

Pastors' Views on Economic Impact 2026

A SURVEY OF AMERICAN PROTESTANT PASTORS

Lifeway[®] Research

Methodology

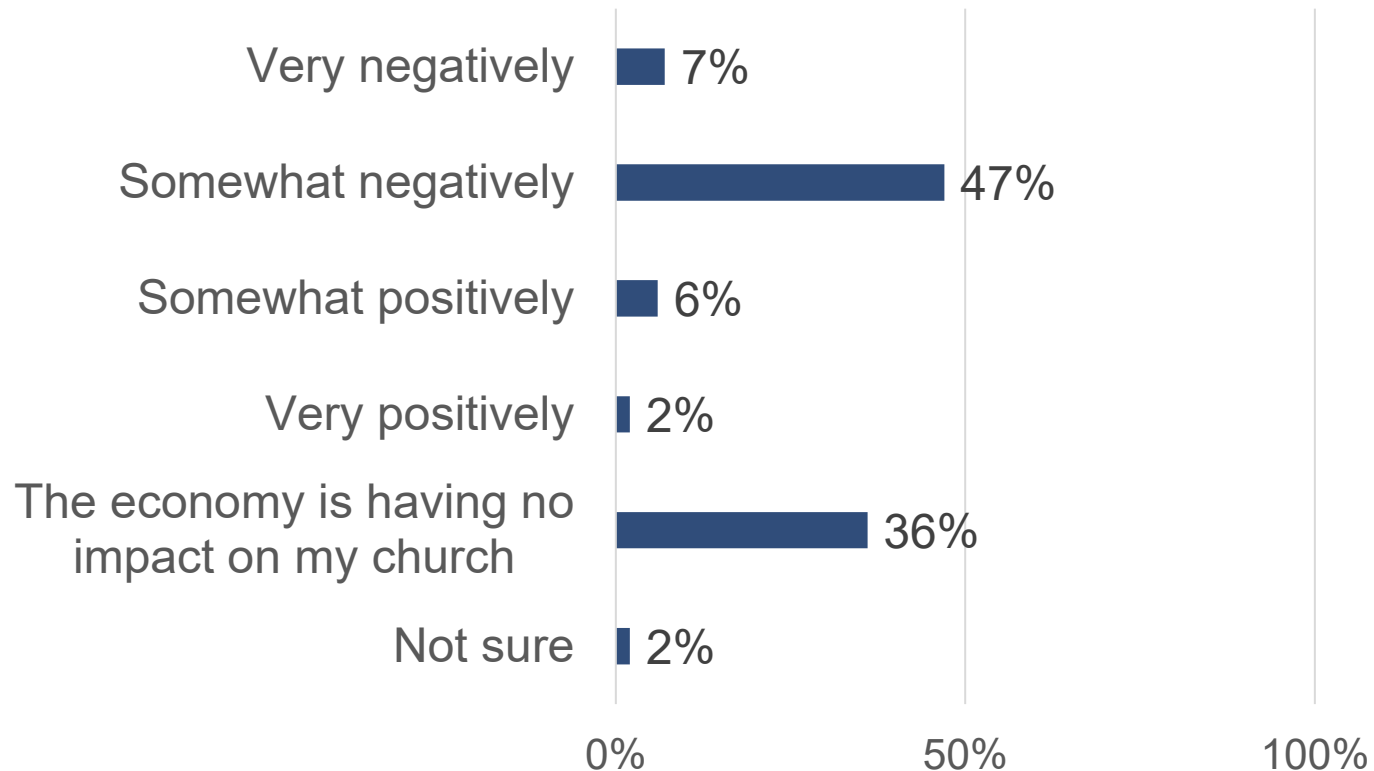
- The phone survey of 1,004 Protestant pastors was conducted September 8-30, 2026
- The calling list was a stratified random sample, drawn from a list of all Protestant churches. Quotas were used for church size
- Each interview was conducted with the senior pastor, minister or priest at the church
- Responses were weighted by region and church size to more accurately reflect the population
- The completed sample is 1,004 surveys
- The sample provides 95% confidence that the sampling error does not exceed $\pm 3.2\%$ 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
 - 1,003 pastors conducted September 2-24, 2025

54% say that the current economy is having a negative impact on their church

Among Protestant Pastors



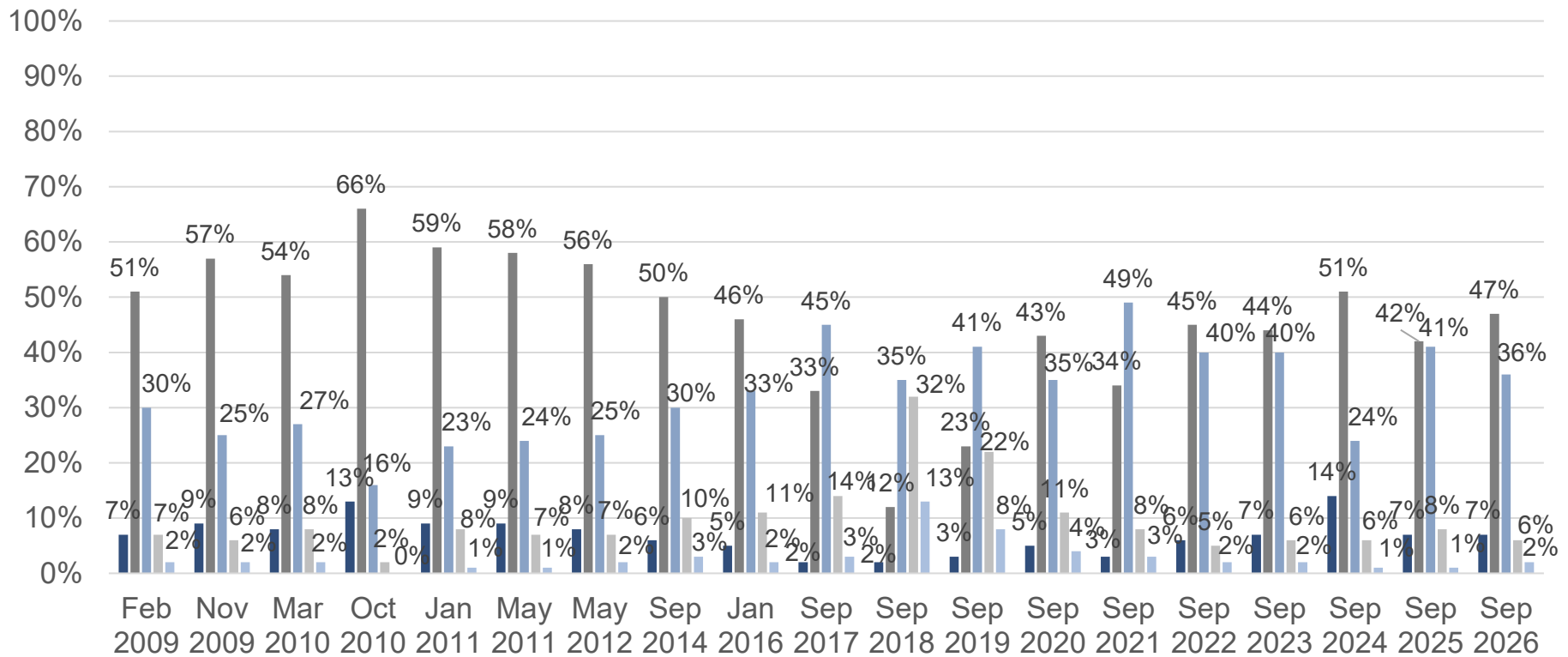
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Q: "How is the current economy impacting your church?" n=1,004

More Pastors report somewhat negative economic impact than last year (47% v. 42%)

Among Protestant Pastors

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

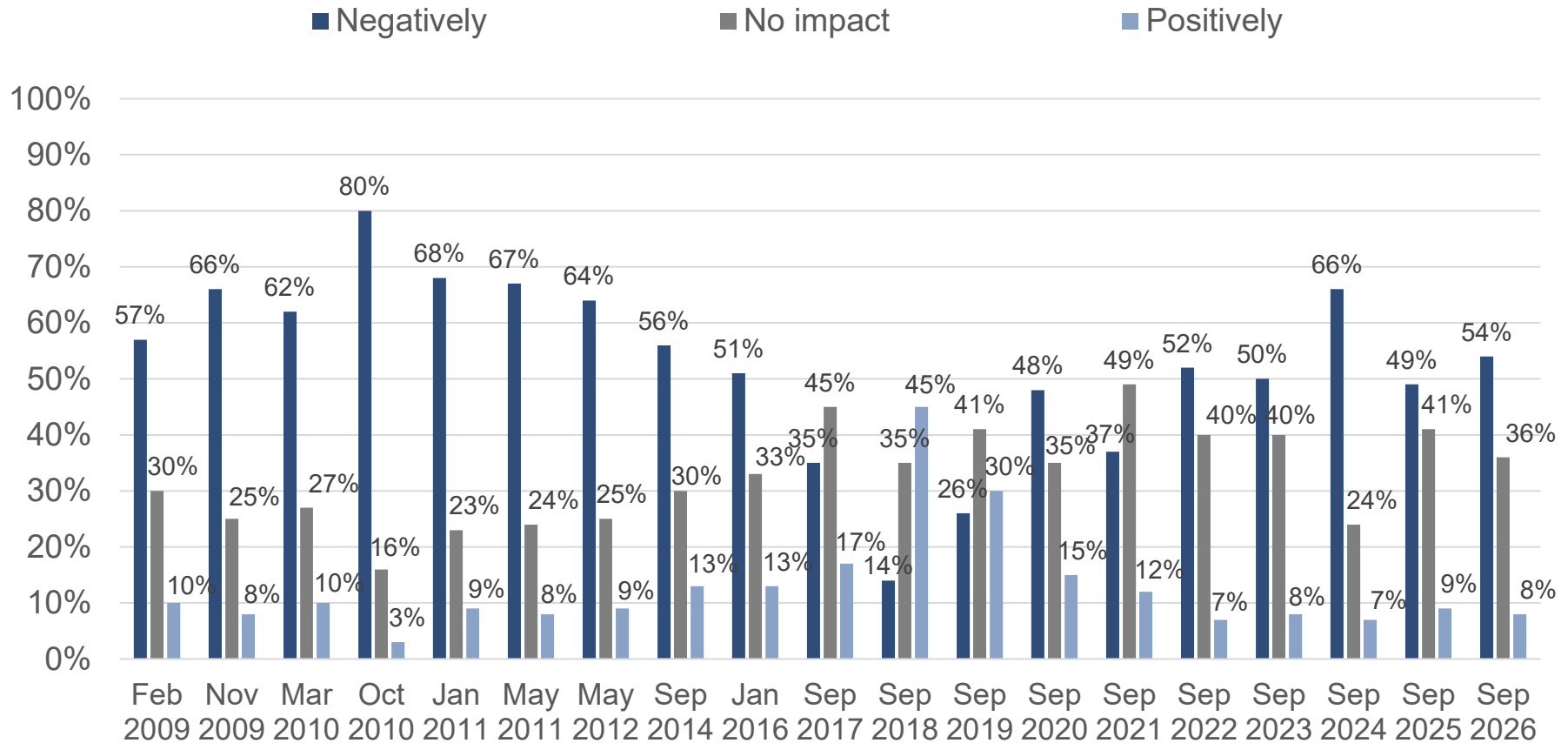


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Q: "How is the current economy impacting your church?"

Pastors' perceptions of negative economic impact is higher than last year (54% v. 49%)

Among Protestant Pastors

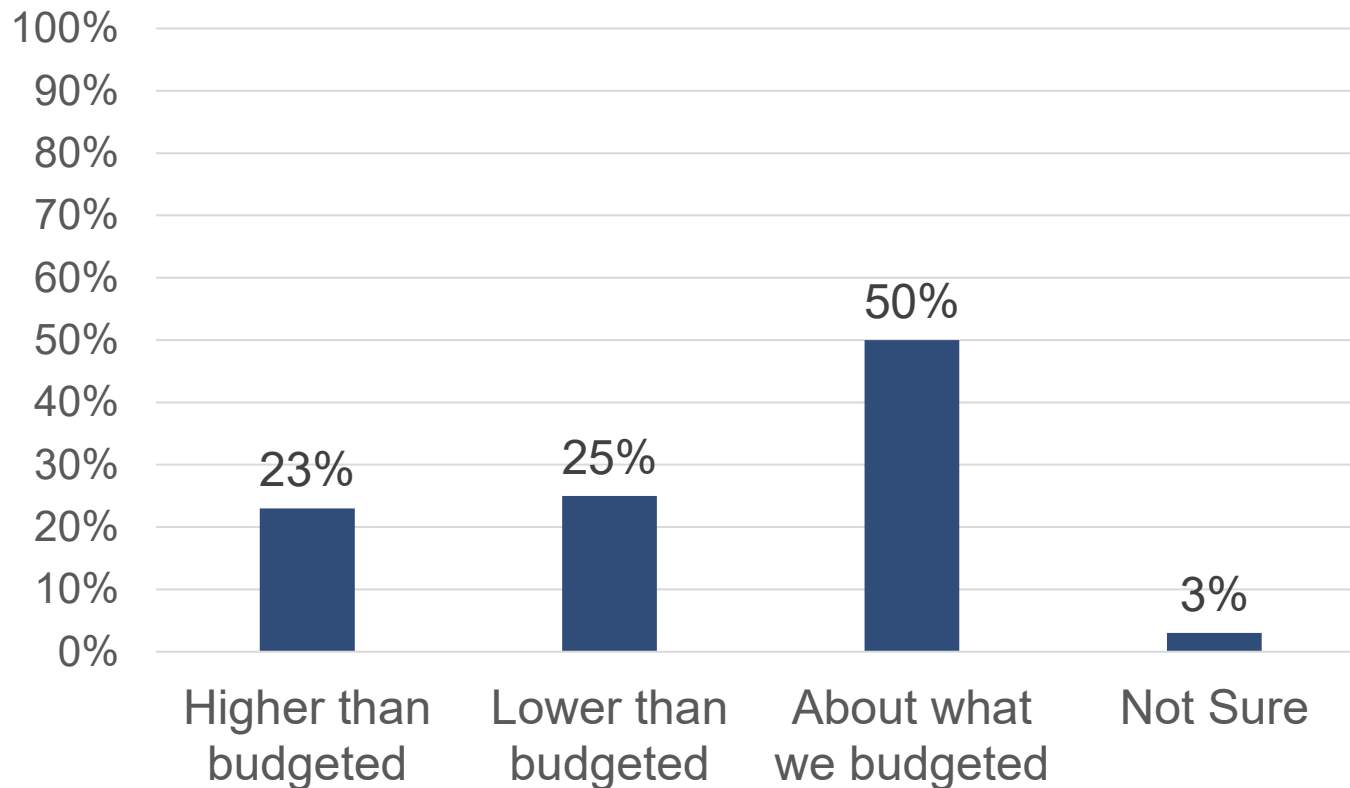


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Q: "How is the current economy impacting your church?" *Positively includes very positively and somewhat positively responses. Negatively combines very negatively and somewhat negatively responses*

50% say that giving for 2026 is about what was budgeted; those exceeding or missing budget are almost equal

Among Protestant Pastors

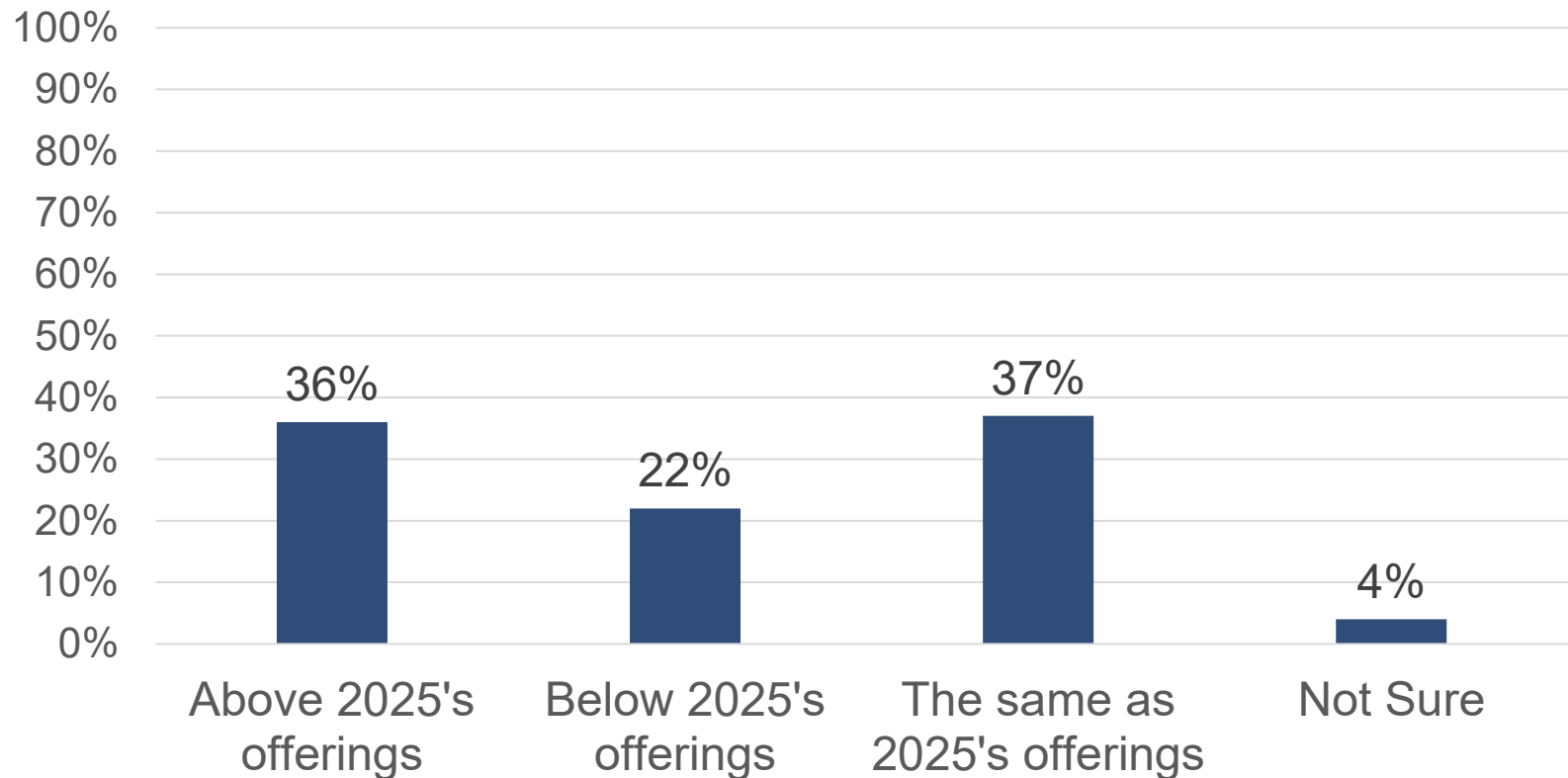


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Q: "Since the beginning of 2026, have your offerings been ..." n=1,004

36% say that giving for 2026 is higher than 2025.

Among Protestant Pastors

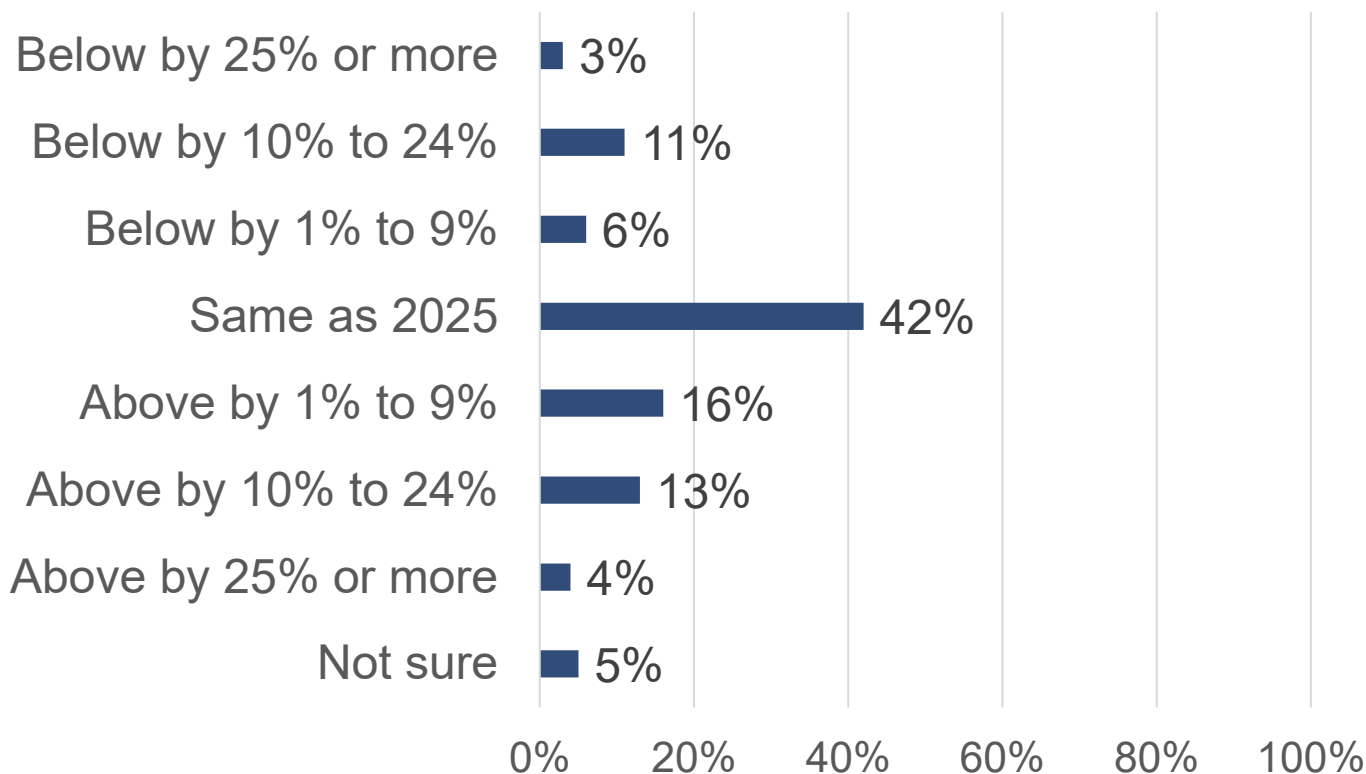


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Q: "Compared to your calendar year 2025 offerings, have your total offerings so far for 2026 been ..." n=1,004

Percentage 2026 offerings are below or above 2025

Among Protestant Pastors
Reporting the Percent Change



Mean change: +1.24%

Median change: 0%

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Q: "Approximately what percentage are your calendar year 2026 offerings above 2025's offerings?"
Q: "Approximately what percentage are your calendar year 2026 offerings below 2025's offerings?" n=896

Significant Differences

Pastor

Ethnicity

Age

Gender

Education Level

Self-identified Evangelical/Mainline

Church

Region

Denomination

Average Attendance

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
Northeast	Baptist	0-49
South	Lutheran	50-99
Midwest	Methodist	100-249
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?”

- Pastors age 65+ (11%) are more likely to select “Very or somewhat positively” than pastors age 18-44 (6%) and 45-54 (5%)
- Female pastors are more likely to select “Very or somewhat negatively” than males (71% v. 50%)
- African American pastors are the most likely to select “Very or somewhat negatively” (82%)
- Pastors with a Master’s Degree (56%) or a Doctoral Degree (62%) are more likely to select “Very or somewhat negatively” than those with a Bachelor’s Degree (48%)
- Mainline pastors are more likely to select “Very or somewhat negatively” than Evangelical pastors (66% v. 47%)
- Methodists (68%) and Presbyterian/Reformed (66%) are more likely to select “Very or somewhat negatively” than Baptists (46%), Pentecostals (51%), and Non-denominational (38%)
- Pastors at churches with attendance of 250+ are the most likely to select “The economy is having no impact on my church” (46%)

“Since the beginning of 2026, have your offerings been?”

- Pastors age 55-64 (32%) are more likely to select “Lower than budgeted” than pastors age 18-44 (22%) and 45-54 (21%)
- Male pastors are more likely to select “Higher than budgeted” than females (26% v. 11%)
- African American pastors are the most likely to select “Lower than budgeted” (55%)
- Pastors with a Doctoral Degree (32%) are more likely to select “Lower than budgeted” than those with a Bachelor’s Degree (19%)
- Evangelical pastors are more likely to select “Higher than budgeted” than Mainline pastors (26% v. 18%)
- Pastors in the West (27%) are more likely to select “Higher than budgeted” than those in the Midwest (18%)
- Pastors in the South (30%) are more likely to select “Lower than budgeted” than those in the Northeast (20%) and West (20%)

“Since the beginning of 2026, have your offerings been?”

Continued

- Baptists (29%) and Non-denominational (35%) are more likely to select “Higher than budgeted” than Lutherans (19%), Methodists (18%), Pentecostals (15%), and Presbyterian/Reformed (17%)
- Methodists (33%) are more likely to select “Lower than budgeted” than Pentecostals (18%) and Non-denominational (4%)
- Pastors at churches with attendance of 250+ are the most likely to select “Higher than budgeted” (38%)

“Compared to your calendar year 2025 offerings, have your total offerings so far for 2026 been ...”

- Male pastors are more likely to select “Above 2025’s offerings” than females (40% v. 23%)
- African American pastors are the most likely to select “Below 2025’s offerings” (47%)
- Pastors with a Bachelor’s Degree (39%) or a Master’s Degree (39%) are more likely to select “The same as 2025’s offerings” than those with a Doctoral Degree (28%)
- Evangelical pastors are more likely to select “Above 2025’s offerings” than Mainline pastors (40% v. 33%)
- Non-denominational are the most likely to select “Above 2025’s offerings” (52%)
- Pastors at churches with attendance of 0-49 (31%) are more likely to select “Below 2025’s offerings” than those at churches with attendance of 100-249 (19%) and 250+ (13%)
- Pastors at churches with attendance of 100-249 (42%) and 250+ (51%) are more likely to select “Above 2025’s offerings” than those with attendance of 0-49 (22%) and 50-99 (32%)

“Approximately what percentage are your calendar year 2026 offerings above/below 2025’s offerings?”

- Pastors age 54-54 (14%) are more likely to select “Below by 10% to 24%” than pastors age 18-44 (7%)
- Male pastors are more likely to select “Above by 10% to 24%” than females (15% v. 8%)
- Pastors of Other Ethnicities (20%) are more likely to select “Above by 1% to 9%” than African American pastors (5%)
- African American pastors (17%) are more likely to select “Below by 25% or more” than white pastors (2%) and pastors of Other Ethnicities (4%)
- Pastors with No College Degree are the least likely to select “Above by 1% to 9%” (6%)
- Pastors in the Midwest (11%) and South (13%) are more likely to select “Below by 10% to 24%” than those in the Northeast (4%)

“Approximately what percentage are your calendar year 2026 offerings above/below 2025’s offerings?” *Continued*

- Presbyterian/Reformed (20%) and Non-denominational (23%) are more likely to select “Above by 1% to 9%” than Baptists (12%)
- Pentecostals (22%) and Non-denominational (18%) are more likely to select “Above by 10% to 24%” than Lutherans (9%)
- Pastors at churches with attendance of 0-49 (15%) and 50-99 (15%) are more likely to select “Below by 10% to 24%” than those at churches with attendance of 100-249 (7%) and 250+ (4%)
- Pastors at churches with attendance of 0-49 (7%) are the least likely to select “Above by 1% to 9%” (7%)
- Pastors at churches with attendance of 100-249 (16%) and 250+ (18%) are more likely to select “Above by 10% to 24%” than those at churches with attendance of 0-49 (9%)

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