

'Worshipping Community' (WC) 2021 Guidelines

Definition:

We are defining 'worshipping community' to include any person who attends your church at least once a month (weekly services) or once a quarter (monthly services), or would do so if not prevented by illness, infirmity or temporary absence. This includes all ages but it is useful to count separately: children (0-10 primary), young people (11-17 secondary), younger adults (18-34), adults (36-69), and adults (70 and over). Activities include things such as fellowship groups and other regular events which have a distinct act of worship or prayer. It also includes activities not on church premises (e.g. school or community centre) but not pupils attending school assemblies within school time, even if they are held in the church building. The following explanation has been found helpful by many:

Imagine looking at your Sunday congregation and thinking, 'That's quite a good turn out today!' Then you think of those you know who are regulars but are not there and you think, 'If everybody came on one day we would have XX people here.' Your mind thinks then of those who come to that midweek event which includes worship/discipleship and you add those. Then you realise you have not included those who are housebound who are regularly visited with communion. When you add it all together it comes to a lot more than the average number in church on a Sunday, e.g. if your ASA is 50 and you identify an additional 32 people involved in the worshipping life of your church, then your Worshipping Community figure will be 82.

We include in the WC total those who:

- ⇒ come to midweek services and fellowship groups
- ⇒ are ill and unable to come to church
- ⇒ are away on holiday or business
- ⇒ have home communions
- ⇒ are part of a 'fresh expression' of church**
- ⇒ schools worship/discipleship activity which is voluntary and not part of school time
e.g. lunchtime or after-school
- ⇒ live in care or residential homes and would consider themselves to be full members of your church. If a service is done in a 'home' and conducted in a room where all are present whether they have chosen to or not, then discern who to include; if there is a service conducted in a separate room with people choosing to attend then they qualify for inclusion in WC figures.

We do not include in the WC total those who:

- ⇒ are visitors - holidaymakers, baptism parties etc
- ⇒ school services, whether in church or in school, which are part of their school time
- ⇒ those attending to comply with requirements for banns of marriage or to be married in church
- ⇒ consider their 'home' church to be another church. If you are uncertain which the individual regards as their principal place of worship, please ask them

How do I accurately calculate my WC?

We recommend the use of the following forms, both available at <https://www.lichfield.anglican.org/stats>:

- A Church Family List template to help keep track of who is coming and going and where they attend. There is also an additional worksheet included, completed for some fictional characters, hopefully to give you a little more help.
- A Pastoral Care Register to keep track of weekly attendance.
Many churches have a master list of names of those who come regularly.

** 'A fresh expression is any venture that works mainly with non-churchgoers and aims to become church.'

To find out whether or not your venture is a fresh expression please visit the fresh expressions (www.freshexpressions.org.uk) and share websites (www.sharetheguide.org), which are full of stories that will help you understand what a fresh expression of church is.