

GUIDANCE

Reporting a **CHANGE OF STATUS** of a church

District approval is needed for a Methodist Society to cease to be recognized as such and for its associated Church Council to be dissolved. The relevant change of status of the Local Church then needs to be **reported via the Statistics for Mission site.**

- The effect of "closing" a Local Church in this way means that separate membership and attendance statistics **no longer need to be reported.**
- It does not necessarily mean that the church building is closed. The church may, for example, become part of a **multi-site society**, which will include the former individual society's membership and attendance statistics in its aggregate returns.

When is reporting a change of status **NOT** needed?

- If a **building** has become unusable but the society continues to meet elsewhere, all you need do is notify us of the **address of the new site**. Separate district approval is also required before a church building is closed for public worship.
- If a **Local Ecumenical Partnership (LEP) ceases to meet**, but the Methodist congregation keep going on their own, all that needs to happen is for the **LEP tick box** located in the church profile (see point 2) to be **unticked**. A **name change**, if applicable, can be requested from the Web Support Officer.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCEDURE

> STATISTICS FOR MISSION

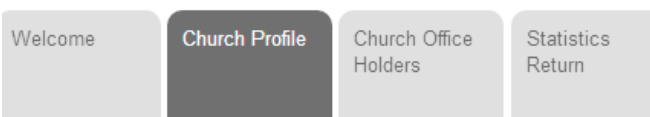
- 1) Go to <https://online.methodist.org.uk>.

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 select STATISTICS FOR MISSION.

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

Select a Church >

- 3) Go to **CHURCH PROFILE**.



- 4) Scroll to the **REPORTING CHANGES** section and click the **REPORT CHANGED STATUS** button.

**REPORT
CHANGED
STATUS**

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

5) Select the **TYPE** of closure from the pop-up box.

To capture distinctions between different types of closures, a list of four options appears when you click the blue REPORT CHANGED STATUS button.

You need to **select the option** that best explains the new status of your church:

- **"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. **NOTE:** If you choose this option, you will also be able to choose the society your church has become a class of via a dropdown menu displaying all circuit churches.
- **"CEASED"**. Public worship is discontinued and members cease to meet in the worshipping community: some may transfer to other Methodist churches. This option also applies if Methodist members cease to participate in an LEP, but the LEP continues.
- **"CEASED LEP"**. The Single Congregation LEP is constitutionally dissolved. The remaining congregation, including Methodist members, cease to meet. **NOTE:** If you choose this option, the Connexional Ecumenical Officer (eo@methodistchurch.org.uk) needs to be informed as well.
- **"MERGED"**. Members continue to meet, but as part of a scheme whereby the Local Church has merged with one or more other churches: this may involve sharing a building, or meeting across more than one site (multi-site society).

6) Enter the **DATE** of the status change.

This may be one of the following:

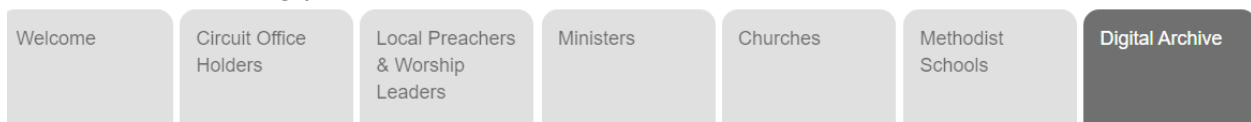
- The date of Synod accepting the recommendation to cease worship (SO 943(1));
- the date of the last church council meeting;
- the date of a resolution to wind up a Society;
- the date of the last service in a Methodist chapel;
- the date of the adoption of a scheme for church merger.

7) When you have entered all the details, click **CONFIRM**.

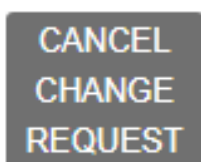
An automated notification email is sent to the Web Support Officer.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Once processed, that society's record will be removed from the list of active churches and instead appear within its Circuit's **Digital Archive** tab. The trusteeship of the property will be transferred accordingly.



NOTE: You will be asked to complete the final statistics year before the change of status can be actioned.



If you have reported a change of status in error, return to the Church Profile page and click the **CANCEL CHANGE REQUEST** button.

Questions? Contact onlinesuitesupport@methodistchurch.org.uk