

# Protestant pastors say economy is hurting their churches

October 12, 2022

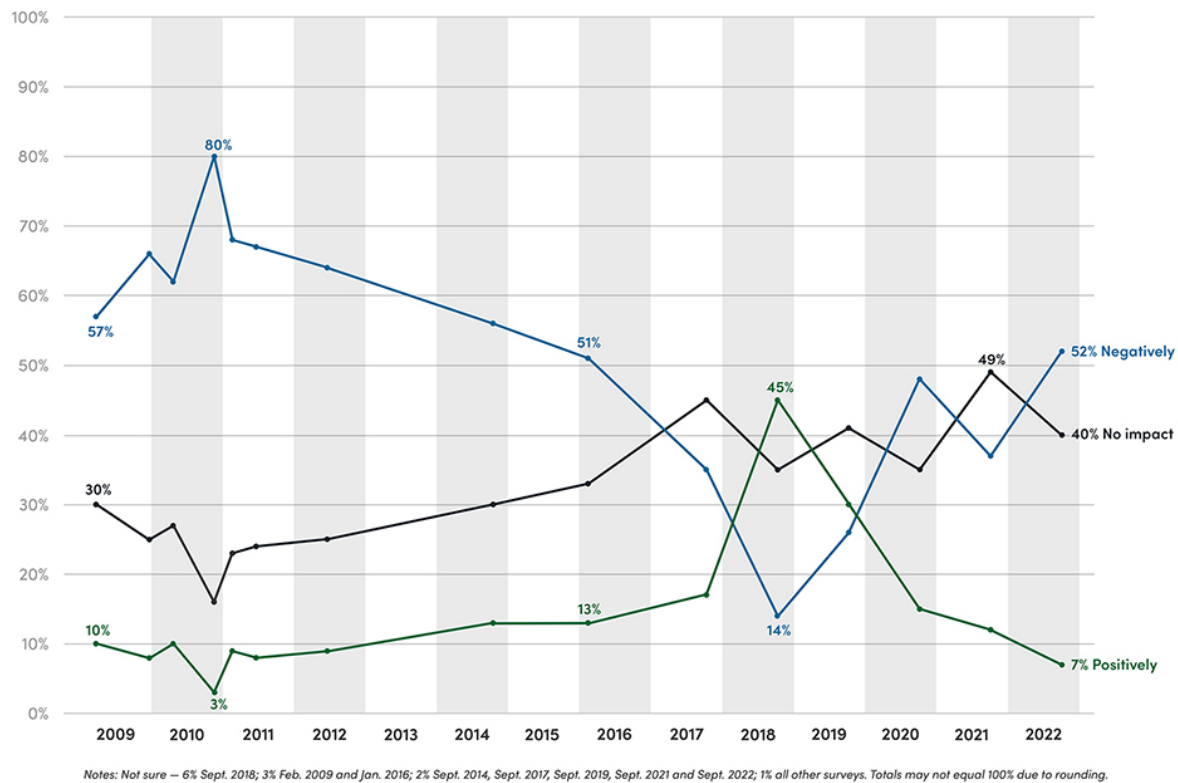
WASHINGTON (RNS)—A new survey of 1,000 Protestant pastors finds that half are concerned the economy is hurting their churches.

The survey from Lifeway Research, an agency of the Southern Baptist Convention, also found most pastors say congregational giving is in line with the previous year.

In the survey, 52 percent said the economy was having a negative impact on their churches, up 15 percentage points from 2021. Overall, 40 percent said the economy wasn't having any effect, and 7 percent said the economy is a positive factor for their churches.

# How is the current economy impacting your church?

Among U.S. Protestant pastors from 2009–2022



Lifewayresearch

LifewayResearch.com

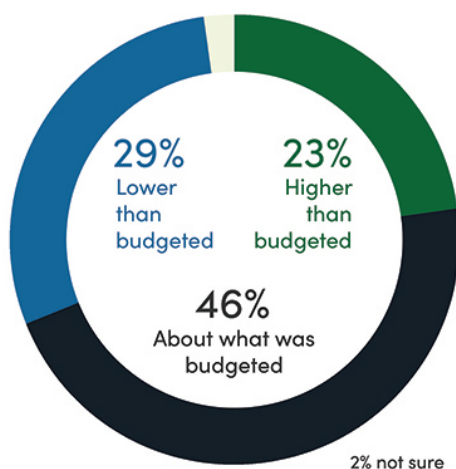
The survey, taken in September, marks the first time since 2016 more than half of pastors feel the economy is having a negative impact on their churches and the first time since 2012 fewer than 10 percent of pastors see the economy as having a positive effect.

However, 46 percent of pastors said giving has been about what was budgeted and 23 percent said it's higher.

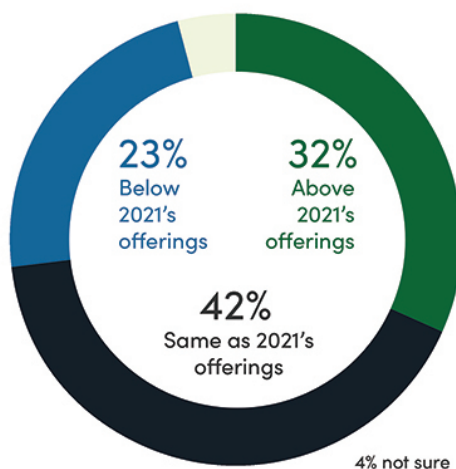
## Giving in most churches at or above budget and last year's levels

Among U.S. Protestant pastors

Offerings in 2022 compared to budget



Offerings in 2022 compared to 2021



Note: Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

**Lifeway**research

LifewayResearch.com

"The souring of pastor attitudes towards the economy is more about rising expenses than declining income," said Scott McConnell, executive director of Lifeway Research. "Declining year-over-year giving is a factor for almost a quarter of churches, but this is a similar rate to what churches have averaged for over a decade."

Small-church pastors, those with congregations of fewer than 50 attendees, were the most likely to say the economy was negatively impacting their churches.

Pastors at the largest churches, those with 250 or more, are the most likely to say offerings so far this year are above last year's levels.

The survey had a margin of error of plus or minus 3.2 percentage points.