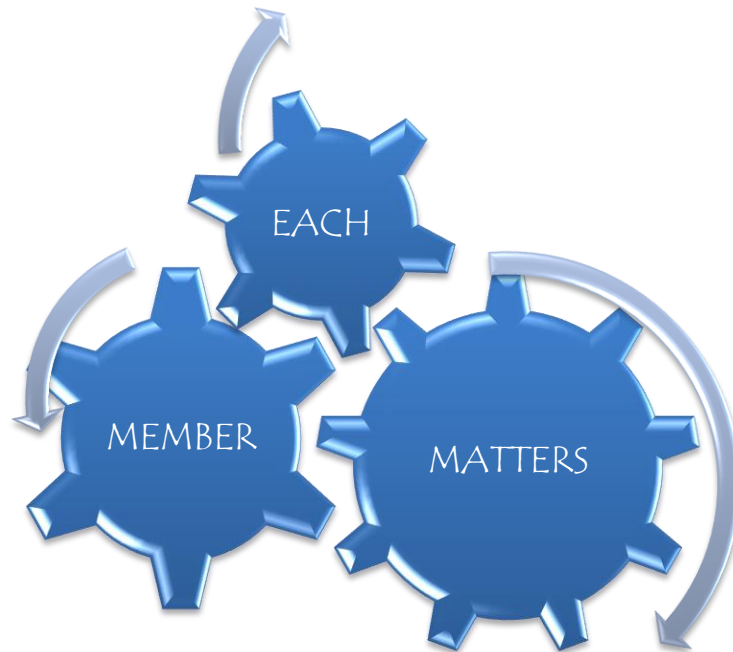


MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

Manual for the
Local Church Clerk
within the
Mountain View Conference



Conference Clerk
Mountain View Conference

1400 Liberty Street
Parkersburg, West Virginia
26101

304-422-4581

Appreciation is extended to Caryn Payne, Georgia Cumberland Conference Membership Coordinator for her willingness to share these concepts and descriptions. Some portions originally came from Donald G King, Alberta Conference Secretary, from his church clerk manual printed in 1994.



Index

Role of the Church Clerk	4
Church Board and Business Meeting Minutes	5
Sample of Minutes	6
Attendance	7
Member Contact Information	7
Incoming Membership Records	8
Baptism	8
Re-baptism	9
Profession of Faith	9
Transfer of Incoming Membership	9
Outgoing Membership Changes	11
Transfer of Outgoing Membership	11
Death	12
Missing	12
Suggestions for Keeping Members from Missing	13
Removed	13
Church Bulletin	14
Church Directory	15
Permanent Church Records	15

Membership Matters!!!

Role of the Church Clerk

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 Cor. 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 regularly.

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 while another clerk deals with church board and business meetings and the respective minutes. 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 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. (Contact Advent Source, 800-328-0525, or your local Adventist Book Center, 301-572-0700.)

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

May God give you joy on your journey!

CHURCH BOARD AND BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES

You as church clerk 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 printed as soon as possible 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.

- Supply a copy of the previous meeting minutes for each committee member.
- 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 & number of voted action)
 - Major discussion items (even though no action is voted)
 - Signature lines for the chairperson and the clerk to sign their names
- Sample of church board minutes is on page 6.

Your Town Seventh-day Adventist Church
MINUTES OF THE CHURCH BOARD
January 19, 2022
7:00 pm

Your Town, Your State

MEMBERS PRESENT: Joy Carman, Chairperson, Donna Nammar, Sandy Welch, Barry Martin, Marilyn Carter
John Boskind, Don Rhodes, Eldon Preston...

NOT PRESENT: Gary Brown, Jan Smith...

INVITED GUEST: Larry Payne

Action No. Agenda

VOTED: to accept the agenda as presented with the additions as suggested.
22-01

Minutes of previous Church Board meeting.

VOTED: to accept the minutes of the church board meeting of Nov 3, 2021, with corrections.
22-02

Financial report

VOTED: To accept the December 2021 Financial Report
22-03

Installation of windows in youth SS room

VOTED: to approve \$5,000 from the building fund to be used for the purchase and installation of
22-04 new windows in the youth SS room.

Considerable discussion on the upcoming evangelistic meetings. Pastor will contact speaker
to finalize date and location.

Membership transfers (outgoing)

VOTED: to recommend from Your SDA Church the transfer of membership for Mike and Daisy Clark to
22-05 The Other SDA Church in Anytown, Ky.

Purchase of new office copier.

VOTED: to authorize the purchase of a new copier for the church office not to exceed
22-06 \$3,500.

Joy Carman, Chairperson

Sandy Welch, Secretary

ATTENDANCE

Monthly attendance totals are needed for both Sabbath School and church. There are forms online (mtviewconf.org/forms -- choose the "Church Clerk" link and use the "Sabbath School/Church Attendance Report/Form) where you may print or download the form, save to your computer and enter the totals each month. These can then be mailed (MVC, 1400 Liberty Street, Parkersburg, WV 26101), or faxed (304-422-4582), or sent via email: lizb@mvcgsda.org.

The MVC keeps a record of Sabbath School and church attendance totals. At the end of each quarter, the North American Division and the Columbia Union Conference receive the attendance reports. Within these quarterly reports, attendance is noted for specific Sabbaths.

It is perfectly fine to have someone help you with the weekly attendance records with the understanding that the completed form will be sent to the MVC office after the end of each month. Some MVC clerks are utilizing the online attendance totals on eAdventist. Contact the MVC conference clerk if you are interested in learning more about online attendance record-keeping.

MEMBER CONTACT INFORMATION

It is vitally necessary to keep the contact information of your members current. Not only for your church records but to inform the MVC clerk of these changes. There are forms available at MtViewConf.org. (Membership Name/Address Corrections Form A). You may also choose to send an email about any changes. lizb@mvcgsda.org

Once or twice a year, you will receive a membership list for your church. Please go carefully through the list and make any corrections and inform the MVC clerk as well. Items such as name changes (misspellings, did they marry), mailing address, phone number, and email. This information is helpful to you as church clerk, and to the MVC for such things as mailings, contacting, etc. The organizations that mail the Adventist Journey and Visitor magazine need current addresses. Incorrect addresses cost money.

INCOMING MEMBERSHIP RECORDS

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

- Baptism
- Profession of Faith
- Letter of transfer from another Seventh-day Adventist church
(transfers from another denomination are not done)

Your clerk duties for each situation follow (See also *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual*):

BAPTISM:

1. When a person is baptized, a Certificate of Baptism must be signed by the pastor and the church clerk and given to the baptismal candidate. Your pastor should have copies in his possession. These certificates are also available from the MVC office.
2. Baptisms that occur in other churches, at a lake/river, at summer camp or camp meeting, etc., need to be voted into the local church fellowship by vote of the congregation. The vote into membership should be done shortly after the event (preferably the following Sabbath, if possible). Both dates should be reported.
3. When the individual has been accepted into church fellowship by vote of the congregation, (not just the church board), the clerk will fill out the Membership Changes form available at mtviewconf.org -- Forms, Church Clerk (fillable or pdf) or by contacting the conference clerk for a print copy.
4. Record this information in eAdventist.net (*if set up by the Conf. Clerk to perform this online*), in the Church Record Book, or on a Church Membership Card for the card file.
5. Unless you've been granted access to enter baptisms on eAdventist.net, this information must be sent to the MVC clerk immediately so that it can be entered into eAdventist.net. If the pastor desires the new member to receive the Spiritual Partner gifts, he must submit the New Member/Spiritual Partner report to the MVC clerk. In this case, the church clerk does not need to submit the Membership Changes report. It is not necessary for both you and your pastor to report the information.

RE-BAPTISM:

If a current member of your church is re-baptized, send the information on the form shown at mtviewconf.org -- Forms, Church Clerk (fillable or pdf) and indicate as a re-baptism.

If the individual is from another church, it will be necessary to transfer their church membership to your church provided he/she wants to join your church.

If the person had been removed from Adventist church membership in the past, this will be considered a new baptism and not a re-baptism for reporting purposes.

PROFESSION OF FAITH (POF):

1. The person is accepted into the church fellowship by vote of the congregation, not just the church board.
2. Record this information in eAdventist.net (*if set up by the Conf. clerk to perform this online*), in the Church Record Book, or on a Church Membership Card for the card file.
3. Unless you've been granted access to enter a POF on eAdventist.net, this information must be sent to the MVC clerk immediately so that it can be entered into eAdventist.net. If the pastor desires the new member to receive the Spiritual Partner gifts, he must fill in and submit the New Member/Spiritual Partner report and submit directly to the conference clerk. In this case, the church clerk does not need to submit the Membership Changes report. It is not necessary for both you and your pastor to report the information.

TRANSFER OF INCOMING MEMBERSHIP:

The North American Division is now using eAdventist.net for all membership transfers. This has done away with the former "green membership transfer card" to request a transfer. *Please understand – all membership transfers go through eAdventist.net.* Please contact the MVC clerk if you have any questions!

When an individual comes to you requesting to join your church, obtain the full name (maiden name if appropriate) and the name of the church, city, and state where their current Adventist church membership is located. This information will be entered on the Membership Changes form and submitted to the MVC clerk unless you have eAdventist access to do this.

If you do not have access, this information should be submitted to the MVC clerk. Do not send a request to the other church. The MVC clerk will enter it into the eAdventist.net system for the transfer to be initiated.

Now you WAIT for the other church to do their part. Remember, by Adventist Church Manual policy, each church has 3 months to do their part of the transfer!!

Please don't get impatient! Remember, due to various holiday seasons, summer, etc., not all churches have monthly board meetings. It might be that your request reached them just after a meeting so they will need to wait until the next meeting.

The MVC clerk keeps an eye on these transfer requests and will contact the conference clerk or church clerk where their membership is currently held if questions arise. Please feel free to reach out to the MVC clerk if you feel too much time has passed since the initial request.

While you are waiting, here is what is transpiring at the other church. 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 weekly, those transferring can be entered in the church bulletin for two consecutive weeks. The date of the second reading is the grant/recommended date.

If the church clerk does not have access to perform transfers online, he/she enters the second reading date on the transfer form and sends it back to their conference clerk who enters the date into the system.

Now it is the MVC clerk's turn to do something! The individual is now ready to be accepted into your church. The MVC clerk prints the request and sends it to you. Share the transfer info with the pastor, who presents it first to the church board for recommendation. Their name now goes before the church (two weeks in the church bulletin) in a first and second reading whereupon the date of the second reading is the official acceptance date.

This is the date you enter on the transfer form and mail back to the MVC clerk to be entered into the system. If you have been given eAdventist access for online transfers, enter this info online with eAdventist.

IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER: Please know that individual names are added or subtracted from the church membership list **ONLY** after the transfer has been completed at both churches – the granting and accepting church. An individual remains on the granting church's list until the receiving church has accepted the member. At no time is a transferring individual not listed as a member somewhere!

OUTGOING MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

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

- Transfer of church membership
- Death
- Missing
- Removed

Your clerk duties for each situation follow (See also the *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual*):

TRANSFER OF OUTGOING MEMBERSHIP:

You as clerk will receive notification of the transfer request. If you are NOT online, you will be sent a transfer request asking for a grant/recommend date for the transfer.

Please refer to pages 9 and 10 for the entire membership transfer process.

Points to remember:

- Each church has 3 months to act on their part of the transfer.
- Names remain on a membership list! Even if you have granted a transfer for an individual, you do not remove them from your church books until you have been given acknowledgment that they have been accepted into the other church. If you have online eAdventist access to perform transfers, the name will transfer automatically – you do not add or remove the name on eAdventist.net yourself.
- The MVC clerk keeps an eye on these transfer requests and will contact the conference clerk or church clerk where their membership is transferring to. Please feel free to reach out to the MVC clerk if you feel too much time has passed since the initial request.
- Do not send granted transfers directly to the other church – it must go through eAdventist.net. All granted transfers must be sent to the MVC clerk who will complete the transfer request.

DEATH:

1. If you have online eAdventist access to make changes, record the date of death in *eAdventist.net*. If not online, submit this information to the MVC clerk. For your membership records to agree with the MVC records, it is necessary that the conference clerk be aware of all membership changes, including deaths.
2. Record the date of death in your Church Record Book, or on the individual Membership Card (if not doing this on eAdventist.net).
3. Death is the only reason a clerk may remove an individual's name from the church records without church approval.

MISSING:

At times, it is necessary to go through the membership list and change the status of those whom you have lost track of over the years (usually at least 5+ years need to transpire). 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 you have not been seen for some time. 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 Seventh-day Adventist church where they would like to have their membership transferred. Remember, the tone of this letter is redemptive, not accusatory.

MVC strongly suggests including a dated card with options that they would like to have done with their membership. The following are suggestions:

- I am attending Some Other Seventh-day Adventist church and will ask the church clerk to request my membership be transferred here.
- I wish to have my membership remain at my current church.
- I no longer accept the teachings of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and wish to have my name removed from the Seventh-day Adventist 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.

Letters that are returned as undeliverable with no forwarding address will be listed 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. Be sure to send these names to the MVC clerk using the Membership Changes form the name(s) and date(s) of the vote of the missing member(s).

SUGGESTIONS FOR KEEPING MEMBERS FROM BECOMING “MISSING”:

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

In a small church it is not hard to notice when someone has stopped attending. A large church may notice when newsletters are returned by the postal service or members mention to you that they haven’t seen certain members for some weeks.

If the church clerk 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 the 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 should also be noted that those who have been missing for longer periods of time can sometimes be found by talking with members who have known them in the past. Once found, they can be encouraged to return to church fellowship. This is your goal! It should be harder to drop/remove a name from the church books than it is to win them into the church! Members cannot be dropped due to nonattendance.

REMOVED:

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

A member's name can **only be removed** from church membership by a vote of the church in a duly called Business Meeting, not the church board.

The **exception** would be if a person sends a letter to the pastor or church board **requesting** to have their name removed. It is effective as of the date of the letter. (See *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual*, 19th Edition, page 66). It should be presented to the board, but it is not presented before the church in a business meeting.

This information needs to be recorded in your Church Record Book if you are not on eAdventist.net to make such changes. Please contact the MVC clerk so that the information can be recorded there as well, using the Membership Changes form.

CHURCH BULLETIN

In small churches where there is no church secretary, the church clerk may be asked to assume the responsibility of preparing the weekly church bulletin.

CHURCH OFFICERS/CHURCH DIRECTORY

During the first quarter, the Church Officers form is mailed to each MVC pastor and church clerk. An Organizing Committee will be chosen by your church who then chooses a Nominating Committee. It is the Nominating Committee who carefully considers members' names for various positions utilized by your church. There is a protocol to be followed as outlined in the Adventist Church Manual. The voted names listed on the Church Officer form is then sent to the Mountain View Conference clerk before the deadline stated on the form. This is also the time to update the section about meeting times for your church, any changes to church address, website, directions to the church, etc.

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

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

PERMANENT CHURCH RECORDS

With the arrival of eAdventist.net, the Church Record Book (blue book) is not being used as often by churches. Your church may have some of the "blue books," all of which are to be kept as permanent records for your church. Even minutes from church meetings used to be recorded in these books.

Transfer requests and sometimes attendance reports, etc., will be maintained either with eAdventist or on conference files, so there wouldn't be a reason to keep those documents.

Church board minutes, business meeting meetings and membership records would be a permanent record to keep. These documents would reflect the transfers, disciplines, etc., of the church.