

Missional Partnerships Plan for Missions Giving

Adopted in Church Conference July 24, 2024

- 1) We will continue to support mission endeavors at the level of 10% of regular budget offerings. *(This percentage is subject to change from year-to-year based on the approved budget.)*
 - a) Anyone giving to ESBC can choose to designate their budget mission offerings to **one** of the following Global Mission Partners (in alphabetic order)
 - i) The Baptist World Alliance
 - ii) The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship
 - iii) The Southern Baptist Convention
 - iv) Gifts can be divided equally among BWA, CBF, and SBC.
 - v) A new fund- The Greater Way Partnership Fund- *(The Greater Way Partnership Fund* is the default if a person does not choose one of the Global Partners listed above.)
- 2) *The Greater Way Partnership Fund* will be used for additional funding for current mission partners, mission emergencies or spontaneous needs that arise, or new missions opportunities.
- 3) A Missions Vision Council within the Missions Cluster will be responsible for:
 - o Developing a strategy for missional partnerships
 - o Evaluating opportunities presented by mission partners to use *The Greater Way Partnership Fund*
 - o Recommending to the missions cluster, deacons, and the congregation spending and participation in missional partnerships.
 - o Being a learning group for expanding our participation in Kingdom causes.
 - o Communicating missions projects with the church.
 - o Facilitating missions education for the congregation, including preparations for The Global Missions Celebration.
 - o Evaluating the balance of the Greater Way Fund at the end of the year to determine how funds should be used.
- 4) The Missions Vision Council will:
 - a) Housed under the Missions Cluster.
 - b) Chosen by the Nominating Committee with input from and consultation with the Missions Cluster.
 - c) Composed of 7 members chosen as follows:
 - i) 3 members will be from the Missions Cluster
 - (1) 1 member will be a member of the Local Missions Council.
 - (2) 1 member will be a member of the National Missions Council.
 - (3) 1 member will be a member of the International Missions Council.
 - ii) 2 members will be from the Stewardship Committee

- iii) 2 members will be at-large members of the congregation.
 - d) There will be staggered membership for team members, with each member serving a 3-year term once the team is established. The inaugural team will either serve 1 or 2 years and then roll off with the ability to be nominated back onto the team to serve the full 3-year term.
 - e) The Missions Vision Council will choose a chairperson at the first meeting of the church year.
- 5) The following are guidelines for allocating money from *The Greater Way Partnership Fund*:
- a) The Missions Vision Council is accountable to the deacons and stewardship committee for the funds spent and will provide reports of their activity at each regular church conference.
 - b) For ongoing partner support, the Council can set up a multi-year plan of funding that will come from *The Greater Way Partnership Fund*.
- 6) The criteria for adding new missional partners must be consistent with our mission statement and the Greater Way Covenant.
- 7) Note the following concerning the Greenville Baptist Association
- a) Support for The Greenville Baptist Association for 2024 was adjusted to the level of funds already distributed between January and August 2024.
 - b) The balance of the funds budgeted for GBA in the 2024 budget was sent to our mission partners in Ecuador and Thailand which currently receive no financial support from Earle Street. We have been assisting these ministries with the work of mission teams for several years.
 - c) Any future support for the GBA will be considered by the Missions Vision Council and directed toward local projects that align with our mission statement and The Greater Way Covenant.

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Frequently Asked Questions

What does it mean to be centered-set/ Jesus-centered as a congregation?

“Rather than drawing a line to identify people based on their common characteristics, a centered set uses a directional and relational basis of evaluation. The group is created by defining a center and observing people’s relationship with the center.” “In a centered church, God is the center focus.” We want ESBC to be defined by Christ, not an outside organization or denominational structure. One writer defined being ‘centrist’ as a “space deep and rich with conviction. It is a position that is biblically based, Christ-centered, missionally focused, relationally healthy and historically orthodox.” A centered-set

congregation will engage relationally across a spectrum of missional partners and cooperate in mission with like-minded brothers and sisters.

What is the difference between missions and missional?

The mission of Earle Street Baptist Church is to: worship God (worship), to share the gospel of Jesus Christ in word and deed (missions), to be a home to all who would enter (fellowship), to minister to the needs of one another (ministry), and to assist in spiritual growth (spiritual growth). We also support missions causes locally, nationally, and globally through our giving and personal involvement.

Being missional is a much bigger concern than just supporting missions.

“Missional is a word that came to be a part of the Christian vocabulary in the last 30 years or so. (Not missions but *missional*.) It is an important distinction that helps us to see missions from a different perspective. In many Baptist Churches “missions” was something you prayed about and gave money to, but was a small, but important part of a large church program. But the concept of “missional” broadens the mission of the church to be everything we are and all that we do in service to the “*missio Dei*” or mission of God.

Being a missional church is actively participating in the *missio Dei*, or mission of God.

Christopher Wright in an article for the Mission Church Network offers the following explanation of a missional church:

Many times we wrongly assume that the primary activity of God is in the church, rather than recognizing that God’s primary activity is in the world, and the church is God’s instrument sent into the world to participate in His redemptive mission. This key distinction clarifies the difference between a church with a missions program and a missional church. A church with a missions program usually sees missions as one activity alongside other equally important programs of the church. A missional church, on the other hand, focuses all its activities on its participation in God’s agenda for the world. God’s mission must form and inform everything we do. All activities of the church must be catalyzed by and organized around the *missio Dei*.

From: <http://www.missionalchurchnetwork.com/what-is-missional/>

Another way to perceive this is ***missions*** is something we do, ***missional*** is who we are. Everything we are and do in the congregation is to be focused on living in the center of God’s mission for the world. As a missional, centered-set church we will strive to partner with and cooperate with others who are seeking to care for God’s creation and call people into a reconciled relationship with Himself.

Will I be able to still give money to the SBC?

Yes. Everyone can choose a Global Partner to give 10% (or current budget percentage) of their budget offering. As well as designating one’s mission offering to the Southern

Baptist Convention, others can designate to the Baptist World Alliance, The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, or gifts equally divided among the three.

What is the Baptist World Alliance?

“The Baptist World Alliance is a global movement of Baptists sharing a common confession of faith in Jesus Christ bonded together by God’s love to support, encourage and strengthen one another while proclaiming and living the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit before a lost and hurting world.”

It is a global network of 51 million Baptists in 130 countries and territories unified by a mission to impact the world for Christ. As a “Global Impact Church,” a congregation connects with other Baptist churches and conventions in five key ministry areas:

- Strengthening worship, fellowship, and unity
- Leading in missions and evangelism
- Responding to human need through aid, relief, and community development.
- Defending religious freedom and human rights and justice.
- Advancing theological reflection and transformational leadership.

Can we add missional partners in the future?

Yes, the Missions Vision Council can evaluate adding any additional missions partners.

How will the congregation have on-going input in our missions strategy?

Every year, the Missions Vision Council will make recommendations on budget allocations for partners. The congregation will have a chance to ask questions about these allocations and vote on the budget.

How do I update my designation to Global Partners?

- Similar to our Global Missions Offering, a card will be provided to make your preferences known or it can be done on the church’s website.

If someone doesn’t designate a Global Partner, where will their money go?

- If someone doesn’t designate a Global Partner, then 10% (or the current budget percentage) of their budget offerings will go into “The Greater Way Partnership Fund.”

Will ESBC continue to have the Global Missions Celebration?

- Yes, we will continue to have Global Missions Celebration (held in February) giving people the opportunity to make good faith pledges for missions over and above their budget offering designations.

These changes took effect September 1, 2024. The proposal for these changes was approved in church conference on July 24, 2024.