

COUNTING WORSHIP ATTENDANCE

December 2023

If you are one of the many congregations offering an online option for weekly worship, how should you count attendance?

The Church of the Brethren is a member of the Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies (ASARB), where data gatherers from many religious groups share ideas and learn from one another. Some Christian denominations have years of experience with online worship data, and we benefit from their knowledge.

One metric that ASARB members agree on is the need to keep in-person (on-site) attendance *separate* from online attendance. Technologies change rapidly, and measuring online participation is a challenge. Statisticians must be able to compare numbers consistently from year to year, trusting they are comparing apples with apples. Denominations that have had multiple platforms for years have always kept these numbers separate, and we are doing the same.

What should you do for 2023 data? On the Statistical Form, report in-person worship attendance and online worship attendance separately.

How should you count online worship attendance for this coming year? This is complex because of the technology involved. (For example, “views” may count people who watched just a few minutes or times the video autoplayed, and there’s no way to know how many viewers are represented by a single device.) Guidance on counting online attendance is posted at www.brethren.org/yearbook.

If you have questions, please contact Jim Miner, Yearbook Specialist, at yearbook@brethren.org.

“Don’t stop meeting together with other believers.” —Hebrews 10:25a, *Common English Bible*