



December 2020

Advent Greetings, **Conference Partners!**

It's that time again for the UCC to begin preparing the *Yearbook & Directory* for the coming year. We are deeply grateful for your continued efforts to help us maintain up-to-date and accurate data, especially as 2020 has been a year of challenges and uncertainty. To best help us prepare, please consider the important items in the two sections below: general and specific Conference highlights.

General Yearbook process highlights:

Supplemental Survey

Because of its continued success and tremendous value, we will once again include supplemental research questions (using a SurveyMonkey link) to accompany the Yearbook data collection process. Please note that this year's questions follow up on some of the COVID-19 survey questions asked of congregations earlier this year. This will provide our various ministry settings ongoing data about the impact of the pandemic on our congregations. Notably, we'll ask about online worship attendance in the supplemental survey since the Data Hub's design doesn't accommodate in-person and online worship data.

Conference and Church Incentives

To express our gratitude for everyone contributing to the major efforts required for the Yearbook process, we'll offer both Conference- and church-level incentives again this year. Conferences can expect service-oriented incentives for high participation rates and increased participation over the last 5 years. Churches that complete both their annual report and supplemental survey will be included in the drawing for one of over 30 gifts!

OCWM Giving

As a reminder, three years ago we made a substantive change in reporting OCWM giving.* **Other UCC Giving** is defined as *any UCC-related entity that is not Basic Support or the four Special Mission Offerings*. Churches will self-report this category, not the Conferences as was the case with the previous Special Support category. Conferences will continue to forward an Excel spreadsheet with their OCWM data to the CARDD office. *We are only asking you to report **OCWM Basic Support** (however that's defined in your Conference) and the **four Special Offerings**. Please do not report OCWM Special Support*. Taylor Russell, CARDD's Research Specialist, collects, reviews, and edits each Conference's spreadsheets as they arrive and will request changes as necessary. Expect communications from Taylor in early February.

Manual on Ministry Updates

In the last several months, we've worked diligently with our IT consulting company to upgrade the Data Hub to more closely reflect the changes in the Manual on Ministry. Expected to go live in early December, the changes are primarily within the People Records. Standing and Status will be tracked separately. We'll now track changes in both as well as the movement of records between Conferences.

Specific Conference organization of Yearbook data collection and reporting highlights:

As many of you have already experienced, making minister record updates throughout the year makes reporting much easier. If you have not been making ongoing updates to minister records and would like to get a head start on doing so, the Data Hub is accessible at any time. As always, the **Data Hub**

* When the General Synod 31 Resolution on Proposing a New Framework for Covenantal Giving and Implementing Fundraising Best Practices passed, the OCWM category previously known as Special Support—which sought to capture all UCC-related giving that was not Basic Support—was replaced with a new category called **Other UCC Giving**.

resources webpage (ucc.org/research_data-hub) offers training materials and tutorials to guide Conference and Association users through the process of making changes in the system. Updated video tutorials will be available in January.

All instructional materials (video and printed) for local churches will also be available in January at the Yearbook and Directory webpage: ucc.org/research_yearbook. Congregations can also find a *Definitions Tip Sheet* 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!*

Please note that the new ucc.org website will launch at the end of December. Since the CARDD staff will be out of the office when it launches, there may be some lag time in updating the Yearbook and Directory webpage. We appreciate your patience as we will quickly attend to any updates upon our return to the office and regain access to the site in early January.

As in previous years, **your Conference doesn't need to change the annual data collection process for Yearbook reporting unless you want to**. We're aware that each Conference has its own unique process for collecting Yearbook information from local churches and ministers. Because some churches may not have regular Internet access or may not feel comfortable inputting their data electronically, our website (ucc.org/research_secure_forms) has downloadable minister and church Yearbook forms that you can access, distribute, and use at any time. However, *please do not share this link with your churches!* You are welcome to download and share them as a resource for your Conference; they need not be sent to CARDD directly.

Please be as thorough as possible when adding and updating people's records. When updating minister records, remember that the **Specialized Ministries (now part of the Positions tab)** and the **Member in Discernment** tabs should also be updated. We recommend a quick review of each tab on a person's record any time you update it to ensure no additional updates have been overlooked. As an additional reminder, ministers have the option to *not* publish their address, phone number, or email address in the *Yearbook & Directory* or *Access UCC*. To amplify this, there is a special page on our website to inform ministers that they can opt out at any time by contacting their Conference. Please feel free to direct ministers to the **Authorized Minister Opt Out** page (ucc.org/opt_out) when sending information update requests.

Please be sure to **update the Conference and Association records in the Data Hub** during the annual Yearbook data collection period, including all Conference/Association information and any staff changes since the past year. We pull this data directly from that tab into the *Yearbook & Directory* and *will not send back to Conferences to review before publication!*

Thank you to all the Conferences that reported financial and general statistical information in the Data Hub these last three years! We ask that you/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 tab in the Conferences section of the Data Hub** are also on the Yearbook and Directory webpage.

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 in this bizarre season. **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

Destiny Hisey
Associate Director and Yearbook Managing Editor

P.S. CARDD will offer incentives again as a fun way to celebrate our collective success! For 2021:

- ✓ **Conferences that have a 75% congregational reporting rate** get a customized Mini Statistical Profile
- ✓ **The three Conferences with the highest increases in their reporting rate** also get 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 (when travel resumes) 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.