



December 2024

Advent Greetings, **Conference Partners!**

Once again, it is time for the UCC to begin preparing for the coming year's *Yearbook & Directory!* We are deeply grateful for your continued efforts to help us maintain up-to-date and accurate data.

This year, we will be working with a new and updated Data Hub (now titled "UCC Database and Directories"). Much of the system's look and some of its features have changed. The underlying data remains the same, however, and the collection process should fall along lines familiar to years past. The following document and the resources collected on our [Yearbook Page](#) are designed to bring you up to speed on the changes we've made and to help navigate this coming year's data collection.

To make the transition as smooth as possible, we have opted to delay the start of yearbook data collection to conduct additional testing. **The site should become available to conferences starting on January 15th and open to churches starting January 22nd.**

For ease of consultation, information has been organized by topic, with topics affected by the Data Hub transition **highlighted in green**.

Logging In

If you already have an Engage account, simply enter your username and password to sign in. If not, a new account may be created by clicking on the appropriate request button below the login and following the instructions on the next page. If you have forgotten your username or password, you can regain access by clicking on "forgot username or password" and following the instructions there.

Virtual Worship Attendance

Starting this year, virtual worship attendance will be collected alongside in-person attendance. The forms of virtual worship tracked include those on:

- Video-conferencing platforms such as Zoom or Skype, which log **devices**
- Social media platforms such as Facebook Live, which log **views**
- Video hosting platforms such as Youtube, Boxcast, and Vimeo, which also log **views**
- Multi-stream platforms such as Restream or Streamyard, which log **viewers**
- Audio platforms such as podcasts, radio broadcasts, or a 1-800 number, which log **listeners**

It is important for each form of attendance to be recorded separately, as engagement is tracked differently across platforms.

OCWM Giving

Conferences will continue to forward an Excel spreadsheet with their OCWM data to the CARDD office. These sheets should include **OCWM Basic Support** (however that's defined in your Conference) and the **four Special Offerings**: One Great Hour of Sharing, Neighbors in Need, Strengthen the Church, and Christmas Fund. Expect communications from Evan in early February.

Inactive Churches

In October 2022 the UCC Board of Directors approved an inactive church policy. This policy states:

“A local church should be marked [in the Data Hub] by the Conference as inactive if it is permanently closed, no longer holds worship services, and will not hold them in the future. A local church’s standing should be changed by the Conference to 3-Removed Church [in the Data Hub]” if standing in the Association (or Conference acting as association) is terminated, the local church notified the Association or Conferences that it has elected to leave the UCC, or it has been marked inactive because it has been permanently closed for two or more years.” Furthermore, “CARDD reserves the right to change the standing of a 0-UCC Church to 3-Removed Church if it has been inactive for more than two years because it is permanently closed, unless the Conference has requested an extension. CARDD will notify Conferences in advance of changing the standing of a Local Church in the Data Hub. Such notifications will be made on an annual basis prior to finalizing the Yearbook data for the prior year.”

Please note, you may skip marking a church as inactive and change it immediately to 3-Removed Church if it no longer needs to be covered by our federal group tax exemption.

You should be receiving a list of all your inactive churches alongside the annual instructions to facilitate removal. If you have not received such a list, it means that you do not have any inactive churches pending removal. As per the inactive churches policy, “[i]f a permanently closed inactive church is winding up its affairs and needs to remain in the federal group tax exemption longer than two years, the Conference can notify CARDD of the need for an extension for a specific length of time. In such a case, the church will remain as a 0-UCC Church until the extension expires.” You can request this extension by emailing us at yearbook@ucc.org. You will receive a list of those churches we are preparing to move to 3-Removed Churches by April 24th, 2025. **Unless we’ve received a request for an extension, these churches will be scheduled for removal on May 5th, 2025.**

All instructional materials (video and printed) for local churches will also be available in January on the Yearbook and Directory webpage: ucc.org/research_yearbook. Congregations will also find a *Data Hub Church Field Guide* for reporting categories and a printable *Data Hub Reporting Guide* (included in the Church Yearbook Instructions). An additional information sheet will be provided to guide churches in their reporting of the Other UCC Giving category. *Please share these resources with your congregations!*

Thank you to all the Conferences that reported financial and general statistical information in the Data Hub these last several years! We ask that you or the Conference financial person aim to complete this information again this spring as it provides essential information to the Conferences. Resources to assist with **completing the Conference Finances section of the Conference page of the Data Hub** will also be posted to the Yearbook and Directory webpage. Please expect to receive further communications from Evan early next year.

As always, any CARDD team member is ready and willing to assist you in the Yearbook reporting process. We look forward to another great reporting cycle, made ever more vital as we continue to document all of the changes churches have experienced these past few years. **THANK YOU** for your continued partnership in this vital work on behalf of the United Church of Christ!

Faithfully,

Erica Dollhopf, Ph.D.
CARDD Director

Evan Pence, Ph.D.
Associate Director and Yearbook Managing Editor

P.S. CARDD will offer incentives again as a fun way to celebrate our collective success! For 2025:

- ✓ **Conferences that have a 75% congregational reporting rate** will be eligible for a customized Mini Statistical Profile
- ✓ **The three Conferences with the highest increases in their reporting rate** also be eligible for a customized Mini Statistical Profile
- ✓ Conferences that have a 75% overall congregational reporting rate and the three Conferences with the highest increased reporting rate will be **entered into a drawing for an in-person or virtual training on a topic of the winner's choice facilitated by CARDD staff.**

This is CARDD's small way of honoring all the work that you—our Conference and Association partners—undertake with this annual process and throughout the entire year. We hope they'll boost local church reporting or encourage your Conference to send a few extra announcements to increase data submission, so feel free to tell others about these incentives! If you have other ideas for future incentives, please *do* let us know.