



Narrative Budget

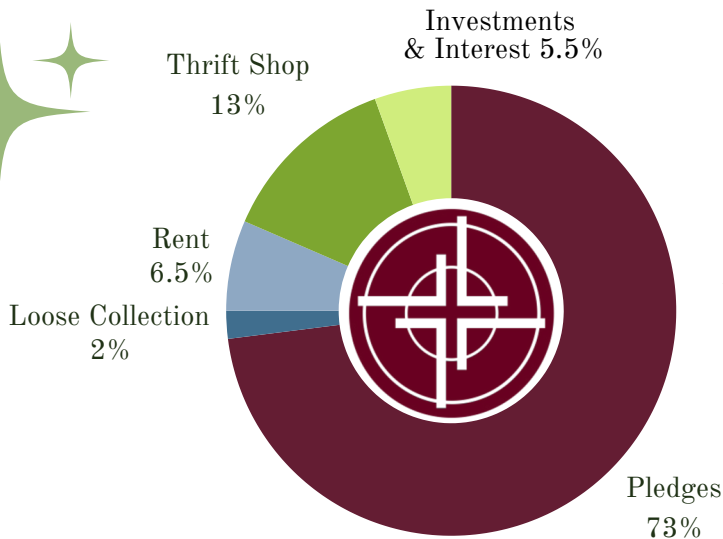
Acton Congregational Church



2025

As we embark on our annual pledge appeal, we invite you to take a moment to reflect on the profound impact our church community has on our lives and the world around us. Our church is more than just a building; it is a place where faith is nurtured, lives are transformed, and hope is shared. It is where we come together to worship, support one another, and extend God's love beyond our walls.

Where Our Income Comes From



The Trustees

I have served on the Board of Trustees twice during my years at ACC. The first time, in the 80's, we were in the process of expanding our building with a new wing for classrooms and buying the property for the parking lot – exciting times! Now, during my second term, we are struggling with finding additional uses for that “new” space and securing the money to support the ongoing costs. On the face of it, that may seem a little sad, but in reality it's a reflection of how the world is changing in so many ways. So while the Trustees still have the mission to manage the dollars and cents, I am constantly reminded by our renewed focus on community and outreach that ACC is not buildings, but people and connections.

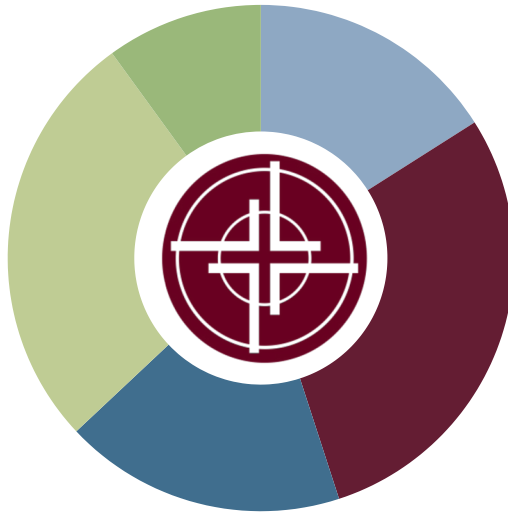
-Sherry Ryder

2025 Budget

Missions & Service
10%

Life Together
16%

Building for Ministry
27%



Faith & Worship
29%

Nurturing Families & Youth
18%



Mission & Service

to believe is to care, to care is to do

We actively reach out to serve those around us through various initiatives, we strive to be a beacon of hope and love in our community. We make a tangible difference through the programs we support with our time and dollars, including:

- **Habitat for Humanity:** building homes and transforming lives
- **Community Supper:** warm meals and fellowship to those in need
- **Mitten Tree:** generosity to brighten the holidays and share Christ's love with others
- **Cornerstone Thrift Shop:** offering affordable essentials
- **Youth Mission Trips:** empowering our youth to serve and learn in diverse communities
- **Rise against Hunger:** packing and distributing meals to combat global hunger
- **Lazarus House:** assisting families with shelter food and resources to overcome poverty



Life Together

Welcoming, Caring, Sharing:
how we use our resources reflects our love through
the examples shown here, and in many other ways.

Visitation Team

After our Senior Minister makes an initial pastoral care visit or call, the Visitation Team reaches out to the members and friends in our faith community who are going through difficult times due to health issues, grief, unexpected life changes, caregiving responsibilities, or any other afflictions. With the minister's guidance, we provide them with listening ears, support, encouragement, and prayers. We also deliver Easter flowers and Christmas cookies to those who are homebound.

Caring for others as an expression of our gratitude for God's love and generosity connects each other and deepens the relationship. Some caring relationships have blossomed into long-term friendships.

– Kyoko Loverin

Fellowship

- Walk n Wonder
- Candles, Carols & Crockpots
- Christmas Tree lighting
- Trunk or Treat
- Brunches and potlucks
- Women's holiday brunch

Caring

- Pastoral visits to homes and hospitals
- Prayer Shawl Ministry
- Prayer after Worship
- Stephen Ministers
- Good Shepherd Meal Ministry



Faith & Worship

Fostering a deep connection with God and each other

Worship

Sunday worship at ACC is at the core of my week. Throughout the week, I am busy and focused on the task at hand or my plans for the next thing. However, the worship service on Sunday morning is a chance to stop being absorbed in ordinary things and think of extraordinary things. I like being together and focusing on the organ, hymns, anthems, scripture, prayers, passing the peace, mission plans, etc. Ideas come from everywhere in worship. Sometimes my mind wanders, but then big ideas come into my mind. Thoughts of the holy, of forgiveness, of love, of obligation, of ways to be better in the world occupy my thinking. I have a sense of being less important and more important at the same time. It's a fascinating mystery. Each week, I am back again to think, learn, laugh, and share in that unique hour together.

-Shirley Beltz

Faith and Fellowship

- Inspiring messages from Rev. Paulo's sermons
- Guest and lay preachers to expand our perspective
- Faith-deepening programs
- A welcoming Sanctuary
- Livestreamed services to reach people far and wide

Special Times

- Celebrating important milestones, both personal and spiritual
- Rally Sunday
- Advent and Christmas
- Lenten Dinners
- Holy Week and Easter
- Special Sunday services such as Youth, Caring, and M&O Sundays
- Special Concerts and music programs



Seeking *to live God's Love*



Faith & Worship

Fostering a deep connection with God and each other

Music Ministry

I moved with Rebecca Cazabon, my wife, to Acton in 2013 and we joined ACC the following year. Rebecca joined the ACC Senior Choir soon after our family began attending services, and she has occasionally sung solos and duets. During the pandemic, Rebecca served as ACC Cantor, leading the virtual service in music for those watching at home.

Although I had sung in church choirs most of my adult life, I held off on joining the ACC Choir due to rehearsal conflicts with my classic rock cover band (The MCats Band, for which I play keys). As The MCats approached its 20th year, gigs decreased. And with Pip's announced retirement, I joined Rebecca for the spring 2023 performance of the Bach Cantata 93 - and I have been singing with the choir ever since.

We both love singing with the choir, which provides rich musical, spiritual, and social outlets. The ACC Senior Choir is fun and funny, and we are excited to begin singing again after a summer hiatus, under the inspiring direction of Ellie!
- Erik Heels

Faith & Worship

Fostering a deep connection with God and each other

Music Ministry



Music is another language of worship; its wordless communication draws us closer to God and to each other. I like to paraphrase Psalm 46: “[Music] is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.”

*-Elizabeth Carley,
Organist/Coordinator of Music*



Nurturing *Families and Youth*

learning and growing in faith

Family Ministries

Though there are many special moments during Sunday School at ACC, the most beautiful ones happen when we see the children and the church as a whole unite in living and spreading God's love. This past spring, some wonderful volunteers from the congregation came to spend a Sunday or two leading the Sunday School class lessons. During one special week, the kids and these volunteers discussed the many ways that Jesus' love shows itself in our lives. Another week, they made gorgeous Easter cards to mail to church members, using their hands and their hearts to send Jesus' love out into the world. Without realizing how well they were all connected, these volunteers brought the message of finding and spreading Jesus' love full circle. It was a beautiful example of the joy that ACC's children's programs are capable of creating, and the powerful impact they have within our community on kids and adults alike.

– Jenny Salvias

Programs

- Sunday School
- Children's Choir
- Children's Sermons
- Christmas Pageant
- Children's Moments during worship



Nurturing Families and Youth

learning and growing in faith

Confirmation

I volunteer in the junior high and confirmation programs because I love being around the energy of kids in that age group. It's a very interesting in-between time, when they are trying to figure out who they are and what they believe. The confirmands I've met always impress me with their pure curiosity. It takes a while for them to feel comfortable asking questions, but when they do, it's wonderful to witness how they think about the big faith questions we all still wrestle with in our own lives. I'm so glad we have programs for our youth where they can be with their peers in an environment that is open, supportive, and neutral, without many of the stresses that can be present in other parts of their world. I'm glad I have this outlet, too!

– Julia Hanna

JHYF Experiences

- Confirmation instruction
- Interfaith exploration
- Service projects
- Retreats
- Fellowship opportunities
- Faith deepening through the Confirmation process



Nurturing Families and Youth

learning and growing in faith

Youth Ministries

Each year the senior high youth go on mission trips for a week. They travel in vans to someplace far from suburban Acton. It is always to a place that is not only far in distance, but in culture and economic prosperity. They get to see people who have led lives nothing like their own.

But what is missing from this list of daytime mission trip activities that you might have heard about, is what goes on in the evening sessions. In the evening, there is a youth worship team that leads worship. We can't talk about what is discussed, but there are many stories that are shared. Tears are shed. This time is when the youth are most honest with each other. It is the time when their deepest beliefs, faith, and love come out.

– Russ Lowe

Memorable Experiences

- Creating a games night for city youth after cooking dinner and eating with them.
- Cleaning up a rural park where city youth will be able to get out of the city
- Repairing a community building by cleaning, scraping, and painting floors and walls.
- Building a cement wall to hold back flood waters.
- Helping with food distribution in a pantry and distribution center.



Building *the Ministry*

All are welcome:
the lights are on, and the doors are open.



We're privileged to be rich in space to worship, celebrate and support each other, including our beautiful sanctuary and spacious Hartman Hall. Our building supports activities that further the work of our church, provides a home for our Cornerstone Thrift Shop, and an affordable, safe space for community groups. This year, we had major expenses for a new roof and organ repairs. We received some generous donations to help with the organ repairs and we coupled the roof replacement with our solar panel project to off-set future electricity costs. While we have paid off the mortgage for the building, the maintenance costs continue to rise as our building ages.

We have been consistently blessed with Trustees and members who show their gratitude for God's love by working tirelessly to manage our finances, personnel, technology and building. Without these volunteers, our operating costs would be much higher. Your gifts help support our building, which is at the center of our faith community.

Faith Testimonial

In my many years at Acton Congregational Church, I've been blessed to experience the many ways faith manifests itself within our community, and it reminds me of the familiar line from 1 John 3:18, "let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth." This verse is familiar to us because it's central to our faith expression. Our collective "deeds and truth" define our faith community and enable us to respond to our changing world while remaining true to our faith. Whether it was the decision to become Opening and Affirming, or the prayerful process to determine the best outcome for our properties at 8 and 20 Concord Road, I've been proud to be part of ACC's leadership team that has recently navigated these thoughtful decisions. Experiencing this provided me with inspiration to do more.

As I look to the future, it's become clear that both our community and our world are changing in manifest ways, both of which the 2023-2024 Strategic Planning Task Force drafted recommendations to begin to address. In parallel, as 2023 Trustee Co-Chair, these concerns inspired me to lead a push for ACC to make for a more sustainable building use model and to reduce our carbon footprint. One way to do this was to use our facility at 12 Concord Road to produce renewable energy by installing solar panels. Although the "word" of installing solar panels at ACC had been discussed for some time, I and many others felt that now was time for it to become a "deed" in service to both our community and to the future of our planet. Emphasizing this point, Mark Lauritano at our January 2024 Annual Meeting, described our solar panel installation as "an act on our shared covenant and care for future generations", and supported it by excerpts from our Mission Statement to "work for justice and equity for all people" and to "respect and conserve God's earth". This was truly a deed many of us were inspired to complete!

Faith Testimonial



The twelve-month process to install solar panels was necessarily a community affair. It was a rewarding combination of both faith in action and traditional project planning. For me personally, I found the ACC leadership team and congregational encouragement reassuring and inspiring. I was also proud to represent ACC to our broader community, including conversations with Matt Leibman, Solar Project Coordinator at Temple Beth Elohim; Neil Gordon, CEO of Acton Children's Discovery Museum; Bob Nail, President of Massachusetts Interfaith Power and Light; and the Acton Historic District Commission, among many others. Finally, the working relationships I formed with other members of ACC's Environmental Sustainability Task Force, Chuck Floyd, Tom Gillispie, Mark Lauritano, John Scaletta, and Allen Warner were greatly appreciated as they're all a true blessing to ACC!

Now that the installation is complete and I reflect on the long, but rewarding, process, I'm reminded of James 2:17-18, "In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. But someone will say, 'You have faith; I have deeds.' Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds."

-Rod Kunz



Acton Congregational Church

Thank You



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Your generous support goes well beyond supporting the annual pledge drive – your talents and time help the church’s many programs and activities. That’s an inspiring sign of your generous spirit, and of a vibrant, caring congregation-

And for that we thank you.