

Instructions Manual for Church Clerks

ROLE OF THE CHURCH CLERK/SECRETARY

Welcome to the office of Church Clerk/Secretary for your congregation! This is a position where your spiritual gifts of “Helps, Energy and Orderliness” (1 Corinthians 12:28) will come into play as you serve your church with lists, changes, numbers, people, history and church procedures.

Your role will be to minister to the congregation by documenting and maintaining the church records. You will work in close relationship with the pastor and other church officers and members. You will keep accurate minutes of church board and business meetings and submit information regarding your church to the conference on a regular basis.

As clerk/secretary, you must recognize the need for careful and confidential guardianship of all church records. Even inactive members regard their church membership and church business as important to their spiritual life.

Not all congregations have the same needs. A clerk, as well as an assistant, may be necessary to function adequately in larger churches. In some cases, one clerk does everything dealing with membership changes and transfers. Another clerk deals with church board and business meetings. This arrangement works very well and keeps the job from becoming too much for today’s busy individuals.

Some churches keep records in computer files while others use file cards and notebooks. With the introduction of the eAdventist.net web based internet program, record management efficiency has been greatly enhanced.

You are responsible for acquainting yourself with the latest edition of the Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual which contains important information and procedures for the work of the clerk

Please read through this manual for the duties you are expected to handle. It is a challenge, but one you will enjoy!

May the Lord bless you in your endeavors!

CHURCH BOARD & BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES

As a church clerk/secretary, you are expected to take the minutes of church board and business meetings. If you are unable to attend a scheduled meeting, you should make necessary arrangements in advance, which are satisfactory to the chairperson, for a replacement to record the minutes.

Minutes should be typed as soon as possible after the meeting, while notes are still meaningful, and details can be more easily recalled. Provide a copy for the pastor and/or chairperson to read and approve before the final copy of the minutes is copied and distributed.

1. Supply a copy of the previous meeting minutes for each committee member.

2. Minutes should include the following:

- Date and time of meeting
- Place of meeting
- Members present
- Members absent
- Invited guests present
- Agenda items
- Actions voted (number by year and number of the voted action)
- Major discussion items (even though no action was voted)
- Signature lines for chairperson and the clerk to sign their names

3. A sample of church board minutes is on the following page.

Any Seventh-day Adventist Church
MINUTES OF THE CHURCH BOARD
January 22, 2023
Anytown, State

MEMBERS PRESENT: Joy Carman, Chairperson, Mary Barnes, clerk/secretary,
John Boskind, Marilyn Carter, Donna Nammar, Sandy Welch, Missy
Chapman, etc.

MEMBERS NOT PRESENT: Larry Payne, John Rhodes, etc.

INVITED GUEST: Eldon Preston

Action No.
20-01

AGENDA

VOTED: to accept the agenda as presented with the additions as suggested.

20-02 **MINUTES OF THE CHURCH BOARD MEETING**

VOTED: to accept the Minutes of the Church Board held November 3, 2019 with
corrections.

20-03 **FINANCIAL REPORT**

VOTED: to accept the December 2019 Financial Report

20-04 **INSTALLATION OF WINDOWS IN YOUTH ROOM**

VOTED: to approve \$5,000 from the building fund to be used for the purchase and
installation of new windows in the youth SS room.

DISCUSSION OF THE UPCOMING EVANGELISTIC SERIES

Considerable discussion centered around the upcoming evangelistic
meetings planned for the Sample area. It was suggested that the pastor
contact the speaker and bring a report suggesting a preferred time and
location for the meetings.

20-05 **TRANSFER OF MEMBERSHIP (outgoing)**

VOTED: to recommend from the Any SDA church the transfer of membership for Mike
and Daisy Clark to the Lexington SDA Church in Lexington, KY.

20-06 **PURCHASE OF OFFICE COPIER**

VOTED: to authorize the purchase of a new copier for the church office not to exceed
\$3,500.

Joy Carman, Chairperson

May Barnes, Secretary

INCOMING MEMBERSHIP RECORDS

An individual becomes a member of the Seventh-day Adventist church in one of three ways:

- Baptism or Rebaptism
- Profession of Faith
- Letter of transfer from another Seventh-day Adventist church

Your clerk duties for each situation is as follows (See also the SDA Church Manual):

BAPTISM

1. When a person is baptized, a Certificate of Baptism must be signed by the pastor and church clerk/secretary.
2. When the person has been accepted into the church fellowship by vote of the congregation, not just the church board, the clerk must record the following personal information:
 - Name
 - Address
 - Phone number
 - Date of birth – vitally important!!
 - Marital status
 - Date of baptism
 - Officiating pastor
3. Record this information ACMS.
4. If NOT on ACMS, this information must be sent to the conference membership clerk right away so that it can be entered into ACMS. You are responsible for seeing that baptism information is sent to the conference. It is not necessary for the Pastor to send in the information, just as long as it is sent by you!!

REBAPTISM

If a current member of your church is baptized, this is considered as re-baptism.

If the person has been dropped from SDA church membership in the past as *Missing* and has been attending and the individual desires baptism, this is considered as rebaptism.

If the person has been dropped from SDA church membership in the past as *Removed (Apostasy)* and the individual returns and desires baptism, this is considered a new baptism and not a re-baptism as far as reporting goes.

If the individual is baptized and is found that they are a member at another SDA church, it will be necessary to transfer their church membership to your church, provided he/she is wanting to join your church. If this is what needs to be done, please contact the conference membership clerk for instructions on how to request this transfer and record the re-baptism.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

1. The Certificate of Profession of Faith is signed by the pastor and the church clerk/secretary. These forms are available from the Adventist Book Center.
2. When the person has been accepted into the church fellowship by vote of the congregation, not just the church board, the clerk must record the following personal information:
 - Name
 - Address
 - Phone number
 - Date of birth – vitally important!!
 - Marital status
 - Date of baptism
 - Officiating pastor
3. Record this information in ACMS.
4. If NOT on ACMS, this information must be sent to the conference membership clerk right away so that it can be entered into ACMS. You are responsible for seeing that profession of faith information is sent to the conference. It is not necessary for the Pastor to send in the information, just as long as it is sent by you!!

LETTER OF TRANSFER

The General Conference is now using ACMS for all membership transfers. This has done away with the former “green membership transfer card” to request a transfer.

When an individual comes to you requesting to join your church:

1. Obtain the full name (maiden name if appropriate) of the individual and the name of the church, city and state where their current SDA church membership is located. You can also request their home address and their date of birth.
2. Take the requested name to your church board to let them know who is wanting to join your church. If you as clerk are online with eAdventist.net, you initiate a transfer coming INTO your church directly online. You mail nothing! If the church where the membership is currently located is not online, the transfer request will print from the conference office and be sent to the other church (see transfer form sample on page 7a). Your responsibility is to see that the transfer request is entered on the eAdventist.net system. If you are NOT online with eAdventist.net, this information should be emailed, faxed, or called into the conference membership clerk. **DO NOT SEND A REQUEST TO THE OTHER CHURCH.** The conference membership clerk will enter it into the eAdventist.net system for the transfer to be initiated.
3. You now wait until you receive word that the request has been granted. The transfer request is taken to the granting church board, then to the congregation for a first and second reading. If a church bulletin is printed each week, those transferring can be listed in the church bulletin. The date of the second reading is the grant/recommended date. The church clerk enters the second reading date on the transfer form and mails it back to the conference membership clerk or, if online, enters the date in eAdventist.net. The date is then entered into the system and if you are online, you will receive a notification from eAdventist.net that the grant date has been entered. If you are NOT online with eAdventist.net, a transfer form is printed and emailed/mailed to you that now asks for the acceptance date. This form is sent to you, the clerk who is asking for the transfer (see transfer form sample on page 10a).
4. This individual is now ready to be accepted into your church. Their name goes before the church in a first and second reading whereupon the date of the second reading is the official acceptance date. This is the date you

enter into eAdventist.net as the acceptance date or written in the transfer letter.

IMPORTANT: Please remember that individual names are added or subtracted from the church membership list **ONLY** after the transfer has been completed from both churches – the granting and accepting church. At no time is an individual not listed as a member somewhere!

Instructions

English 2.0 28-Sept-2017

You have received the enclosed "Transfers of Membership" form because at least one Seventh-day Adventist church member is joining or leaving your church. If you have been asked for "Date granted" or "Date accepted", enter the dates in mm/dd/yyyy format, sign the form, and mail/fax it to the conference listed in the "Return Address". If "Signature" is not asked for, you do not need to mail/fax the form.

Thank you.

eAdventist technology for churches Transfers of Membership Las Virtudes Adventist Church

Attn:
Church Clerk
Las Virtudes Adventist Church
Villa Prades
Rio Piedras 00924
Puerto Rico

Return Address:
Membership Records
Sample Conference in NAD
PO Box 00000
Columbia, MD 20904

Or fax to: 123-456-7890
Phone: 123-456-0987

Use this translation as a guide to the English form.

REQUESTS TO GRANT Transferring to...

First SDA Church (Silver Spring, MD) – Clerk Name
Sue Smith Requested 2/23/2016

Date granted: _____

GRANTED TO ACCEPT Transferring from...

Maranatha SDA Church (Laurel, MD) – Clerk Name
Jay Jones Requested 3/4/2016
Lois Jones Requested 3/4/2016

Date accepted: _____
Date accepted: _____

ACCEPTED Completed transfers to...

Ephesus SDA Church (Takoma Park, MD) – Clerk Name
Patrick Harris Accepted 3/14/2016
Elizabeth Harris Accepted 3/14/2016
Patrick Harris, Jr Accepted 3/14/2016

★ Signature (church clerk): X

Mail or fax to return address above

eAdventist technology for churches Transfers of Membership Your Church Name

Attn:
Church Clerk
Your church name
Your church address

Return Address:
Membership Records
Address of NAD Conference
that sent you this form

Or fax to: FAX number
Phone: Phone number

REQUESTS TO GRANT Transferring to...

Church requesting the transfer (City, State/Province) – Clerk: Name, phone number
Person leaving Date requested, mm/dd/yyyy Fill in date granted: mm/dd/yyyy

GRANTED TO ACCEPT Transferring from...

Church granting transfer (City, State/Province) – Clerk: Name, phone number

Person joining Date granted, mm/dd/yyyy Fill in date accepted: mm/dd/yyyy
Person joining Date granted, mm/dd/yyyy Fill in date accepted: mm/dd/yyyy

ACCEPTED Completed transfers to...

Church that accepted your former member (City, State/Province) – Clerk: Name, phone number

Person that left Date accepted, mm/dd/yyyy
Person that left Date accepted, mm/dd/yyyy
Person that left Date accepted, mm/dd/yyyy

★ Signature (church clerk): X _____

Mail or fax to Return Address above

Some sections may be omitted.

OUTGOING MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

An individual may leave the membership of a Seventh-day Adventist church in one of four ways:

- Death
- Transfer of outgoing membership
- Missing
- Removed (apostasy)

Your clerk duties for each situation follows (See also the SDA Church Manual):

DEATH

If online, record the date of death in eAdventist.net. If NOT online, email or phone the conference membership clerk so she can enter this information. In order for your membership records to be in agreement with the conference, it is necessary that the conference be aware of all such membership changes.

TRANSFER OF OUTGOING MEMBERSHIP

1. You as clerk will receive notification of the transfer request. If you are online, you will see in the “To Grant” column of eAdventist.net a transfer request. If you are NOT online, you will receive by email or in the mail a transfer request (see transfer letter sample on page 10a) asking for a grant/ recommended date for the transfer.
2. Take the transfer request to your church board for approval. The name is then entered in the church bulletin for two weeks and presented to the congregation in a first and second reading. The date of the second reading is the official grant/recommended date.
3. Enter the date on the transfer form and return it to the conference membership clerk so she can enter the date in eAdventist.net. If you are an online clerk, enter the date in eAdventist.net directly.

Remember, the name is not removed from your records UNTIL an acceptance date has been sent to you in the form of an acknowledgement (see transfer form sample

on page 10a). Once you have an acceptance date, you can remove the individuals name from your Church Record Book. The name is automatically transferred in eAdventist.net from one church to the other.

MISSING

At times, it is necessary to go through the membership list and remove those who have not been attending for many years (usually at least 5+ years). This is not a joyous time but is sometimes necessary for numerous reasons.

It is suggested that you as clerk work with your pastor to compile a list of those who have not been attending. Compose a letter to this group letting them know that you are working on your church membership records and you have missed seeing them. Ask if they have moved and are attending another SDA church where they would like to have their membership transferred. Remember, the tone of this letter is redemptive, not one of scolding. You may also want to include a dated card giving them the option of telling you what they would like to have done with their membership. The following are suggestions:

- ☐ I am attending the North SDA Church and will ask the church clerk to request my membership be transferred here.
- ☐ I wish to have my membership remain at this church.
- ☐ I do not accept the teachings of the SDA church any longer and wish to have my name removed from the SDA church membership list.

Ask them to indicate their desire, sign the card, and return it in a certain amount of time – such as a month. Be sure to include a date that indicates if you have not received any information by this date their name will be dropped as missing by the church in a church business meeting.

These letters need to be sent by registered mail. This will serve as official notice. Be sure and keep accurate records of the letters that are sent and the responses that you receive. This is part of your permanent membership record. Your next step will be dependent on the response you receive.

Letters that are returned as undeliverable with no forwarding address, will be dropped as Missing. The date of the church business meeting when these names are read and voted on is the official date they are dropped as Missing.

HELP PREVENT MISSING MEMBERS

The church clerk/secretary has a unique opportunity to help prevent “missing member” situations.

In a small church it is not hard to notice when someone is not attending regularly. A large church may notice when newsletters are returned by the postal service.

If the church clerk/secretary takes note of those persons, he/she can send church bulletins with friendly notes and tell the pastoral staff that the member has been missing. An alert clerk can keep a member from becoming “missing”. If only a short time has elapsed between first notice of an “undeliverable” letter and intervention by a pastor, elder or lay member, it may not be difficult to find the member and encourage a return to active fellowship.

It also should be noted that those who have been missing for longer periods of time, sometimes can be found by talking with members who have known them. Once found, they can be encouraged to return to church fellowship. This is your ultimate goal!

REMOVED (APOSTASY)

If someone wishes to have their name dropped because they do not wish to remain a member of the SDA church, they will be listed as Removed. The date of the church business meeting when these names are read and voted on is the official date they are dropped as Removed.

The church can also discipline and remove members from membership. Please refer to *Reasons for Discipline* on page 62 of the Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual 19th Edition (2015).

A church removing members must notify them in writing of the action taken but with the assurance of enduring spiritual interest and personal concern. This communication should, where possible, be delivered in person by the pastor or by a board designee.

Members should not be removed for nonattendance or for their inability or failure to contribute financially to the Church.

The Church Board can recommend removing a member, but the vote is then taken to the church at-large in a business meeting to vote on the removal of members.

Under NO circumstances does the church clerk, elder, or pastor have the right to take the final action of removing a member. The final action is at the church at-large in a business meeting.

Except in the case of the death of members, the clerk can remove a name from the records only after a vote of the church in a business meeting.

CHURCH BULLETIN

In small churches where there is no church secretary, the church clerk/secretary may assume the responsibility of the weekly church bulletin. However, this is a duty that may be delegated to someone with typing and/or computer skills if it is more convenient to do so.

CHURCH DIRECTORY

One of the responsibilities the church clerk/secretary may have is to produce a church directory. This may be printed, duplicated or produced using eAdventist.net or by a company that makes photo directories. Often it will include non-member spouses and non-baptized children from member-related homes plus regular attendees who are not yet baptized.

Since one of the purposes of the directory is to promote friendship in the congregation, it would be good to include a statement that “this is not an official membership list but a directory of church families”.

COMMITTEE LISTS

The church clerk/secretary should keep a list of all committees appointed by the church. He/she should also provide for the chairperson of the group a list of the members comprising the committee, along with an outline of the task the committee is being asked to accomplish.

MISSION GROUPS

Mission Groups do not hold church membership. The members attending a mission group have their membership located in a sponsoring church or at the Conference Church. A mission group may elect a clerk whose first responsibility is to contact the conference membership clerk.

PERMANENT CHURCH RECORDS

With the advent of eAdventist.net, the Church Record Book is not being used as often by churches. Your church probably has a number of “blue” record books, all of which are to be kept as permanent records for your church. Once you move to eAdventist.net, your membership records are kept on computer. If you are NOT on eAdventist.net, you can keep all your membership forms in an organized binder or folder system.

It is recommended that monthly eAdventist.net reports be printed and kept in a 3-ring notebook with monthly dividers. There are numerous reports that are available on eAdventist.net that will give valuable statistical information on your church (baptism reports, membership lists, membership statistics, etc). If these are printed monthly and/or quarterly and filed, they will be a quick reference when attending board meetings, church business meetings, etc. Be sure and store all such records of your church in a fire proof safe as this is your church history and must be kept permanently.

If the following year, you no longer are the church clerk, it is your duty to turn in all membership files and records to the incoming clerk, since this is property of the local church.

UNION PAPER SUBSCRIPTIONS

The church clerk/secretary ensures that each member receives a subscription to periodicals: the monthly issue of the Adventist Review and the Columbia Union paper Visitor. The mailing addresses for these subscriptions are generated from eAdventist.net. Consequently, you can see the importance of keeping the member information up to date in this system. Sending address changes and updates is a very important function of the church clerk/secretary.

If a member notifies you that they are not receiving these subscriptions in the mail or would like to make a change, you can verify and change the members' address in eAdventist.net. If you are not on eAdventist.net, you can send a notification to the conference clerk of the necessary changes.

CHURCH OFFICERS UPDATE

At different times of the year churches nominate new church officers. It is the clerk's responsibility to update the list of Church Officers right away. If online on eAdventist.net, you may update the church officers on the Organization tab. If NOT on eAdventist.net, this information must be sent to the conference membership clerk right away so that it can be entered into eAdventist.net.

ATTENDANCE REPORT

Take a count of Sabbath School attendance on the 2nd Sabbath and 7th Sabbath of the quarter. Take a count of Church attendance every week and average for the quarter. This report must be sent to the conference membership clerk on the 5th of the month after the quarter ends. If you do not have an Attendance Report, call the conference membership clerk to send you one. This is done by ALL clerks whether or not they are online on eAdventist.net.

The purpose of this and the quarterly reports is to record a brief comprehensive picture of the denomination. It will provide a guide to leaders at various levels, but will also facilitate planning and pastoral care by the local church. Attendance data is to be an accurate summary of local church and Sabbath school attendance.

Every regularly organized church and company is to report on attendance. The count is to include the total number in attendance comprising: all adults, children (regardless of age), SDA visitors, and non-SDA visitors. Everyone who is in attendance on a Sabbath when attendance is being recorded must be counted.

If you do not have internet access: Submit attendance form via mail or fax at Attention: Claudya Barrientos, 606 Greenville Avenue Staunton, VA 24401 or fax (540) 886-5734.

If you have internet access: A website link will be provided within the Attendance Sheets where you can provide your numbers in an online form. Please ask the conference clerk if you do not receive the online website link.