

2023 Annual Church Profile:

Analysis of Active 2022 Congregations Not Active in 2023

Summary: Among the 49,842 active Southern Baptist congregations in 2022, 1.8% disbanded or closed and 0.5% left or were disaffiliated from the SBC by the time 2023 data was compiled.

The final ACP congregation file for 2023 that includes both churches and church-type missions was compared to 2022. Postmortem analysis was conducted by Lifeway Research to determine what happened to each congregation in the 2022 dataset not found in the 2023 dataset.

The primary sources used for this analysis were:

1. Reason codes and notes provided by state conventions when congregations were marked inactive
2. Affiliation data in SBCWorkspace for active congregations

1,253 congregations in 2022 database were not found in the 2023 dataset. 72 should not be in this analysis because they had no SBC affiliation in 2022 and either closed (21) or removed all remaining affiliations (51). Also, 13 should not be in this analysis due to errors in either 2023 or 2022. These include 9 that should not have been in the 2022 file because they are duplicates of other congregations and 4 that it was since learned should have been active in the 2023 file.

1,168 is the accurate number of Southern Baptist congregations in the 2022 dataset that are not in the 2023 dataset. Below are reasons they are no longer active Southern Baptist congregations (*12 still have an affiliation with a state convention or local association):

893	Disbanded/closed	76%	Disbanded/closed
7	Disbanded/closed – Reason is unknown	1%	Reason is unknown
260	Left/disaffiliated from SBC*	22%	Left/disaffiliated from SBC
2	New church work; not yet a church	<1%	Not yet a church
<u>6</u>	Exist as a ministry not a congregation	1%	Exist as a ministry
1,168			

Among the congregations that closed and a reason was obtained, below is a breakdown of what occurred (to the best of our knowledge).

739	Disbanded/closed	83%	Disbanded/closed
104	Merged into a Southern Baptist church	12%	Merged into a Southern Baptist church
13	Merged into a non-Southern Baptist church	1%	Merged into a non-Southern Baptist church
9	Never got started	1%	Never got started
<u>28</u>	Now a campus of a church	3%	No longer a church record
893			

Information on a congregation's closing is not always obtained when it happens. For example, among the 739 disbanded/closed congregations 153 were identified as closing in 2022 or prior.

Special thanks to the data administrators and clerks in each state convention that entered this data in SBCWorkspace and provided notes to Lifeway.