

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

*Manual for the Local Church Clerk within the
Wisconsin Conference*



Each Member Matters



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Appreciation is extended to the Georgia-Cumberland Conference, for the use of their clerk manual as an example in creating this manual.



MEMBERSHIP

Seventh-day Adventist[®] Church

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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 deals 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 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 review the Membership section on pg. 43-55. If your church does not have a copy, you can find a church manual online at adventist.org/resources/church-manual, or Contact Advent Source, 800-328-0525.

Thank you for reading through this manual so you may understand more clearly the duties you are expected to handle. It is a challenge, but one you will enjoy!

May God give you joy on your journey!

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 division in January of 2003. The Wisconsin Conference went online in 2003. All 58 conferences in North America are now online.

The eAdventist system will give you access to your church membership data for updating member records, initiating transfer requests, numerous reports, entering baptisms and Professions of Faith, etc. Because it is an online program, whenever you, as clerk, or the membership clerk of the conference, update 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 drastically reduced.

If you would like to become one of the many local church clerks in the Wisconsin Conference who are enjoying the benefits of being online with *eAdventist.net*, please download the Authorization Form on the Wisconsin Conference website: wi.adventist.org, under "News & More" then "Forms & Reports". You, as well as your pastor, will need to sign the form. Please mail, scan or fax this back to me at the conference office.

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Once I have your Authorization Form, I will contact you with training manual information and the demo site login authorization code. You will go through the manual, at your own speed, and practice the exercises that have been designed to acquaint you with the program. The demo site is the "pretend site". You can do nothing to hurt or destroy it! It is for practice purposes only. Even with the self-tutorial, you are encouraged to contact me at any time with questions. Please note: In the Wisconsin Conference, the local church clerk holds this role for six months before training begins on eAdventist.

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!

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.

Following a board meeting, you will need to organize your notes into officially typed minutes. Your name must be included at the bottom as you are the official recording secretary. Copies of the minutes should be sent to all members of the church board by email or through the postal service.

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)
- Name of clerk as the official recording secretary

Sample of church board minutes is on page 6.

Please remember that records belong to the church. Ideally, the clerk should have two copies - one at home and one at the church, each in a binder. It is also recommended to keep records in a fire proof box.

ACME Detective Agency
Board Meeting - Minutes
September 32, 3132
Meeting Location: Accident, Maryland

Board Members: Ivan Odor – Chair, Sam Sung, Saad Maan, Chris P. Bacon, Kash Register, Deja Viau, Casey Needzit, Holly Dayin, Ike Entell, Lou Scannon, Sue Perrman (Bold – Present at Meeting)

#	Action	Motion/Item
	Opening Prayer	
	Devotional	
1-3132	Voted	To approve the Nowonder 3, 3132 ACME Minutes with the following change: Saad Maan was present.
2-3132	Voted	To approve the purchase of Legos for all staff offices.
3-3132	Voted	To approve the 3132 budget of \$144,000
4-3132	Information	President's Report
5-3132	Voted	To approve the purchase of a commodore 64 the Vice-presidents
6-3132	Voted	To accept the ACME Director's Report - Purchase of 1000 tornado seeds - Iron Glue update
7-3132	Discussion/FYI	Mid-Term Constituency Meeting Date/Locations September 45 @ Big Arm, Montana October 2 @ Coupon, Pennsylvania Nowonder 17 @ Truth or Consequences, New Mexico
8-3132	Voted	To deny the wishes of the President that he retire!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
9-3132	Discussion	New Items/Q&A
	Discussion/Requests Notes	- Wile E Coyote and Road Runner Complaints - Dehydrated Boulder purchase by Treasury

Closing Prayer: Pearl E. Gates

Recording Secretary: Susan A. Clerk

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 SDA Church Manual):

BAPTISM:

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. These certificates are available from the Wisconsin Conference Office.

When the individual has been accepted into the church fellowship by vote of the congregation, not just the church board, the clerk records the following personal information in eAdventist.net, in the Church Record Book or on a Church Membership Card:

- Name
- Address
- Phone number
- Date of birth – vitally important!!
- Gender
- Marital status
- Date of baptism
- Officiating pastor
- Would like to receive Conference/Union Periodicals? Yes or No

If NOT on eAdventist.net, this information must be sent to the conference membership clerk so that it can be entered into eAdventist.net. The preferred way to send this information is to go to the conference website: wi.adventist.org. Click on the tab that says "News & More." Next click on "Forms & Reports." Then click on the appropriate form ("Report Baptism" or "Report POF"). Fill in all information requested and submit. Your conference membership clerk will receive an automatic email notifying them that a report has been submitted.

RE-BAPTISM:

If a current member of your church is re-baptized, click on the "Report Re-Baptism" link under "Forms & Reports" on the conference website.

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 this is the case, please call the conference membership clerk for instructions on how to record the re-baptism and request the transfer.

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

PROFESSION OF FAITH

The Certificate of Profession of Faith is signed by the pastor and the church clerk. The certificate is to be given to the candidate. These forms are available from the Wisconsin Conference Office.

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 in eAdventist.net, in the Church Record Book or on a Church Membership Card:

- Name
- Address
- Phone number
- Date of birth – vitally important!!
- Gender
- Marital status
- Date of profession of faith
- Officiating pastor
- Would like to receive Conference/Union Periodicals? Yes or No

If NOT on eAdventist.net, this information must be sent to the conference membership clerk so that it can be entered into eAdventist.net. The preferred way to send this information is to go to the conference website: wi.adventist.org. Click on the tab that says "News & More." Next, click on "Forms & Reports." Then click on the appropriate form ("Report Baptism" or "Report POF"). Fill in all information requested and submit. Your conference membership clerk will receive an automatic email notifying them that a report has been submitted.

TRANSFER OF INCOMING MEMBER:

The North American Division is now using *eAdventist.net* for all membership transfers – whether you are using *eAdventist.net* or not. This has done away with the former “green membership transfer card” to request a transfer. *Please understand – all membership transfers go through eAdventist.net ONLY.* Please contact your conference membership 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 SDA church membership is located. Take the requested name to your church board to let them know who has requested a membership transfer.

If you are an online clerk 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 my office at the conference and will be mailed to the other church (see page 11). Your responsibility is to see that the transfer request is entered on the *eAdventist.net* system. The fact that the other church is not online does not affect what you are to do – you do the same for both online and offline churches. You now wait until you receive word that the request has been granted.

If you are NOT an online clerk, 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. If you have internet access, the conference website (wi.adventist.org) also has a form for requesting a transfer. Again, click on "News & More", then on "Forms & Reports." Finally click on "Request a Transfer", fill in the information and submit. The conference membership clerk will automatically receive this information and start a transfer for you.

Now you WAIT for the other church to do their part. Remember, by SDA 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.

In any event, however, if it is longer than 3 months since the request was entered, please contact your conference membership clerk for suggestions on how to check on the status of the transfer.

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 is NOT online, he/she enters the second reading date on the transfer form and mails it back to the conference membership coordinator who enters the date into the system.

Now it is your turn to do something!! The individual is now ready to be accepted into your church. Their name must go before the church board for approval and then before the church congregation for two weeks as a first and second reading. This can be either published or announced up front, whereupon the date of the second publishing and/or reading is the official acceptance date.

If you are online, you will notice that the individual's name is no longer in your "To Grant" column, but has now moved automatically to your "To Accept" column. This is where you enter the acceptance date. In your *eAdventist.net* training manual you will learn all about doing transfers!!

If you are NOT online, this is the date you enter on the transfer form and mail back to the conference membership coordinator for her to enter into the system.

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 accepting church has accepted the member. 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:

- Transfer of church membership
- Death
- Missing
- Removed

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

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. You will also receive an email notification. If you are NOT online, you will receive in the mail a transfer request asking for a grant/recommend date for the transfer.

Please refer back 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 at all times! 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 are an online clerk, the name will transfer automatically – you do not add or remove the name on *eAdventist.net* yourself.
- It is your responsibility to keep checking on your transfers and how long it has been since you requested the transfer. Please contact your conference membership clerk if you've heard nothing and it has been at least 3 months.
- Do not send transfer requests directly to the other church – it must go through *eAdventist.net*.

DEATH:

If online, record the date of death in *eAdventist.net*. If NOT online, email or phone the conference membership clerk so they 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 membership changes, including deaths.

Record the date of death in your Church Record Book and on the individuals Membership Card, if you are not on *eAdventist.net*.

Death is the only reason a clerk may remove an individual's name from the church records without church approval.

OBITUARIES:

The Wisconsin Conference does not publish obituaries in the Lamp Letter. If the family of a deceased member would like to have an obituary printed in the Lake Union Herald, the local church clerk will need to do the following:

Go to the Wisconsin conference website, wi.adventist.org. Click on the tab "News & More." Click on "Forms & Reports." Scroll down and click on "Obituary Online Form." Fill in the requested information and submit.

A second option is to download and print the obituary form. Again, on the conference website click on the tab "News & More." Click on "Forms & Reports." Click on "printable Obituary Report Form." A form will download for you to print. Fill in the information and send the form to the conference membership clerk either by mail or email to the addresses listed earlier in this manual.

Please note: in some churches the Communications department or local pastor submits the obituary form. Please make sure everyone communicates so only one form is being submitted.

MISSING MEMBER GUIDELINES:

The decision to list members as "Missing" is a pastoral decision made with the local church board. The clerk is not to make this decision on their own.

If there is a time that the pastor and the church board feel it is necessary to list a member as "Missing" please use the following guidelines for handling missing members:

The information in **bold print** is a response from the North American Division membership department concerning the proper procedure for missing members. You may also refer to the 2015 online edition of the SDA Church Manual, p. 43, 65-66, and 81.

The board needs to vote "missing" so that there is an accounting for the names being dropped from the current membership list. However, these people are still members "in good and regular standing" until you find out otherwise. Once you rediscover them, you can "undo missing" without any board action.

The church body does not need to vote on "missing" since the person is not transferring or losing their membership standing. The board vote helps to ensure that there is a record of the decision rather than the person simply "disappearing" from the membership list without anybody other than the clerk aware.

It is a good idea to publish/post a list of the "missing" members to see if anybody in the church knows their whereabouts before taking the list to the board.

If the church board prefers having the church body vote on the missing members it is perfectly fine. Just know that it is not necessary.

Please note: The Church Manual recommends *waiting at least two years* after trying to locate a missing member before listing them as "missing."

All status changes are recorded in the eAdventist system. If you are online you will mark the member as "Missing" on their profile account. If you are offline you will send the information to the conference Membership Clerk so the information can be recorded at the conference office.

MISSING VS. REMOVED:

Please read about Missing and Removed members in the Church Manual, pg. 65-68. Available at adventist.org/resources/church-manual.

When a member is listed as "Missing" it is as if that person is "hiding" in the church. Their name will not appear on the membership list. If the "Missing" member returns to the fellowship of the church that person is reinstated as a member.

When a member is "Removed", that person is no longer a member in the Seventh-day Adventist church. In the Wisconsin Conference, members are ONLY removed for apostasy or upon a written request from the member. The reasons for removal are kept in the minutes of the local church board, not on eAdventist. If the "Removed" person returns to the fellowship of the church, that person is (usually) reinstated through baptism.

The eAdventist system now has a "Reclaim" option. You can also report a "Reclaim" on the conference website under "Forms & Reports."

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 they haven't seen certain members in a number of weeks.

If the church clerk takes note of those persons, he/she can send church bulletins or cards with friendly notes to stay in touch with the missing member. The clerk should also tell the pastoral staff that the member has been missing. By reaching out to the individual and informing the pastoral staff, the likelihood of connecting with the missing member increases, thus giving the church an opportunity to encourage them to return to active fellowship.

ATTENDANCE

Twice each quarter, on the 2nd and 7th Sabbaths, each clerk takes an attendance count for Sabbath School, Church and any online attendance. A few days before the count is due, the conference membership clerk will send a reminder email with instructions for how to report the count online or offline. If, for some reason, your congregation does not meet on the 2nd or 7th Sabbaths, you may take attendance the next time it meets. These reports are used to help your local conference and NAD know better how to minister to your needs.

BACKGROUND SCREENING COORDINATOR

The Background Screening Coordinator is responsible to keep track of all the church officer roles and volunteers that require Child Protection Training and background screening and to ensure each officer has completed the required training and screening. Internet access is required for this role.

The Wisconsin Conference has assigned the role of Background Screening Coordinator to the local church clerk. Your church board may vote to assign this role to another member in your church. If the church board has not assigned this role to another member, it is the responsibility of the local clerk to ensure the training and background screenings are current.

Sandy Berg is in charge of the Background Screening process and will provide a letter of instruction for the local coordinator, as well as a letter to send to those needing to complete/renew their screening. All questions should be directed to Sandy at: sberg@wi.adventist.org.

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 DIRECTORY

One of the responsibilities the church clerk may be asked to do is 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.”

A basic directory can be printed from the eAdventist online system. Contact the Conference Membership Clerk for information on obtaining this directory.

COMMITTEE LISTS

The church clerk 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 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/company that is being organized. The company clerk must work with the conference membership clerk to see that all names are reported and the location of the individual's current church membership is identified. It is absolutely essential to have the full name of the church along with the complete mailing address of the church. The conference membership clerk works very closely with the company clerk 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 speak and write English. If there is no one that can take on this responsibility, it becomes necessary for the clerk to have an assistant who can interpret what is needed and therefore communicate with the conference.

eADVENTIST APP

myEADVENTIST is a mobile-friendly web app that provides the people in each church family with the following:

- Membership Profiles of the people in their family
- Ability to update these Membership Profiles (optional)
- Links to resources (e.g. website, Facebook, streaming, AdventistGiving, etc.)
- All church officers with contact info
- Upcoming church events
- Church directory (optional)
- Church/school finder (coming soon)
- Tools for pastors and ministry leaders (coming soon)

The app is currently available as a web app that works equally well on phones, tablets and PCs. This is not the type of app that is purchased from a supplier. If you are a pastor or church clerk and are interested in having the myEADVENTIST app on your device, contact your conference membership clerk and instructions will be emailed to you.

Note: You do not need to be an online clerk to have access to myEADVENTIST. If you are an offline clerk with an email address then your pastor can send you an invitation so you can download the myEADVENTIST app.

The app is also available to all members who have an email address. An invitation to download the app is sent from the pastor or local church clerk.

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 also your pastor. If your pastor wishes to have access to eAdventist.net information, please have him contact the Conference Membership Clerk for login assistance.

If computer access is not available, you will need to utilize some other method of record keeping, making sure your lists are in sync with the eAdventist system. If you, as church clerk, are not on eAdventist.net, you may request membership lists from the Conference Membership Clerk. This is beneficial to be certain that all membership changes have been made at the conference level. It is suggested you ask for a current list every six months.

If you would like to create your own membership cards be sure they include the following:

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

Again, please make sure your lists are in sync with what is in the eAdventist system.

Outgoing members should be removed from the Active Membership File. Date of official action and cause should be recorded. This card should be moved to a file for all “Transferred or Dropped Memberships.”

MISSION GROUPS

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

PERMANENT CHURCH RECORDS

With the advent of eAdventist.net, the Church Record Book (blue book) is not being used as often by churches. Your church probably has a number of the “blue 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 will need to continue to record information in the 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 changes, 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.

When your church is trying to gather information for its 50th anniversary or a homecoming, you'll be very glad this material has been saved through the years!!

PERIODICAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

The church clerk ensures that each member receives a subscription to three periodicals:

- ***Adventist Journey*** - World Church Report
- ***Lake Union Herald*** - Union Report
- ***Lamp Letter*** - Wisconsin Conference Report

The mailing addresses for these subscriptions are generated from *eAdventist.net*. Consequently you can see the importance of keeping member information up to date in the system. Sending address changes and updates is a most important function of the church clerk. This one thing alone provides monetary savings to the conference.

Please note: Many periodicals also have online options. If you, or any member, would like to receive the Wisconsin Conference eNewsletter, please send the request, along with name and email address, to lcas@wi.adventist.org.

PRAYER MINISTRY

The role of the local church clerk has so much potential for intercessory prayer ministry. The clerk has the membership list of all church members in the congregation, some faithful and some not. This is the opportunity to come before our Heavenly Father and intercede in prayer for each member on the list. Prayer brings revival! You will be blessed as you seek God's will for each name on your membership list.