

General Council on Finance and Administration  
The United Methodist Church  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**2010 Membership Data Released**

*Nashville, TN* – The staff of the General Council on Finance and Administration of The United Methodist Church (GCFA) recently completed their audit of the year-end 2010 statistical data for local churches in the United States. Despite The United Methodist Church's decline in membership and attendance in the United States, the Church continues to show significant generosity and mission engagement.

The statistics as reported by local churches and annual conferences indicate that professing membership in 2010 was down 1.4% over 2009, and average worship attendance was down 2.3%. In 2009, membership decreased 1.2% and attendance 1.9%.

Scott Brewer, Assistant General Secretary for Connectional Services at GCFA, noted that, while 140,295 persons were received in United Methodist churches on profession of faith or faith restored, only 54% of churches reported receiving any members by profession of faith or faith restored, down from just over 58% in 2005. "Amid some of these worrisome trends, we continue to have strong signs of life in our churches," Brewer added. "We need to understand and accept the reality of our numbers, but we also need to remain people of hope. As we work to answer the call to be more vital disciples in more vital congregations, it is important to remember that God is not finished with us yet."

Staff saw several positive trends in small group ministries and local church giving. The number of Christian formation participants in local churches increased 4% over 2009, while reported participation in covenant discipleship groups increased nearly 11%, and enrollees in vacation bible school increased almost 6%. Local churches in the US reported serving over 1.1 million persons through daycare and education ministries, and nearly 26.3 million persons through ministries of outreach, justice, and mercy.

Total spending in the local church declined 0.92% from 2009. Local church capital expenditures declined nearly 8%, while spending for all other categories increased by 0.67%. Non-apportioned giving to mission increased more than 10% over the previous year. Direct giving to United Methodist-related causes increased over 29%, while direct giving to non-United Methodist causes declined by almost 4%. Giving in 2010 to the Advance, which includes contributions to the United Methodist Committee on Relief

(UMCOR), increased 146% over the previous year to over \$44.9 million, in large part due to contributions to Haiti following the devastating earthquakes in 2010. “In times of great need, such as the devastation caused by natural disasters, we have seen United Methodists respond with tremendous generosity,” said Laura Chambers, Senior Researcher at GCFA.

More data can be found on GCFA’s website at <http://www.gcfa.org/data-services>. Additional information related to the statistics of the denomination will be reported in the Connectional Table’s State of the Church Report later this year.

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The General Council on Finance and Administration (GCFA) coordinates and administers finances and safeguards the legal interests and rights of The United Methodist Church.

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