

# **Pastors' Views on Economic Impact 2025**

A SURVEY OF AMERICAN PROTESTANT PASTORS

**Lifeway**research

# Methodology

- The phone survey of 1,003 Protestant pastors was conducted September 2-24, 2025
- 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

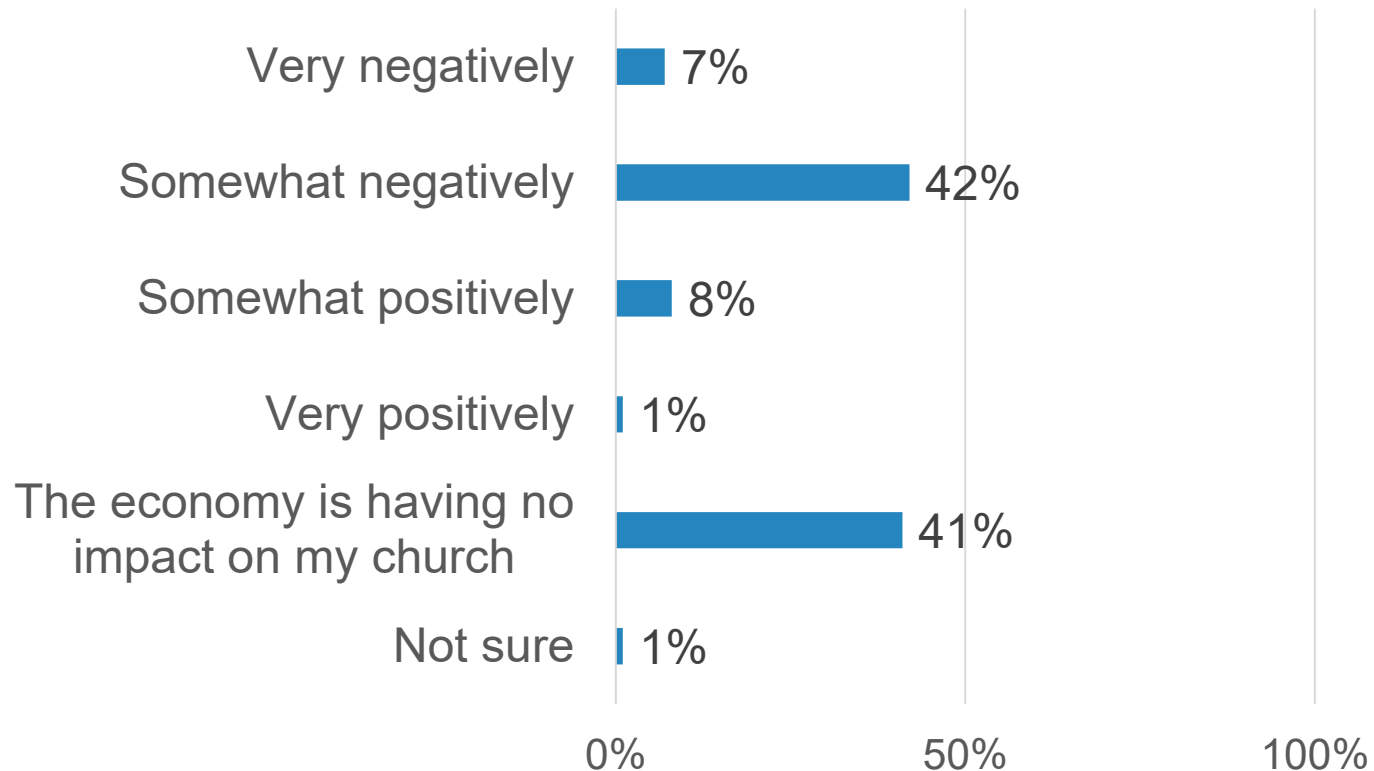
# Methodology

- Comparisons are also made to the following telephone surveys using probability sampling:
  - 1,000 pastors conducted February 2-10, 2009
  - 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
  - 1,003 pastors conducted August 8 – September 3, 2024

\*Mixed-mode telephone **Lifeway research**

# 49% say that the current economy is having a negative impact on their church

Among Protestant Pastors



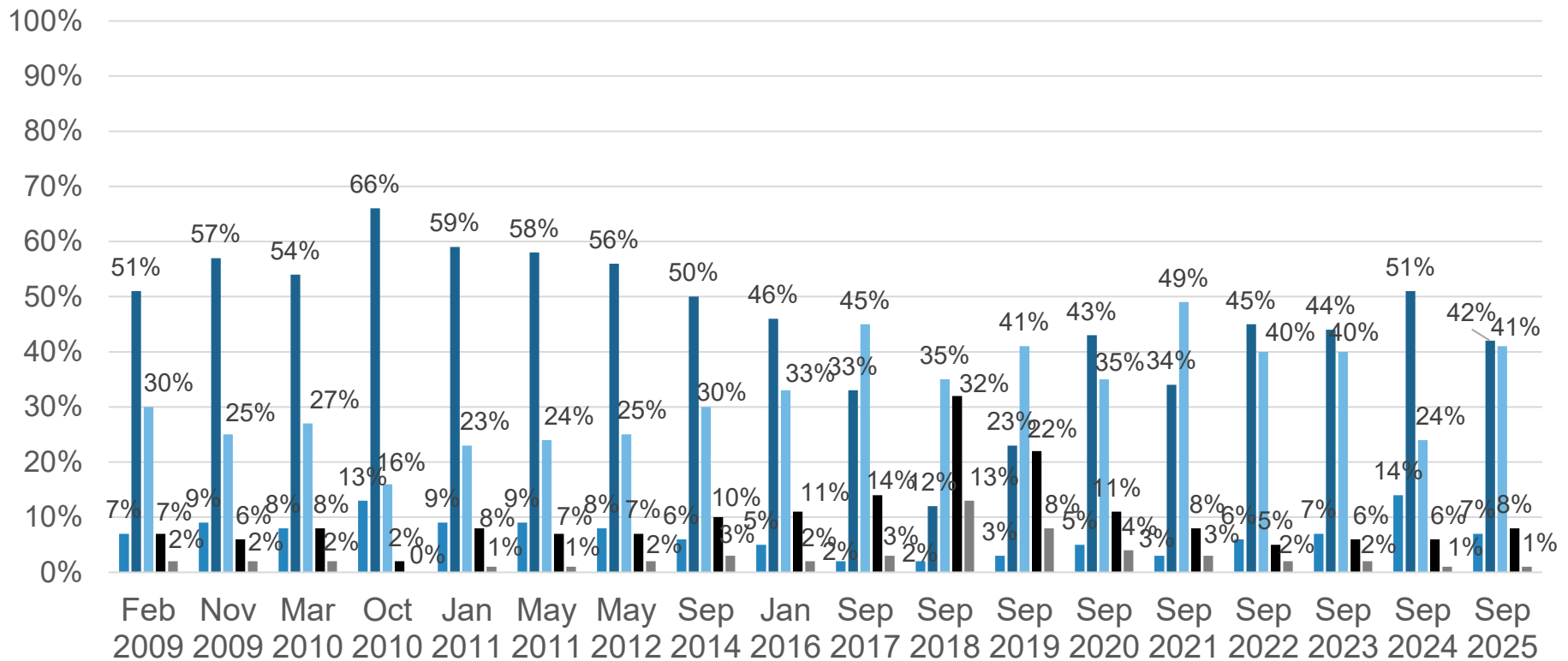
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Q: "How is the current economy impacting your church?" n=1,003

# Pastors' perceptions of negative economic impact is much less negative than last year

Among Protestant Pastors

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

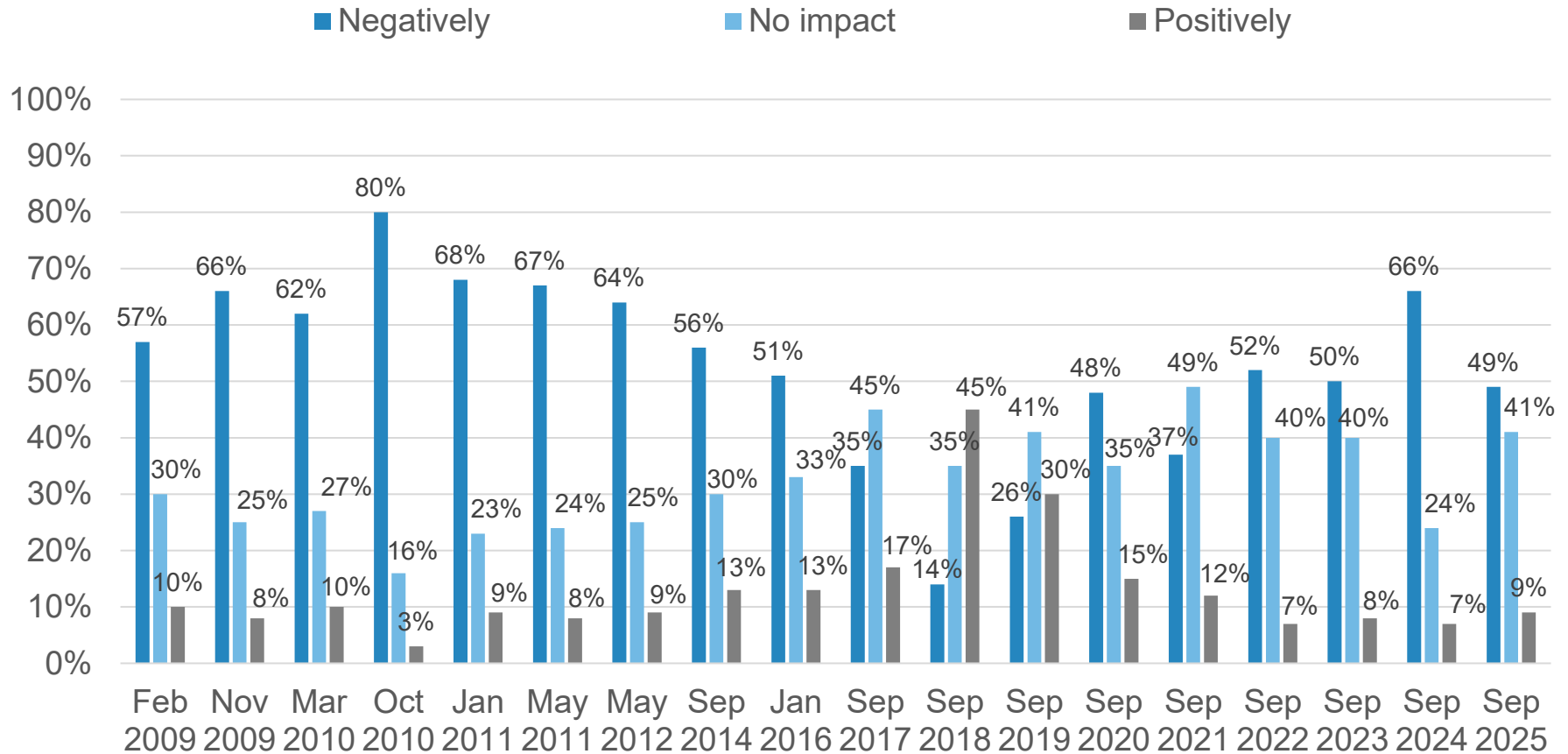


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Q: "How is the current economy impacting your church?"

# Pastors' perceptions of negative economic impact is very similar to 2023

Among Protestant Pastors

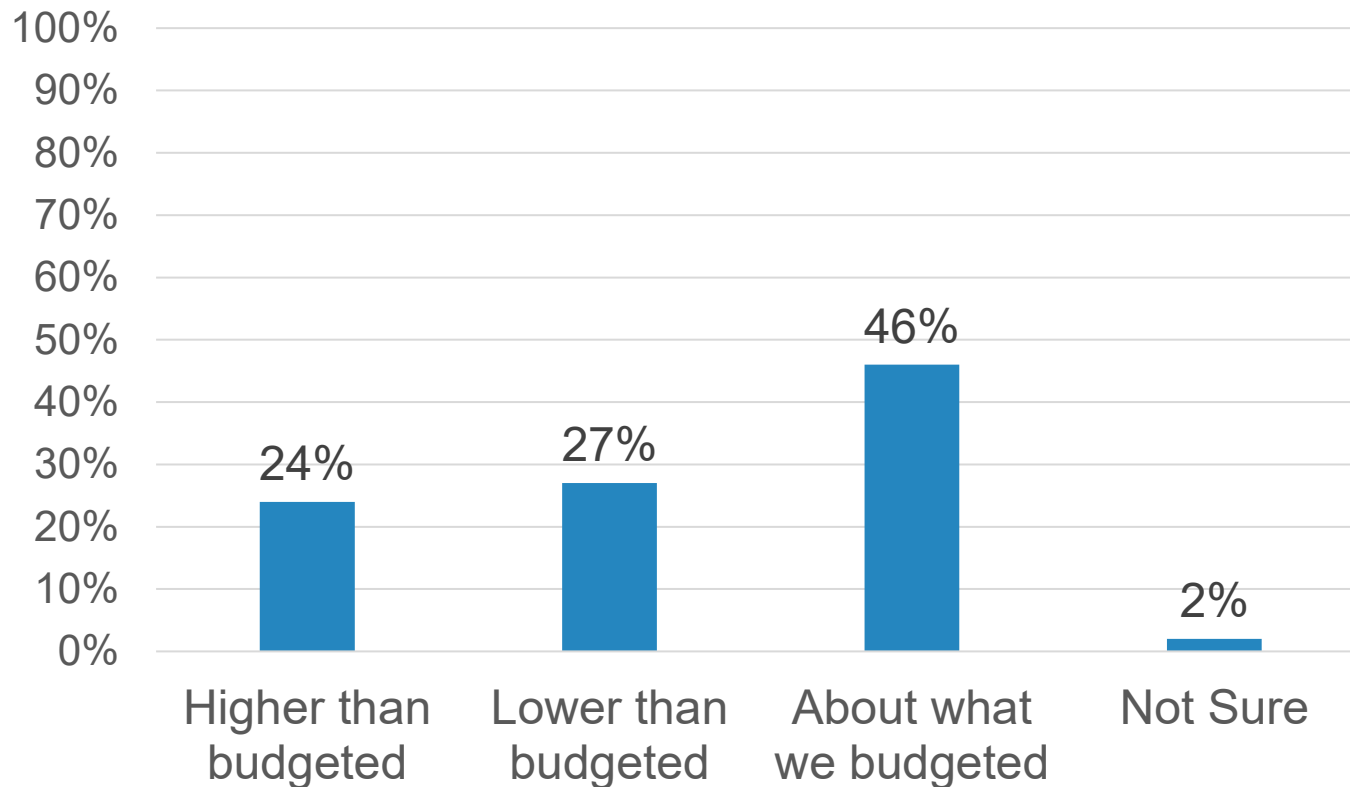


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Q: "How is the current economy impacting your church?" Positively includes very positively and somewhat positively responses. Negatively combines very negatively and somewhat negatively responses

# 46% say that giving for 2025 is about what was budgeted; 27% say it is lower than budgeted

Among Protestant Pastors

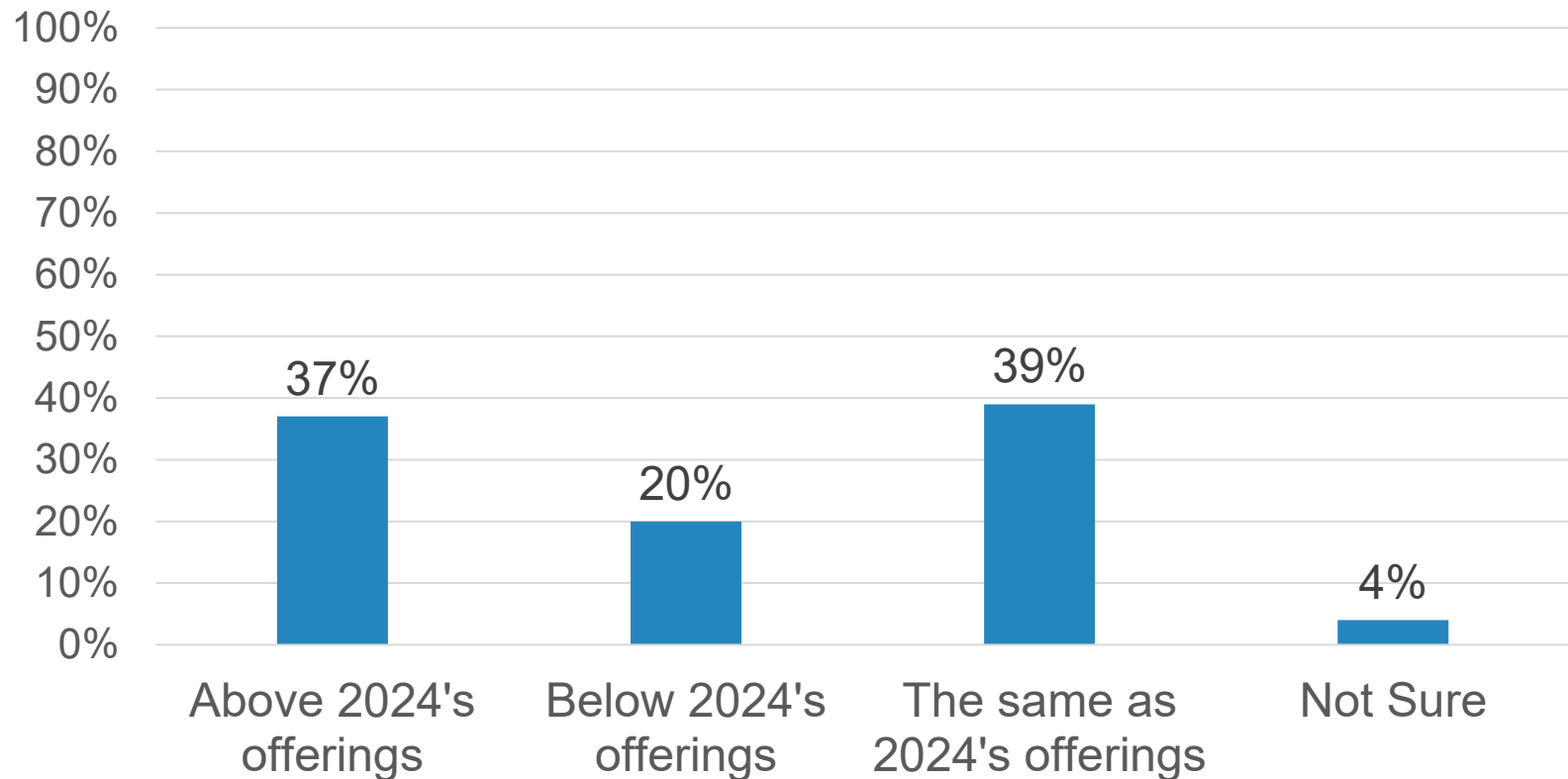


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Q: "Since the beginning of 2025, have your offerings been ..." n=1,003

# 37% say that giving for 2025 is higher than 2024. Year-over-year growth was last at 37% in 2019

Among Protestant Pastors



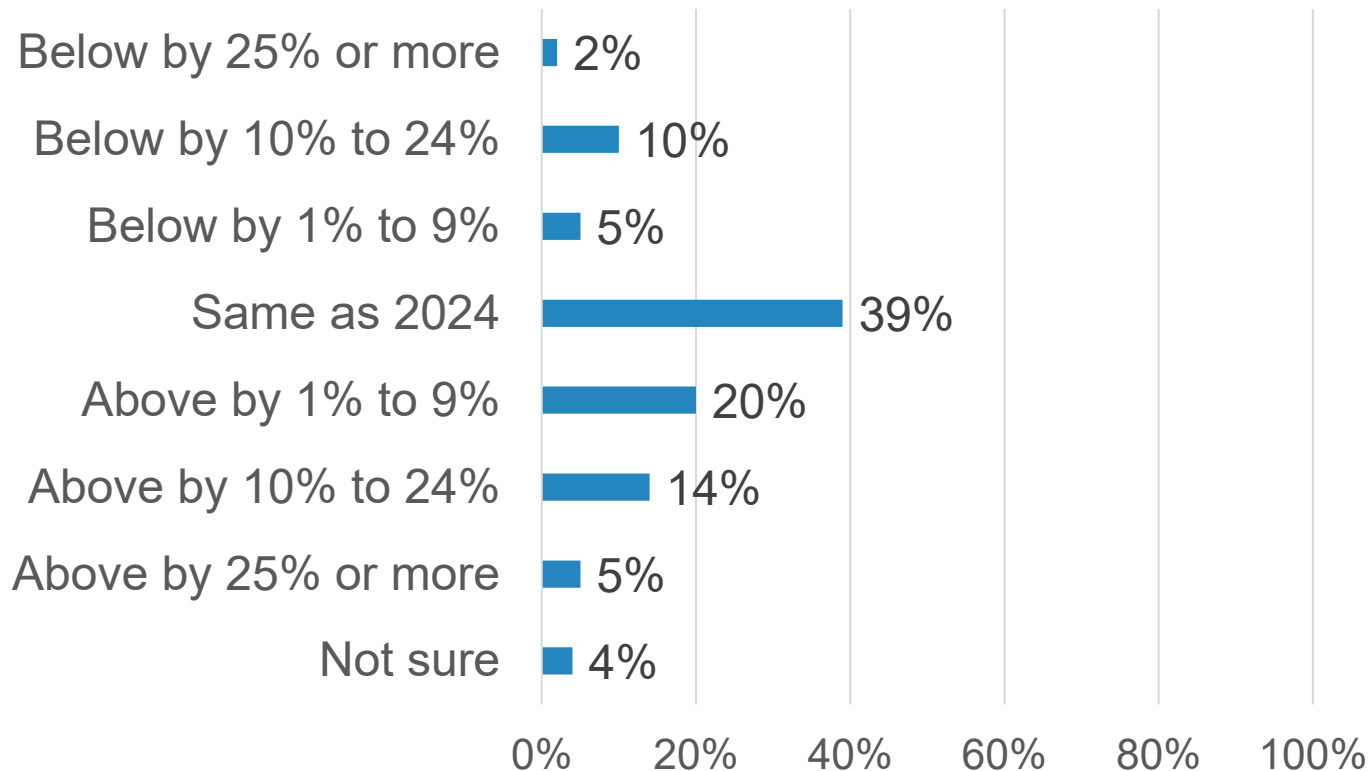
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Q: "Compared to your calendar year 2024 offerings, have your total offerings so far for 2025 been ..." n=1,003



# Percentage offerings are below or above 2024

Among Protestant Pastors



Mean change: +2.14%

Median change: 0%

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Q: "Approximately what percentage are your calendar year 2025 offerings above 2024's offerings?"  
Q: "Approximately what percentage are your calendar year 2025 offerings below 2024's offerings?" n=1,003

# Significant Differences

Pastor

Ethnicity

Age

Gender

Education Level

Self-identified Evangelical/Mainline

Church

Region

Denomination

Average Attendance

Location

# 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	Master's 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, attendance, and location.

REGION	DENOMINATION GROUP	ATTENDANCE	LOCATION
Northeast	Baptist	0-49	Urban
South	Lutheran	50-99	Suburban
Midwest	Methodist	100-249	Rural
West	Pentecostal	250+	
	Presbyterian/Reformed		
	Holiness		
	Non-Denominational		

Note: Region is defined by the US Census locations

## **“How is the current economy impacting your church?”**

- Female pastors are more likely to select “Very or somewhat negatively” than males (56% v. 46%)
- African American pastors are the most likely to select “Very or somewhat negatively” (63%)
- Pastors with a Master’s Degree (52%) are more likely to select “Very or somewhat negatively” than those with a Bachelor’s Degree (42%)
- Mainline pastors are more likely to select “Very or somewhat negatively” than Evangelical pastors (55% v. 45%)
- Pastors in the Northeast (58%) are more likely to select “Very or somewhat negatively” than those in the South (47%)
- Methodists (64%), Presbyterian/Reformed (56%) and Holiness (64%) are more likely to select “Very or somewhat negatively” than Baptists (41%) and Non-denominational (41%)
- Pastors at churches with attendance 0-49 (55%) and 50-99 (53%) are more likely to select “Very or somewhat negatively” than those at churches with attendance of 250+ (42%)
- Pastors at churches in a rural area (50%) are more likely to select “The economy is having no impact on my church” than those at churches in an urban area (39%)

## **“Since the beginning of 2025, have your offerings been?”**

- Male pastors are more likely to select “Higher than budgeted” than females (28% v. 16%)
- African American pastors (41%) are more likely to select “Lower than budget” than white pastors (26%)
- Pastors with a Master’s Degree (26%) are more likely to select “Higher than budgeted” than those with no college degree (18%)
- Methodists (37%) and Holiness (39%) are more likely to select “Lower than budgeted” than Baptists (26%), Presbyterian/Reformed (21%), and Non-denominational (24%)
- Pastors at churches with attendance of 0-49 (34%) and 50-99 (29%) are more likely to select “Lower than budgeted” than those at churches with attendance of 250+ (20%)
- Pastors at churches with attendance of 250+ are the most likely to select “Higher than budgeted” (39%)

## **“Compared to your calendar year 2024 offerings, have your total offerings so far for 2025 been ...”**

- Male pastors are more likely to select “Above 2024’s offerings” than females (40% v. 30%)
- African American pastors (33%) are more likely to select “Below 2024’s offerings” than white pastors (19%)
- Pastors with no college degree (25%) are more likely to select “Below 2024’s offerings” than those with a Bachelor’s Degree (16%)
- Pastors in the Northeast (43%) and West (41%) are more likely to select “Above 2024’s offerings” than those in the Midwest (31%)
- Lutherans (39%), Presbyterian/Reformed (39%), and Non-denominational (44%) are more likely to select “Above 2024’s offerings” than Methodists (27%)
- Pastors at churches with attendance of 0-49 (29%) and 50-99 (23%) are more likely to select “Below 2024’s offerings” than those at churches with attendance of 250+ (12%)
- Pastors at churches with attendance 250+ are the most likely to select “Above 2024’s offerings” (53%)

## **“Approximately what percentage are your calendar year 2025 offerings above/below 2024’s offerings?”**

- Male pastors are more likely to select “Above by 10% to 24%” than females (16% v. 9%)
- Pastors of Other Ethnicities (19%) are more likely to select “Above by 10% to 24%” than African American pastors (7%)
- African American pastors (11%) are more likely to select “Below by 25% or more” than white pastors (2%) and pastors of Other Ethnicities (1%)
- Pastors with a Doctoral Degree (26%) are more likely to select “Above by 1% to 9%” than those with no college degree (16%)
- Pastors in the Midwest (23%) are more likely to select “Above by 1% to 9%” than those in the South (17%)
- Lutherans (29%) and Presbyterian/Reformed (25%) are more likely to select “Above by 1% to 9%” than Methodists (15%) and Pentecostals (12%)
- Methodists (22%) and Holiness (19%) are more likely to select “Below by 10% to 24%” than Baptists (8%), Lutherans (8%), Presbyterian/Reformed (7%), and Non-denominational (5%)



## **“Approximately what percentage are your calendar year 2025 offerings above/below 2024’s offerings?” Continued**

- Pastors at churches with attendance 250+ (27%) are more likely to select “Above by 1% to 9%” than those at churches with attendance of 0-49 (13%) and 50-99 (18%)
- Pastors at churches with attendance of 0-49 (15%) and 50-99 (12%) are more likely to select “Below by 10% to 24%” than those at churches with attendance of 250+ (4%)

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