



January 2026

## Epiphany 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 marks our second year using the new UCC Database and Directories, and we anticipate a much smoother experience for church and Conference users over the 2025 experience. The Research Team learned A LOT last year, and we're grateful to you and to your churches for your perseverance, diligent reporting on bugs, and patience. The data should all be current and everything is ready to go. The following document and the resources collected on our [Yearbook Page](#) are designed to help navigate this coming year's data collection.

**This year, the site should become available to conferences starting at noon ET on Tuesday, January 20<sup>th</sup> and open to churches starting Monday, January 26<sup>th</sup>. The Yearbook reporting will close for churches on Friday, April 10<sup>th</sup>.**

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

### **Logging In**

For Conference staff and church staff who already have an Engage account, simply enter your username and password to sign in. For church staff who do not have an account in Engage, 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**

This year, we will continue to collect virtual worship attendance alongside in-person attendance. The forms of virtual worship tracked include those on:

- Video-conferencing platforms such as Zoom
- Social media platforms such as Facebook Live
- Video hosting platforms such as YouTube, Boxcast, and Vimeo
- Multi-stream platforms such as Restream or Streamyard
- Audio platforms such as podcasts, radio broadcasts, or a 1-800 number

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 Research team. 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. Please note that churches will not see the OCWM section when they log in for Yearbook reporting.

### *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 Database and Directories] 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 Database and Directories]” 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, “[the Research Team] reserves the right to change the standing of a o-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. [The Research Team] 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 [The Research Team] of the need for an extension for a specific length of time. In such a case, the church will remain as a o-UCC Church until the extension expires.” You can request this extension by emailing us at [yearbook@ucc.org](mailto:yearbook@ucc.org). You will receive a list of those churches we are preparing to move to 3-Removed Churches by April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2026. **Unless we’ve received a request for an extension, these churches will be scheduled for removal on May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2026.**

**All instructional materials (video and printed) for local churches** are also available on the Yearbook and Directory webpage: [ucc.org/research\\_yearbook](http://ucc.org/research_yearbook). Congregations will also find a *Database and Directories Church Field Guide* for reporting categories and a printable *Database and Directories 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 and Database and Directories over the 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 Database and Directories** will also be posted to the Yearbook and Directory webpage. Please expect to receive further communications from Evan in February.

As always, any Research 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,

Rev. Elizabeth Dilley  
*Minister and Team Leader, MESA and Research*

Dr. Evan Pence, Ph.D.  
*Research and Data Manager*