

Notes on Membership



Updated: November 2, 2015

NOTES ON MEMBERSHIP:

- **Baptized Member:** A baptized member is a person who has received the sacrament of baptism in a United Methodist Church or has received Christian baptism in another denomination and later transferred to a United Methodist Church.
- **Professing Member:** A professing member is a baptized person who has taken vows declaring the Christian faith.
- **Conference Members “At Large”:** According to ¶1259.3 of the Book of Discipline, the annual conference secretary should have a general membership roll of members attributed to New Church Starts that are not sponsored by an existing church. This membership should be transferred as soon as possible to the roll of the new church once it reaches conference criteria for organization. These members are reported separately to GCFA.
- **Who count as constituents?** Officially, a constituent is a person who is not a member of the church, but for whom the church has pastoral responsibility. It may be easier to consider who is not a constituent! Any professing members on the active church roll should be counted in line 9. Any baptized persons, children or adults, who have not yet become professing members, should be counted on line 12. All others associated with your congregation are your constituents and should be counted on line 13. The official definition is located at ¶230.3 in the *2012 Book of Discipline*. **See below for further information on Membership.**
- How do I determine if this church has **pastoral responsibilities** for this person? If the person is hospitalized, dies, needs pastoral support, etc., who will do it? If it is someone at **this** church, then **this** church has pastoral responsibilities for this person. The person may or may not attend church on Sunday morning, may attend a weekday class or outreach program, may be related to a church Member or Constituent, may spend summers or winters in town, may be in town for school, or whatever. Here are some questions to help you determine a person’s status:
 - Is the person a member of another United Methodist Church? If the answer is YES:

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- If they have asked to become an Affiliate, then they are an Affiliate of this church and not listed on your church Tables at all. They will be counted on the other church's Tables. We don't want to count them twice. (However, a person can be a member of one church and a constituent in another.)
 - If they have not asked to become an Affiliate, then they are a Constituent and are counted on Line 13.
- Is the person a member of another denomination? If the answer is YES:
 - If they have asked to become an Associate, then they are an Associate of this church and not counted on your church Tables at all. They will be counted by that other denomination (but can still be counted as a constituent).
 - If they have not asked to become an Associate, then they are a Constituent and are counted on Line 13.
- Has the person joined *this* church? YES – they are a Professing Member of this church and counted on Line 9. Since they had to be baptized to join this church, they are also a Baptized Member of the church, but *do not* count them on Line 12!
- Is the person not a member of any church or don't know their status? Then they are a Constituent of this church and counted on Line 13.
- A person can be a member of exactly 0 or 1 church.
 - A new-born infant is a Constituent and a member of no church until baptized.
 - Dennis was baptized, attended Confirmation, but was never confirmed and never joined the church. He is a Baptized Member of this church, but not a Professing Member (and therefore does not have the right to vote at a church conference).
- Once baptized, forever baptized. Baptism is of God and as far as United Methodists are concerned, it cannot be taken away. Once baptized as a United Methodist, Presbyterian, Lutheran, UCC, Catholic, or whatever, you are baptized. Period. The only exception to this is persons previously baptized by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints and other churches in the Mormon tradition. Baptisms in that faith tradition are not recognized by The United Methodist Church and so persons coming from those traditions must be baptized. For more information on Church Membership definitions, consult ¶215 in the **2012 Book of Discipline**.

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NOTES ON WORSHIP ATTENDANCE:

For Worship Attendance, report the total attendance at all services your church holds on a regular weekly basis as a primary opportunity for worship. As each congregation is different, there may be times that you wonder what to report or not report as worship attendance. Here are some dos and don'ts for reporting your worship attendance:

- DO report all persons, including children, who participate in all or part of the service.
- DO report attendance at services held on Sunday.
- DO report for services held on Saturday, or other days of the week if the people who attend that service and do not normally also attend on Sunday as well.
- DO NOT include worship for special services that are only held on special occasions such as Christmas Eve, Maundy Thursday, or Good Friday.
- DO NOT report persons who are in your church building during worship times, but are not participating in a worship service.

NOTES ON NUMBER OF PERSONS ENGAGED IN MISSION AND MINISTRY:

Beginning with this next year's report, you will have opportunity to report on the total mission engagement of your congregation on line 28, "Number of persons engaged in mission." Here are some dos and don'ts on how to report this information:

- DO report persons working on mission teams.
- DO include persons who work in community ministries provided by your local church such as after school programs, food banks, or homeless ministries.
- DO include persons who work as part of the church's support for community ministries with other churches or organizations such as Habitat for Humanity, or CROP Walk.
- DO NOT include persons who volunteer for ministries on their own without the support or endorsement of the church. Although this is important ministry, it's not something for which the church can claim responsibility.
- DO NOT include persons who work in mission and outreach as part of their job.
- DO NOT report persons more than once.
- There may be times that it isn't easy to know what should or should not be included here. Just remember to be clear about how you define it, and report consistently. If you need further guidance call your district or conference office.