

INSTRUCTION MANUAL
for the
CHURCH CLERK

Potomac Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
606 Greenville Avenue
Staunton, VA 24401

INSTRUCTION MANUAL for the CHURCH CLERK of the Potomac Conference



Conference Membership/Statistical Clerk

606 Greenville Avenue
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Appreciation is extended to Caryn Payne, Georgia-Cumberland Conference Clerk, for her church clerk manual printed in 2007. This current manual introduces the use of eAdventist.net and the subsequent removal of clerk forms that are no longer utilized by Potomac Conference.

Last Revised: March 2013

Index

Role of the Church Clerk Secretary	1
<i>eAdventist.net</i> Information	2
Church Board and Business Meeting Minutes	3
Sample of Minutes	4
Incoming Membership Records	5
Baptism	5
Re-Baptism	6
Profession of Faith	6
Transfer of Incoming Membership	7
Sample of Transfer to be Recommended	7 a
Outgoing Membership Changes	8
Death	8
Transfer of Outgoing Membership	8
Sample of Transfer to be Accepted	8 a
Sample of Acknowledgement of Transfer	8 b
Missing/Removed (Apostasy)	10
Help Prevent Missing Members	10
Church Bulletin	11
Church Directory	11
Committee Lists	11
Companies	12
Mission Groups	12
Membership File	13
Permanent Church Records	13
Union Paper Subscriptions	14
Church Officers / Attendance Report	14
<i>eAdventist.net</i> Authorization Form	14 a

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 (Contact your local Adventist Book Center for this publication).

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!

eAdventist.net INFORMATION

eAdventist.net is the web based internet membership program of the North American Division of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

It was piloted in June of 2002 in the North Pacific Union and was made available to the rest of the division in January of 2003. Potomac Conference went online August, 2007. Currently 58 of 58 conferences in North America have come online.

It is a membership program that give you access to your church membership data for updating member records, transfer requests, numerous reports, etc. because it is an online program, whenever you, as clerk, or the membership clerk of the conference, updates member information, it is immediately seen by all who have access to your membership. For example, if a member's address is updated, the very next time mailing labels are generated for any of the conference/union/NAD mailings, the most recent address will be utilized. Consequently, savings in postage of undeliverable mail has been greatly reduced.

If you would like to become one of the many local church clerks/secretaries in the Potomac Conference who are enjoying the benefits of being online with *eAdventist.net*, please complete the Authorization Form enclosed. You, as well as your pastor, will need to sign the form. Please email, mail, or fax this back to me at the conference office.

Claudya Barrientos
Potomac Conference Membership Clerk
606 Greenville Avenue
Staunton, VA 24401
ClaudyaB@pcsda.org
Fax number: 540-886-5734

Once I have your Authorization Form, I will contact you with training manual information and the demo site login authorization code.

Being on *eAdventist.net* is not mandatory; however, we are encouraging you to check into the benefits of *eAdventist.net*. Once you see how it can benefit you and the sisterhood of churches throughout the NAD, you may decide it's just what you need!

Please don't hesitate to call if you have any questions: (301) 467-2264.

CHURCH BOARD AND BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES

You as church clerk/secretary 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 page 4.

Any Seventh-day Adventist Church
MINUTES OF THE CHURCH BOARD
January 22, 2007

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.
07-01 AGENDA

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

07-02 MINUTES OF THE CHURCH BOARD MEETING

VOTED: to accept the Minutes of the Church Board held November 3, 2006 with
corrections.

07-03 FINANCIAL REPORT

VOTED: to accept the December 2006 Financial Report

07-04 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.

07-05 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.

07-06 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
- 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. 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 *eAdventist.net*, in the Church Record Book or on a Church Membership Card for current card file.
4. 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*. 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!!

RE-BAPTISM

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 re-baptism.

If the person has been dropped from SDA church membership in the past as Removed (Apostasy) and the individual returns and desires baptism, the church will put the person on probation time for a maximum period of 12 months in which the church will work with the individual, 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 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 call 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 *eAdventist.net*, in the Church Record Book or on a Church Membership Card for current card file.
4. 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*. 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!!

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.

When an individual comes to you requesting to join your church, 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. 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. You now wait until you receive word that the request has been granted.

If you are NOT online with *eAdventist.net*, this information should be emailed 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.

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. The date is then entered into the system and a transfer is printed 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 8a).

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.

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!

OUTGOING MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

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

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

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

DEATH

1. 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.
2. Record the date of death in the Church Record Book and on the individual's Membership Card, if not on *eAdventist.net*.

TRANSFER OF OUTGOING MEMBERSHIP

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 in the mail a transfer request asking for a grant/recommended date for the transfer.

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.

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*.

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 8b). 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.

Instructions

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 to enter a recommendation or acceptance date, enter that date on the English form in mm/dd/yyyy format, sign the form, and mail/fax it to the conference that sent you this paperwork. If no signature is asked for, you do not need to mail/fax the form.

Thank you.



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
Silver Spring, MD 20904

Use this translation as a guide to the English form



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 RECOMMEND *Transferring to...*

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

RECOMMENDATIONS TO ACKNOWLEDGE *Transferring from...*

Maranatha SDA Church (Laurel, MD) – Clerk: Name, phone number
Jay Jones Recommended
Lois Jones Recommended

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS *Completed transfers to...*

Ephesus SDA Church (Takoma Park, MD) – Clerk: Name, phone number
Patrick Harris Accepted
Elizabeth Harris Accepted
Patrick Harris, Jr. Accepted

Signature (church clerk): _____

REQUESTS TO RECOMMEND *Transferring to...*

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

RECOMMENDATIONS TO ACKNOWLEDGE *Transferring from...*

Church recommending transfer (City, State/Province) – Clerk: Name, phone number
Person joining Date recommended, mm/dd/yyyy Fill in date accepted, mm/dd/yyyy
Person joining Date recommended, mm/dd/yyyy Fill in date accepted, mm/dd/yyyy

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS *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

MISSING/REMOVED (Apostasy)

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. 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.

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.

A member's name can ONLY be DROPPED from church membership by a vote of the church.

This information is then listed in *eAdventist.net* or in your Church Record Book. If you are not on *eAdventist.net*, please contact the conference membership clerk so that the information can be recorded in *eAdventist.net*.

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!!

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 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.

COMPANIES

Companies do not hold church membership. At the organization of a company, a charter list is signed by all those wishing to have their membership moved to the conference under the company that is being organized. The company clerk/secretary must work with the conference membership clerk to see that all names are reported and the location of the individual's current church membership identified. It is absolutely vital to have the full name of the company along with the complete mailing address of the company. The conference membership clerk works very closely with the company clerk/secretary to see that important information is obtained so that transfers can be completed. Language can be a barrier to proper communication between the church company or mission group and the conference. It is preferred that the clerk/secretary speak and write English. If there is no one that can take on this responsibility, it becomes necessary for the clerk/secretary to have an assistant who can interpret what is needed and therefore communicate with the conference.

At the organization of a company, the conference membership clerk will prepare a letter for the company clerk/secretary outlining the necessary duties.

MISSION GROUPS

Mission Groups do not hold church membership. The members attending a mission group have their membership located in a sponsoring church or other SDA church. A mission group may elect a clerk whose first responsibility is to contact the conference membership clerk. Together they can discuss what is necessary to do at this stage of the mission group.

MEMBERSHIP FILE

If using *eAdventist.net*, your membership records are centrally located with a variety of information that will be helpful to you as clerk and the pastor. If your pastor wishes to have access to *eAdventist.net* information, please have him contact the conference membership clerk for login assistance.

If you are a small church and computer access is not available, you will need to utilize some other method of record keeping, such as a card file. Even if you as a church clerk are not on *eAdventist.net*, you can receive membership lists from the conference membership clerk just by asking. This is also beneficial to be certain that all membership changes have been made at the conference level.

A Membership Card should include:

- Name
- Address
- Phone number
- Date received: by baptism, POF, or transfer
- Date dismissed: by death, transfer, missing or removed (apostasy)
- Date and page number of entry in Church Record Book

Outgoing members should be removed from the “Active Membership File”. Record date of official action and how member was removed. This card should be moved to a file for all “Transferred or Dropped Memberships”.

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 must continue to record information in the blue Church Record Book.

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.

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.

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*.