

CHECK-OUT INSTRUCTIONS FOR LOCAL CHURCHES

Through the Annual Church Statistics System UMC

January 2024

The North Texas Conference is using the United Methodist statistics program, ACStats or ACS, this year for Check-Out.

ONLINE FORMS FOR CHECK-OUT

Table 1 – Membership and Participation

Table 2 – Church Assets and Expenses

Table 3 – Church Income

Table 4 – New Faces New Spaces

Table 5 – Special Report-apportionment related values

Clergy Compensation Worksheet – print out from Conference website, fill out, submit to Check-out

HOW TO GET STARTED

Log in at <https://stats.gcfa.org/>.

Each local church has up to 5 users.

The Login is the church's **GCFA number**.

The password is **ntexas2023!** until the user changes it.

1. Log in and create your password.
2. You must include your email and phone numbers, preferably a cell phone number.

WRITE DOWN THE NEW PASSWORD. If you forget or lose it, the conference office will have to re-set it. The local church/pastor and district cannot reset passwords.

After the initial login, you access your church's tables with your email address and the password you created. Each local church user will have his or her own login email and particular password.

Select "Annual Report" and then "Print" so you will have the complete set of data entered last year. The 2022 data will be to the right of the boxes for the 2023 data to be entered.

GENERAL INFORMATION

- For all the tables, specific instructions are included with each line.
 - Toggle the button on the left of the forms that reads "Display Question Help." The instructions will be visible. You will need to toggle this button every time you open your local church tables.
 - These same instructions are available by clicking on the blue Question Number.
- There is basic help in the "Instructions" button.
- Each question must have an answer. If the answer is 0, put in 0. Use whole numbers.
- You do not have to save your work as you go. It is automatically saved as you enter data.

- If the line number has “Conf” in an amber oval at the end of it, the conference will fill in this line after close-out on January 11.
- If the line number has “Appor” in a blue oval, that line is apportionment related and will duplicate in Table 5, Special Report.
- For many boxes, if an incorrect amount or wildly different amount from the previous year is entered, a **line error** or **line warning** will appear under the question.
 - The error or warning necessitates one or both of the following:
 - Fixing the line amount.
 - Explaining in the notes why this year’s entry is correct.
- When every table is completed and you believe you have completed your check out forms, then you “Submit” your church’s tables.

TABLE 1

- Line 1 is automatically filled in from the 2021 reported membership. This line CANNOT be changed. If it is incorrect for some reason, you can make the correction on Line 2c.
- Lines 2a and 2b Professions of Faith
 - To gauge the number of people who join the church through facets other than confirmation classes (i.e. of their own volition), we have added a secondary professions of faith category. We are now collecting “Professions of Faith through confirmation” in addition to “Professions of Faith other than through confirmation.”
- **Line 2g is new.** If you know your church received members from a closed United Methodist church, please enter that number here. Otherwise, record a “0”.
- **Line 7a Online Worship. PLEASE REFER TO 2023 INSTRUCTIONS AT THE END OF THIS DOCUMENT.** Generally, it is **not** included with the total worship attendance, so if you have been counting online attendance as part of your worship attendance, you should NOT include it on Line 7 but then report it on 7a as a separate number. **DO NOT ADD LINE 7a WITH LINE 7. THE CONFERENCE OFFICE MUST REPORT THESE SEPARATELY TO GCFA. For the Journal and all other reports, the conference office will add these two lines together.**
- Ministries included in Line 21 may be listed in both lines 21a and 21b if they fit the definitions of those lines.

TABLE 2

- Line 25 is asking about liquid assets only. The description has been updated to reflect this. **YOU MAY USE YOUR FUND BALANCE REPORT** to help this. If you haven’t already done so, submit your Fund Balance Report at Check-out.
- Line 27 includes Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loans that have NOT been forgiven.
- Lines 28-36e will be completed by the Annual Conference following close-out on January 11. Each of these lines has “Conf” (in an amber oval) at the end of the line title which means the conference will provide these amounts. The amounts should be reflected on your Table 2 by January 12. **IF you fill in these lines, the conference will override these amounts after close-out.**
- Line 41aa is for equitable compensation funds and/or conference grants that supplement the lead pastor’s salary.
- Line 41bb is for conference grants that supplement the associate pastor’s salary.

TABLE 3

- Several lines on Table 3 have been updated for clarification. Most pertain to the intent of use of funds – if money was transferred from liquid assets to be used for operating expenses/budget, this amount should be reflected in the Market Value of Liquid Assets on Table 2 and reported as “Amount received from interest and dividends and/or transferred from liquid assets” on Table 3.
- The line asking for “Amount received from Sale of Church Assets” (Line 52e) has been updated to ensure that only amounts allocated toward the budget/spending plan should be recorded here. In turn, “including the sale of buildings” has been added to “Funds from other sources and projects” (Line 53c) to account for sales that are not allocated for the church budget and saved for later use. This also should be reflected in market values.
- “Memorials endowments, and bequests” (formerly line 63b, new line 53b) has been updated to indicate that only the total amount of funds received should be included here only for the year it was received. The value of the fund should then be reflected in Market Value, and any rent payments, interest, or dividends earned should be recorded in 52d or 52f for budget.
- Line 54c is for recording Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loans and/or Employee Retention Credit (ERC) funds, if the church received any of these funds in 2023.

Table 4 -- NEW FACES, NEW SPACES

- This is the fifth year for this form as requested by the Cabinet. Churches must complete this form to submit all the Check-Out forms. For 2023, if the answers to the questions are all “0”, that is fine. The Cabinet recognizes that New Faces New Spaces is a new emphasis. The form must still be submitted.

Table 5 -- SPECIAL REPORT

- These values should be automatically filled with the appropriate values from Tables 1 and 2.

CLERGY COMPENSATION WORKSHEET

There is no online worksheet that automatically populates the appropriate lines on Table 2. Please follow the instructions below.

- You **MUST** fill out the Clergy Compensation Excel Worksheet before filling out Table 2.
- The worksheet is found online at <https://ntcumc.org/connectional-resources/close-out-check-out>.
- Download the excel file and fill it out. There are tabs for lead pastors, associate pastors and deacons. There is also a “**TOTALS FOR ACStats**” tab.
- In cases where there was a mid-year appointment change for lead pastors, or if there are multiple associate pastors or deacons under appointment list each clergy separately on the appropriate tab with their corresponding amounts paid. Each tab will total the lines.
- The amounts entered in the lead, associate, and deacon tabs automatically populate the “TOTALS FOR ACStats” tab.
- Manually enter the total amounts from the individual categories on the “Totals for ACStats” worksheet into the appropriate lines on Table 2.
- **Print out this completed worksheet—all sheets that you filled out—could be up to 4 excel files printed out—and submit it on your church’s check-out day.**

SUBMIT

- At the top of the church's ACStats page is the "Submit" button. When you have completed the tables, select "Submit" and follow the prompts.
- If you follow the prompts and it will not let you submit, this probably means you have not addressed an error or warning on one of the tables.
- After addressing the errors and attention boxes and you still cannot submit, call your district office.
- Submitting your statistics prevents you from being able to change them. If you discover a mistake and need to make a correction, contact your district office for help.
- Always print hard copies for your files.

NORTH TEXAS CONFERENCE
COUNTING WORSHIP ATTENDANCE IN ACStats FOR 2023
(12/12/2023)

1. Your church should have in place a system it used in 2023 to count online worship attendance, so some of the following information may just be additional items to consider.
2. We are attempting to get an accurate picture of worship attendance whether it was in-person or online.
3. **Both in-person worship and online worship are reported as annual averages.**
4. When reporting **in-person worship** and calculating the average attendance, remember there may have been Sundays when only online worship was offered.
5. Counting weekly **online worship** attendance (Whatever your church chooses, be consistent!)
 - a. Count online attendance as not a “scroll” but worshippers who stayed connected for 20-30 minutes, no matter which online platform was used.
 - b. Count one Sunday of worship attendance as “one week.” I.E., count Sunday thru Saturday as one worship service. Since worshippers can worship anytime now, there needs to be a cutoff. A 7-day week seems appropriate rather than counting every time a particular Facebook or You Tube service is watched months later.
 - c. In reporting online worship attendance, we suggest you count one “view” as 1.8 persons in attendance. Whatever system your church chooses to count the number of online viewers in a home at any one time, be consistent.

Additional guidance from GCFA

For online views, count anyone listening online for whom the church has evidence of participation. This can be done through an online check-in process or through analytic software associated with your streaming platform. Confirm that the analytics demonstrate that the person viewed the worship for a significant portion. Create a standard and stick to it consistently. Be aware that some platforms’ analytics-like Facebook—will even count someone scrolling by as a hit. You should filter down to those who “attended” a significant portion of your stream.

This method isn’t perfect, and it likely may account for not counting groups or families watching together. Remember that you are trying to report accurate and fair information to the best of your ability.

TABLE 1, Lines 7 and 7a

Line 7 Report average in-person attendance at all services held on a consistent weekly basis as the primary opportunity for worship. Count all persons (including children) who participate in part of any of these services. Do not include online worshippers nor attendance from irregularly held special services (i.e., Christmas Eve services).

Line 7a Report here average weekly number of unique viewers who access worship online. This includes those live streaming your worship service and views/downloads of recorded worship services (audio or video), sermons, and/or podcasts. Do not include generic hits/visits to your website.