

Live Online Attendance Tracking Guidance for The Wesleyan Church

The Wesleyan Church wants to help congregations track meaningful metrics in terms of reaching people for Christ.

Many churches have found online streaming of their worship services to be a valuable part of their ministries. A special category on the Local Church Statistical Report (LCSR) was subsequently created to gather these numbers for future analysis (8 - Live online average attendance) enabling Wesleyan churches to celebrate as well as further innovate corporate worship.

Reporting in this category should be approached with wisdom and consistency. The intent is to track *live* online attendance only. Do not include total video views or video content made available at a later date.

Congregations are strongly encouraged to implement conservative tracking mechanisms to ensure the integrity of physical attendance in onsite worship services and keep online and in-person attendance separate, as combining those numbers can inflate attendance and skew historical attendance trends.

Following are additional thoughts and coaching on how to best track a variety of currently available streaming services:

- Many church-oriented streaming services exist which allow a church to stream on their website and these come with streaming attendance numbers to track. These can be reported on line 27A.
- Facebook Live, YouTube and other social media platforms may be used and provide video statistics or analytics for tracking.
- While no platform can provide a perfect number, the number which most accurately reflects participation in a virtual service is “Peak Live Viewers” or “Peak Concurrent Viewers.”
- Some platforms like Facebook and YouTube allow the option to share a pre-recorded video using a feature called, “Premiere.” Enabling, “Premiere,” treats the pre-recorded video as though it were a live video, airing a showing at a specified day and time. When using this feature, a Peak Live/Concurrent Viewer statistic for the initial play period of the video is provided and that number may be treated as the equivalent of the same on a “Live” video for reporting on line 8.

As stated above, 8 is intended to reflect live online average attendance (not total video views or recordings that were watched at a later time). TWC encourages the use of conservative tracking mechanisms as it can not only be easy to distort online attendance but also take away from engagement in physical worship services.