

1883



ARBOR

1954



ASHES

2025



ADVANCING

2026



Elizabeth
Baptist Church



2026 MAP

Mission and Purpose of Elizabeth Baptist Church





"I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy, for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now."
~ Philippians 1:3-5 NKJV

PASTOR'S NOTE

I'm delighted to share the 2026 Mission and Purpose (MAP) of Elizabeth Baptist Church with you. God has been moving among the people of EBC since our church was founded through a brush arbor revival in 1883. In 1954, our sanctuary was destroyed by fire. From those ashes, God revived the spirit of the people and ever since we have been advancing the Kingdom of God. In the words of Derek Kiser, our Administrative and Family Pastor, "we have come from the arbor to the ashes, from the ashes to advancing the kingdom."

With respect to last year, there is much to celebrate and thankfully there are many reasons to be excited about the future. We have new ministry and missions opportunities, and the potential to renovate our sanctuary and build a new lobby. What will keep us moving in the right direction is the willingness to ask some important questions of ourselves. Why do we exist as a church? What are the core values that give purpose to our lives and our worship? Do we have a God-sized vision for the future? Part of the purpose of the 2026 MAP is to return to the basics and address our mission, vision, and core values.

Of course, part of our MAP is a discussion of our finances. Thankfully, at the time of this writing we are \$34,220.96 ahead year over year. We are thankful for God's provision and we project that our 2025 giving will be around \$1,788,842. Thus, our finance team

is proposing a 2026 MAP of \$1,864,672.63 this is a 5.62% increase from last year and reflects a budget built on faith and a vision for the future. As I have



Monday, December 13, 1954

said many times before, our best days for serving the Lord and furthering His Kingdom are ahead of us! I'm excited to see what God is going to do! As you read through the rest of the 2026 MAP, ask the Lord to show you how to become a ministry partner through our shared mission, vision, and core values.

In Christ,



EBC MISSION

There is an important difference between mission statements and vision statements. Mission statements remind and vision statements inspire. Our mission statement reminds us of what we must do to be a faithful church. It should stand the test of time. It might be updated now and again, but the essential mission remains the same. Thus, mission comes before vision. That said, here's our mission statement and the five core values that are the foundation of our mission.

Mission Statement:

Elizabeth Baptist Church exists to glorify God and minister to people by cultivating gospel-centered relationships rooted in our core values: Worship, Discipleship, Evangelism, Missions and Christian Community.

There are two reasons we exist as a church: 1) to glorify God, and 2) to minister to people. This mission is rooted in Jesus' words from Mark 12:29-31 **"The first of all the commandments is: 'Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is one. And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' This is the first commandment. And the second, like it, is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."**

How do we glorify God and minister to people? Answer – by consistently living out our core values. Notice that our core values begin with Worship. The success or failure of everything we do is a byproduct of our worship. Worshipping well is what allows us to make disciples, to evangelize, to serve others in the name of the Lord, and to develop a community that is centered on the Gospel of Jesus Christ.



VISION

**"Where there is no vision,
the people perish."
~ Proverbs 29:18 KJV**

EBC VISION

Our vision statement inspires us to follow through with our mission. Everything starts with worship. Through our worship, we seek to proclaim God's Word. Thus, we want to be known as a congregation that, "teaches biblical truth." A large part of serving God is following the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. For that reason, our desire is to, "follow the leading of the Holy Spirit." If we are led by the Spirit of God then we will have the peculiar balance of compassion and boldness, that is, we will, "compassionately serve others, and boldly proclaim the Gospel." Our vision statement puts all of this together.

Vision Statement:

At Elizabeth Baptist Church we teach biblical truth, follow the lead of the Holy Spirit, compassionately serve others, and boldly proclaim the Gospel.



WORSHIP

Worship is both personal and corporate—it is the act of lifting Jesus Christ above everything else through holiness, thanksgiving, and praise. Authentic worship begins with the heart. It is about relationship, not ritual; God's presence, not performance. True worship is not limited to a service or a song, but is a daily lifestyle of gratitude and obedience. As we live this way, we are not merely attending church—we are becoming the church, embodying Christ in every aspect of our lives.

Many people view worship as something to be presented—a performance to prepare, polish, and deliver. The focus is often on excellence in execution, on creating moments that look and sound right. While there is value in skill and preparation, this approach subtly places the emphasis on the platform rather than on the presence of God.

True worship is not about impressing people but about inviting them into the presence of Jesus. It is not a concert to be observed, but a holy conversation to be joined. In worship, the congregation is not an audience; they are participants, the gathered body of Christ offering praise together.

At EBC we strive to cultivate participatory, presence-centered worship—where every song, prayer, and act of praise draws people into communion with God rather than performance before others. Worship becomes less about what we present to people and more about how we lead people into God's presence. Such worship deepens our walk with Christ and enables us to worship as a family responding to the goodness of God!



“Worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.” ~ Psalm 29:2 NKJV



This year EBC celebrated it's highest number of baptisms ever! 68 lives changed by the power of the Gospel.

DISCIPLESHIP

Discipleship is an ongoing journey of becoming more like Christ, led by the Holy Spirit. It is a lifestyle marked by intentional growth, biblical truth and deep relational mentoring. It is not a one-time event or Bible study class. True discipleship is challenging and transformative. It moves beyond knowledge to application, beyond comfort to obedience. It is not easy, consumer driven, or optional for the Christian life.

**"As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving."
~ Colossians 2:6-7 (NKJV)**

Discipleship happens at EBC in a variety of ways. It happens in our Lifegroup classes and on Sunday evenings as we discuss Scripture and grow together spiritually. It happens when we hear the Holy Spirit speak through the message during the worship service and our minds are changed. It happens when we choose to serve in one of the church's ministries and in doing so become more like Christ, who came not to be served, but to serve. Discipleship happens in our homes, workplaces, schools, and places of recreation when we seek obedience to the Lord rather than our own sinful desires. Discipleship also happens when we love one another. Over the past year, discipleship has happened in our men's ministry, the Corps of Discipleship, and our EBC Women's Ministry. We also licensed four men to



preach the Gospel. Discipleship occurs weekly in our Children's Ministry and youth group when young people understand the truth of God's word. At EBC, discipleship is a lifelong and daily endeavor.



EVANGELISM

Evangelism is a core calling of the church, an intentional compassionate act of sharing the truth of Jesus Christ. It is not about numbers, programs, or cultural slogans. It is about souls! Evangelism invites people to respond to the Gospel through biblical truth, personal testimony, and everyday witness. It is essential and leads to a lifestyle decision: Are you willing to be a disciple of Jesus Christ?

FROM JUSTIN WEBB

DISCIPLESHIP AND EVANGELISM PASTOR

One of the most encouraging things I have observed at EBC is the number of folks who are engaged in partner ministries that regularly share the Gospel. The Gospel is proclaimed close to home, such as the Fire Department in Shelby, and around the world in places like Burundi, Africa. The Gospel is proclaimed through CTO, Justice Ministries, the Jail Ministry, and by men whom we have licensed to preach, just to name a few.

FROM QUENTIN CASH

SHELBY FIRE DEPT. BATTALION CHIEF

We have a job that requires us to be at work on Sundays, so it is great to still be able to get some of the Gospel from Stuart and John (EBC Members) while at work [at the fire station].

What I like most about the Sunday School is that it creates an opportunity for the crew to listen to the Word of God together. Some staff members may not be going to church or are not saved. It allows them to hear the Word with others prompting discussion as well as allowing us that do go to church not to miss out on growing in our faith with our own churches while at work.

FROM BILLY SCRUGGS

EBC JAIL MINISTRY LEADER

We have seen 30 men come to Christ through the jail ministry this year.

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, ‘The just shall live by faith.’”
~ Romans 1:16-17 (NKJV)



Quentin Cash



David Vanhoy - EBC IT Admin.





Each year, EBC gives approximately 20% of its resources to missions & ministries outside our church.

MISSIONS

Missions are an expression of God's love rooted in biblical truth and compassion. Shaped by context and driven by service, true missions meet real needs with humility and sacrifice. At EBC we value outreach that is practical and points to Christ not ourselves. Our calling as Christians is to go and serve with love and intentionality.

Acts 1:8 tells us **"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."** This past year Elizabethans have done just that.

- As Southern Baptists we are part of the Cooperative program, which sends people as missionaries to some of the most unreached places of the world to live and share the good news of Jesus. We also share in the United States through the North American Mission board by planting churches right here. As NC Baptists, 10% of our general fund giving is a tithe to the Cooperative Program. You are a part of sharing the Gospel in ways and places that Elizabeth Baptist could never reach on its own.
- We give over and above our 10% to various ministries. We also raise funds for partner ministries like NC Baptist Children's Homes.
- We helped in Western North Carolina as well as Shelby in the wake of Hurricane Helene. We were a regional collection center for WNC supplies.
- We served by providing supplies to Black Mountain and Lake Lure including material

- needs with food and home repairs in Lake Lure.
- We shared gifts for Christmas with kids through Appalachian Backpack, Operation Christmas Child, and locally for children at Elizabeth Elementary School.
- Our kid's ministry takes virtual trips each week to learn about missionaries, language and culture, as well as tasting food from each nation they visit.
- We took part of our youth group to share the Gospel in San Mateo, Guatemala.





CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

Christian community is Christ-centered, purified by grace and united in purpose. It is marked by sincere relationships, mutual support, and a commitment to accountability. True community can not be built on events, meals, or traditions alone, but on a shared life rooted in God's love, personal integrity, and spiritual growth. Real community goes deeper, reflects Christ, bears burdens, and builds people up in biblical truth.

Our fifth core value is rooted in Acts 2:42-43; 46-47:

“And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles... And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved. (ESV)”

The early church was devoted to the apostles teaching and gathered for fellowship together. This core value reminds us that God did not create us to be alone. God created us to be in relationship with one another as fellow believers. Genuine Christian community is centered in “*koinonia*,” a Greek word that means “fellowship, communion, partnership.” In a Christian context, *koinonia* signifies the deep bond of unity and spiritual communion believers share with each other and with Jesus Christ.

At EBC, our church enjoys gathering for fellowship, meals, and special events, but our community is not centered on those things. EBC is centered and founded on our belief in Jesus Christ. Through our salvation, we know that our purpose is to grow in our relationship with Christ. We know that we are called to unite with one another not only to point unbelievers towards Christ, but to spiritually challenge, encourage, and support one another as brothers and sisters in Christ. What a blessing it is to be part of the EBC family.

LIVING OUT OUR MISSION & VISION



“Faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead... show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.”
~ James 2:17, 18b, 26 NKJV

A church that fulfills its mission and is inspired by its vision is a church that will display its faith by its works!



Pastor Rit praying with a couple at the altar during Sunday worship



Caleb and Ruth Estridge before their baptism



EBC Deacons at the Cleveland County Fair Service on World Communion Sunday



Children in Sunday School



Core of Discipleship Men's Ministry



Women's Ministry Bible Study



Sunday Morning Worship



TITHES AND OFFERINGS

When the nation of Israel held back its offerings from the Lord, God sent them a prophet to challenge their greed. Malachi 3:8-10 says,

“Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, ‘In what way have we robbed You?’ In tithes and offerings. You are cursed with a curse, For you have robbed Me, even this whole nation. Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and try Me now in this, says the LORD of hosts, if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it.”

Notice the phrase, “tithes and offerings.” In Hebrew, the word translated “tithe” literally means 10%. God commanded His people to give 10% of their income to the work of the Lord. Thus, obedient giving is 10% of our income. What we give to the Lord beyond our tithe is generous giving. This is the one area God says, “try me now in this.”

Statistically, tithing research shows there’s plenty of room to grow in obedience and generosity.

FROM BETTY JEAN BLANTON

“Being part of Elizabeth Baptist has significantly enriched my life and strengthened my faith through tithing, volunteering, and studying the Bible.”



GENERAL GIVING STATS

Only 2.85% of all gifts are over \$1,000¹

43.89% of gifts are under \$100¹

Only 5-10% of church attendees follow biblical tithing behavior.²

20% of a congregation gives 80%
30% of a congregation gives 20%
50% of a congregation do not give

CALL TO ACTION

208 of 400 EBC families are already giving. That means our budget is being funded by just over half of our families.

Imagine the impact if every family became faithful givers to EBC.

That is our call to action.

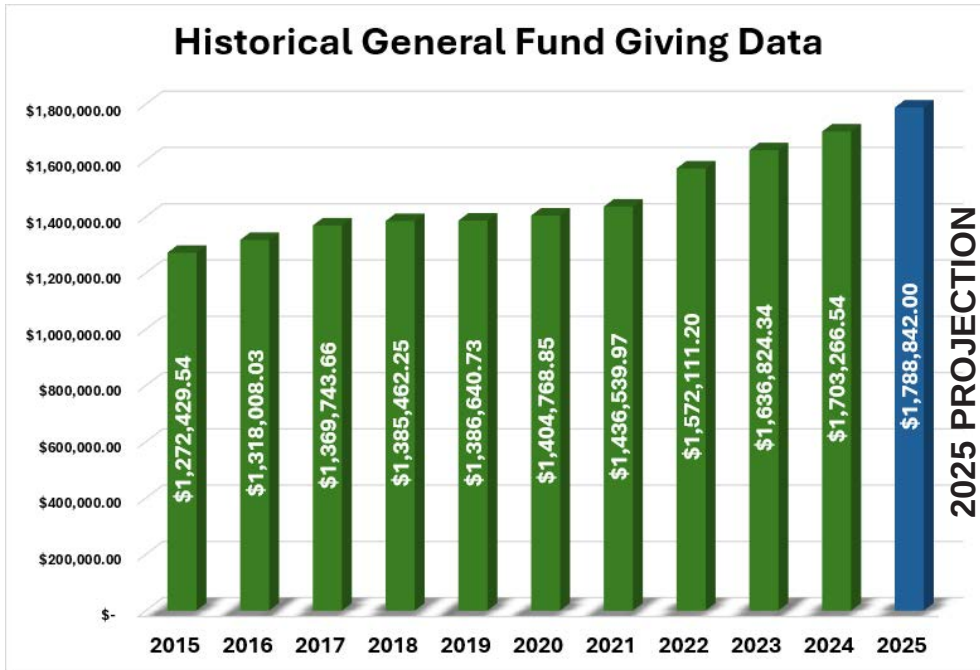
¹ stat from <https://careynieuwhof.com/church-giving-statistics/>

² stat from <https://www.overflow.co/learn/unlocking-the-power-of-giving-in-2023-church-donation-key-stats>

2026 MAP

Total 2026 MAP: \$1,864,672.63

Historical General Fund Giving Data



FROM RYAN ECKENRODE BUDGET/FINANCE CHAIR

Thank you for trusting me to serve as the chairperson on the Budget and Finance Team over this past year. Elizabeth Baptist Church is blessed with so many talents, resources, and gifts from God. It is exciting to see the church grow in a financially responsible way and to experience God's fruit and labor each year making it a pleasure to serve on this committee. As a reminder that God is a faithful provider, Philippians 4:19 states **"And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of glory in Christ Jesus."**

We believe the 2026 budget reflects current financial trends and provides key resources to flourish and grow in our faith and to share God's message.

2026 Mission and Purpose of EBC

Glorify God...

through worship

Grow in Christ...

through discipleship and evangelism

Go make a difference...

through missions and Christian community



POTENTIAL SANCTUARY RENOVATION



Sanctuary Concept Drawing - Total Seating 445 (increase of 25% in additional seating)

TENTATIVE TIMELINE

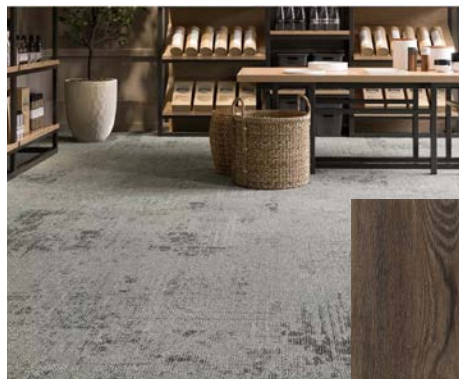
- Project presentation to church first quarter 2026
- Potential vote on project March/April 2026
- Pending vote, begin internal campaign April/May 2026
- Potential launch date late 2026 to early 2027



Sample Seating

SANCTUARY/LOBBY REMODEL TEAM

- Stephen Borders
- Brooks Clary
- Jerry Gardner
- Taylor Hastings
- Derek Kiser
- Aaron Meier
- Charlette Terry
- Rit Varriale



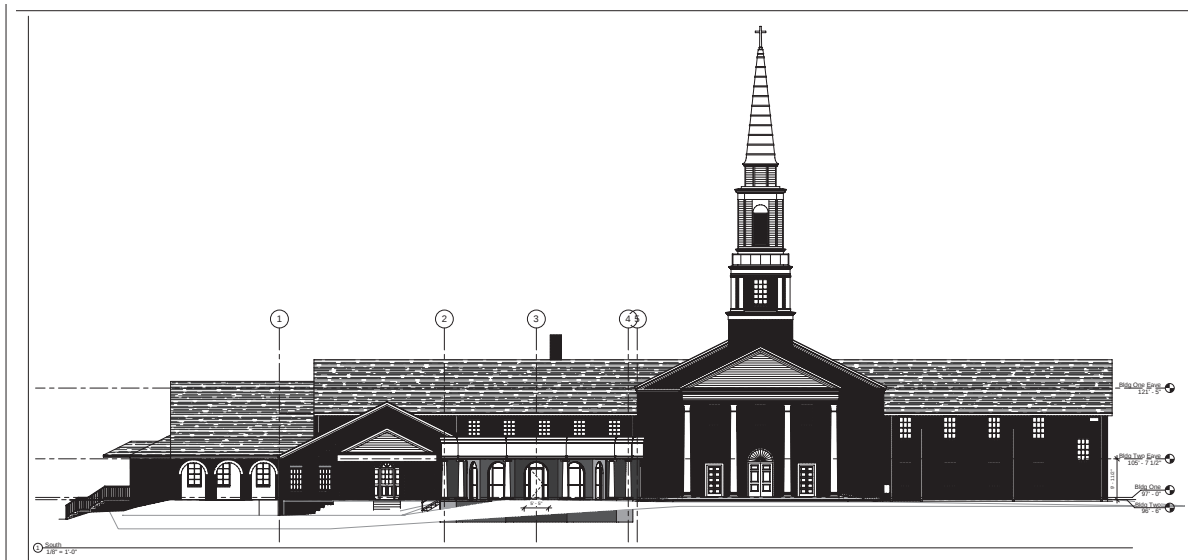
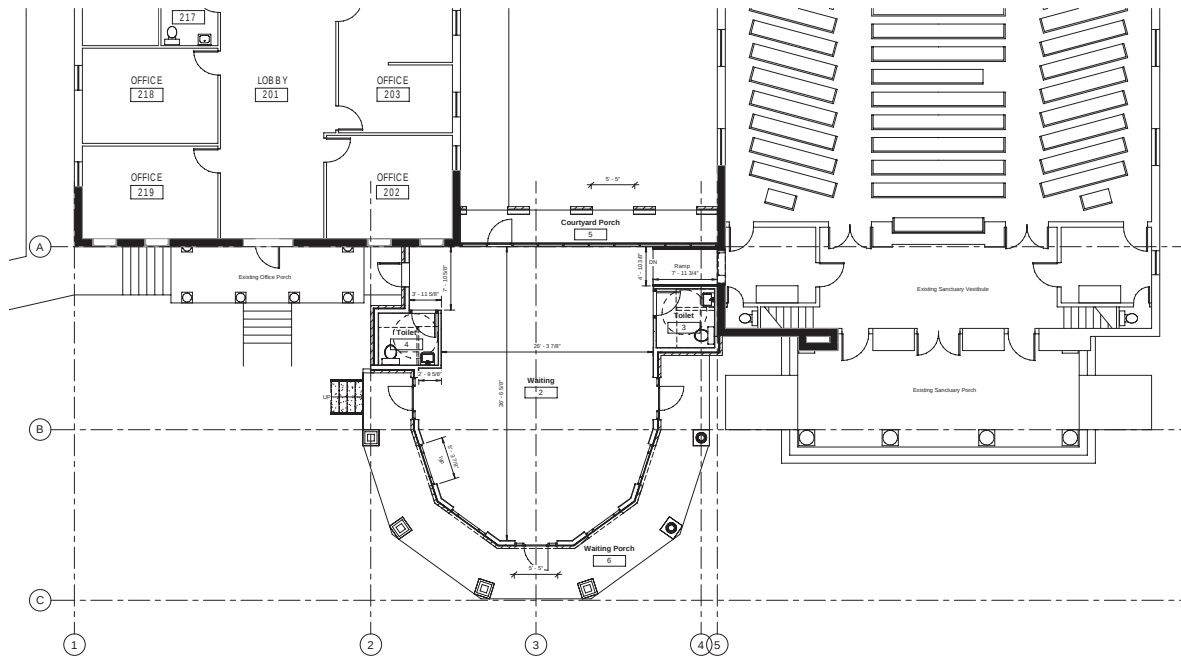
Carpet Concept

Acoustical Panels



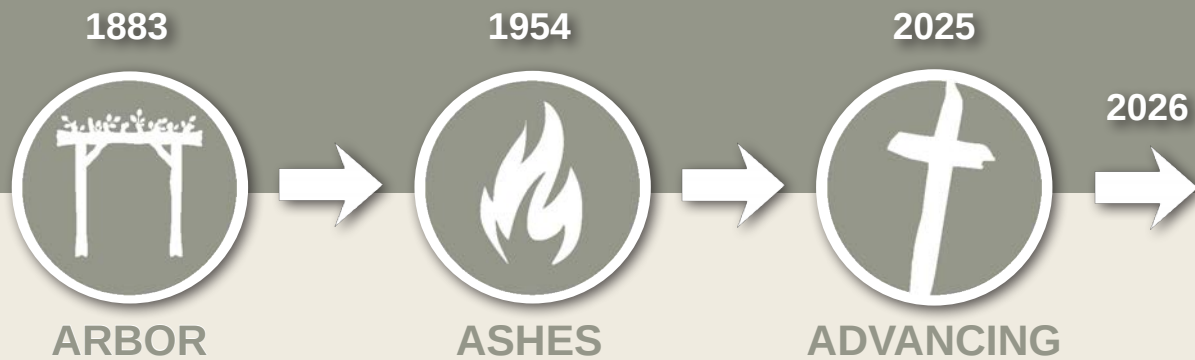
Stage Flooring LVP

POTENTIAL LOBBY ADDITION



TENTATIVE LOBBY CONCEPTS

- New lobby between Church Office and Sanctuary
- Welcome Center for new members and guests
- Create a new foot traffic flow away from the front of the sanctuary
- Add bathrooms in new lobby space
- Redo outdoor courtyard to be an additional area of connection
- Have an area where people can sign up for events
- Provide an additional meeting room for small events
- Current concept is a 1,200 square foot addition plus 500 square foot of porch space and 1,900 square foot of courtyard



Elizabeth Baptist Church

WORSHIP • LEARN • SERVE

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