



December 2023

Advent 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. To best help us prepare for the 2024 *Yearbook & Directory*, please consider the important reminders and updates below.

Church Data Hub Password Resets

The Data Hub now has the functionality to allow Conference and Association Data Hub managers/editors to unlock and reset church Data Hub passwords. *You will only need to contact CARDD for assistance in the event an account is not active or does not yet exist.* We expect this to eliminate many of the delays your churches have experienced in the past in getting their passwords reset. Your Conference Yearbook Instructions include details on resetting passwords. There is also a video tutorial here: <https://vimeo.com/796792892/941dfff86c>

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 Data Hub] 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 Data Hub]” 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, “CARDD reserves the right to change the standing of a 0-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. CARDD 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.

In early January you will receive a list of all your inactive churches to facilitate 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 CARDD of the need for an extension for a specific length of time. In such a case, the church will remain as a 0-UCC Church until the extension expires.” You can request this extension by emailing us at yearbook@ucc.org. You will receive a list of those churches we are preparing to move to 3-Removed Churches on April 3, 2024. **Unless we’ve received a request for an extension, these churches will be scheduled for removal on April 10, 2024.**

Spanish Language Yearbook Instructions and Data Collection Forms

For the 2022 Yearbook data collection we were able to offer the Yearbook instructions and data collection forms in Spanish. We continue to be unable to translate the full supplemental survey into Spanish this year. We are still offering the Yearbook instructions and the annual data collection, as well as select questions from the supplemental survey (those questions relating to virtual worship attendance.) We hope that we can offer full materials in Spanish again in the future. Your conference can

select whether these forms are sent to your conference for data entry or whether these forms are sent electronically to the CARDD office for data entry. We will forward to the conference a copy of any data entry forms sent to us.

Virtual Worship Attendance

We will continue to gather Virtual Worship Attendance through the Supplemental Survey. We anticipate adding this data collection to the Data Hub beginning with the 2025 annual data collection.

OCWM Giving

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.* Evan Pence, CARDD's Research Analyst, collects, reviews, and edits each Conference's spreadsheet as they arrive and will request changes as necessary. Expect communications from Evan in early February.

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 *Data Hub Church Field Guide* 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!*

Thank you to all the Conferences that reported financial and general statistical information in the Data Hub these last four 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 tab in the Conferences section of the Data Hub** are also on the Yearbook and Directory webpage. Please expect to receive further communications from Evan early next year.

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 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,

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 2024:

- ✓ **Conferences that have a 75% congregational reporting rate** will be eligible for a customized Mini Statistical Profile
- ✓ **The three Conferences with the highest increases in their reporting rate** also be eligible for 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 or virtual 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.