

SBC Trends and Statistics: 2024

Key insights into membership and attendance

Key Statistics

Here's an overview of the key statistics shaping the Southern Baptist Convention in 2024:

- **Total SBC Membership (2024):** Approximately 12.7 million.
- **Average Weekly In-Person Worship Attendance (2023/2024):** About 4.3 million (Lifeway and SBC reporting).

National Context: Church Attendance Trends

The Southern Baptist Convention's trends must be viewed within the broader context of changing religious participation in the United States:

- **Decline in U.S. Church Attendance:** Over the past two decades, U.S. church attendance has experienced a notable decline.
- **Gallup Data:** Weekly or nearly-weekly attendance is around 30% of U.S. adults, a decrease from approximately 42% two decades ago. This decline affects all denominations, including Baptists.
- **Church Attendance Frequency:** Recent research indicates the typical churchgoer attends services approximately 1.6 times per month. This represents a post-pandemic rebound but remains below pre-pandemic attendance norms. *This benchmark is not SBC-specific.*

Trends and Interpretation

Analyzing the interplay between membership, attendance, and broader societal shifts reveals key trends within the SBC:

- **Membership vs. Attendance:** While SBC membership has declined to 12.7 million (the lowest in about 50 years), weekly attendance has rebounded to approximately 4.3 million. This suggests a trend of fewer nominal members and restored in-person participation. The figures highlight an engaged core, contrasted with a decline in broader membership.
- **Youth and Generational Shifts:** Data indicates:
 - **Mixed Signs:** Some younger adults attend more often than during pandemic lows.

- **Generational Change:** Generational change and the rise of religiously unaffiliated individuals (“nones”) continue to reduce denominational membership and attendance.
- **Baptisms and New-Member Activity:** Some analyses point to an increase in baptisms in recent years in SBC churches (post-pandemic uptick). This can coincide with net membership decline if removals/transfers exceed new additions, signifying ongoing activity and engagement despite overall membership trends.