

## Executive Summary

Annual Church Profile (ACP) 2023 data were used to investigate various defining attributes of Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) churches. Only churches are included in the results and not every church reported all the demographic information or ACP statistics.

### Demographic Highlights:

- 78% of churches are in the South region of the United States.
- A plurality of churches (45%) is in suburban areas.
- Seven in ten churches (70%) have an average AM worship attendance of less than 100.
- Around one-third of churches (31%) have 50% or less of worship attendance regularly involved in Sunday school or small groups.

### Crosstab Highlights:

- Churches in the Northeast (58%) and West (60%) are most likely in urban areas.
- The Midwest (46%) and South (47%) churches are most likely in suburban areas.
- Around half of churches in the Northeast (49%), Midwest (53%), and West (48%) average between 1-49 AM worship attendees.
- Churches in suburban (34%) and urban (40%) are more likely to have 100+ attendees than those in rural areas (18%).

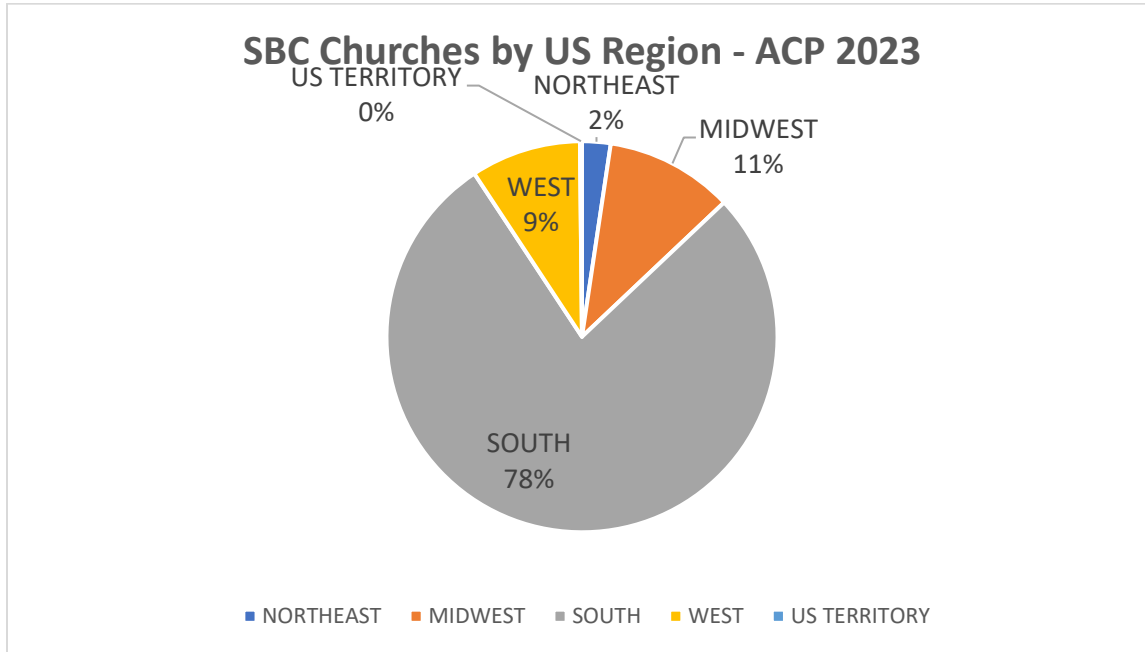
### Compared to 2018 Highlights:

- There was an 10% increase in the number of churches in the West South Central division which includes Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas.
- The percentage of churches with average worship attendance between 1 and 49 increased from 38% to 43% of SBC churches. There was a 2% increase in the number of churches in this attendance range while all other groups saw a decrease.
- There has been a change in the number of churches where only at most 25% of the worship attendees are involved in Sunday school or small groups. The percentage of SBC churches in this category went from 6% to 9% which reflects a 39% increase in the number of churches reporting this level of participation.

The following pages contain graphs and tables for the attributes discussed above.

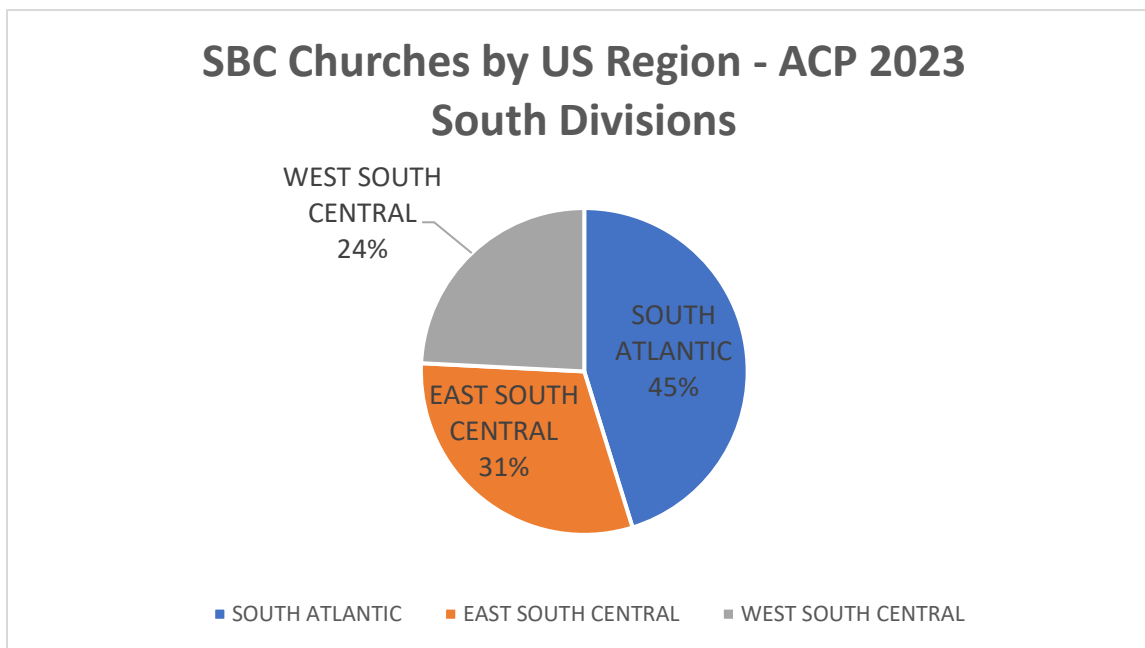
**ACP 2023 Church Demographics**

**Regions:** US Census Bureau regions are used to define Northeast, Midwest, South, and West.



**South Division:** The South is further divided into three areas.

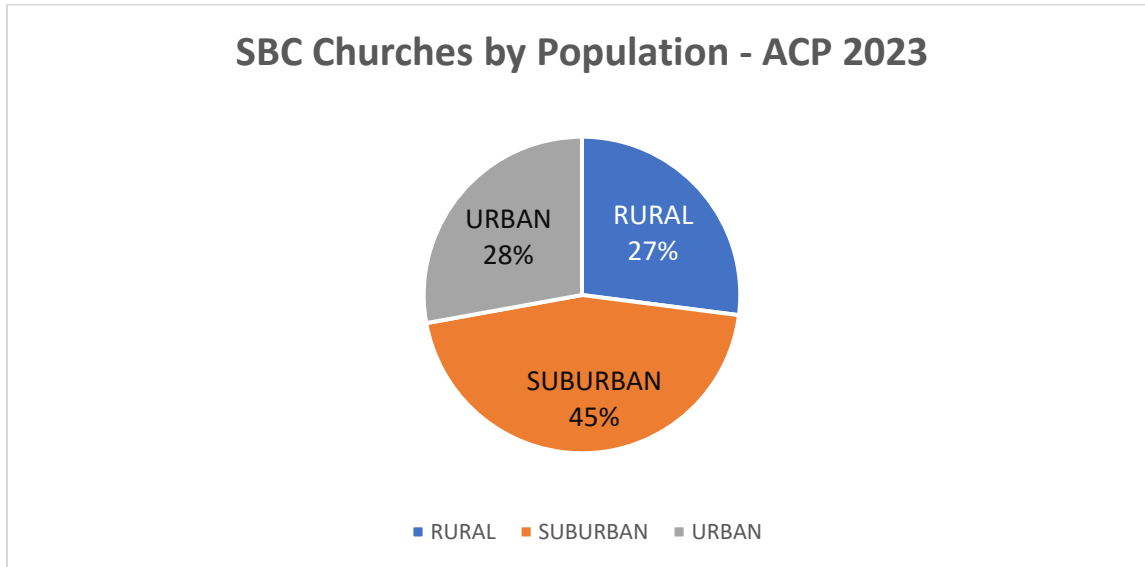
- South Atlantic: Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia
- East South Central: Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, Tennessee
- West South Central: Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas



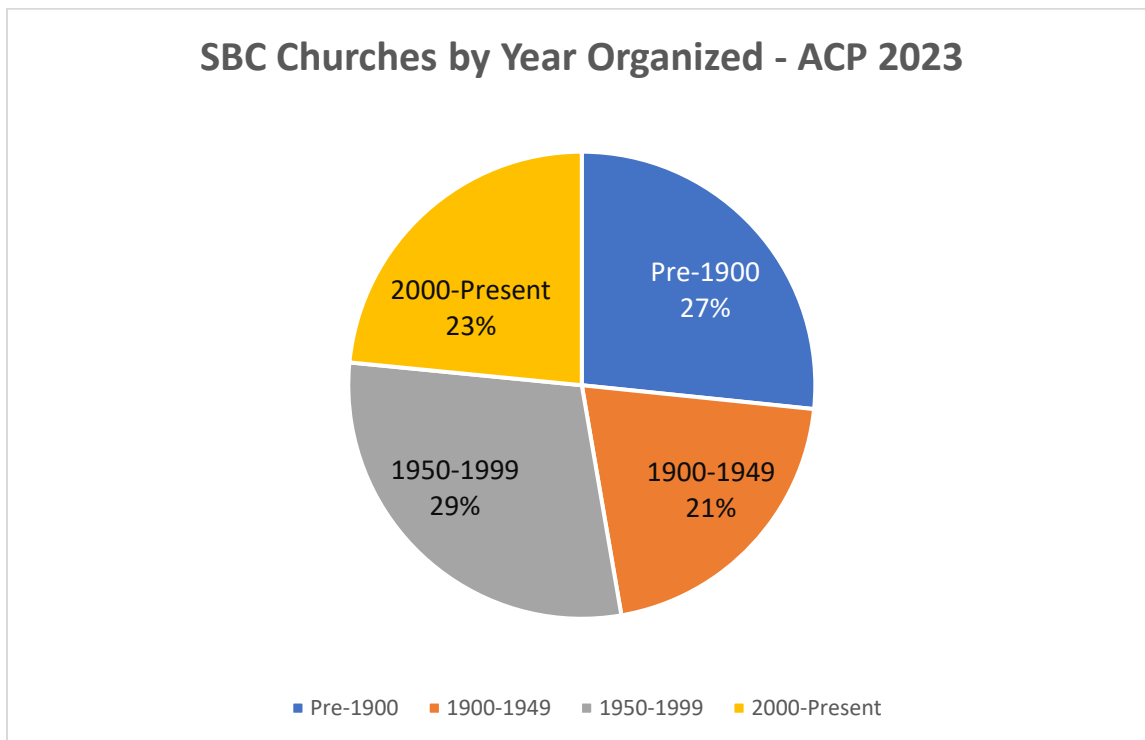
## 2023 ACP Church Statistics

**Population:** Estimated population size as of May 6, 2024, was used for assigning group. Street address defined the city when available and mail address supplemented the data when necessary.

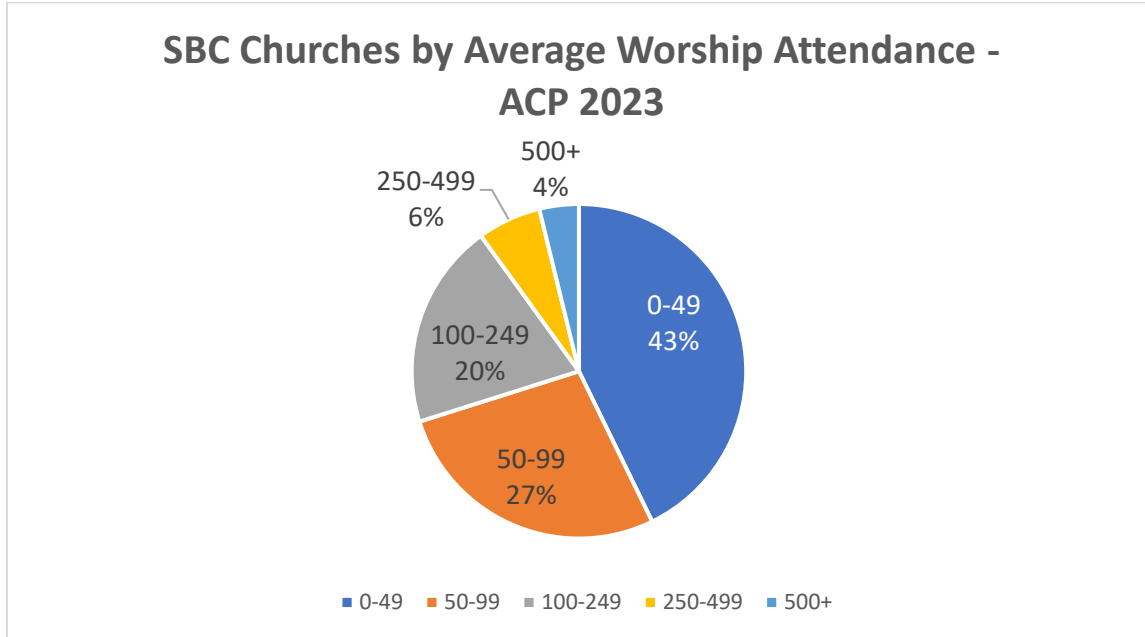
- Rural: Population less than 2,500
- Suburban: Population greater than or equal to 2,500 and less than 50,000
- Urban: Population greater than or equal to 50,000



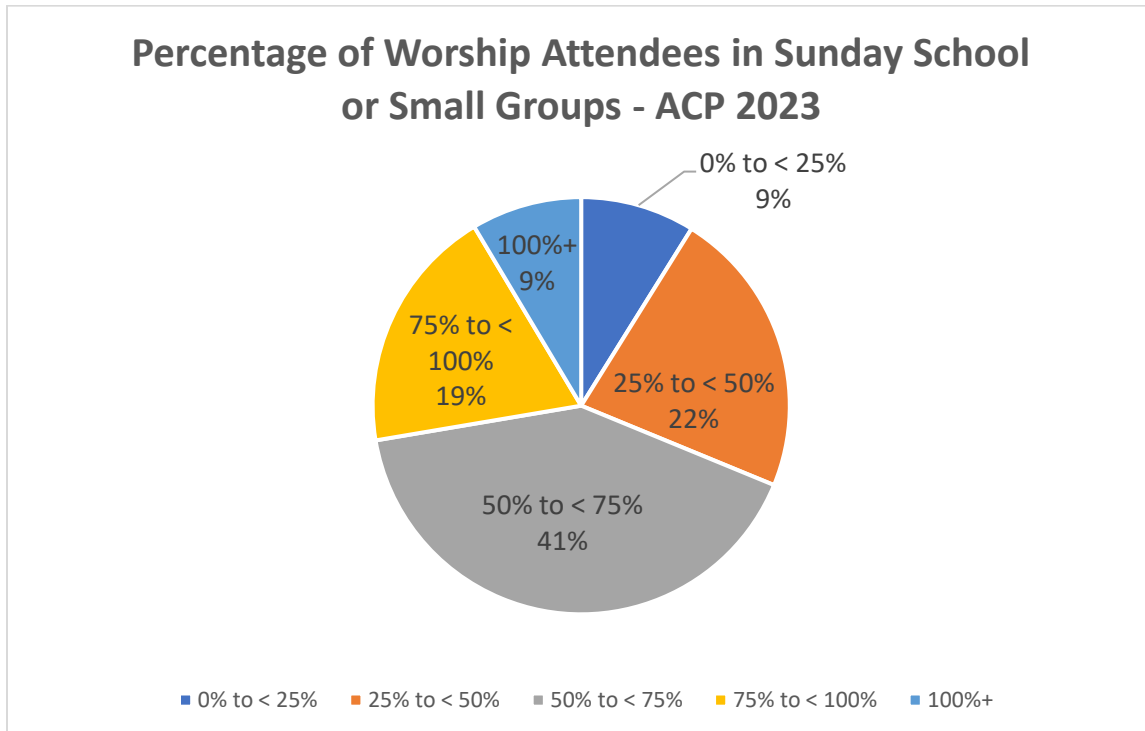
**Year Organized:** Churches were placed into four categories based on the year the church was organized: Pre-1900, 1900-1949, 1950-1999, 2000-Present.



**Weekly Worship Average Attendance:** Churches were divided into categories based on their average in person weekly worship attendance: 0-49, 50-99, 100-249, 250-499, 500+.



**Percentage of worship attendance in Sunday school or small groups:** Churches were divided into categories based on the average Sunday school/ small group divided by average worship attendance.



**ACP 2023 Church Crosstabs**

*Region vs Population:* SBC churches in the Northeast and West are more likely to be in urban areas than those in the Midwest and South. The Midwest and South are predominately in rural and suburban areas.

	POPULATION		
REGION	Rural	Suburban	Urban
Northeast	7%	35%	58%
Midwest	32%	46%	22%
South	39%	47%	24%
West	11%	29%	60%
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>28%</b>

*Average Weekly Worship Attendance:* The following tables show the distribution across various demographics as it relates to church size as defined by in person average weekly worship attendance.

**Region:** Churches in the Northeast, Midwest, and West have between 1 -49 attendees more frequently than those in the South.

Average Worship Attendance	NORTHEAST	MIDWEST	SOUTH	WEST	OVERALL
<b>1-49</b>	49%	53%	41%	48%	<b>43%</b>
<b>50-99</b>	26%	23%	28%	27%	<b>27%</b>
<b>100-249</b>	19%	17%	21%	17%	<b>20%</b>
<b>250-499</b>	4%	5%	7%	5%	<b>6%</b>
<b>500+</b>	2%	3%	4%	3%	<b>4%</b>

**Population:** Rural areas are the more likely to have the smallest churches, 1 to 49 attendees. Churches with 100+ attendees are in suburban and urban areas more frequently.

Average Worship Attendance	RURAL	SUBURBAN	URBAN	OVERALL
<b>1-49</b>	54%	39%	34%	<b>42%</b>
<b>50-99</b>	29%	27%	27%	<b>27%</b>
<b>100-249</b>	15%	22%	22%	<b>20%</b>
<b>250-499</b>	2%	8%	9%	<b>6%</b>
<b>500+</b>	1%	4%	8%	<b>4%</b>

2023 ACP Church Statistics

**Year Organized:** The distribution of church sizes is similar across all eras when churches were organized.

Average Worship Attendance	Pre-1900	1900-1949	1950-1999	2000-Present	OVERALL
<b>1-49</b>	41%	43%	44%	43%	<b>43%</b>
<b>50-99</b>	28%	29%	26%	26%	<b>27%</b>
<b>100-249</b>	21%	20%	19%	20%	<b>20%</b>
<b>250-499</b>	6%	6%	6%	6%	<b>6%</b>
<b>500+</b>	3%	3%	5%	5%	<b>4%</b>

**Percentage of weekly worship attendance in Sunday school or small groups:** The smallest churches, 1 to 49 attendees, are both more likely to have the lowest and largest amount of participation. Churches with 50 to 99 attendees are more likely to have participation across the three middle levels.

Average Worship Attendance	0% to < 25%	25% to < 50%	50% to < 75%	75% to < 100%	100%+	OVERALL
<b>1-49</b>	61%	43%	37%	38%	54%	<b>42%</b>
<b>50-99</b>	20%	28%	31%	27%	21%	<b>28%</b>
<b>100-249</b>	12%	20%	22%	22%	16%	<b>20%</b>
<b>250-499</b>	4%	6%	6%	8%	7%	<b>6%</b>
<b>500+</b>	3%	3%	4%	5%	3%	<b>4%</b>

**ACP 2023 Compared to ACP 2018**

The following tables show the demographics for churches in both 2018 and 2023. The definitions applied in the 2023 Church Demographics were used for 2018 to make the results comparable. There are no population groupings as the 2018 population data were not available in the same manner.

**Region:** No meaningful differences between 2023 and 2018.

REGION	2023	2018	% Change Num Churches
Northeast	2%	2%	2%
Midwest	11%	11%	2%
South	78%	78%	5%
West	9%	9%	7%
US Territory	0%	0%	37%

**South Divisions:** There has been an increase in the number of churches in the West South Central which includes Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas. The West South Central division saw a 10% increase.

SOUTH_REG	2023	2018	% Change Num Churches
South Atlantic	45%	46%	-2%
East South Central	31%	32%	-5%
West South Central	24%	22%	10%

**Year Organized:** In the past five years, the number of churches organized since 2000 increased by 1,946 churches, a 26% increase.

YR_ORG_GRP	2023	2018
Pre-1900	27%	28%
1900-1949	21%	22%
1950-1999	29%	31%
2000-Present	23%	20%

2023 ACP Church Statistics

**Weekly Worship Average Attendance:** The percentage of churches with in person average attendance between 1 and 49 increased from 38% to 43% of SBC churches. There was a 2% increase in the number of churches in this attendance range while all other groups saw a decrease.

ATT_GRP	2023	2018	% Change Num Churches
1-49	43%	38%	2%
50-99	27%	29%	-15%
100-249	20%	22%	-20%
250-499	6%	7%	-21%
500+	4%	4%	-16%

**Percentage of weekly worship attendance in Sunday school or small groups:** There has been a change in the number of churches where only at most 25% of the worship attendees are involved in Sunday school or small groups. The percentage of SBC churches in this category went from 6% to 9% which reflects a 39% increase in the number of churches reporting this level of participation.

SS_AM_GRP	2023	2018	% Change Num Churches
0% to < 25%	9%	6%	39%
25% to < 50%	22%	19%	3%
50% to < 75%	41%	44%	-16%
75% to < 100%	19%	22%	-23%
100%+	9%	9%	-15%