

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

Manual for the Local Church Clerk within the Georgia-Cumberland Conference



Each Member Matters



Caryn Payne

Georgia-Cumberland Conference Membership Coordinator

PO Box 12000
Calhoun, GA 30703

255 Conference Dr NE
Calhoun, GA 30701

706-629-7951, ext. 340

Appreciation is extended to Donald G. King, Alberta Conference Secretary, for his church clerk manual printed in 1994. This current manual introduces the use of eAdventist.net and the subsequent removal of clerk forms no longer utilized by the Georgia-Cumberland Conference.



MEMBERSHIP

Seventh-day Adventist® Church

GEORGIA-CUMBERLAND CONFERENCE

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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 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).

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!

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. Georgia-Cumberland Conference went online in October, 2004. All 58 conferences in North American are online.

It is a membership program that gives 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 coordinator 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 GCC who are enjoying the benefits of being online with *eAdventist.net*, please complete the Authorization Form on page 20. You, as well as your pastor, will need to sign the form. Please mail or fax this back to me at the conference office.

Caryn Payne
GCC Membership Coordinator
PO Box 12000
Calhoun, GA 30703

Fax number: 706-625-3684

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.

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 feel free to call me any time: 800-567-1844, Ext 340

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.

ACME Detective Agency
Board Meeting - Minutes
Septober 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 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Purchase of 1000 tornado seeds - Iron Glue update
7-3132	Discussion/FYI	Mid-Term Constituency Meeting Date/Locations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Septober 45 @ Big Arm, Montana Octember 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wile E Coyote and Road Runner Complaints - Dehydrated Boulder purchase by Treasury

Closing Prayer: Pearl E. Gates

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:

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. These forms are available from the Adventist Book Center.
2. 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:

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 the card file.
4. If NOT on *eAdventist.net*, this information must be sent to the conference membership coordinator immediately so that it can be entered into *eAdventist.net*. It is not necessary for you and your pastor to report the information, just as long as it is sent by one of you!!

RE-BAPTISM:

If a current member of your church is re-baptized, send the information on the form and indicate it 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 this is the case, please call the conference membership coordinator 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 (apostasy or missing), this will be considered a new baptism and not a re-baptism for reporting purposes.

PROFESSION OF FAITH:

1. 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 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 profession of faith

3. Record this information in *eAdventist.net*, in the Church Record Book or on a Church Membership Card for the card file.
4. If NOT on *eAdventist.net*, this information must be sent to the conference membership coordinator immediately so that it can be entered into *eAdventist.net*. It is not necessary for you and your pastor to report the information, just as long as it is sent by one of you!!

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 coordinator 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 coordinator. DO NOT SEND A REQUEST TO THE OTHER CHURCH. The conference membership coordinator 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 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 coordinator 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 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.

If you are online, you will notice that the individuals 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 churches list until the accepting church has accepted the member. At no time is an individual not listed as a member somewhere!!

SAMPLES OF ALL TRANSFER FORMS ARE AT THE BACK OF THIS MANUAL

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 (apostasy)





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. 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. If you are

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 check on your transfers and how long it has been since you requested the transfer. Please contact your conference membership coordinator 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:




1. If online, record the date of death in *eAdventist.net*. If NOT online, email or phone the conference membership coordinator 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 membership changes, including deaths.
2. Record the date of death in your Church Record Book and on the individuals Membership Card, if you are not 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/REMOVED (Apostasy):

At times, it is necessary to go through the membership list and remove those whom you have lost track of over the 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 you have not 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 SDA church where they would like to have their membership transferred. Remember, the tone of this letter is redemptive, not accusatory.

You may also want to include a dated card with options that they would like to have done with their membership. The following are suggestions:

-  I am attending Some Other 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 no longer accept the teachings of the SDA church 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 members name can ONLY be DROPPED from church membership by a vote of the church in a duly called Business Meeting.

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

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 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 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 ultimate goal!

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.”

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 coordinator 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 coordinator 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.

At the organization of a company, the conference membership coordinator will prepare a letter for the company clerk outlining the necessary duties and time frame for these to be accomplished.

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 as well as your pastor. If your pastor wishes to have access to *eAdventist.net* information, please have him contact the conference membership coordinator for login assistance.

If computer access is not available, you will need to utilize some other method of record keeping. You may obtain Membership Cards from the conference office, at no charge, if you wish to keep a card file. If you, as church clerk, are not on *eAdventist.net*, you may receive membership lists from the conference membership coordinator for the asking. 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 quarter.

A Membership Card should include:

- ✚ 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

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.

OBITUARIES

If the family of a deceased church member wishes to have an obituary printed in the Southern Union Southern Tidings, the church clerk should send the following information to the Georgia-Cumberland Conference Communication Department:

- ✚ Full name and age
- ✚ Date of birth
- ✚ Date of death
- ✚ Church where member
- ✚ Denominational employment

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!!

UNION PAPER SUBSCRIPTIONS

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

-  Georgia-Cumberland Conference ***Communique***
-  Southern Union ***Southern Tidings***
-  GC monthly ***Adventist World***

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.