

TWO SLICES OF HISTORY - 1965 and 2007

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Visioning Conference
United Methodist Union
Nardin Park U.M.C.

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The data reflected in this presentation has been extracted from the Detroit Annual Conference Journals of 1965 and 2007. Church membership statistics reflect numbers in effect on January 1 of those years, while pastoral appointments reflect positions held or assumed on June 16 or July of those years. The year 1965 was chosen because it marks the beginning of this researcher's ministerial career. The year 2007 is the last year for which a published Journal was available.

	1965 — Dwight E. Loder	2007 -- Jonathan D. Keaton
1. Bishop of the Detroit Annual Conference.		
2. Total Membership, Detroit Annual Conference	1965 — 190,148	2007 — 100,384
3. Number of members in churches related to the Methodist Union:	1965 — 62,132	2007 — 33,015
4. Number of churches related to the Methodist Union: (districts)	1965 — 82 (one district)	2007 — 95 (two districts)
5. Number of appointed pastors in churches related to the Methodist Union:	1965—109	2007—107
6. Number of white male pastors:	1965 —96	2007—45
7. Number of female pastors:	1965 —4	2007—37
8. Number of African — American pastors:	1965 — 9	2007 —25
9. Number of Asian and Hispanic pastors:	1965 —0	2007 — 8
10. Number of clergy couples:	1965 —0	2007—4
11. Number of Detroit District churches in 1965 which no longer exist under the same name:	37	
12. Number of Detroit District church buildings listed in the 1965 Journal that have been sold or otherwise abandoned:	35	

13. Number of Detroit District churches listed in the 1965 Journal that have since relocated, while retaining the same name: 3

14. Number of Methodist Union churches with 1000 or more members. 1965—22 2007—4

15. Number of Methodist Union churches with 750 — 999 members. 1965—9 2007—7

16. Total number of Methodist Union churches with memberships over 750. 1965—31 (out of 82) 2007—11 (out of 95)

17. Number of Methodist Union churches with fewer than 300 members. 1965—18 2007—71

18. Number of Methodist Union churches located in Detroit and Highland Park. 1965—46 2007—20

19. Number of Detroit and Highland Park churches with more than 750 members. 1965—17 2007—0

20. Number of members in three largest Methodist Union churches. 1965 — 8,977 2007 —9,980

21. Number of congregations that have become related to the Methodist Union since 1965, not including churches melded in by redrawing district boundaries, assimilated via the E.U.B. merger or formed within existing United Methodist buildings. 1965 to 2007:

GLEANINGS AND OBSERVATIONS

1. The combined Detroit East and Detroit West Districts have 13 more churches than the Detroit District had in 1965, but with over 29,000 fewer members.
2. Churches related to the United Methodist Union, however, still equal 33% of the total membership of the Detroit Annual Conference.... a percentage that has not varied in 40 years.
3. The greatest disparity between 1965 and 2007 is in the number of large churches, a decline from 31 in 1965 to 7 in 2007.
4. Of equal concern is the increase in the number of small churches during the same period, from 18 in 1965 to 71 in 2007.
5. At the present time, all but 24 churches on the Detroit East and Detroit West Districts have fewer than 300 members.
6. More churches since 1965 have not meant more pastors under appointment in these churches, due to the disappearance of staff positions in churches where membership has declined.
7. Of interest is the diversity of pastoral appointees in our metropolitan area churches. The numbers tell a rather amazing story.
8. The number of church buildings left behind since 1965 may explain, in part, the financial resources accumulated by the Union over that same time frame, especially when one considers the sale of additional church buildings that were both acquired and abandoned since 1965.
9. It is apparent that many of our smaller membership churches currently worship in buildings that were built for much larger constituencies, with repair and renovation costs that often exceed the stewardship capacities of the present members.
10. It would appear that the Union has become disproportionately dependent (for dollars and leaders) upon a dwindling number of large membership churches.