

Statisticians Report for 2014

2015 Annual Conference

Bishop Leeland, Lay, and Clergy members and guest thank you for the opportunity to provide the report of the work of the local churches as reported in the Local Church Report to the Alabama West Florida Conference in 2014.

Before I begin I want to again express my appreciation to the members of the Fiscal Office staff whose dedication and daily effort really make the work of the Fiscal Office effective. I want to introduce to you: Heidi Mitchell, our Controller, Belinda Carnegie, your Benefits Coordinator, and Terri Pickering, my Administrative Assistant, and our newest employee, Sharon Beasley who is our Accounts Clerk. Please express your appreciation for the work they do on your behalf.

So, now on to the statistical report:

We began the year with professing membership of 141,989.

We received 2,415 professing members, decline of 2% over 2013.

We removed by charge conference action 2,766 members. That is 29% fewer members removed in 2014 than in 2013.

There was 9% decrease in reported member deaths, 1,747 deaths in 2013 versus 1,588 in 2014. This statistic is somewhat interesting in that one year there is a decrease, the next year an increase which we might expect to see, given the aging population in the United Methodist Church.

We ended 2014 with professing membership of 139,918 a 1% decrease over 2013. There was a net loss of 2,071 members in 2014, about half as many 2014, than in 2013. This statistic would indicate that churches are continuing to conduct membership audits and “right sizing” their membership rolls.

The reported Average Attendance at weekly worship services decreased slightly from 65,110 in 2013 to 63,781 in 2014 a decrease of 2%.

Fewer members left for non-United Methodist churches than joined from non-United Methodist churches.

Another interesting statistic was that the reported Hispanic/Latino population increased 7%.

For the first time in three years baptisms decreased. There were 2,013 baptisms in 2013 versus 1,912 in 2014.

You may remember that I mentioned that we learned that one of the measures of vital congregations is number of small groups centered on Christian formation. There was less than 1% decrease in weekly attendance in Sunday church school. However, the total of other categories of Christian formation groups showed 2% increase.

The number of persons served in community ministries for daycare and/or education decreased by less than 1% from just over 26,800 in 2013 to more than 26,646 in 2014.

However, the number of persons served by community ministries for outreach, justice and mercy increased by 5% from just over 461,000 in 2013 to more than 485,000 in 2014. Again, this year, Vacation Bible School attendance increased by 1%.

The Market Value of church property was up by about 2% and debt was down by 9%.

Building improvement and major equipment purchases increased by about 3%.

Turning to benevolence giving, in 2013 churches reported giving \$1,603,996 to United Methodist causes which was not given through the conference office, decreased to \$1,385,314 in 2014 a 13% decrease. Giving to non-United Methodist cause showed an increase of \$589,695 or 8%.

I want to express my appreciation to the pastors who made an effort to submit timely and accurate reports and to the Administrative Professionals in the districts for their hard work in following up on delinquent reports and for their attention to detail in validating the reports.

Bishop, this concludes my report for the calendar year 2014. I will publish this report on the conference web site following Annual Conference.