

Statistician's Report

I invite you to explore the 2008 statistics with me. At the end of 2008, there were 522 churches with a total of 88,789 members (this membership number was 2.4% decrease from 2007) and an average worship attendance of 31,356 (a decline of 2.7%). We look forward to welcoming Vermont Churches next year!

Our eight districts divide our conference geographically. The districts and the number of churches in each are:

NME	Northern Maine	64
MME	Mid Maine	71
NHD	New Hampshire	64
TRI	Tri-State	73
CWM	Connecticut/Western Massachusetts	65
CMA	Central Massachusetts	63
MBH	Metro Boston Hope	56
RIM	Rhode Island/Southeastern Massachusetts	66

Question 1: What district has the most members?

Answer: Central Massachusetts

You might have been tempted to guess Tri-State because it has the most churches and that would be a good guess, but Central Massachusetts, with 63 churches, has the most members with a total of 14,693.

District	Total Membership	Average Church Membership
Northern Maine	7,828	122
Mid Maine	8,731	123
New Hampshire	7,069	110
Tri-State	14,323	196
Connecticut/Western Massachusetts	12,377	190
Central Massachusetts	14,693	233
Metro Boston Hope	9,685	175
Rhode Island/Southeastern Massachusetts	14,083	213
New England Conference	88,789	170

Question 2: What district has the most churches with an average worship attendance of 125 or higher?

Answer: Tri-State

Overall, 52 churches, 10% of churches in our conference, have an average worship attendance of 125 or more. All our districts have some of these larger churches. Central Massachusetts has the 3 churches with the highest worship attendances in our conference, but the district with the most churches over 125 is Tri-State with 13 churches!

District	Number of Churches with Average Worship Attendance of 125 or more	% of Churches in District
Northern Maine	2	3%
Mid Maine	5	7%
New Hampshire	2	3%
Tri-State	13	18%
Connecticut/Western Massachusetts	4	6%
Central Massachusetts	10	16%
Metro Boston Hope	4	7%
Rhode Island/Southeastern Massachusetts	12	18%
New England Conference	52	10%

Question 3: What district received the most new members by Profession of Faith in 2008?

Answer: Rhode Island/Southeastern Massachusetts

Churches receive new members in three ways: Profession of Faith, Transfer from Other Methodist Churches, and Transfer from Other Denominations. A bright spot in the statistics in 2008 was the Professions of Faith because there was a 7% rise - increasing from 1531 in 2007 to 1643 in 2008. The 297 people received by profession of faith in the Rhode Island/Southeastern Massachusetts district was the largest total number in any district.

District	Number of New Members Received by Profession of Faith
Northern Maine	113
Mid Maine	104
New Hampshire	123
Tri-State	261
Connecticut/Western Massachusetts	230
Central Massachusetts	256
Metro Boston Hope	259
Rhode Island/Southeastern Massachusetts	297
New England Conference	1643

Question 4: What district had the highest percentage of churches with an increased worship attendance from 2007 to 2008?

Answer: Connecticut/Western Massachusetts

Overall our conference average worship attendance decreased this year, and every district posted a decreased average worship attendance as well. But within every district at least 30% of the churches had an increase in worship attendance. Connecticut/Western Massachusetts had the most with 40% of its churches showing an increase in attendance in 2008 compared to 2007.

District	Number of Churches with an Attendance Increase	Number of Churches with an Attendance Increase
Northern Maine	21	33%
Mid Maine	22	31%
New Hampshire	19	30%
Tri-State	22	30%
Connecticut/Western Massachusetts	26	40%
Central Massachusetts	20	32%
Metro Boston Hope	20	36%
Rhode Island/Southeastern Massachusetts	20	30%
New England Conference	170	33%

Question 5: What district gave the most money to local benevolences when scaled by membership?

Answer: New Hampshire

One of the numbers I like to look at on the statistical tables is the line that shows how much money each church spent directly on benevolences and local mission. This money is over and above the amount given to mission through the conference such as mission shares, advance specials, and special Sunday offerings. Last year, our 522 churches together gave a total of \$1.8 million to soup kitchens, affordable housing efforts, medical clinics, pastor's discretionary funds, and other local missions. This money is in addition to the food and clothing drives, in kind donations of building use, and hours of volunteer talent given to after school programs, food pantries, community organizing and other community projects. The New Hampshire District had the largest per member spending on local missions at \$34.

District	Dollars Spent Directly on Mission	Dollars Scaled by Membership
Northern Maine	96,898	12
Mid Maine	199,409	23
New Hampshire	240,266	34
Tri-State	285,320	20
Connecticut/Western Massachusetts	167,857	14
Central Massachusetts	399,755	27
Metro Boston Hope	190,646	20
Rhode Island/Southeastern Massachusetts	257,175	18
New England Conference	1,837,326	21

Question 6: What district had the largest ratio of worship attendance to membership?

Answer: Mid Maine

This statistic is a combination of two numbers – dividing worship attendance by membership. It often shows the commitment of a church’s membership to come together for worship – to be present to God and each other as a worshipping community. Our conference as a whole has a ratio of .35 – that means that on an average Sunday, at least two thirds of our members are not present at worship (remember the average attendance includes children and visitors who are not members). Mid Maine shows a high ratio of 0.41!

District	Ratio of Worship Attendance to Membership
Northern Maine	0.38
Mid Maine	0.41
New Hampshire	0.39
Tri-State	0.37
Connecticut/Western Massachusetts	0.31
Central Massachusetts	0.32
Metro Boston Hope	0.33
Rhode Island/Southeastern Massachusetts	0.36
New England Conference	0.35

Question 7: What district has the most churches in counties with the highest level of poverty?

Answer: Northern Maine

It is not only helpful to know statistics about our churches, but it is important to know our context as well. There are only 4 counties in all of New England that have poverty rates exceeding 17%. One of these counties is Suffolk county in Massachusetts which basically covers the city of Boston as well as Chelsea, Revere, and Winthrop – we have 10 churches in Suffolk county. The other 3 counties with this high level of poverty, are all in Northern Maine. 27 United Methodist churches in the Northern Maine District are located in Aroostook, Somerset, and Washington counties.

Question 8: What district had the most new churches added to the statistical tables in 2008?

Answer: Metro Boston Hope

Last year, three new churches were added to our statistics – the most in any one year since the New England conference was formed. One was in the Connecticut/Western Massachusetts district: Connecticut Central Korean UMC in East Hampton. Metro Boston Hope, however, had two new churches. Vision Community started in Arlington and then merged with Grace UMC in Cambridge to become Grace Vision UMC. The Brazilian Ministry is also a new start beginning in Malden and now located in Saugus. These three churches together added 270 members and 190 people to our conference worship attendance last year while also adding to the diversity of the New England Conference!

Joy Mueller, Conference Statistician