

Church is about connections – our connection to those in our congregation, our connection with our local community, and our connection with the family of God around the world.

The early church recognized this connection. When the Christians in Jerusalem needed help, other churches chipped in. Paul’s second letter to the Corinthian church reminded them of their joyful and gracious opportunity to support their fellow believers. Our church needs your help, too.

We have exciting plans for 2024 and beyond, as this narrative budget explains – plans to share God’s love here in Eastport. We pray that just as you excel in so many ways in your faith, you will excel in generosity this year.

Now as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in utmost eagerness, and in our love for you—so we want you to excel also in this generous undertaking.

2 Corinthians 8:7, NRSVUE

Living Our Faith, Building a Brighter Future

Eastport United Methodist Church is a beacon of hope in our community. We strive to create a welcoming space where *all* can grow in their faith and make a positive impact on the world. However, as with many churches, we face financial challenges. This narrative budget outlines our mission, expenses, and income, and most importantly, how your support helps us fulfill our vision.

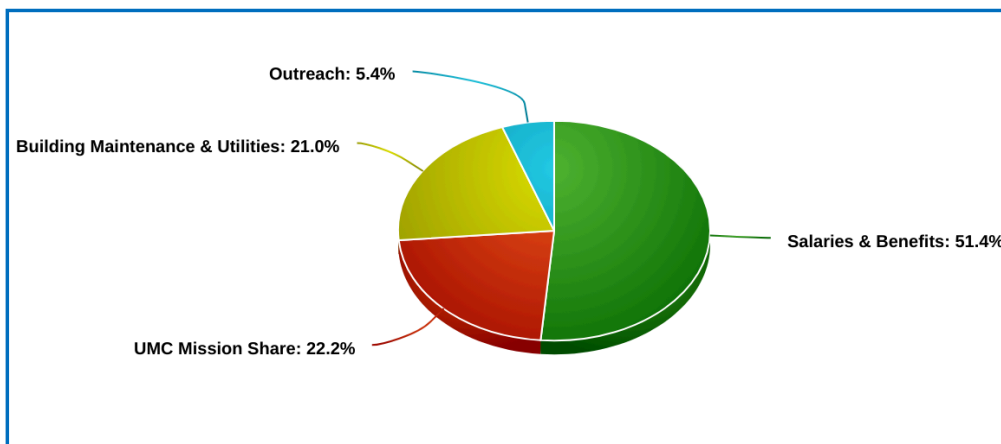
Our Mission and Values

Eastport UMC is guided by a core mission: inviting all people to deepen their connection with God and live their faith actively. We value meaningful worship, a welcoming community, inclusivity, social justice, lifelong learning, and responsible stewardship. These values are reflected in everything we do, from our Sunday morning worship services to our outreach programs.

Where Do Your Donations Go?

We want you to have a better idea of how our church handles money, where does it all go? A large portion goes to salaries and benefits for our pastor, music director, secretary, community navigator, and custodians. That's right, we the congregation are responsible for raising the funds for those things, as well as essential utilities and building maintenance. We put a lot of sweat into our commitment to serving those in need, and funds support our outreach programs that provide assistance and hope to our neighbors. Additionally, as part of the United Methodist Church, we contribute to mission shares that support global ministries, education initiatives, and disaster relief.

Projected Expenses



Taking a different look, the pages that follow better describe the impact of our congregation's contributions.

A fully funded budget by your generous contributions supports a variety of vital ministries:

38% goes into enriching experiences that nurture the spirit.

Worship is at the heart of our life together. Worship breathes life into us as a community of Christians. We hear the Word of God preached, prayed, and sung; we experience grace in the sacraments of communion and baptism. In 2023, we gathered together 60 times for worship, with around 124 unique people joining us throughout any month; and welcomed 18 new members.

Preparation for sermons and special services including weddings and funerals requires a significant amount of our pastor's time. Did you know that Pastor Chris officiated 5 weddings and 19 funerals in 2023?

Our gifts support the incredible work of our Director of Music who not only leads us, our praise team, Wesleyan Choir, and Heavenly Bells in musical praise but also serves as an ambassador of God's love to so many in our community. We also depend on our office staff to prepare bulletins and other materials. Other costs related to worship include communion and sanctuary supplies, banners and decorations, and items for special events.

10% Witnessing and Evangelism

Witnessing involves making "visible" what is otherwise "invisible." Testifying to the work of God in our lives bears witness to our Savior. Evangelism is a way in which we can fulfill Christ's call to be his witnesses by going out into the world proclaiming the Good News. This ministry focus includes advertising costs, promotional items, our website, and the gifts we offer our community. Events that bring Eastport United Methodist Church and Jesus Christ into the public eye, even such as the Annapolis Jazz & Roots Festival or monthly community information sessions are evangelism.

15% Christian Formation: Bible studies, groups, and programs for all ages

Discipleship doesn't just happen in a 15 minute sermon, but through relationships and study that happen over a lifetime. We believe that the Christian education and values taught to our children and youth will become cornerstones for their lives. Our goal is to nurture lifelong disciples of Jesus Christ. We've re-ignited our support for children's Sunday school classes. For adults, we offer adult "Sunday school" classes (Conversations in Faith) and various Bible and

book studies throughout the year. As students of their faith, our adults enjoy studying, discussing, and sharing together. They savor the fellowship that comes with these opportunities. Education funds also help the pastor provide grief counseling and other educational services for parishioners and our community.

37% maintains a safe and accessible space for worship, outreach, and community events

We create an atmosphere where visitors, friends, and members can feel at home. Our fellowship hall welcomes guests with hot coffee and snacks, free WiFi access, comfortable furniture, and bright displays of events and church news.

We offer a clean and safe building and property as a gift of hospitality to our community and tenants including Charting Careers, #JustOneSweater, three recovery groups, the Eastport Civic Association, just to name a few. Other groups that meet here regularly or periodically include the Maryland Hall Art for Everyone program, The Literacy Council of Anne Arundel, Anne Arundel Dept. of Health, CrabKickers Children's Soccer Clinic, Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, and several different neighborhood groups including the Eastport Civic Association. Luminis Hospital conducts health screenings here. Our church is a popular place for community events including weddings, showers, funerals, and reunions.

Here are a few comments from community members expressing how Eastport United Methodist has positively impacted their lives:

"Engaged in the community. Actually doing the work of Jesus. Welcoming and diverse."

"I enjoy the fellowship of our women's group and my husband finds great meaning in the worship services."

"I like it. They are... No. We're intentional, but not pushy, about building community, and being authentically engaged in the community."

"I could be myself, my whole self, because of the evident acceptance and encouragement of gay Christian living."

"While I've attended for decades, I finally feel included when I call it our church."

"This is the first time in nearly 70 years I've felt comfortable receiving holy communion. Needless to say, this church has changed my life."

"The pastor is authentic & kind. Sermons are engaging scripture and relevant issues. This church seems to care for their building and neighbors."

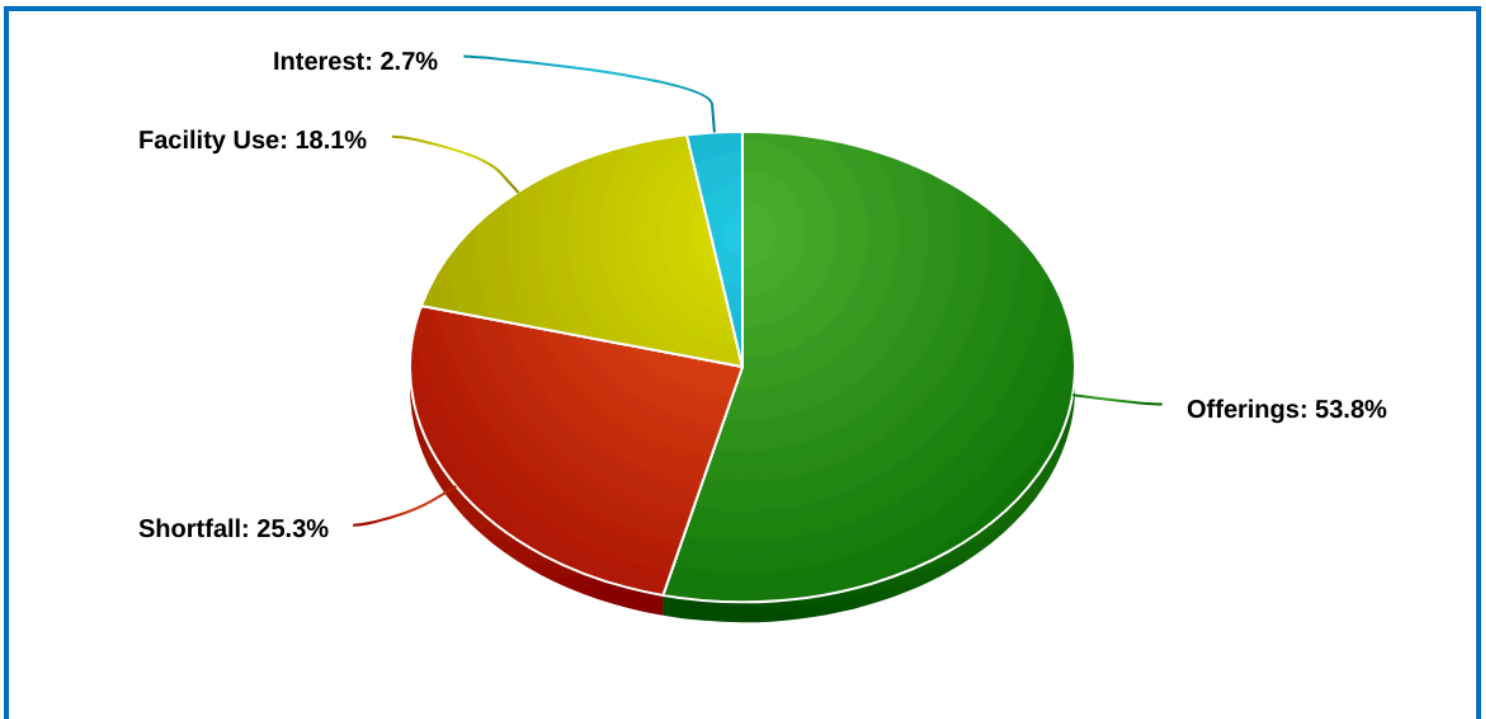
"They sing a blend of hymns and newer tunes, not-overly produced music... service flows nicely."

"I visited several churches when I moved to Annapolis, but Eastport UMC was the most open and welcoming."

Yet...

While we strive for financial responsibility, we currently face a budget shortfall of \$66,368. We *must* avoid depleting our reserves, so we need your help.

Eastport UMC 2024 Budget Projected Income



Here's How You Can Help

There are several ways you can make a difference:

Increase Your Giving: Consider a regular financial contribution to support our ongoing ministries. Every dollar counts!

One-Time Donation: A special gift can help us fund specific initiatives or address unexpected needs.

Volunteer Your Time: Our ministries thrive on the dedication of volunteers. Share your skills and talents!

Spread the Word: Tell your friends and family about Eastport UMC's mission and our need for support. Share a social media post, bring a friend to church or to an event!

Required Minimum Distribution: If you are a senior who is required to withdraw minimum (RMD) annual distributions from your IRA, 401K, or other qualified plan (or anyone else with an inherited IRA account with RMDs), the amount you are required to withdraw is added to your taxable income. This additional required distribution of income can even boost you up into a higher tax bracket, which is generally undesirable.

But did you know that you can direct the RMD distribution to your church? This is called a QCD (qualified charitable distribution) and the entire amount is excluded from your income for tax purposes. Your investment representative can supply you with the QCD form. The income tax is avoided by using this specific mechanism when the funds go directly from the IRA to the charity.

Together, We Worship. Together, We Can Make a Difference

Your contributions allow us to continue our vital work and stay true to our mission to make disciples of Jesus for the transformation of the world. Thanks to your support, we can:

- Offer inspiring worship services that enrich the lives of people of all ages.
- Provide a welcoming and inclusive community where everyone feels valued and supported.
- Reach out to those in need through our impactful outreach programs.
- Champion social justice and work towards a more equitable world.

Investing in Eastport UMC is an investment in our community. With your help, we can continue to be a beacon of hope and a catalyst for positive change.

Are you a numbers person who likes to see the fine details? A line-item budget with income and expense expectations, the breakdown into ministry areas, and comparisons to previous years figures, is available from the Finance Committee. Contact Elaine Fors-MacKellar for more information.