

The Story Behind the Numbers

Our annual budget is a theological document. It directs our work each year like a map. It not only represents our values, it's also a filter by which we interpret God's call upon our lives in the coming year.

The numbers you see in the budget itself — the dollars to be pledged then given by all of us as our offerings to God — are no

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less sacred than the work they envision. However, sometimes it's hard to see the beauty of a story in a spreadsheet.

As you review and absorb this story along with the numbers, we hope and trust you'll see not only the beauty, but feel the excitement about what's in store in 2020.

Please pay special attention to the things that matter to you most, then plan on being present for both Brad Jernberg's Wednesday night Q & A on January 22, and our pastor's "State of the Church" presentation of Sunday, January 26 following worship.

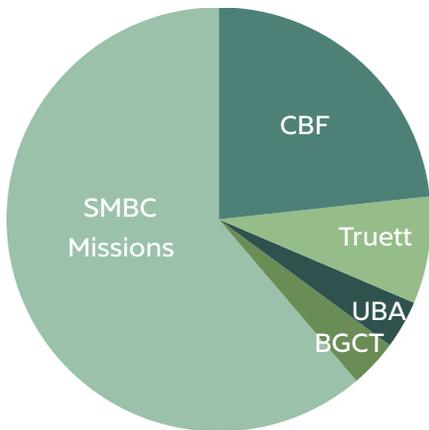


After this latter presentation, within the context of our Quarterly Business Meeting, we'll discuss the budget, take any remaining questions, vote on it, then together, begin to carry out the beautiful and meaningful story it foretells.

Missions

Global & Local Partners, Hispanic Ministry, SMILE

2020 Proposed	\$439,474
% of Budget	10%



10% of our annual budget giving goes to missions, while close to 15% of all dollars the church receives support mission efforts locally and globally.

With this in mind, let's take a closer look at the missions numbers, especially given the fact that what's being proposed is somewhat different than in past years due to the changing landscape of how missions are most effectively done in this era.

First, this pie is cut into a 60/40 division, with South Main's Mission Partners receiving the larger share (60%) and South Main's Denominational Partners getting the smaller share (40%). This is different from last year when this "Missions Pie" was cut into a 50/50 division.

This year, this first portion (60%), would be disbursed by the Missions Committee to our global and local mission partners with whom you're familiar. This includes OSA, Sodzo, and mission trip travel support. This portion of the budget also includes funding for local organizations like the Emergency Aid Coalition, SEARCH, Gracewood, Amazing Place, and MacGregor Elementary student support, as well as mission dollars to our own ongoing

"in-house" efforts, like Manna, SMILE, Youth Missions, and our Benevolence ministry for those with urgent needs in our community.

The second portion of the pie, the 40%, will be directed to the four South Main Denominational Partners to whom we gave last year, but in a different four-way split.

The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, with which we've done mission work for over two decades, would receive 60% (50% in 2019). 22% (10% in 2019) would go to a scholarship fund at Truett Seminary, reflecting our priority to support the education of moderate Baptist leaders for the future.

Further, 9% (30% in 2019) will go to the Baptist General Convention of Texas, another organization with which we've worked for decades. Finally, 9% (10% in 2019) would go to the Union Baptist Association, a diverse organization with which we've historically partnered that currently works with local churches in need. These changes in percentages allow us to support our local mission partners more robustly, while maintaining our long-standing relationships with our denominational partners.



Worship & Music

Worship, Choirs, Handbells, & Broadcast Ministry

2020 Proposed	\$392,085
% of Budget	9%

Worship is the ongoing theme of our story and represents our best offering to God. Led each week by Carey Cannon, our congregational voice in worship has grown in beauty, harmony, and resonance. Currently, we have 111 congregation members regularly participating in our sanctuary choir.

At each special service at South Main, we experience expressions of worship and fellowship that are inspiring and transformational. For instance, on December 11 of last year, 300 parents, grandparents, and friends streamed into the Sanctuary to watch the MainKids annual Christmas Pageant. The bells rang out, the kids sang their parts beautifully, and the costumes were adorable. But what those present couldn't see were the many hours of dreaming, organization, rehearsals, leadership, and costume preparation which began three months before and continued weekly until moments before the pageant itself.



Photo: Nathan Moeller

In this and other ways, the idea of worship is taught at South Main. God is the audience and the congregation is not simply a group of spectators. These notions are modeled to the 145 children and youth in our church who are enrolled in choir. Moreover, our children and youth are often asked to participate in leading worship through one of our 6 separate age-graded choirs, as a part of one of our church's 6 children and youth handbell choirs, by reading Scripture, or offering a prayer.

Simply put, worship is the golden thread that moves through our story, and through each generation of South Main, and music is its symphonic soundtrack.

Family Ministry

Babies, Children, Middle & High Schoolers — and their Parents

2020 Proposed	\$526,536
% of Budget	12%

The Family Ministry at South Main, under the innovative leadership of Dolores Rader and her energetic team, is tending families with infants through high school students in a unified way that's well aligned with Gospel purpose. The ministry has twin aims: to strengthen families and create in our children and youth a durable and authentic faith that's truly their own — one that will withstand the challenges they face as young people and into adulthood.

Our Family Ministry has continued to grow in a way that fuels the growth of the church. We had 6 families join in 2019 and now have 282 children and youth (up 18% from 5 years ago) enrolled in Sunday School from 148 families. Moreover, we have 23 distinct Family Ministry Sunday School classes led by 62 adult volunteers. Each young person present is receiving thoughtful lessons from Scripture, as well as support and spiritual life lessons tailored to their respective ages and life stations. These discipleship efforts are reflected in the fact that 29% of our 2019 stewardship pledges were from children 18 and under.

In addition, the ministry provides daily encouragements, weekly parenting and life tips, mission trips, and ongoing practical offerings for our church's kids and youth aimed at their overall well-being. Our Family Ministry is not only vital to the church, and preparing our kids spiritually and practically for the future, but it's attracting young families throughout our city to the Gospel of Christ.



Photo: Lauren Benesh

Adult Discipleship

Sunday School, Stewardship, & Retreats

2020 Proposed	\$196,634
% of Budget	4%

As a fellowship of believers, Sunday School, get-togethers in homes for Bible study, joining others on retreat, and sharing devotional readings during Lent and Advent, provide unique paths for South Mainers to deepen our discipleship together.



Photo: Nathan Moeller

Under the steady guidance of Matt Walton, our Sunday School communities have been revitalized with new organization and energy. In addition to starting 4 new Sunday School communities in 2019, each community, both new and old, now benefits from leadership focused on community-building and missions. Likewise, this budget aims to support our Sunday school teachers — not only through ongoing training, but with resources to enable their ability to further nurture the spiritual maturity and growth of the congregation at large.

Finally, our budget reflects the growth of our Next Step program designed to connect both guests and new members into the life of the church, and into a lifestyle which draws them closer to God in a path of life-changing discipleship.

Pastoral Ministry

Pastoral Care, Memorial Services, Grief Ministries

2020 Budget	\$439,067
% of Budget	10%

Each year, many in our congregation face challenges due to illness, accident, a death in the family, a financial or legal crisis, or the diagnosis of dementia of a loved one, to name a few.

Our pastoral ministries serve those in need in all sorts of ways — providing companionship to longtime South Main members who can no longer attend church in person (MainTies); personal visits to those who are in the midst of medical care (Deacon Hospital Visitation); resources to those who are elderly and living alone (Amazing Place's Faith Care Connection); training to those dealing with a loved one with dementia (Savvy Caregiver training); or compassion and help for those dealing with grief over loss (Walking through Grief).

In addition, our pastoral care budget includes, most vitally, the work of our pastors who visit congregants in the hospital and counsel congregants in need. They are present with South Mainers in times of loss, and help them navigate through memorial services, as well as the storms that inevitably arise in our lives. These efforts are all designed to link us to one another and to weave vital social fabric among us, generating social capital to rely on during trials in our lives.



Fellowship

Hospitality, Coffee, Sunday Lunches, & Community

2020 Proposed	\$204,329
% of Budget	5%



Experiences like a good conversation over a good meal, a time of prayer with friends on a Wednesday night, a deep dialogue within a small group community on Sunday, or a casual moment with other parents watching your kids play on the playground during the week, are all encounters on which it is difficult to put a price.

These moments are envisioned in the spaces between the lines of the spreadsheets that make up this budget. That is to say, the figures in this budget represent preparation for these life-giving moments to occur for all of us.

Intentionally setting the stage for these experiences is a core function of the church, which is not only necessary, but responds to the deepest needs we share as human beings regardless of age, race, social station, or anything else. We seek community and the essence of community is human connection.

Operations

Facilities, Utilities, & Maintenance

2020 Proposed	\$805,900
% of Budget	18%

All over the world there are good people who don't attend and don't give generously to their local church. It's a common word for people of good will to say that they want their energies to really count, and their resources to go to the truly needy, not a big organization which requires administration and property costs, insurance, air conditioning, and the like.

What this view fails to uncover is that whenever a congregation comes together within the church's buildings, or even gathers elsewhere as a group borne of relationships and structure developed at the church itself, an invisible safety net of strong connections is being woven, then strengthened under common purpose, among all those who are regularly present. This net of social connections, this well of social reserves, is a crucial blessing our church provides to all of us, and the operations section of this budget represents the hub from which this very net is spun.

Likewise, when you peruse this budget, examining the costs related to maintaining the campus and the general operations of the church, perhaps also think of the campus as a launching pad from which all the good work of missions and ministry lifts off.

Without this launching pad and the work of those who maintain and operate it, you who work downstream doing the Gospel work of South Main would likely never meet, much less ever come together to form a cohesive team with a shared Gospel mission. Our church's building is, very simply, the focal point from where not only all our relationships bud, but the place from which all our endeavors, taken on with God's guidance, reach escape velocity and actually get off the ground.



Administration

Ministry Support, Communications, & Facilities Staff

2020 Proposed	\$1,390,719
% of Budget	32%

Our print publications — such as The Fount and the Worship Guide — are of the highest quality and embody South Main’s standard of excellence. We continue to reach new audiences through our expanding print and digital marketing efforts. For instance, if someone in the area Googles “Baptist Church in Houston,” South Main consistently appears near the top of the first page of organic search results.

Finally, it’s been said that “the people are the programs” and it’s true. South Main employs 75 people, more than a third of whom work in ministry support, maintenance, properties, communications, and security; their salaries and benefits are all reflected in this section. We are especially blessed that your gifts allow us to use a “living wage” (as determined by the M.I.T. Living Wage Scale for Harris County) as the starting point for our hourly employees.



Photo: Laurie Sellers

The Bottom Line

A spending plan to fulfill SMBC’s mission in 2020

A considerable amount of earnest prayer, pragmatic discussion, and diligent study has gone into the preparation of the church’s proposed budget already. The Finance Committee has compiled, examined, discussed, reviewed, and prayed their way through several drafts of what’s being proposed.

2019 Budget	\$4,275,000
2020 Proposed Budget	\$4,394,744
% Change	2.8%

The Personnel Committee, Missions Committee, Operations Committee, the diaconate, and staff have all made valuable contributions to this document as well. Each of these groups has listened for God’s guidance, discerned the Spirit’s direction, and considered the financial capacity of the congregation in the year ahead. They factored in our church’s history and our current context — mindful of our ongoing capital campaign and the need to extinguish our remaining debt.

This budget and the challenging work it envisions is certainly an ambitious undertaking, but one that is reasonable to adopt, then carry out given the undeniable blessings God has bestowed on this congregation in terms of resources, leadership, and energy.

Indeed our annual budget is one of our church’s most important theological documents, and this particular proposed budget reflects our values and our pursuit of God’s will as a church for 2020.

We’d now ask you to join those who’ve worked on these documents thus far, as together we continue to prayerfully consider the path ahead in 2020 with God’s continued guidance and ongoing blessing.

2020 Proposed Budget					
Income	2019		2020		
Total Income	\$	4,275,000	\$	4,394,744	
Expenses					% of Budget
Missions		420,871	10%	439,474	10%
Worship & Music		385,068	9%	392,085	9%
Family Ministry		469,594	11%	526,536	12%
Adult Discipleship		201,465	5%	196,634	4%
Pastoral Ministry		451,282	11%	439,067	10%
Fellowship		195,600	5%	204,329	5%
Operations		753,200	18%	805,900	18%
Administration		1,397,920	33%	1,390,719	32%
Total Expense	\$	4,275,000	\$	4,394,744	
Total Income Over/Under Expense	\$	-	\$	-	