

How to use them



Church Graphs

New tool for church administrators

How to use your MASTER SHEET and 18 graphs

MASTER SHEET: Input Data

The raw data for your Church Graphs – actual numbers, not percentages – are shown on the attached MASTER SHEET, where you see the input numbers supplied by your church. These are the numbers entered into the computerized system and are the basis for all your graphs.

The MASTER SHEET is NOT an input sheet! It's what you get AFTER the graphs have been produced, your record of what WAS entered into the system.

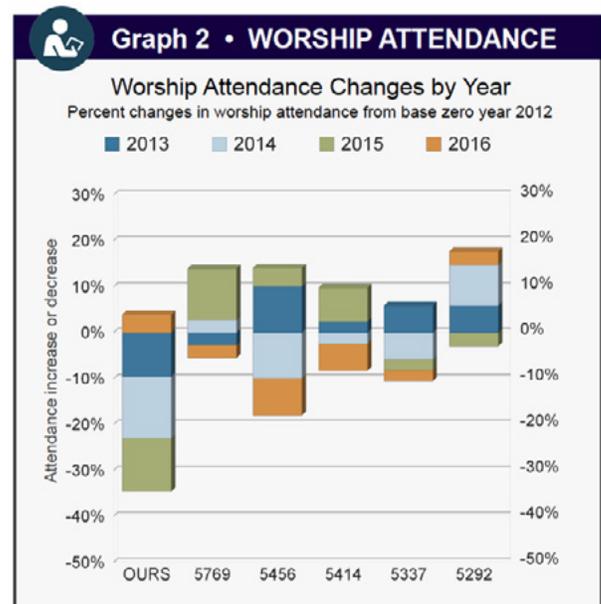
The MASTER SHEET is a back-end document, not a front-end document.

For confidentiality, the MASTER SHEET is NOT included in the set of 18 graphs because the set shows percentages and unit costs only, never naming a church and never providing actual numbers that could enable someone to make a reasoned guess about church identity.

And for that reason also, the MASTER SHEET is NOT shown online.

Only one MASTER SHEET is produced – the original, no copies – and the original is given to the person who supplied the inputs, and that person makes and distributes copies as needed.

Without the MASTER SHEET – which shows all inputs in actual numbers – the graphs could seem mysterious (percentages only) and users could wonder if they are trustworthy. Of course, if the supplied input numbers on the MASTER SHEET are in error, then the graphs too will be in error, and then corrected inputs need to be entered into the system. **If the inputs are accurate, the computer-generated graphs are accurate, and they can be verified on the attached VALIDATE SHEET.**



Reading the graph

Each graph shows your church (first stack at left labeled OURS) compared with five other Twin Cities churches, side-by-side for a particular metric, like Worship Attendance above.

Each graph has a zero baseline (0%) from which all change is measured from the base year (four years ago).

The amount of change by year is shown on the graph in different colors. A year's gain is added to the stack above the baseline, a year's loss below the baseline, drawn proportionate to the gain or loss, measured on the side percent scale.

At a glance you can see if the stack is basically above the baseline (net increase over four years) or below it (net decrease over four years).

At a glance you can see if other churches had the same kind of results in any particular year (color) and the magnitude of changes (height of each segment).

At a glance you can see the speed of change (long stacks are more volatile than short stacks).

MASTER SHEET: Updates

The MASTER SHEET not only shows the input data but also serves as a convenient sheet from which you can make photocopies for periodic updates.

TO MAKE AN UPDATE:

1. Make a photocopy of the MASTER SHEET. On the copy, write the data month in the Income and Expenses boxes. (Never write directly on the original MASTER SHEET; use the original only for making copies, and then write on the copies.)
2. From your most recent church attendance and financial records, within each category on the MASTER SHEET, enter your most current numbers on the blank lines in the right-hand column.

(IMPORTANT: Year-to-date Income and Expense numbers need to be divided by the seasonal adjustment factor for that month in order to get an annualized projection. You can use the adjustment factors printed on the MASTER SHEET, or you can develop your own adjustment factors based on the historical income and expense patterns of your church.)

3. You can make photocopies of your new updated sheet and distribute it to pastor, staff and board, keeping them informed in a timely, consistent and professional manner.

At end of the year, you can submit new numbers to Church Scouts for a complete new set of graphs.

You may find the MASTER SHEET to be the most used part of the entire Church Graphs system because it shows actual numbers and gives projections for the current year.

The MASTER SHEET is particularly useful for giving new board and staff members a broad overview of the church and for keeping everyone focused on the key issues.

Validate

Many people are surprised by some of these charts, particularly the 'ticket prices' in Graph 19 (optional). Some people are inclined to dismiss them by saying that *'the numbers must be in error.'* To assure confidence in the graphs, you can use the attached VALIDATE SHEET and your own calculator to verify results.

Benefits of participation

- **WEALTH OF DATA.** When you use the Church Graphs system, you'll never be in the dark about what's happening in your church and in the churches around you. There's no other way to get this data. With better facts, you'll make better decisions.
- **EASY UPDATES.** At the end of every year, just send your attendance numbers, Balance Sheet, Income/Expense Statement and list of employees by function – we even do the data inputting for you – and you'll get back an updated set of graphs. It couldn't be easier.
- **FREE.** Church Graphs is a ministry – not a business – a computerized information system built by Twin Cities Christian businessmen to help pastors and boards. There's a \$100 Processing Fee if your church is not a member of the **National Association of Church Administrators**, but free for members (annual association membership is only \$50).
- **PROFESSIONAL.** The Christian businessmen who designed, built and fund the Church Graphs system want to do everything they can to give church administrators the knowledge and tools necessary to be professionals at a level comparable to the business world. They believe that we should give at least as much diligence to managing our churches as we give to managing our businesses.
- **BRIEFINGS.** Your set of Church Graphs will show five comparison churches set side by side with your church – something you've never seen before – but the entire computerized system will generate thousands of data points from dozens of churches. From this data, the system will plot moving trends showing what's happening in Twin Cities churches in ways that would be impossible to discern without big data and computers. This information, to help pastors and boards with decision-making, will be sent to participating churches in periodic briefings.

Key points

- The purpose of **Church Graphs** is not primarily for historical record, but rather a tool for **planning and decision-making**.
- Every number on every graph represents a **person**, an **hour** or a **dollar**, entrusted to leaders for carrying out the church's mission.
- Numbers replace vague words like *some*, *few*, *many*, *less*, *more* with specific measurement for communicating with greater precision.
- **Church Graphs** tell everything essential to know about the business part of your church – priorities, attendance, income, expenses, assets, liabilities, trends, and levels of efficiency and effectiveness. **If the business part is not good, the ministry part suffers greatly.**
- We should give at least as much diligence to management of our churches as we give to management of our businesses.
- These graphs convey information that until now has not been available and is too complex to hold in comprehension without aid of computer and graphics.
- When leaders confront the key facts about the church on the same page, at the same time, in the same room, then discussion and decision-making becomes **better, bolder, faster**.
- The **gospel** (changed lives) is *qualitative*, but the church's **mission** (making disciples) is *quantitative*. The church needs both perspectives.
- Signals revealed by the graphs and comparisons with other churches cause major **rethinking** about priorities, strategies and allocations of time and money.
- People are constantly rotating in and out of leadership positions. Often they don't fully understand the issues constraining church growth, don't see opportunities, or lack confidence for making big decisions. **Church Graphs** get new leaders oriented *fast!*
- **Church Graphs** are not static; they reveal trends and speeds to show *how ministry is moving* in your church and in churches around you.

Another service to Twin Cities churches from Church Scouts

Scouts tell what's happening around you

www.churchscouts.org

For pastors and boards

Church Graphs is designed for helping the church's top-level decision-makers. Too much detail is confusing. Trends and comparisons are best when expressed in percentages and graphed. And data needs context, relative to other churches.

Church Graphs carries just the right type and amount information for pastors and church boards, to assist in making important decisions.

The other churches

For confidentiality, each of the other Twin Cities churches is identified only by an ID number known only to that church.

The five comparison churches were selected by computer because of similarities in size and character.

Tracking results

As an analysis tool, **Church Graphs** enables you to spot a church that seems to be doing things very well – or very poorly – and then use the church ID to track through the charts in each parameter to get an understanding of *why* that church is getting those results.

Online help

For help in interpreting the graphs and converting the new knowledge into action, help is available online at www.churchscouts.org/churchgraphs.

More information

For more information, and for PDF downloads, go to www.churchscouts.org/churchgraphs.

For personal contact, email to graphs@churchscouts.org or text or call **952-935-7980**.