



CONGREGATIONAL MEETING | 11.16.2025

ETERNAL CHURCH



CONGREGATIONAL MEETING 11.16.25

JASON VINSON

WELCOME & PRAYER

Jason Vinson

Chairman of the Elders

MEETING AGENDA

1. Welcome - Jason Vinson
2. The Purpose and Work of the Session - Jason Vinson, Chair
3. The Purpose and Work of the Diaconate - Emily Zimmer, Chair
4. Budget and Finance - Garrett Copeland
5. Stewardship as Worship – Rick Allen
6. Teaching Pastor Search Committee - Scott Carroll
7. The Heart of Eternal Church as we move forward to New Beginnings - Jason Vinson
8. Corporate Prayer - Jason Vinson

The Purpose and Work of the Session



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The Role of the Session

*“An elder is one who **“shepherds the flock of God”** (1 Peter 5:1-4), exercises oversight, leads with humility (Hebrews 13:7), **takes responsibility for the church** (1 Thessalonians 5:12), and is accountable to God for the spiritual well-being of its members (Hebrews 13:17).”*

Eternal Church Handbook of Practices, Section C



Focus Area: Shepherding The Flock

*“As shepherds of the flock, they are called to **lead with wisdom, care for church members, and uphold the church’s vision and doctrine.** Each elder is entrusted with specific members, ensuring both proactive and responsive shepherding.”*

*He chose David his servant and took him **from the sheepfolds;**
from following the nursing ewes he brought him to shepherd Jacob **his people,** Israel **his inheritance.**
With **upright heart** he shepherded them and **guided them with his skillful hand.**
(Psalm 78:70–72, ESV)*

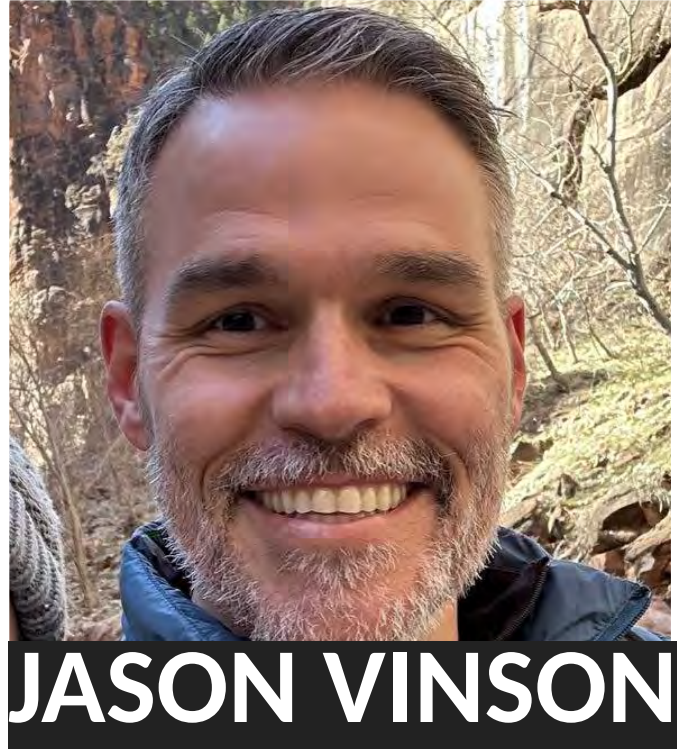
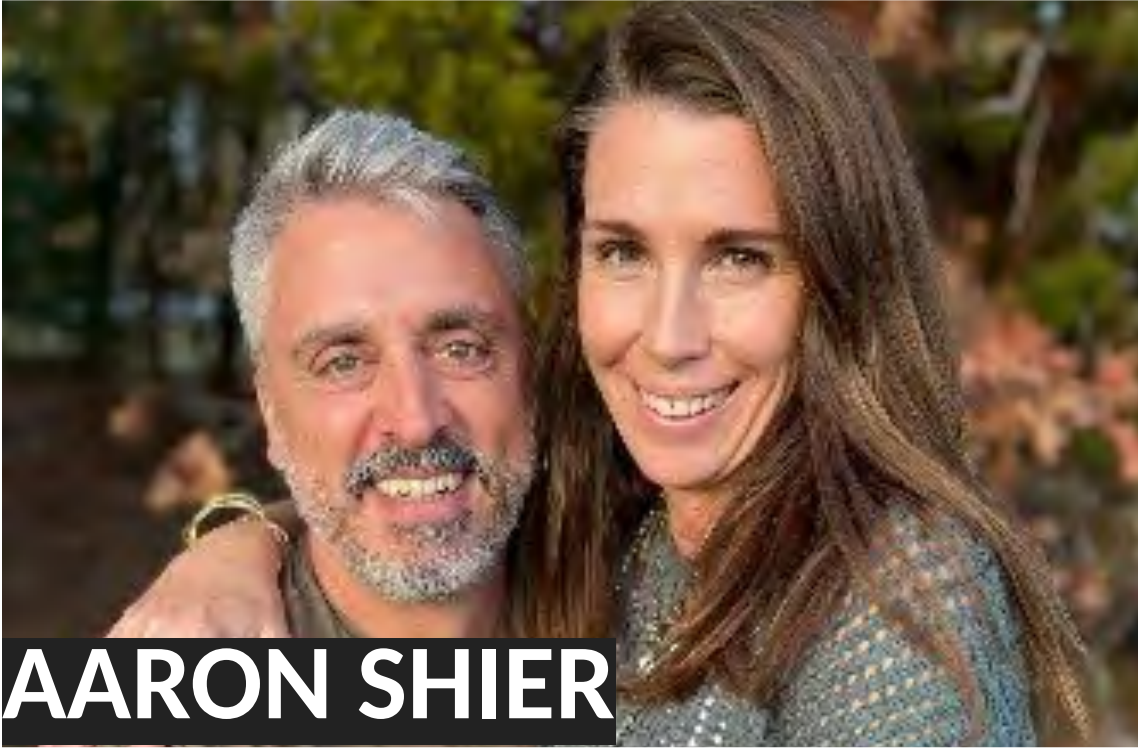
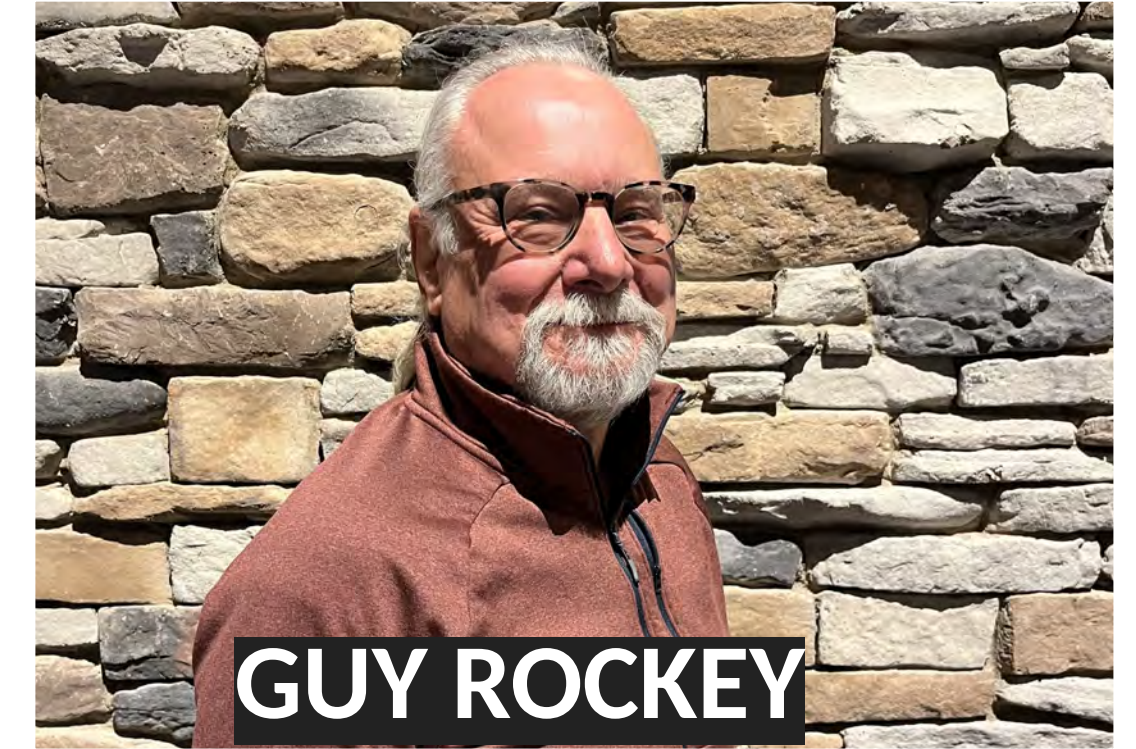
Relational Ministry: Shepherding Strategy

- Each Elder has a Flock to care for
- Flocks consist of ~20 members including one other Elder family
- The goal is relational ministry, to understand the body by being among the body
- Elders come together at least monthly to discuss overall flock perspective and pray for the body



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from following the nursing ewes he brought him to shepherd Jacob **his people**, Israel **his inheritance**.
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(Psalm 78:70–72, ESV)*

ELDERS| We currently have 11 individuals serving as Elders:



Our Responsibility for the Church:

Current Focus Areas



- Relational Shepherding of Congregants, Pastors, and Staff
- Partnering with Diaconate and Staff on alignment and execution of our Mission and Vision
- Corporate responsibilities of managing the church (finance, personnel, administration, etc.)
- Seeking God's direction for where He is leading His church

THE PURPOSE AND WORK OF THE DIACONATE

EMILY ZIMMER

THE PURPOSE AND WORK OF THE DIACONATE

Emily Zimmer

Chair of the Deacons

THE PURPOSE AND WORK OF THE DIACONATE

The role of the Diaconate - Servant Leadership

Eternal's Deacons are brothers and sisters who come alongside people to help meet practical needs, show compassion and assist in ministry.

- ▶ As Deacons, we endeavor to be wise, sure, and humble servants who protect and promote church unity by assisting the Pastoral Team, Staff, and Elders in meeting the needs of the church. (1 Timothy 3:8-13)
- ▶ We collaborate with the Session concerning the needs of our church body.
- ▶ When meeting needs, in addition to our direct service, we seek to recognize the giftings present in individuals in the body and encourage the use of those gifts.
- ▶ We seek to bring together these parts so that the body can function in meeting needs through service.

DIACONATE MEMBERS | We currently have 11 individuals serving as deacons:



THE PURPOSE AND WORK OF THE DIACONATE

Diaconate Ministries

The primary functional roles in which we serve as Deacons include: Helps, Hospitality, Stewardship, and Special Events.

HELPS

Comfort and pray with people who are going through seasons of hardship, including but not limited to death of a loved one, medical issues, marital and/or parenting struggles, and loneliness. Help meet non-financial physical needs such as meals, moving, yard work and the like.

- Collaborate with the Shepherd Team and Deacons reviewing Stewardship requests to provide spiritual support to people with financial and physical needs.
- Actively engage in Monthly Prayer Meetings and Widow Ministry.
- Proactively identify needs within our church community and engage with the rest of the Diaconate to develop potential solutions to such items.

THE PURPOSE AND WORK OF THE DIACONATE

HOSPITALITY

Foster an environment of joy, connectedness, and community throughout the congregation and amongst the volunteer teams on which they serve.

Additionally, proactively engage others (volunteers, church members and regular attenders, and new visitors) in a manner that makes Sunday services a comfortable, smooth, gospel-centered, and hospitable experience for every man, woman, and child that walks through the front doors of the church.

- Be a proactive hospitable presence at church services and other church events.
- Foster an environment of joy, connectedness, and community amongst the volunteer teams on which they serve.

THE PURPOSE AND WORK OF THE DIACONATE

STEWARDSHIP

Provide tangible help to people in need, often financial, both within the church and in the broader community, in such a way that people are pointed to Jesus and witness Him working through the church.

- Review, discern, and approve (if appropriate) financial support requests of church members, regular attenders, and others within the Eternal Church community.
- Engage members of the outside community who contact the church seeking financial and/or other forms of tangible assistance.
- Review, approve, and coordinate requests for counseling financial assistance.

THE PURPOSE AND WORK OF THE DIACONATE

SPECIAL EVENTS & PROJECTS

Serve as a resource for special events and projects that either take place at the church building, are organized at the church-wide level, or are add-ons to the typical Sunday service.

- Serve as point-of-contact and liaison between the Diaconate and the Staff as it relates to Special Events.
- Collaborate with Events Coordinator to mobilize Deacons and other volunteers to fulfill service needs for events, as needed.

THE PURPOSE AND WORK OF THE DIACONATE

LOOKING AHEAD

- ▶ Community Resource Inventory
- ▶ The Heart of the Diaconate

FINANCIAL UPDATE

GARRETT COPELAND

Garrett Copeland
Treasurer & Deacon

Financial Update

Agenda

- June 8th Meeting Recap
- FY25 Year in Review
- FY26 Budget
- Stewardship as Worship



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June 8th Meeting Recap



Operations

- Lizzy → Sheila
- Melissa as Finance Assistant
- Finance Committee established in January 2025 (+Troy Fleming)

Year-to-date Results (through April '25)

- YTD deficit of \$106k

What's Next?

- Finance Committee to monitor spending
- Preparation, review, and approval of FY26 budget

Building Loan

- Loan amount: \$4.3M
- 3.19% for 10 years
- Current loan balance: \$3.9M

Giving

- Aplos → PC in Jan '25
- 3 methods for giving (online, bill pay, in person)

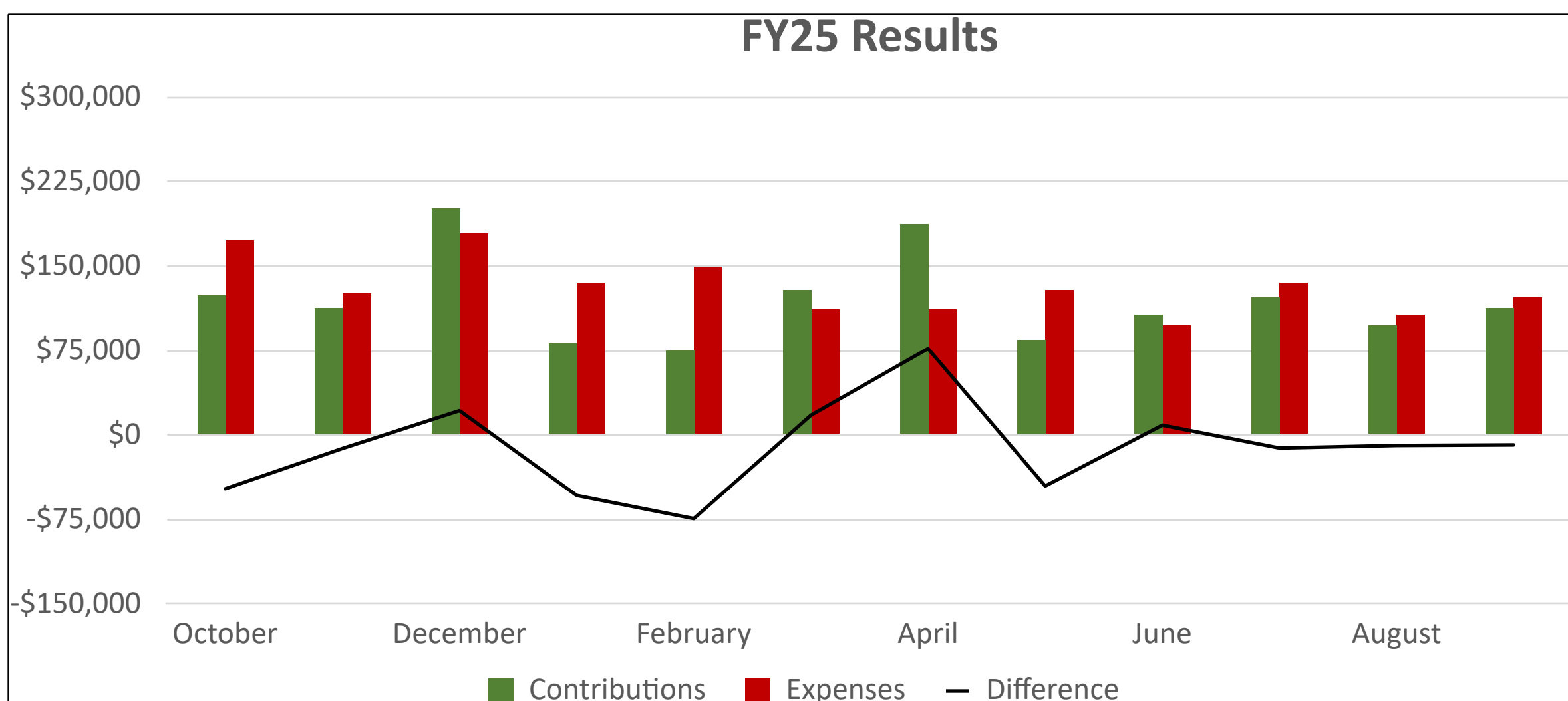
FY25 Year in Review

FY25 Actual Results	
Total Contributions	\$1,440k
Total Expenses	\$1,572k / \$1,686k
Surplus (Deficit)	(\$132k) / (\$246k)

Mortgage Principal

Because mortgage principal represents the pay down of a liability, it is not an expense for accounting purposes. However, it does represent an outlay of cash and therefore the impact of the mortgage is included in *italics*.

FY25 Budgeted Expenses = \$1,671k



Commentary

Contributions:

- Decrease in contributions is directly related to decrease in attendance

Expenses:

- Largest savings due to 1) lower staff/pastor costs and 2) single service vs. two services on Sundays for most of the year

FY25 Ending Reserve Balance:

\$549k (represents 4.6 months of operations)

FY26 Budget

FY26 Budget	
Total Estimated Contributions	\$1,428k
Total Projected Expenses*	\$1,428k / <i>\$1,542k</i>
Surplus (Deficit)	\$ - / <i>(\$114k)</i>

*Italics include mortgage principal

Projected FY26 Ending Reserve Balance:
\$435k (represents 3.7 months of operations)

FY26 Budget

Process

- Session was presented with three options for developing the FY26 budget:
 - Maintain (equal to FY25 spend)
 - Reimagine (equal to estimated FY26 contributions, exclude mortgage principal from expenses)
 - Reduce (equal to estimated FY26 contributions, include mortgage principal in expenses)
- Session set **Reimagine** as the budget approach for FY26.
- **Reimagine** invites us to rethink each ministry and service, seeking creative ways to achieve similar objectives at a lower cost.

Other Items to Note

- Collaborative effort involving Finance Committee, Elders, Pastors / Staff.
- Estimate of expected contributions in was based on historical trends and recent giving history.
- Budget includes Teaching Pastor for half the year as well as search firm costs.
- We have identified additional areas that, if necessary, could be reduced.
- Finance Committee to monitor giving vs. spend on a monthly basis and report to Session as needed.

Comparison to Prior Year Budget

	FY26 Budget (Annual)	FY25 Budget (Annual)	Difference (Annual)	FY26 Budget (Monthly)	FY25 Budget (Monthly)	Difference (Monthly)
Total Expenses	\$1,428k	\$1,671k	<i>(\$243k) / (14%)</i>	\$119k	\$139k	<i>(\$20k) / (14%)</i>

Comparison to Prior Year Actual Spend

	FY26 Budget (Annual)	FY25 Actual (Annual)	Difference (Annual)	FY26 Budget (Monthly)	FY25 Actual (Monthly)	Difference (Monthly)
Total Expenses	\$1,428k	\$1,572k	<i>(\$144k) / (9%)</i>	\$119k	\$131k	<i>(\$12k) / 9%)</i>

FY26 Budget

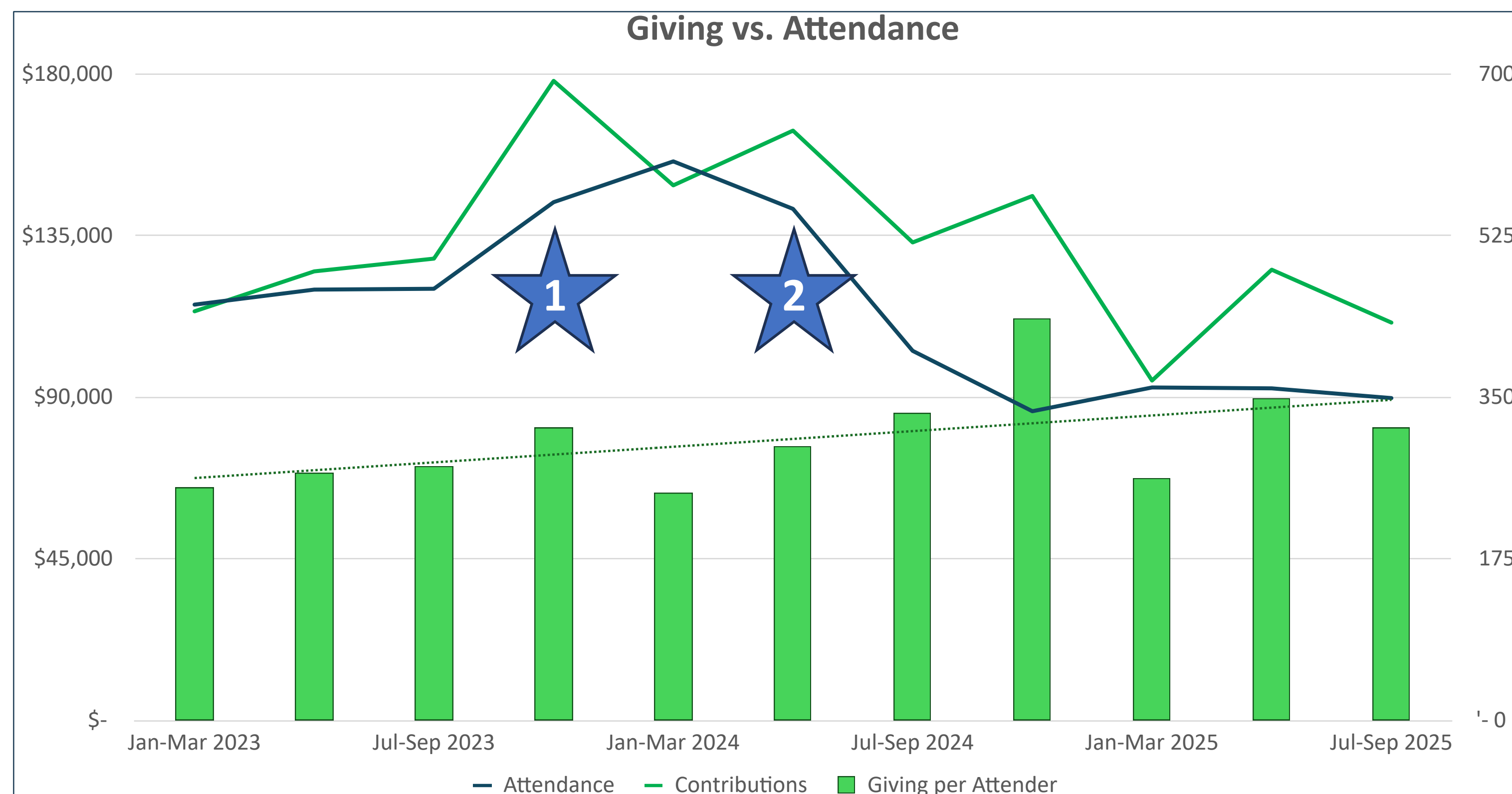


Key Budget Reduction Areas from FY25 to FY26

Care & Missions	Worship	Family Ministry	Communications	Outreach / Hospitality	Personnel	Operations
No trips to visit international missionaries	No budget for one-time sound equipment purchases in FY25	Reduce subsidies for Youth retreats	No budget for church body resources (i.e., books and journals)	Reduction in budget for significant churchwide meals/events	Assumed no Teaching Pastor salary/benefits for half the year (6 months)	IT services contract not renewed after initial contract period expired
Reduced contribution to the Greater Charlotte Church Planting Network	Reduce budget for security officers during Sunday services and at YG	Reductions in certain discretionary spend categories		Reduction in spend on coffee ministry as a result of product and process changes	Staff salary budget is down due to natural attrition	Lower bank processing fees due to switch to Planning Center from Aplos in January 2025

Total Reductions from FY25 to FY26: \$144k

Giving Trends



★ 1 New building opened

★ 2 Pastor transition

Giving per Attendee

FY23 (Oct '22 – Sept '23)	\$265.38
FY24 (Oct '23 – Sept '24)	\$298.14
FY25 (Oct '24 – Sept '25)	\$342.12

GENEROSITY

RICK ALLEN

Rick Allen

Elder



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Generosity

The Generosity of God



"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life"

John 3:16



The Generosity of God's People

"Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give,
not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver"
2 Corinthians 9:7



The Generosity of God's People

"Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap" - Luke 6:3

"Freely you have received; freely give" - Matthew 10:8

"Give generously to him and do so without a grudging heart; then because of this the Lord your God will bless you in all your work and in everything you put your hand to" - Deuteronomy 15:10

The Generosity of God's People



3 elements of generosity

Time-Talent-Treasure

TEACHING PASTOR SEARCH COMMITTEE

SCOTT CARROLL

TEACHING PASTOR SEARCH COMMITTEE

Scott Carroll

Elder

TPSC



TEACHING PASTOR
SEARCH COMMITTEE

PASTORAL STRUCTURE DISCERNMENT COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

PSDC Recommendation	Session Approved
1. A primary Teaching Pastor spiritually gifted in preaching and skilled in expository teaching.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
a. Teaching Pastor preaches 70% to 80% of the time	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b. Teaching Pastor expected to train and mentor other teachers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2. Conduct search for Teaching Pastor	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
a. Search should include external candidates and, if and to the extent Session feels led, internal candidates	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b. Begin search for Teaching Pastor right away	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3. Executive Pastor separate from Teaching Pastor – primary role to pastor the other pastors and staff with some church admin and general oversight of ministries	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
a. Pastor Chad continues as Executive Pastor	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4. Executive Pastor and Teaching Pastor as co-leaders	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Pastoral Structure Implementation Game Plan

Prepare	Form Search Committee	Identify Candidates	Congregation Engages with Candidates	Confirm and Call Candidate	Install and Celebrate
Summer	Beginning of Ministry Year – August-ish	6 to 12 months			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Form Implementation Committee Prepare hearts for discernment Develop charter for Search Committee Define characteristics of Teaching Pastor candidates Assess financial situation Develop search process Develop Teaching Pastor job description Define application Define interim needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Broad composition of elders, deacons, members Spiritually, emotionally, relationally mature Committed to collaboration and transparency Prayerful posture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Calling and spiritual maturity Doctrinal alignment Shepherding and leadership Shared philosophy of preaching and worship Cultural engagement Personal and family life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Written review of candidates (e.g., ministry experience, background) Engage in formal and informal conversations, Q&A, preach Reflection and discernment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there unity and peace in this decision? Has God made his will clear? Does this pastor demonstrate biblical qualifications and heart alignment? Candidate confirms their own sense of call Congregational vote 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Church gathers to commission, install and celebrate their new Teaching Pastor

FOUR PHASE APPROACH



- ▶ **PHASE ONE: Onboarding and Package Preparation**
- ▶ Provide church profile, church information, History, Doctrine, Theology, Beliefs, Culture DNA, Provide community profile

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- ▶ **PHASE TWO: Search and Launch**
- ▶ Recruiting, Marketing, Nationwide search, Three personal coaches

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- ▶ **PHASE THREE: CS Interviews**
- ▶ Three interviews, Present 3-5 candidates

FOUR PHASE APPROACH



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- ▶ Provide church profile, church information, History, Doctrine, Theology, Beliefs, Culture DNA, Provide community profile
- ▶ **PHASE TWO: Search and Launch**
- ▶ Recruiting, Marketing, Nationwide search, Three personal coaches
- ▶ **PHASE THREE: CS Interviews**
- ▶ Three interviews, Present 3-5 candidates
- ▶ **PHASE FOUR: On Site Interviews**
- ▶ We interview candidates, Select candidates to make visit, Invite candidate to visit and teach, Present recommendation to Session

THE HEART OF ETERNAL CHURCH

JASON VINSON

Singing A New Song

The Heart of Eternal
Church as we move
forward to New
Beginnings



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A New Song for Eternal Church: Elder Retreat



*Rejoice in the LORD, O you righteous!
For praise from the upright is beautiful.*

*Praise the LORD with the harp;
Make melody to Him with an instrument of ten
strings.*

*Sing to Him a new song;
Play skillfully with a shout of joy.*

Psalm 33:1-3



Psalm 127:1

Unless the Lord builds the house,
those who build it labor in vain.
Unless the Lord watches over the city,
the watchman stays awake in vain.

Being on Mission

4 Coordinates

- Truth
- Worship
- Community
- Witness

Vision

We want to see every man, woman, and child living **transformed** lives of witness at home, at work, and at play.

Mission

We pursue this Vision by treasuring the truth of the gospel, worshipping Jesus Christ in word and deed, and growing in communities of faith.

Reaching the Lost

Equipping the Saints

Growing in Community

New Teaching Pastor Search

Current Realities

- Healthy Sundays, Greenhouse/Wed, FM
- Weak Witness/Mission/Reaching the Lost Locally and Globally
- Transient/Interim season (threshold) needed leadership
- Church body desiring community and discipleship
- Budget in flux
- Learner oriented rather than “so that...”
- Richly resourced people and building



Having a Kingdom Focus

And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Matthew 28:18–20

Equipping
the Saints

Reaching
the Lost

Transformed Lives

Practicing
Community





Transformed Lives: Reaching the Lost

So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

Acts 1:6–8



Transformed Lives: Practicing Community

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 all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. 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.

Acts 2:42–47



Transformed Lives: Equipping the Saints

And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

Ephesians 4:11–16

Corporate Prayer

- Prayer for our Witness to increase both locally and globally for the sake of His name
- Prayer for the Spirit to move in our body and in our community with a desire for kingdom transformation
- Prayer for the Lord to bless our ministries for his Glory and to show us how to align with what he has outlined as the Gospel Mission of His church
- Prayer for our church to diligently seek the Lord in all that we do so that Christ would be magnified

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GO WITH GOD



Appendix - FY26 Budget



Eternal Church

Fiscal Year 2026 Operating Budget

	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Total FY26	FY25 Budget	Change
Total 100-Care & Missions	5,100	5,100	5,300	5,100	5,100	5,100	5,100	5,100	5,100	5,100	6,100	5,100	62,400	87,300	-29%
Total 140-Worship	4,797	1,667	1,497	1,447	1,497	1,667	1,497	1,667	1,497	1,447	1,717	1,447	21,844	57,540	-62%
Total 150-Adult Ministry	67	67	67	67	67	67	67	67	67	67	67	67	800	1,000	-20%
Total 160-Family Ministry-Students	859	359	409	2,859	409	359	359	409	2,609	609	409	359	10,008	28,500	-65%
Total 170-Children's Ministry	866	991	682	866	866	1,116	866	557	682	682	866	866	9,906	10,900	-9%
Total 180-Family Ministry-Young Adults	-	75	-	75	-	-	75	-	-	-	-	75	300	2,500	-88%
Total 190-Family Ministry-Development	372	371	496	372	371	496	371	372	496	371	496	372	4,956	9,600	-48%
Total 200-Creative Arts/Communication	195	195	195	195	3,695	195	195	195	195	195	195	195	5,840	14,350	-59%
Total 250- Outreach Hospitality	541	541	541	591	541	541	591	541	541	541	591	541	6,642	20,750	-68%
Total 300-Administration-Personnel	75,980	76,326	75,342	75,252	75,252	76,107	84,117	81,774	81,774	81,774	83,471	83,469	950,637	985,473	-4%
Total 300-Administration-Operations	23,708	23,452	37,905	24,604	34,948	38,654	34,452	28,791	27,447	23,135	31,518	25,698	354,312	338,615	5%
Total Operating Expense	112,485	109,144	122,434	111,428	122,746	124,302	127,690	119,473	120,408	113,920	125,429	118,189	1,427,646	1,556,528	-8%
Mortgage Principal	9,500	9,500	9,500	9,500	9,500	9,500	9,500	9,500	9,500	9,500	9,500	9,500	114,000	114,000	0%
Total Cash Need	121,985	118,644	131,934	120,928	132,246	133,802	137,190	128,973	129,908	123,420	134,929	127,689	1,541,646	1,670,528	-8%