

Church of England continues to shrink according to official figures

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Provisional statistics released this week by the Church of England show the Church continuing to shrink. Average Sunday attendance in 2010 continued in a downward trend, falling by two per cent to 923,700 or around 1.5% of the UK population. Average weekly attendance fell to 1,116,100 (1.8% of the population) from 1,130,360 in 2009.

London, one of the largest dioceses in the Church of England, and one which in the past has claimed growth, saw declines in both average Sunday attendance (down four per cent) and average weekly attendance (down two per cent).

Infant baptism figures showed continued decline (by one per cent to 83,260) but both child baptism (43,850) and adult baptisms (11,160) were each up by one per cent.

Funerals in church and crematoria were down by two per cent and four per cent respectively.

Electoral roll figures, which are probably the nearest the Church of England comes to figures for active members, stood at 1,214,100 in 2010, up from 1,196,900 in 2009 – but still only 2% of the UK population or less than one in fifty.

Easter services were attended by 1,394,700 in 2010 and Christmas services by 2,298,400. All-age attendance at Christmas services was down by five per cent, a figure blamed on bad weather conditions. Attendance at Easter services was down by one per cent.

The 2010 statistics have been compiled by the Research and Statistics Department of the Archbishops' Council

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