



CONFERENCE DATA COMPARISON 2008-2009

Every year about this time, this newsletter compares the most recently released official UMC church statistics for the USA. The tune is usually the same with minor variations, as is the case this year. Membership change has not deviated markedly from the trend of the last four decades. All major categories are down including the number of churches, which has declined by 236 (-0.7%) This is less than the previous period's drop of 330, but more than the period before that at 198.

All jurisdictions had a net loss of membership, yielding a combined loss of 94,570 (-1.2%). (The figure for 2008 was down by 79,535.) All annual conferences in the Northeastern, North Central, and Western jurisdictions lost members. One conference in the South Central and four conferences in the Southeastern jurisdictions gained members. The Northeastern and North Central jurisdictions accounted for over 58,000 of the membership decrease. The Northeastern Jurisdiction had the highest percentage drop at 2.2%. Once again, North Georgia had the largest membership increase in numbers at 2,283, followed by Central Texas at 1,529. Interestingly, if North Georgia and the Western Jurisdiction continue their current trending, sometime in 2012 North Georgia will have more members than the Western Jurisdiction. However, North Georgia's membership increase has been less every year for the past few years. It used to be a predictable 6,000 or so yearly.

Worship attendance continued the trend of recent years and again declined significantly. The most recent period's drop is 52,733 (-1.7%), compared to 65,386 in the previous period. If non-reporting of some churches were to be factored in, the loss could improve by around 11,000. (See *Note at end.*) All jurisdictions declined in attendance in worship, with eight annual conferences showing an increase.

Other categories displayed declines as well. Church school attendance showed a decline, but a new reporting format on the year-end reports made comparisons inaccurate. Members received by profession of faith dropped by 699, or -0.5%. This marks a vast

improvement over last period's 3.3% drop. Twenty-five conferences showed increases, matching last year's total. Average members per church remained at 228, dropping slightly compared to the 230 figure which had held for the previous three periods. Average worship attendance continued the trend of recent years in dropping by one to 93. Half of all United Methodist churches had 105 members or fewer, down by 3. Half had 48 or less in attendance, a drop of two from the previous period. When factoring out non-reporting, the number is 45, down by 4.

The following pages contain individual annual conference figures and have not been altered per the note at the end. All data used here has been provided by the General Council on Finance and Administration (GCFA), which gets its numbers from annual conferences, who in turn get their numbers from year-end reports filled out by the churches. For a broader summary of the latest data, go to this link for the GCFA press release: <http://www.gcfa.org/connectional-giving-year-end-2010>. As one looks over the year-to-year changes, there is a lot of red ink. Hopefully, rather than causing discouragement, this will serve to instill new resolve in fulfilling God's mission through The United Methodist Church.

Note on non-reporting church impact on worship attendance figures:

Many churches fail to submit their year-end reports. In most annual conferences, this results in a "0" or "1" being reported for attendance in those churches. When those churches do report in the other year used in comparison, there is obviously a notable change in the numbers. For example, a church reporting 100 in attendance in 2008 and 0 in 2009 will appear to have decreased by 100. It is possible to alleviate this issue by replacing those zeros with the number reported in the comparison year. When this is done for all churches, there are some conferences with notable changes, but the intent of this report is to present the official numbers as reported. Four conferences officially showing increases likely had decreases, and three others would likely indicate the reverse.

BACKGROUND DATA FOR MISSION

Conference Data Comparison 2008-2009

Annual Conference	# of Churches	Change	Rec'd. Prof. Faith	Change	Members	Change	Worship Attendance	Change
NORTHERN ILLINOIS	378	(2)	2,082	(146)	100,301	(1,482)	40,307	(3,179)
DAKOTAS	267	(2)	737	12	38,602	(777)	20,053	(418)
ILLINOIS GREAT RIVERS	882	(10)	2,433	130	140,614	(2,198)	67,064	(1,146)
INDIANA	1,191	(14)	4,172	70	201,497	(3,013)	119,800	(1,863)
IOWA	812	(11)	2,819	(208)	183,260	(3,526)	59,215	(1,151)
DETROIT	451	0	2,269	8	94,692	(2,159)	45,218	451
WEST MICHIGAN	408	(5)	1,510	1	64,645	(1,422)	37,066	(1,784)
MINNESOTA	375	(1)	1,923	(207)	74,719	(1,480)	35,718	(844)
EAST OHIO	790	(3)	2,698	(140)	167,931	(2,862)	65,139	(518)
WEST OHIO	1,131	(13)	4,415	(139)	205,889	(6,225)	115,611	(1,552)
WISCONSIN	477	1	2,173	(57)	81,655	(2,519)	37,937	(824)
North Central Jurisdiction Totals	7,162	(60)	27,231	(676)	1,353,805	(27,663)	643,128	(12,828)
						-2.0%		
NEW ENGLAND	524	(1)	1,385	(190)	86,022	(2,574)	30,597	(632)
CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA	782	(6)	2,248	(14)	132,884	(3,730)	61,114	(1,858)
GREATER NEW JERSEY	583	(2)	2,904	207	94,201	(605)	49,930	(1,553)
NEW YORK	474	2	2,198	106	115,819	(2,548)	36,332	(398)
TROY	293	(3)	497	(54)	44,857	(2,597)	13,124	(402)
EASTERN PENNSYLVANIA	453	(3)	2,246	(267)	119,195	(2,253)	46,183	(2,136)
WYOMING	290	(4)	630	(84)	56,493	(3,847)	14,664	(206)
WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA	865	0	2,573	61	182,464	(3,127)	61,817	(1,876)
NORTH CENTRAL NEW YORK	386	(4)	721	(123)	70,700	(1,117)	20,666	(534)
WESTERN NEW YORK	254	(1)	716	(306)	53,780	(1,252)	19,221	(449)
BALTIMORE-WASHINGTON	678	4	3,871	(253)	185,372	(3,094)	68,281	(2,030)
PENINSULA-DELAWARE	444	(4)	1,697	(173)	87,383	(1,519)	33,683	(2,049)
WEST VIRGINIA	1,161	(19)	1,590	(206)	101,328	(1,216)	47,642	(723)
Northeastern Jurisdiction Totals	7,187	(41)	23,276	(1,296)	1,330,498	(29,479)	503,254	(14,846)
						-2.2%		
ARKANSAS	692	(3)	2,183	156	136,225	(1,888)	54,340	(290)
CENTRAL TEXAS	315	10	2,099	(131)	164,919	1,529	46,156	(422)
NORTH TEXAS	316	(1)	3,291	65	156,284	(2,326)	59,527	(774)
RIO GRANDE	88	(4)	197	21	13,787	(201)	4,764	128
TEXAS	688	(7)	6,582	1,168	287,220	(1,559)	104,100	(916)
KANSAS WEST	367	(3)	1,307	(114)	81,415	(1,358)	32,706	(1,067)
KANSAS EAST	327	4	1,887	169	71,174	(131)	31,836	(67)
LOUISIANA	505	(3)	1,791	349	120,653	(1,709)	41,646	(969)
MISSOURI	861	(17)	3,655	(1)	167,063	(1,665)	81,340	(869)
NEBRASKA	387	(5)	1,563	(133)	78,156	(1,143)	30,547	(1,353)
NEW MEXICO	147	(1)	542	(91)	36,630	(1,016)	15,341	(414)
OKLAHOMA	526	(7)	2,264	(50)	237,698	(3,635)	57,571	(803)
OKLAHOMA INDIAN MISSION	82	0	100	12	6,189	(7)	1,996	(47)
NORTHWEST TEXAS	215	0	772	26	63,933	(294)	20,425	(825)
SOUTHWEST TEXAS	339	(6)	2,163	(78)	118,727	(305)	48,343	(186)
South Central Jurisdiction Totals	5,855	(43)	30,396	1,368	1,740,073	(15,708)	630,638	(8,874)
						-0.9%		

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Annual Conference	# of Churches	Change	Rec'd. Prof. Faith	Change	Members	Change	Worship Attendance	Change
NORTH GEORGIA	900	(10)	6,630	(40)	356,381	2,283	127,684	(1,383)
SOUTH GEORGIA	641	(1)	2,020	148	133,325	(1,599)	52,559	(83)
ALABAMA-W. FLORIDA	640	(5)	2,806	(131)	148,803	(1,071)	69,342	167
NORTH ALABAMA	767	(25)	2,703	(242)	147,538	(1,971)	70,620	(1,486)
WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA	1,122	(2)	4,655	296	292,829	(384)	123,783	(1,802)
SOUTH CAROLINA	1,012	(10)	3,266	183	237,764	(1,507)	94,495	(2,099)
FLORIDA	655	(10)	6,124	(247)	289,755	(8,298)	141,838	(2,311)
MISSISSIPPI	1,124	(7)	2,094	382	182,181	(1,480)	72,573	(422)
KENTUCKY	813	(1)	2,071	52	152,052	(446)	57,891	(501)
RED BIRD MISSIONARY	25	(1)	23	(14)	1,495	7	690	14
HOLSTON	905	(6)	2,234	(38)	166,625	(180)	70,054	(1,623)
MEMPHIS	437	(6)	1,002	1	84,515	(687)	32,060	(651)
TENNESSEE	608	(3)	1,972	(23)	119,611	616	49,826	(54)
NORTH CAROLINA	815	2	2,706	(213)	237,390	(101)	82,845	164
VIRGINIA	1,199	(4)	4,882	(217)	339,220	549	113,170	(3,916)
Southeastern Jurisdiction Totals	11,663	(89)	45,188	(103)	2,889,484	(14,269)	1,159,430	(15,986)
						-0.5%		
YELLOWSTONE	126	0	341	65	13,973	(306)	7,079	3
ROCKY MOUNTAIN	256	(2)	1,550	(167)	65,779	(538)	30,898	579
CALIFORNIA-PACIFIC	363	(3)	2,255	(66)	80,989	(1,678)	48,644	(237)
DESERT SOUTHWEST	144	5	1,313	217	38,961	(1,037)	26,555	(74)
ALASKA	28	0	107	(15)	3,733	(123)	2,247	(53)
OREGON-IDAHO	210	(1)	683	(78)	30,306	(780)	15,281	(179)
CALIFORNIA-NEVADA	355	1	1,710	(60)	80,059	(1,797)	37,191	(717)
PACIFIC NORTHWEST	265	(3)	1,005	112	52,190	(1,192)	21,168	479
Western Jurisdiction Totals	1,747	(3)	8,964	8	365,990	(7,451)	189,063	(199)
						-2.0%		
USA Totals	33,614	(236)	135,055	(699)	7,679,850	(94,570)	3,125,513	(52,733)

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Tel: 212-870-3840 **Fax:** 212-870-3876

Email: research@gbgm-umc.org

Website: <http://research.gbgm-umc.org>

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John H. Southwick, Editor