

# NOTES ON CHURCH PEOPLE for UMC STATS

## DIFFERENT TYPES OF PEOPLE FOUND IN THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH:

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Each person in a church can only be technically counted on the church statistical report as a 1) Professing Member, 2) Baptized Member Who Has Not Become a Professing Member, or 3) Constituent. No person should be counted in more than one category.

- **Professing Members:** A professing member is a baptized person who has taken vows declaring the Christian faith. They can have been baptized or taken these vows in another church following the UMC's Christian faith tradition. See ¶215 of the *Book of Discipline* for official definitions.
- **Baptized Members Who Have Not Yet Become Professing Members:** A baptized member is a person who has received the sacrament of baptism in a United Methodist Church or has received Christian baptism in another denomination and later transferred to a United Methodist Church. Churches keep a roll of these and remove persons from this roll once they make a profession of faith to become a full professing member.
- **Professing Members Kept on a General Membership Roll (“At Large”):** According to ¶259.3 of the Book of Discipline, the annual conference secretary should have a general membership roll of members attributed to New Church Starts that are not sponsored by an existing church. This membership should be transferred as soon as possible to the roll of the new church once it reaches conference criteria for organization. These members are reported separately to GCFA.
- **Affiliate/Associate Members:** Professing members of the United Methodist Church who are temporarily residing in another area can keep membership in a “home church” but become **Affiliate Members** of the church in their current area. Only the “home church” counts this person on their membership roll, and they are counted as constituents at their affiliated church. A member of another denomination under these circumstances is an **Associate Member**. Affiliate Members can choose which church for which he or she has voting rights. Associate Members have no voting rights within the UMC.

## WHO COUNT AS CONSTITUENTS?

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Officially, a constituent is a person who is not a professing or baptized member of the church, but for whom the church has pastoral responsibility. The official definition is located at ¶230.3 in the **2012 Book of Discipline**.

### How do I determine if this church has pastoral responsibilities for this person?

If the person is hospitalized, dies, needs pastoral support, etc., who will do it? If it is someone at **this** church, then **this** church has pastoral responsibilities for this person. The person may or may not attend church on Sunday morning, may attend a weekday class or outreach program, may be related to a church member or staff person, may spend summers or winters in town, may be in town for school, etc. Until baptized, babies and children are constituents of the church.