

Guide to Statistics 2018

Due Date

The due date for annual reports, in accordance with the Book of Discipline, is January 30, 2019. With the agreement of the Bishop and the Cabinet, we will accept returns until **February 15, 2019**. As with all online returns, we encourage you not to wait until the last moment. If you have questions or concerns, check out our web section:

<https://www.cnumc.org/statistics>

You can also call or email Adrian Pell. Contact information is at the end of this document.

Getting Started

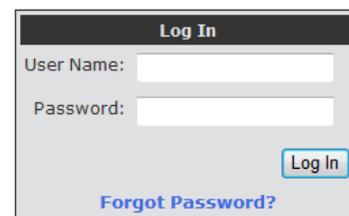
We strongly encourage all churches to enter their statistics using the online Ezra system. You can find the user name and password for your church from our web section – follow the big “Start Here!” link. **Please note** that if you carefully saved your login information last year ... we reset all the accounts, so you will need to get a new password from our site!

Once you have your user name and password, open your web browser to:

<https://ezra.gcfa.org>

When the site opens, sign in with the user name and password that you just obtained.

The first time you use Ezra each year, you will be asked to change the provided password and enter your name and the email address which we can use to contact you if needed. **If the provided username and password do not work, please check with somebody else in your church. They may have got there first!**



Choice of web browser

All the commonly used web browsers should work well – touch screen input is not advised.

Navigating Ezra



At the top of the main Ezra window, you will find a dark grey menu bar. From this menu, which is present on every Ezra page, you can enter and submit your statistics and print various reports.

Preparing Your Statistics

We **strongly recommend** that you print a blank church input form customized for your church to aid in preparing your statistics. This will include the corresponding figures for the previous year as a guide. To print your report, click the button on the front page, run the report and, when it completes, download and print the resulting PDF file. If you have problems with this, please contact us and we can email one to you.



Should you desire a copy of the official GCFA forms, these are available from our web site – in English, Spanish and Korean. However, please be aware that a number of the items on table 2 will be supplied automatically by the conference office, and there are additional lines specific to this conference which do not appear.

Entering Statistics

Now it's time to enter your statistics (after December 27, 2018). You can enter the tables in any order, and you can save between sessions – so, for example, if you have Table 1 ready first (quite likely), go ahead and enter it. You can come back to the other tables later. **Just remember to come back and finally submit your report before February 15, 2019.** We'll remind you if you haven't completed the final submission!

ENTER STATS

On the Enter Stats page, choose the table you want to enter. The resulting page will look very similar to your blank report form. For example:

45	Total amount paid in salary and benefits for all other church staff and diaconal ministers Report the amounts paid by the local church as salaries, housing, benefits, expense reimbursements, and allowances for any lay employees who are not diaconal ministers. DO NOT INCLUDE amounts reported on lines 41-44.	59,569	<input type="text" value="0"/>	45	?
	Program and Operating Expenses Please include amounts paid by the church, as well as amounts paid on behalf of the church, for all program and operating expenses.				?
46	Total amount spent for local church program expenses Report the total of all amounts spent on local church program for the purposes of education, witness, outreach, mercy, communication, worship, and other ministries. DO NOT INCLUDE amounts given to support local or national non-UMC groups and agencies in their programs. Those amounts should be reported on Line 38.	15,760	<input type="text" value="0"/>	46	?

The line number and description are shown, together with the value entered last year. Enter the new figure for 2017 in the box provided. As before, the detailed explanation for each field (where available) is shown alongside the line number. It does not appear on the blank form, however – please see the Frequently Asked Questions section on the web site for a full list of line descriptions.

Vital Signs integration

If your church has been participating in the Vital Signs program during 2018, you should see some green-shaded boxes in your statistical tables.

2b	Received this year on Profession of Faith other than confirmation	4	<input type="text" value="6"/>	2b	?
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These are values which have been pre-filled for you from the appropriate values in Vital Signs. Currently, this only applies to line 7 (Average attendance at all weekly services).

These values are not fixed! Please check that these values are correct according to the definitions used in the annual statistical return, and adjust as necessary. Some churches may have been using definitions in Vital Signs that differ from the annual return definitions.

Save Your Tables – Early and Often!

When you have completed a table, or as much as you intend to complete in this session, press the Save button, located at the top and bottom of the page! This does not complete submitting your entries, but merely saves them for a future submission. You may also wish to press the Save button more frequently to ensure your entries are saved, or to check for errors and warnings.

Save

Always save any tables you have been working on before navigating elsewhere in Ezra or to another web site, or closing your web browser. Your entries may otherwise be lost!

Errors and Warnings

You may see errors and warnings when you try to save a table. Errors should all be easily resolved. Please take the time to check these and make appropriate changes.

Line	Error
5	Error: The total Membership Ethnicity (line 5) must equal Total Membership (line 4). The calculated value is: 0 The entered value is: 189
6	Error: The total Membership Gender (line 6) must equal Total Membership (line 4). The calculated value is: 0 The entered value is: 189

A number of fields on the statistical tables must be calculated from other fields. Where possible, these are calculated for you automatically but there are some cases where matching numbers are required. For example, in table 1, the total number of professing members at the end of the year (line 4) is calculated from the additions and removals, and should be the same as the sum of the ethnic (line 5) and gender (line 6) sum fields.

You may save your statistics with errors, but you must resolve those errors before final submission.

Line	Warning	Explanation	
10	29% increase		Enter

Warnings indicate a value which should be checked – perhaps because it is significantly different from the value entered the previous year, or where no entry was made this year. Please enter an appropriate explanation. This year, you will need to add explanations for all warnings before you can finally submit your report.

Warnings are not necessarily errors. Large changes may be correct – you may have received a much larger number of new professing members this year, for example. Hallelujah! Please, however, do take a moment to check all the lines with warnings to make sure the entries are correct and not typographical errors.

Don't forget to Save your work again after correcting any errors or warnings!

Final Submission – Due by: February 15, 2019

When you have completed entering your statistics on all three tables, resolved all errors and entered information about any warnings, you will be able to submit your data.

Click the Submit Stats item on the menu, and follow the directions there to complete your submission.

You may also wish to print a copy of your submission for your own records – there is no need to send a paper copy to the conference office.

SUBMIT STATS

Once you have submitted your data, you will not be able to make further changes. If you discover additional or corrected information and wish to update your entries, please contact Adrian who will assist you in making the entries. It is our desire to obtain the most accurate information possible, so please do not hesitate to contact us.

What's new in 2018?

The reports for 2018 are broadly similar to those for 2017, but please read on for any changes.

- Table 3 contains a section for the tithe calculation. Please check, when submitting your report, that the calculated value is as expected relative to the aggregate tithe contributions sent to the conference office.
- **Federation/Union churches only:** your church may have an arrangement where only an agreed proportion of your income and expenditure is considered to be United Methodist funds. For example, a UMC/Presbyterian church may regard 50% as attributable to each denomination. If you have entered *all* your income and expenditure elsewhere on the form, you should enter the United Methodist percentage on the new line 52y. This will enable us to report full tithe contributions more accurately.

Questions? Concerns? Suggestions?

Although there is plenty of time to collect and submit the required statistics before the deadline, we know that extraordinary circumstances sometimes arise that may prevent this. If this happens in your church, please let us know as soon as possible so that we can assist you with alternative arrangements.

Generating a complete statistical picture of the conference is an important task, and results in an important tool to assist in conference and church development. If you have questions about any of items on the reports which are not answered in this document or on our web section, please contact us!

Adrian Pell

Conference Statistician

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Phone: (530) 217-3550 (← look: new telephone number!)

Skype: [adrian.r.pell](https://www.skype.com/people/adrian.r.pell)