

Reporting a church closure – a step-by-step guide

Introduction and background

“Closed” refers first and foremost to the church as a Methodist Society, not to the church as a building. Sometimes when a Society is wound up, public worship continues in its own or in another church building; at other times the building is closed for public worship and the Society effectively “ceases to meet”.

There have been several methods in which local churches have reported their closure in the past. Due to the different pathways used (letter, email, phone call or the church web profile application), some of the Connexional Team staff involved in this process have been missed out of the chain and often not received vital information. This has led to delays and errors, such as closed churches being asked to submit their annual statistics.

Since September 2014, there has only been one method to report church closures, enabling staff members in the relevant offices to proceed with their tasks quickly and efficiently.

Step-by-step procedure

1) Go to <http://online.methodist.org.uk>.

If you are not registered, you will need to click REGISTER and follow the instructions.



If you are already a registered user, log in and choose the STATISTICS FOR MISSION option.

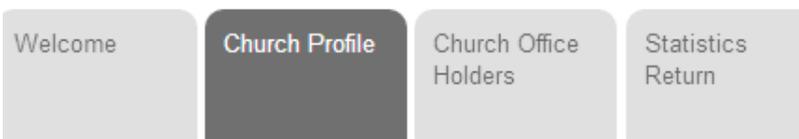


2) Select your church via the SELECT A CHURCH button on the left-hand panel.



If you have access to only one church, you will be taken directly to your church’s WELCOME page.

3) Go to CHURCH PROFILE.



4) Click the REPORT CHURCH CLOSED button.



NOTE: This function is active throughout the year, not just during the statistics collection.

5) A POP-UP BOX will appear.

A grey pop-up box titled "CHURCH CLOSED". Below the title is a note: "Please note that when a church closes it means that the Methodist Society and its associated church council no longer exists. District Synod approval is required before this can happen." Below the note is a section labeled "Reason for closure:" with a dropdown menu showing "Please select...". Below that is a text input field labeled "Closed Date (dd/mm/yy):". At the bottom are two buttons: "CONFIRM" and "CANCEL".

To capture distinctions between different types of closures, a list of four options appears when you click the blue “Report Church Closed” button.

You need to **select the option** that best explains why your church has been closed.

- **“Became a Class”**. Members continue to meet, but as a Class of another Methodist church. This may be where the membership has fallen to six or under, as per Standing Order 605;
- **“Ceased to Meet”**. Public worship is discontinued (there may be a last service to mark the event) and members cease to meet in the church building: some may transfer on an individual basis to other Methodist churches;
- **“Ceased LEP”**. The LEP is constitutionally dissolved or Methodist participation discontinued. Remaining members cease to meet or meet otherwise than as Methodist participating members;
- **“Merged”**. Members continue to meet, but as part of a scheme whereby the Local Church has been merged with another church: this may involve sharing the use of a building, or a church spread across more than one site.

Once you have selected one of these options, you then need to **report the effective date of closure** (dd/mm/yy) in the appropriate box. This may be one of the following:

The date of Synod accepting the recommendation to cease worship (SO 943(1)), the date of the last church council meeting, the date of a resolution to wind up a Society, the date of the last service in a Methodist chapel, or the date of the adoption of a scheme for church merger.

6) Finally, click CONFIRM.

An automated notification email is then sent to the administrative team of the Conference Office at the Methodist Church House, who will get in touch with the Superintendent to verify the requested closure.

Once a church closure (as defined above) has been confirmed, that church’s entry will be removed from the data entry site as the church will not be required to submit any further statistical data.