

Table of contents



Letter from the Pastor	1
Updates	2
I Have Decided	3
Worship and the Word	4
Testimonies and Baptisms	6
OFBC Team	8
OFBC Ministries	9
 Music & Media Men & Women Senior Adult 5&2 CDO Greater things 	
Nominations	12
2025 Budget	14
	

The theme of Old Fort Baptist 2024 Annual Conference is "I Have Decided.." highlighting Old Fort Baptist's commitment to Vital Connections and the choices we make as a body of Christ for the Kingdom of God.

Read more on page 3

The hymn "I Have Decided to Follow Jesus" has a powerful origin rooted in Christian missionary work in India during the 19th century. Its story is tied to a man from the Garo tribe in Assam, who converted to Christianity through the efforts of Welsh missionaries. When the man and his family refused to renounce their faith, village leaders executed his children and wife before taking his life. In the face of this persecution, he declared unwavering faith with what would become the hymn's lyrics: "I have decided to follow Jesus," "Though none go with me, still I will follow," and "The cross before me, the world behind me." His martyrdom reportedly inspired many in the village, including the chief, to embrace Christianity. The hymn was later set to a traditional Indian melody, translated into English, and spread globally through missionary and revival movements. Its simplicity and emotional depth have made it a timeless declaration of faith and commitment to Christ, often sung during baptisms, altar calls, and worship services.

Letter from the Pastor

I officially began to serve as your Transitional Pastor on July 14. It was a typically hot and muggy Lowcountry Sunday morning. Since then, temperatures have slowly fallen, like stubborn golden leaves on a big hickory tree. Either summer wanted to selfishly overstay its welcome, or fall forgot to look at the calendar! I don't know, but I do know that change is hard to understand, at times, and even more difficult to navigate.

The idea of the Transitional Pastor model is to help churches transition from one season to another. For the Transitional Pastor, the first several months are usually devoted to getting to know the people, the culture, and something of the church's story. I was given some background and insight into some recent history, but not long after arriving, some challenges began to surface that required our attention and energy.

I'm happy to say that with your help, we recently received a significant amount of very helpful input from our Church Health Assessment tool. We are still in the process of tallying that information and will provide you with an initial report soon.

Our next step in the Transitional Process will come after the first of the year. This will be the formation of the Transitional Task Force. The makeup of this working group has yet to be determined, but perhaps you might be praying about your involvement. You'll be hearing more about this as soon as we can pull it together.

I can tell you that for the next 6 months or more, we are all going to be hard at work prayerfully seeking God's Vision for our church, sharpening our Mission, affirming our values, setting goals, and building strategies for the coming years.

I have decided – and I invite each of you to join me in this – that God in his eternal wisdom and knowledge knows what is best for His people. I have decided that I can serve you best as Transitional Pastor, by not getting in the Lord's way or by trying to do His job. I have decided to follow Jesus, the Shepherd and Overseer of our souls, who will always lead his flock in the way they should go. Let's decide to go together!

For the sake of the Gospel, Dr. Hal West



Updates



Eric Letho's retirement

In 2024, Old Fort Baptist Church experienced a significant transition as Pastor Eric Lethco retired in July after faithfully serving as the lead and preaching pastor for 29 years. His wife, Patti Lethco, also stepped down from her role as the director of the Child's Day Out Preschool (CDO), marking the end of a remarkable era of their joint ministry. Pastor Eric announced his retirement on February 18 during a Sunday morning sermon in his series on the "I AM" statements of Christ from the book of John, emphasizing that Jesus is the only way to salvation. This theme reflected his enduring passion for missions, particularly his work with the Maasai people in Tanzania, as he and Patti felt called to pursue full-time missions. His final sermon series, The Good Fight, from 1 and 2 Timothy, poignantly echoed the Apostle Paul's charge to pass the mantle of leadership to the next generation.

In July, Pastor Eric delivered his final message, followed by a heartfelt send-off service and retirement celebration. As the church entered this new chapter, leadership moved forward with the decision to appoint a Transitional Pastor to guide the congregation through the next steps.

Staff Changes

In 2024, Old Fort Baptist Church experienced several important staff transitions, welcoming new leaders while also saying goodbye to cherished team members. Angie Tyler was hired as the new Director of the Child's Day Out (CDO) program, and Sydney Masten joined the team as the part-time Preschool Director. Anne Redner served in a short-term staffing position as the part-time Children's Director for most of the year but later stepped down from the role. The church also welcomed Pastor Hal as the Transitional Pastor following the retirement of Pastor Eric Lethco, who served as the lead and preaching pastor for 29 years. Additionally, the church said goodbye to Pastor Charles McCallum, a longtime Associate Pastor who faithfully served in various roles over the years. His dedication and leadership have left a lasting impact, and he will be deeply missed.

"I have Decided..."



The hymn "I Have Decided to Follow Jesus" tells a story of unwavering faith in the face of great loss—a theme that resonates deeply with the journey of Old Fort Baptist Church in 2024. This year has been marked by hope and heartache as we navigated transitions, challenges, and moments of renewal.

We said goodbye to our beloved lead Pastor, whose retirement closed a meaningful chapter in our church's history. While we wait for a new Pastor, we've been blessed with the guidance of a Transitional Pastor, yet the uncertainty has been felt. Like many churches, we experienced painful moments as dedicated staff and volunteers stepped away, leaving gaps that tested our resolve and reminded us of the cost of commitment.



Still, God has been faithful. Our 582 Food Pantry grew into a weekly ministry, reaching more families and shining as a beacon of hope in difficult times. We launched the "Biblical Truth" podcast, began another three-year cycle of the Gospel Project, and celebrated stories of baptism and missions that pointed to God's continued work among us. In the joy of Vacation Bible School and the expansion of ministries, we saw the light of Christ breaking through. The story behind "I Have Decided to Follow Jesus" reminds us that following Christ often comes with trials and hard choices. Yet, as a church, we've chosen to press forward in faith. This year has been a reminder that while the road may be difficult, there is no turning back—because we have decided to follow Jesus.

Worship and the Word



Sunday Morning

Sunday mornings at Old Fort Baptist Church center on worshiping together through music, giving, and the teaching of God's Word. With Biblical Truth as a guiding value, our congregation gathers to glorify God, deepen our understanding of Scripture, and connect in community.

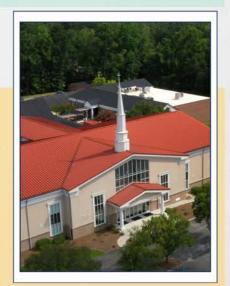


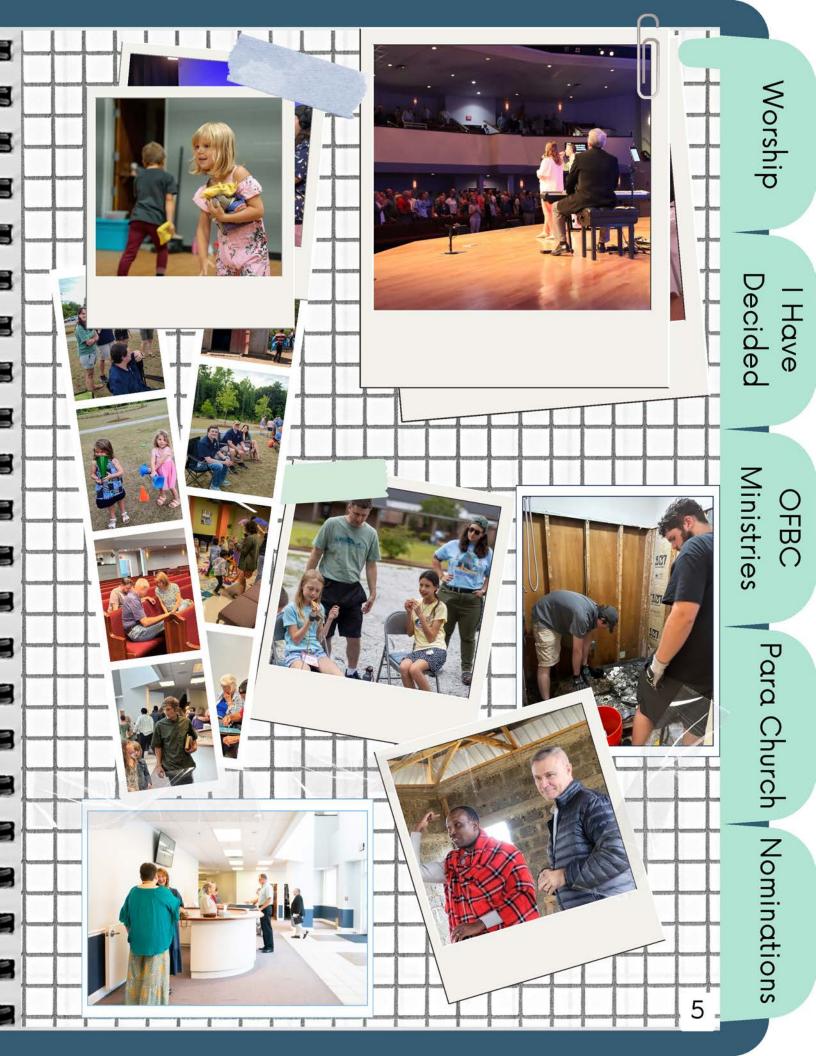
Bible Study

This year, our Sunday Morning Bible Study groups began a new journey through The Gospel Project. Having completed one cycle of the whole Bible, we restarted this curriculum to dive deeper into the redemptive story of Christ from Genesis to Revelation. Through these studies, we continue to grow in Missional Living by understanding how every part of Scripture points to Jesus.

Sunday Evening

Sunday evenings at Old Fort are dedicated to deeper discipleship through Equip Discipleship classes. These intentional learning opportunities help believers develop practical skills for living out their faith and strengthen their understanding of Biblical Truth. By fostering Vital Connections through small groups and discussion-based classes, Sunday evenings provide a space to grow together as disciples on mission.





"I have Decided ... that Christ is the

head of our household."

Our family's journey to God began through our daughters, who became believers before we did.

Parenting in today's world is challenging, and during a particularly tough time, I was blessed to meet a woman, Julie, who loved Jesus deeply. She introduced me to the idea of a loving, unchanging Father, though I wasn't ready to hear it at first. A year later, in a moment of need, I reached out to her, and she invited our family to church the next day.

That first Sunday at Hope Fellowship changed everything. As we sang, tears flowed, and I realized Jesus was not just for my daughters—He was for me too. Two weeks later, I gave my life to Christ, the night before my 41st birthday. We loved the church, the worship, and the relationships we built there.

When we decided to move from Washington to South Carolina, I spoke with Mila's pastor, Joe Miller, who surprisingly had ties to the area we were moving to. He recommended Old Fort Baptist Church, and four days after arriving in Goose Creek, we attended. We were warmly welcomed, even meeting someone who remembered Joe, and felt at home right away.

The transition was tough—missing home, uncertainty at my husband's job—but Old Fort became a constant source of love and support. Bronson Simmons assured us we were welcome, whether for two weeks or ten years. Through it all, God was faithful.

Since moving to SC, God has worked powerfully in our lives. He blessed us with a home in Summerville, guided my husband back to Jesus after 40 years, and strengthened our family. Emily and I were baptized in Washington, while Mila and Steve were baptized at Old Fort. We owe everything to God, who continues to lead us as we follow Him.

-Luna Bretzke



During Mila's baptism, she prayed:
"Dear God, Thank you for sending Jesus. He died on the cross
and rose again to pay for our sins. I will follow Jesus forever.
Thank you for bringing Pastor Joe into my life to teach me
about Jesus and to guide us to Old Fort"

ecided) I Have

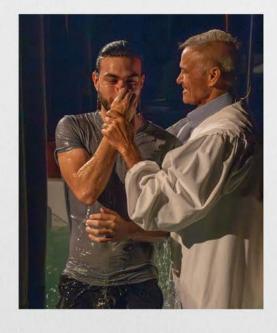
"I have Decided...To be Baptized"



At Old Fort Baptist Church, baptism is a wonderful celebration of new life in Christ. Each time someone takes this step of faith, it is a joyous reminder of God's transforming power and the fulfillment of our mission to make disciples. Through these moments, we come together as a church family to rejoice in the work of the Gospel, proclaiming the hope and new life found in Jesus.

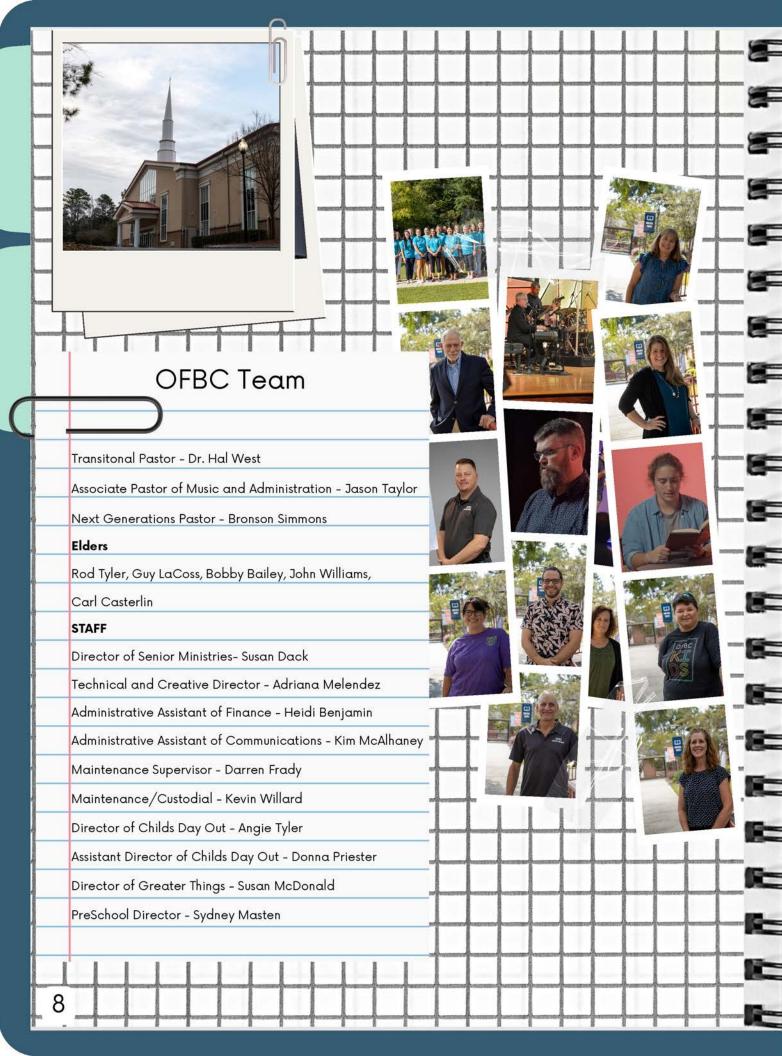
This year, our Church celebrated with 16 people as they proclaimed their relationship with Christ and were Baptized.

Sarah Lohrenz, Eddie McClellan, Michelle Stanfill, Amber Stevens, Hunter Wesenberg, Hayden Wesenberg, James Antley, Summer Antley, Kylea Bachelder, Steve Bretzke, Mila Bretzke, Aubree Busch, Linda Dilaura, Alyson Hanna, Kimberly Kirk, and Donnie Kirk.









OFBC Ministries

Music & Media

The Music and Media Ministry at Old Fort Baptist Church has experienced exciting growth this year, firmly rooted in the core values of Biblical Truth, Missional Living, and Vital Connections. The Media Team has expanded not only in size but also in its impact, with members serving faithfully beyond Sunday mornings and gathering regularly for Bible study and fellowship. These times together have deepened their understanding of God's Word and strengthened their bonds as a team. The ministry's commitment to excellence in worship and storytelling continues to create meaningful opportunities for the church to encounter God's presence while fostering a spirit of unity and mission among its members.

We look forward to the Christmas Choir Musical on December 8th, celebrating the Birth of our Savior!

Mens Ministry

The Men's Ministry at Old Fort Baptist Church continues to be a thriving community where men are encouraged to grow in their faith and live out the church's core values of Biblical Truth, Missional Living, and Vital Connections. This year, the men engaged in the Braveheart Tuesday Morning Men's Study, first led by Eric Lethco and later by Jason Taylor. In the later part of the year, they journeyed through the books of Ezra, Haggai, and Zechariah. Most recently, Esther discovered God's providence even in moments when His presence seems hidden. Alongside this, the Men's Ministry continued their Saturday Men's Breakfast, where they shared fellowship and studied the book of Titus, deepening their understanding of leadership and godly living. Through these studies and gatherings, the Men's Ministry has strengthened their connection with God and one another, equipping men to live missionally in their families, workplaces, and communities.

Womens Ministry

Throughout this year, the Women's Ministry intentionally focused on building vital connections and growing in biblical truth by bringing women together for meaningful monthly gatherings. Each event was thoughtfully crafted -whether it was January's 'Worship Around the Fire,' which many women found to be exactly what they needed, or February's meeting on heart health that featured a powerful testimony from Kim Williams, or October's annual Women's Retreat, where attendees experienced deep fellowship and renewal.

These gatherings created opportunities for fellowship and growth, and we heard time and again how grateful attendees were for these moments together. As we look toward 2025, the Women's Ministry remains committed to curating experiences that continue fostering connection, Biblical truth, and a mission-minded focus. We warmly invite the women of our congregation to join us in another year of intentional connection and growth.

"OFBC's Women's Ministry has had a great variety of events this year. Each one has helped me to get to know more women in the church and draw me closer to God." - Becky Stinson



5&2 Food Pantry

The 582 Food Pantry began in July 2023 and in February of 2024, the pantry began opening each Thursday evening to serve the needs of the community. Relationships are being built with regular clients and new clients are coming in weekly. The pantry serves a need throughout the



community to help people meet their basic needs. More than one person has wept over the assistance being provided. The 5&2 Pantry is meeting one of the core values at OFBC in Missional Living. While meeting the physical needs of people, the volunteers are also trying to show the love of Christ and share that message of love whenever possible. There is a steady base of volunteers that serve 5&2 in different areas, but more volunteers are needed. Also, food donations from the church are very much needed and appreciated.

2024 marked our first 5&2 Thanksgiving Meal Kit service to the community 64 thanksgiving meal kits & 82 families served



Senior Adult Ministry

The Senior Adult Ministry had a fruitful year, embracing our church's goals of biblical truth, vital connections, and missional living. Monthly Young at Heart gatherings, with an average of 28 attendees, offered short programs and fellowship through potluck meals, fostering strong connections. Our weekly Tuesday Bible study focused on biblical truth, deepening spiritual growth as we journeyed through the New Testament. The Lunch Bunch, meeting every third Friday, provided additional opportunities for vital connections over shared meals. Special events like the Biltmore trip and mission projects embodied missional living, encouraging active faith and service. As we look ahead, we encourage and invite the congregation to support this ministry through participation, volunteering, and prayer to further enrich the lives of our seniors.

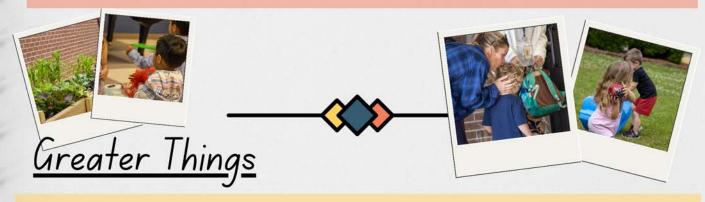


CD0



I have decided...to share God's love with the preschoolers and families that He has placed in our path. Child's Day Out is in our 29th year as a parachurch ministry of Old Fort Baptist Church. We started the year with a new director, Angie Tyler - a veteran CDO teacher of 20 years and church member since 1997.

Our program serves families of children ages 12 months to 4K. This year we have 150 students registered and employ 19 teachers. We hold to the truth of Proverbs 22:6 and strive to love each child unconditionally just as Jesus Christ loves us. We have added chapel time once a week for our 4K students and plan to add the 3K classes in the 2025-26 school year. We are striving to support local missions by working as a school to collect needed items for the Five 8 Two food pantry.



In January, 2024, Greater Things obeyed God's call to open up a Homeschool Hybrid for families who wished to homeschool but worked full time and were not able to care for their children during the day. We started with five students in January of 2024, and increased to 12 in the beginning of this current school year, August of 2024. God has shown great favor over our new endeavor to reach out to families in their need for education and for Jesus Christ. We had one family baptized in our church recently, as result of hearing about our Jesus and the command of baptism. For that, we praise God and give Him the glory!

Greater Things Learning Center (all-day program) is currently serving grades 2 – 4, and, LORD willing, will continue to add a grade as the students continue each year. We have dreams to continue through middle school and high school, as students have the opportunity for internships and enrollment in college classes as they get to their freshman year. The Learning Center adopted a working farm, which we visit once a week to learn how to take care of pigs, chickens (fresh eggs every week!), goats, and horses. We are now learning to ride the horses, as a growing body of research suggests the benefit of horses with children. We have culinary arts unit every Friday, which we learn how to cook, bake, and be the best Chef we can be! We attend classes at the Dorchester Parks and Recreation, and we use a project-based curricula, which allows students to practice giving presentations in front of an audience. Greater Things Learning Center is a five-day program, with a three or four-day program option for homeschooling families.

The Extended Program, which is our after-school program, currently serves three area public schools. The students are bused to our church where we have a heavy emphasis on Bible study and academics with enrichment added each day. We currently serve 39 students in our Greater Things Extended Program.

Nominations 2025



STEWARDSHIP

The Stewardship Committee is responsible for financial promotion throughout the year, including the planning, subscription, and administration of the annual budget. All checks written by the church financial secretary shall be counter-signed by one of its members. The treasurer's report shall be audited annually by an auditing committee or public accountant. The treasurer shall be bonded. (OFBC Constitution & By-Laws 3/14/18)

Team

*Robin Brittain ('22-'24)

Vince Costanzo ('22-'24)

*Mike Montei ('23-'25) (chair)

Kimberly Rhoton ('24-'26)

Nominations

James Monk ('25-'27) Justin Caldwell ('25-'27)

Skylar Gann (25'-27')

*Filled a seat vacated during the year and affirmed by stewardship and the elders



PERSONNEL

The Personnel/Constitution & By-laws Committee assists the church in matters related to employed personnel administration. Its work includes areas such as recommending staff needs, employment, salaries, benefits and personnel services. It will also be responsible to recommend to the church any changes, revisions or additions to the constitution and/or by-laws.

(OFBC Constitution & By-Laws 3/14/18)

Team

Kim Williams ('22-'24)

*Mike Creighton ('22-'24) (chair)

Tim Vance ('23-'25)

Rhonda Cantrell ('23-'25)

**David McDonald ('24-'26)

Nominations Jared Lethco ('25-27)

*The elders recommend Mike Creighton remain as personnel chair for one more year since he was heavily involved in the transitional pastor search and will be with the new pastor search.

**Filled a seat vacated during the year and affirmed by personnel and the elders.



DEACONS

In accordance with the meaning of the work and practice of the New Testament, deacons are to be servants of the church. The task of the deacon is to serve with the Pastor and staff in performing pastoral ministries; proclaim the Gospel to believers and unbelievers; care for the church members and other persons in the community; lead the church to engage in a fellowship of worship, witness, education, and ministry. While deacons may serve in administrative and managerial functions of the church, their primary function shall be spiritual leadership and service. (OFBC Constitution & By-Laws 3/14/18)



Team
Boyd Moore (secretary)
Shajuan Braxton
Larry Cheslek
Leonard Wilkinson
Quincy Williams

Nominations
Geoff Brittain
Les Dial
David McDonald

OFBC 2025 Proposed Budget 💢



Line Item	Sub Item	*2024 YTD Expenses	2024 Budget	2025 Proposed	Difference	%Change
Personnel		\$614,866.25	\$770,319.80	\$653,871	-\$116,448.80	-15.12%
	Pastoral Salary & Housing	\$264,222.96	\$339,096.28	\$227,124	-\$111,972.28	-33.02%
	Pastoral Retirement	\$15,745.94	\$20,345.79	\$12,691	-\$7,654.79	-37.62%
	Pastoral Insurance	\$73,110.31	\$87,950.16	\$87,308	-\$642.16	-0.73%
	Director Salaries	\$68,283.97	\$88,660.00	\$88,660	\$0.00	0.00%
	Director Retirement	\$2,217.60	\$2,620.80	\$2,621	\$0.20	0.01%
	Director Insurance	\$6,529.05	\$6,998.64	\$9,201	\$2,202.36	31.47%
	Support Staff Salaries	\$138,783.71	\$156,323.41	\$157,760	\$1,436.59	0.92%
	Support Staff Retirement	\$7,199.72	\$7,854.25	\$7,854	-\$0.25	-0.00%
	Support Staff Insurance	\$13,155.38	\$14,229.24	\$18,501	\$4,271.76	30.02%
	All Staff FICA/Medicare	\$15,790.15	\$18,741.23	\$18,851	\$109.77	0.59%
	Personnel Contingency Reserve	\$132	\$5,000	\$0	-\$5,000	-100.00%
	Staff Development	\$1,241	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$0	0.00%
	Staff Anniversary/Special Events	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$1,500	-\$1,000	-40.00%
	Pastoral Christmas Bonus		\$2,000	\$2,000	\$0	0.00%
	Support Staff Christmas Bonus		\$1,500	\$1,500	\$0	0.00%
	Mileage Reimbursement/Cell phone	\$5,954	\$2,500	\$4,300	\$1,800	72.00%
	Insurance Reserve Fund	\$0	\$9,000	\$9,000	\$0	0.00%
Adult		\$2100.11	\$4400.00	\$4000	-\$400.00	-9.09%
	Men's Breakfast	\$0.00	\$100.00	\$100	\$0.00	0.00%
	Men's Events	\$764.56	\$900.00	\$500	-\$400.00	-44.44%
	Ladies Bible Studies	\$0.00	\$250.00	\$250	\$0.00	0.00%
	Ladies Events	\$1054.00	\$1250.00	\$1250	\$0.00	0.00%
	Senior Adults	\$281.55	\$1900.00	\$1900	\$0.00	0.00%
Discipleship		\$16,383	\$16,000	\$9,058	-\$6,942	-43.39%
	The Gospel Project (adults)	\$6,388	JI	\$4,645		
	The Gospel Project (leadership)	\$2,771		\$2,513		
	S.S. Teachers	\$0		\$200		
	Discipleship Training	\$7,038		\$1,500	ĺ	
	Bookstore	\$186		\$200		
Music & Media		\$7,946	\$32,990	\$31,840	-\$1,150	-3,49%
	Music Ministry	\$3,531	\$13,000	\$12,150	-\$850	-6.54%
	Media and Licensing	\$4,415	\$19,990	\$19,690	-\$300	-1.50%
Family Ministry		\$22,910	\$52,825	\$40,600	-\$12,225	-23.14%
	Leadership Development	\$1,471	\$7,675	\$4,600	-\$3,075	-40.07%
	Curriculum	\$4,387	\$4,850	\$3,900	-\$950	-19.59%
	Events	\$12,991	\$20,400	\$19,200	-\$1,200	-5.88%
	Supplies	\$2,955	\$12,900	\$7,300	-\$5,600	-43.41%
	Missions	\$674	\$5,500	\$3,800	-\$1,700	-30.91%
	Trips	\$431	\$1,500	\$1,800	\$300	20.00%
Building & Groun	nds	\$125,960	\$192,000	\$179,000	-\$13,000	-6.77%
	Custodial Supplies	\$3,241	\$8,000	\$5,000	-\$3,000	-37.50%
	New Equipment/Building Repair	\$56,979	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$0	0.00%
	Vehicle Maintenance	\$272	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$0	0.00%
	Utilities	\$65,468	\$80,000	\$70,000	-\$10,000	-12.50%



Line Item	Sub Item	*2024 YTD Expenses	2024 Budget	2025 Proposed	Difference	%Change
Administrative		\$156,138	\$164,548	\$175,267	\$10,719.00	6.51%
	Communications	\$3,531	\$7,636	\$6,615	-\$1,021	-13.37%
	Church Insurance	\$79,538	\$76,000	\$83,789	\$7,789	10.25%
	Financial Audit	\$3,250	\$2,500	\$3,250	\$750	30.00%
	Office Supplies	\$2,625	\$7,000	\$5,000	-\$2,000	-28.579
	Technology/Software	\$16,676	\$14,720	\$16,173	\$1,453	9.87%
	Office Equipment	\$30,379	\$33,784	\$35,880	\$2,096	6.20%
	Postage	\$279	\$300	\$300	\$0	0.00%
	Promotions	\$473	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$0	0.00%
	Ordinances	\$163	\$500	\$500	\$0	0.00%
	Security	\$7,607	\$8,608	\$10,260	\$1,652	19.19%
	Fees	\$8,659	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$0	0.00%
	Special Events	\$2,958	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$0	0.00%
Subtotal	//	\$946,303.16	\$1,217,082.80	\$1,093,636	-\$123,446.80	-10.14%
Missions		\$65,263.25	\$121,708.28	\$44,000	static for 2025	
0012651015100-	Cooperative Program 5%	\$31,458.35	\$60,854.14	\$20,000	static	
	Screven Association 2%	\$12,582.34	\$24,341.66	\$10,000	static	
	Missions (OFBC) 3%	\$21,222.56	\$36,512.48	\$14,000	static	
	5+2	\$9,000.00	\$12,000.00	\$6,000	1	
	Maasai Pastors Project	\$3,500.00	\$6,000.00	\$5,000		
	Benevolence	\$1,902.00	\$6,000.00	\$3,000		
TOTAL		\$1,011,566.41	\$1,338,791.08	\$1,137,636.00	-\$201,155.08	-15.03%

* Through	November	15	There	are still	6 week	s in 2024

2024 YTD Budget Contribution (Nov.15)	\$945,611.90
2024 YTD Misc. Income (Nov.15) (facility rentals, CDO & GT rent, transfer from savings reserve)	\$41,403.24
2024 YTD Total Income (Nov. 15)	\$987,015.14
2024 YTD Expense (Nov.15)	\$1,011,566.41
2024 YTD Net Operating Revenue	-\$24,551.27



"The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work. As it is written, "He has distributed freely, he has given to the poor; his righteousness endures forever."

He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness."



