

December 2014



Dear Conference Partners,

Advent Greetings!

It's time once again for the UCC to begin preparing the *Yearbook & Directory* for the coming year. There are a number of important items to be aware of this year.

As a result of the major upgrades to the UCC Data Hub this summer, **this will be the first year that all additions, changes, and updates are to be entered directly into the database.** Over the last several months, we hope that you have spent some time becoming familiar with the Data Hub and have already been making many of the updates so that reporting should be easier. If you have not accessed the Data Hub throughout the year, please visit the Data Hub webpage which offers training materials and tutorials to guide users through making changes in the system: www.ucc.org/research/data-hub.html.

For churches that will be accessing the UCC Data Hub for reporting 2014 information, CARD has created several helpful **video tutorials and information sheets** to guide people through the process. These materials will be available at the following link on our website: www.ucc.org/research/yearbook.html. Information will also be posted on the main page of the CARD website to direct local churches to these materials.

We know that each Conference has its own unique process for how information is collected from local churches and ministers for annual Yearbook reporting. **With the Data Hub upgrade, you do not need to change the annual data collection process for Yearbook reporting if you don't want to do so.** We know that some churches may not have regular internet access, and others may not be comfortable inputting data into a computer link. For this reason, we have posted all minister and church Yearbook forms on our secure website to be accessed at any time for your distribution and use: www.ucc.org/research/secure/forms.html. The only difference for 2015 is that CARD will no longer accept these paper forms directly and will rely on Conferences / Associations to enter all information directly.

In addition, please be aware that the **process for submitting Conference special offerings totals for local churches has changed** due to the Data Hub upgrade. Instead of CARD collecting this information directly from Conference finance contacts, data should be uploaded directly to the system. Instructions on performing this upload are also available on the Yearbook page at www.ucc.org/research/yearbook.html or the secure website at www.ucc.org/research/secure/forms.html.

Because of new functionalities within the Data Hub, please be as diligent as possible in adding and updating information in people's records. Remember that **Specialized Ministry and Member in Discernment tabs** can be updated; and people now have the option not to publish address, phone number, or email address in the *Yearbook & Directory*, Access UCC, and reports generated from the Data Hub. (Note: The process for ministers to opt out ends on December 31, but Conferences can still update opt out preferences within a person's record any time).

We hope that you were pleased with the new layout and content edits in the 2014 *Yearbook & Directory*. For 2015, we will be continuing the process of streamlining layout and content, specifically for the Conference Information and Related Ministries & Organizations sections. This continued process is a product of the review conducted in the fall of 2013 by a group of

individuals in Conference and national settings. As a result, **expect to see some differences in the nature and scope of the information CARD requests from you about your Conference.** Because much of the data for the Conference Information section will be pulled directly from the Data Hub, this will change the amount of detail that is printed in future editions.

That's about it. As always, any member of the CARD staff team is ready and willing to answer questions and assist you in the Yearbook reporting process. We are looking forward to another great Yearbook cycle—thank you for your continued partnership in this vital work on behalf of the United Church of Christ!

Sincerely,

Rev. Kristina Lizardy-Hajbi
Director
Center for Analytics, Research and Data (CARD)

P.S. For 2015, CARD will be offering **incentives to Conferences that are able to increase their Yearbook reporting rates for local churches.** Earlier in the year, I asked for feedback with regard to such incentives; as a result, the following plan was developed:

1. Conferences that have a **10-14% increase** in congregational reporting:
 - *\$300 UCC Resources Gift Certificate*
2. Conferences that have a **15-19% increase** in congregational reporting:
 - *\$400 UCC Resources Gift Certificate*
3. Conferences that have a **20% or greater increase** in congregational reporting:
 - *\$500 UCC Resources Gift Certificate*
 - *A personalized Conference Statistical Mini-Profile*
4. Conferences that have a **3-year average of 80% or higher in congregational reporting and maintain that for 2014 reporting:**
 - *A personalized Conference Statistical Mini-Profile*
 - *Pizza party at Conference Annual Meeting*

(NOTE: Conferences currently maintaining this 3-year average and who are eligible for this incentive are Connecticut, Florida, Illinois South, Rhode Island, Southwest and Wisconsin.)

While we recognize that some of these incentives are not grandiose and may be eclipsed by available staff resources and time, we nevertheless wanted to begin making an effort at offering these incentives in order to:

- 1) *Increase awareness* around the importance of Yearbook reporting for mapping UCC trends over time;
- 2) *Honor* Conferences that have maintained consistently high reporting percentages over time and that continue to do so in the future;
- 3) *Honor* Conferences that make a concerted effort to increase Yearbook reporting for 2015 and beyond.

I hope these incentives might excite your local churches to increase reporting or prompt your Conference to send a few extra announcements to encourage reporting. So feel free to spread the word about these incentives! And if you have other ideas for future incentives, please let us know.