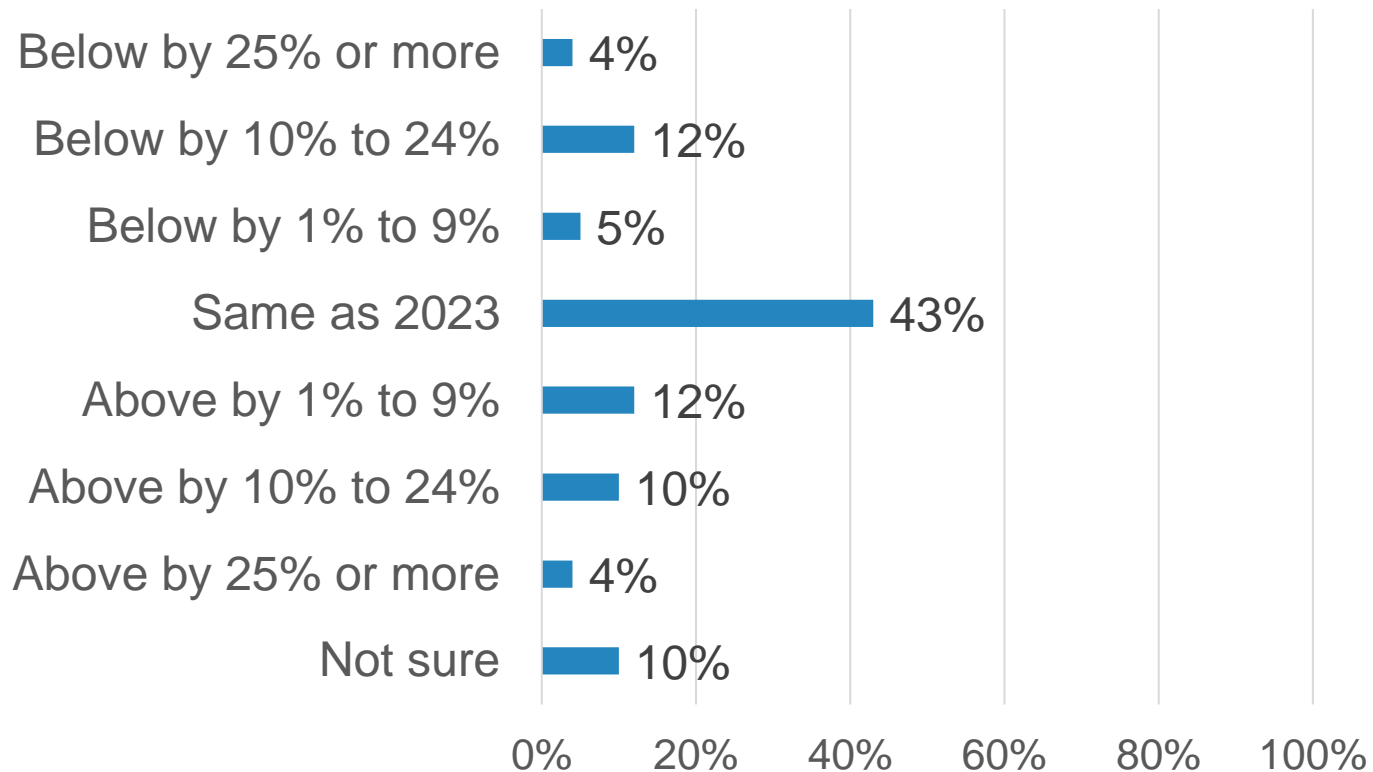


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Q: "Compared to your calendar year 2023 offerings, have your total offerings so far for 2024 been ..." n=1,003

Percentage offerings are below or above 2023

Among Protestant Pastors



Mean change: +0.15%

Median change: 0%

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Q: "Approximately what percentage are your calendar year 2024 offerings above 2023's offerings?"
Q: "Approximately what percentage are your calendar year 2024 offerings below 2023's offerings?" n=898

Significant Differences

Pastor

Ethnicity

Age

Gender

Education Level

Self-identified Evangelical/Mainline

Political Party

Presidential Candidate

Church

Region

Denomination

Average Attendance

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Significant Differences

Comparisons were made to determine if there are any significant statistical differences among the pastor's ethnicity, age, gender, education, self-identified Evangelical or Mainline.

AGE	GENDER	ETHNICITY	EDUCATION	Self-Identified
18-44	Male	White	No College Degree	Evangelical
45-54	Female	African American	Bachelor's Degree	Mainline
55-64		Other ethnicities	Graduate Degree	
65+			Doctoral Degree	

Significant Statistical Differences

Comparisons were made to determine if there are any significant statistical differences among the church's region, denomination group, and average worship attendance.

REGION	DENOMINATION GROUP	ATTENDANCE
Northeast	Baptist	0-49
South	Lutheran	50-99
Midwest	Methodist	100-249
West	Pentecostal	250+
	Presbyterian/Reformed	
	Christian/Church of Christ	
	Non-Denominational	

Note: Region is defined by the US Census locations

Significant Statistical Differences

Comparisons were made to determine if there are any significant statistical differences among political party and presidential candidate .

POLITICAL PARTY	CANDIDATE
Democratic	Kamala Harris (Democratic)
Republican	Donald Trump (Republican)
Independent	Undecided

“How is the current economy impacting your church?”

- Pastors age 45-54 (73%) are more likely to select “Very or somewhat negatively” than pastors age 65+ (61%)
- Male pastors are more likely to select “Very or somewhat negatively” than females (67% v. 58%)
- Pastors who are White (67%) and Other ethnicities (67%) are more likely to select “Very or somewhat negatively” than African American pastors (49%)
- African American pastors (36%) are more likely to select “The economy is having no impact on my church” than White pastors (23%)
- Pastors with no college degree (69%) or a Bachelor’s Degree (70%) are more likely to select “Very or somewhat negatively” than those with a Doctoral Degree (56%)
- Evangelical pastors are more likely to select “Very or somewhat negatively” than Mainline pastors (71% v. 60%)
- Pastors in the West (71%) are more likely to select “Very or somewhat negatively” than those in the Northeast (58%)

“How is the current economy impacting your church?”

Continued

- Methodists (30%), Presbyterian/Reformed (32%), and Non-denominational (31%) are more likely to select “The economy is having no impact on my church” than Baptists (19%), Lutherans (20%), and Christian/Church of Christ (14%)
- Republicans are the most likely to select “Very or somewhat negatively” (79%)
- Democrats (21%) are more likely to select “Very or somewhat positively” than Republicans (2%) and Independents (9%)
- Democrats (34%) are more likely to select “The economy is having no impact on my church” than Republicans (18%) and Independents (24%)
- Pastors planning to vote for Donald Trump are the most likely to select “Very or somewhat negatively” (83%)
- Pastors planning to vote for Kamala Harris (35%) and pastors who are undecided (28%) are more likely to select “The economy is having no impact on my church” than pastors who are planning to vote for Donald Trump (15%)

“Since the beginning of 2024, have your offerings been?”

- Pastors age 45-54 are the most likely to select “Lower than budgeted” (38%)
- Pastors age 55-64 (55%) are more likely to select “About what we budgeted” than pastors age 45-54 (44%)
- Evangelical pastors are more likely to select “Lower than budgeted” than Mainline pastors (34% v. 24%)
- Mainline pastors are more likely to select “About what we budgeted” than Evangelical pastors (55% v. 47%)
- Presbyterian/Reformed (60%) are more likely to select “About what we budgeted” than Baptists (49%), Lutherans (47%), and Pentecostals (39%)
- Pastors at churches with attendance 0-49 are the least likely to select “Higher than budgeted” (11%)
- Republicans (36%) are more likely to select “Lower than budgeted” than Democrats (17%) and Independents (28%)
- Democrats (58%) are more likely to select “About what we budgeted” than Republicans (46%)

“Since the beginning of 2024, have your offerings been?”

continued

- Pastors planning to vote for Donald Trump (39%) and pastors who are undecided (31%) are more likely to select “Lower than budgeted” than pastors planning to vote Kamala Harris (19%)
- Pastors planning to vote for Kamala Harris (61%) are more likely to select “About what we budgeted” than pastors planning to vote for Donald Trump (45%) and pastors who are undecided (47%)

“Compared to your calendar year 2023 offerings, have your total offerings so far for 2024 been ...”

- Pastors age 55-64 (40%) and 65+ (42%) are more likely to select “The same as 2023’s offerings” than pastors age 18-44 (31%)
- Pastors with a Master’s Degree (34%) are more likely to select “Above 2023’s offerings” than those with no college degree (22%) or a Bachelor’s Degree (21%)
- Mainline pastors are more likely to select “Above 2023’s offerings” than Evangelical pastors (36% v. 25%)
- Evangelical pastors are more likely to select “Below 2023’s offerings” than Mainline pastors (28% v. 19%)
- Lutherans (38%) and Presbyterian/Reformed (38%) are more likely to select “Above 2023’s offerings” than Baptists (19%), Methodists (26%), and Pentecostals (25%)
- Pastors at churches with attendance 0-49 are the least likely to select “Above 2023’s offerings” (20%)

“Compared to your calendar year 2023 offerings, have your total offerings so far for 2024 been ...” *continued*

- Democrats (41%) are more likely to select “Above 2023’s offerings” than Republicans (25%) and Independents (30%)
- Pastors planning to vote for Kamala Harris (39%) are more likely to select “Above 2023’s offerings” than pastors planning to vote for Donald Trump (23%) and pastors who are undecided (28%)
- Pastors planning to vote for Donald Trump (31%) and pastors how are undecided (27%) are more likely to select “Below 2023’s offerings” than pastors planning to vote for Kamala Harris (12%)

“Approximately what percentage are your calendar year 2024 offerings above/below 2023’s offerings?”

- Pastors age 65+ (48%) are more likely to select “Same as 2023” than pastors age 18-44 (36%)
- Pastors age 18-44 (15%) are more likely to select “Above by 1% to 9%” than pastors age 65+ (8%)
- African American pastors (11%) are more likely to select “Above by 25% or more” than White pastors (3%)
- Pastors who are Other ethnicities (8%) are more likely to select “Below by 25% or more” than White pastors (3%)
- Pastors with a Master’s Degree (14%) or a Doctoral Degree (16%) are more likely to select “Above by 1% to 9%” than those with no college degree (6%) and a Bachelor’s Degree (8%)
- Pastors with a Master’s Degree (13%) are more likely to select “Above by 10% to 24%” than those with a Bachelor’s Degree (6%)
- Evangelical pastors are more likely to select “Below by 10% to 24%” than Mainline pastors (15% v. 9%)

“Approximately what percentage are your calendar year 2024 offerings above/below 2023’s offerings?” Continued

- Pastors in the South (14%) and West (16%) are more likely to select “Below by 10% to 24%” than those in the Northeast (6%)
- Pentecostals (22%) are more likely to select “Below by 10% to 24%” than Lutherans (8%), Methodists (10%), and Presbyterian/Reformed (6%)
- Lutherans (18%) and Presbyterian/Reformed (15%) are more likely to select “Above by 1% to 9%” than Baptists (7%) and Pentecostals (6%)
- Pastors at churches with attendance 100-249 (15%) and 250+ (18%) are more likely to select “Above by 1% to 9%” than those at churches with attendance of 0-49 (7%)
- Democrats (17%) are more likely to select “Above by 10% to 24%” than Republicans (9%)
- Pastors planning to vote for Donald Trump (15%) are more likely to select “Below by 10% to 24%” than pastors planning to vote for Kamala Harris (7%)
- Pastors planning to vote for Kamala Harris (15%) are more likely to select “Above by 10% to 24%” than those planning to vote for Donald Trump (8%)

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