

Church Clerk's Manual

Revised in 2015

Texas Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

Hours: 8am-5:30pm /Mon-Thurs

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CHURCH CLERK

A MINISTRY DESCRIPTION FOR LOCAL CHURCH LEADERS

Introduction

God asks the church to be a community of people sharing a common purpose and fellowship, continually growing in faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God. It is “his body, the fullness of him who filleth everything in every way” (Eph. 1:22).

God calls us into His body for the purpose of establishing us in a saving relationship with Him and bring us into community with one another. The Holy Spirit convicts our minds, leads us to repentance, and plants us within the church.

You experience the presence of Jesus Christ in the world within your church; the world experiences the living presence of Jesus Christ as it witnesses your church. When a local church serves the world it is an expression of the love of Christ to the world. It is the body of Christ serving the world’s needs and being used by the Spirit as an agency of salvation. Thus the church is a servant body. Created for service, it serves the Lord in praise, serves one another in love, and serves the world in humility. “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them” (Eph. 2:10).

Our priesthood is to each other within the church and to the world. The clerk, like every other church officer, is a ministering servant of God. Every Christian believer is called to ministry, gifted by the Holy Spirit, and in baptism ordained for ministry (Eph. 4:11-12).

Duties of the Church Clerk

Although the role varies somewhat from church to church, the ministry to which a person is called when he or she becomes a church clerk involves the following:

1. Secretary church board and business meetings. Although a church secretary sometimes is delegated this responsibility, it is the duty of the clerk to see that this task is performed and properly entered in the church records. The official copy of the minutes should include complete copies of all reports, documents and financial statements. It is a public record which any church member or denominational representative can look at.
2. Church membership. There must always be a vote by the church, not just the church board, to add or drop a name from the church membership roll, except in the case of the death of a member. The clerk handles the correspondence between the individuals seeking transfers and the churches with which the transfer is being made. The clerk also fills out a certificate and report forms when a person is baptized or makes a profession of faith. In cooperation with the Sabbath School teachers, you should take a keen interest in keeping track of each member, making note of those who do not attend regularly and those who are absent. When a member moves away, the church clerk should try to keep in touch with them and promptly contact the pastor in the

- new district to have him visit them and encourage them to transfer to a new church home.
3. Church records. All church records, minutes of business meetings and board meetings, the church officer list, and the list of church members are maintained by the church clerk. This information is not only for the sake of the church family but portions of this information are also sent on special forms to the local conference office for its use in statistical reports. Also, it is vital that you supply copies of these records to new pastors and church board members so they have the information needed for their work.
 4. List of committees. The clerk should make note of any committees that are appointed and give the chairman of the group a list of the members making up the committee, along with an outline of the work the committee is being asked to accomplish.
 5. Church directory. It is the responsibility of the clerk to have a church directory produced as needed. This may be printed, photocopied, or produced for the church by one of the companies that makes photo directories. It should include non-member spouses and unbaptized children from church-related households, as well as regular attendees not yet baptized. It is well to include a statement that “this is not an official membership list.” Its purpose is to facilitate friendship in the congregation.

Resource Materials

The following resources are recommended for your ministry. You can purchase these by calling AdventSource (800-328-0525), the Adventist Book Center (800-558-0100) or your local Christian bookstore.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual outlines very specific procedures for the transferring of members and the keeping of records. It is an essential resource for clerks.

Visit AdventSource On-Line at www.adventsource.org for a complete list of the latest resources available for local church leaders. You can place an order or request a catalog by calling 1-800-328-0525.

For information about additional resources and answers to your questions call the Adventist Plusline at 1-800-732-7587 or visit them on-line at www.plusline.org.

2002
Edition

Ministry Description Brochure #9

The Church Clerk

AN IMPORTANT OFFICE

The clerk of the church has one of the MOST important church offices, upon which the proper administration and efficient functioning of the church depends. Few realize how much depends on the proper administration of this office.



THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH CLERK

The church clerk is to ensure that the church's records are maintained and that the church's business is documented. The church clerk works in close relationship with the pastor and the rest of the church officers as well as members. The church clerk reports to the local conference and serves on the church board. Sometimes reporting to the clerk are assistant clerks, depending on the size of your church and if you need help. It is important for either the clerk or the assistant clerk to have experience in working with computers or a willingness to learn the computer programs necessary for this work.

TIME COMMITMENT

If you are selected to perform this ministry, you will be asked to make a commitment to serve for at least a year or two. (*See church manual where officers can be selected for two years on a business meeting*). In a small church, the amount of time you would need to spend would be dictated by your methods of record keeping. You might want to select assistants and delegate responsibility. In large churches, reporting and management will require both creativity and time, perhaps more than you have to give. In this case, you would want to gather a group to aid you in the various tasks. Some of your responsibilities could be delegated to the church office secretary. Your gift for this ministry may be so appreciated that your church may wish you to continue this work indefinitely. But you must also make a commitment to teach others the skills you have learned over the span of your service.

APPROPRIATE SPIRITUAL GIFTS

Church clerks will exercise a majority, if not all, of the following spiritual gifts:

Helps: This gift (1Cor 12:38) enables the clerk to give more than merely perfunctory answers. The clerk, as keeper of the church records is a source of information on many items and is a great help in supplying statistics, history, and church procedures.

Energy: This provides the clerk with a gift that enables them to be “not slothful in business” as they serve the Lord. (Romans 12:11)

Orderliness: The body of Christ involves many diverse parts, but those with the gift for orderliness are particularly needed. The very concept of the body of Christ shows an orderly dispensation of spiritual gifts. Therefore, the importance of the clerk’s work in bringing order to the church cannot be over-emphasized. In small churches where there is no office secretary, the clerk conducts most of the church’s business. His or her contribution is invaluable.

Love: While it is the gift most desired by all members of the church, love needs to be particularly manifest in the clerk; love unconditional, without judgment or favoritism, as a fruit of the acceptance of the gift of God’s grace in Christ Jesus.

Duties and Responsibilities

Church Clerk Job Description

The Church Clerk is the official church historian and keeper of the church records. These records should be carefully preserved. At the expiration of the term of office, they are to be passed to the newly-elected clerk. All records and account books of the various church offices are the property of the church. As such, they are to be surrendered at the expiration of the term of office, or at any time during the term at the request of the church.

The duties of the church clerk are as follows:

1. Maintain accurate records of church membership.
2. Keep minutes for church board/church business meetings.
3. Keep records of events for church history.
4. Maintain the Church Record book.
5. Supply statistical information as requested by the church pastor or Conference officials.
6. Handle transfers of membership into and out of the local church.
7. Supply reports of changes in membership to the Conference, as they occur unless you are entering these changes directly online yourself.
8. Be present at all baptisms and record the information.

Responsibilities

The following are the procedures that should be implemented in the work of the church clerk either by taking care of them yourself, or delegating to the church secretary, special committees or willing individuals:

1. The clerk should be present at all administrative meetings of the church. If for some reason the clerk is unable to attend any meeting, the assistant clerk should attend and take the minutes, (in the case of no assistant clerk, the pastor may appoint one of the board members to fill in.)
2. Items to take to a meeting:
 - Notebook
 - The minute book for the church with a copy of the minutes from the prior meeting for each member of the church board in attendance
 - A current list of the church membership
 - A list of all church committees and their members
 - A list of all church officers
 - Paper, in case a secret ballot is required and pencils
3. To ensure that all members of the board are notified and invited to the next board meeting, either by phone or in writing. This can be done by way of bulletin announcement or a regularly scheduled monthly meeting time.
4. To notify the pastor/church board chairman that the quorum has been met and the meeting can be called to order.
5. The clerk's report should include:
 - Current total membership of the church
 - Total members added since the beginning of the year
 - Total members transferring to another church
 - Total persons disfellowshipped
 - Report of any action taken on previous discussions of membership
 - Pending matters on membership
6. The minutes of the meeting will include:
 - Time and date of the meeting
 - Place of the meeting
 - Names of those present and absent
 - Actions voted by board
 - Resolutions passed, adopted or denied
 - Committees elected, the members and their responsibilities
 - Discussion, (the relative parts). (See sample of church board minutes in Appendix.

7. Document and file minutes of the board meeting.
8. Record the acts or resolutions adopted by the board and file in the church minute book in the order in which they were adopted, specifying the date and time of the meeting.
9. Sign the minutes taken of each meeting recorded in the minute book. (If an assistant took the minutes, the assistant should sign.)
10. Keep the minutes of any business meetings of the church, to be read by any member requesting to do so.
11. File in alphabetical order:
 - Letters
 - Church Membership List/Family Unit Record (FUR) Forms
 - Other data or information
12. The clerk should not add or delete any names from the membership list until the action has been approved by a business meeting of the church body. (See Pages 19-25 of this manual)
13. Make a list of committees which are elected. This list should include the specific purpose or function of each committee. Give a copy of this list to:
 - The president of the committee
 - The pastor of the church
 - Keep a copy in the church files
14. Maintain a current list of the church officers.
15. Maintain a current list of the church membership which should include up-to-date information on addresses, phone numbers, birthdates, members and non-members of each family unit. This information is all kept on the FUR forms.
16. Complete and send to the Conference office or enter into eAdventist directly your Local Officers Update form each year after the election of new officers for the church. It should be done as soon as possible after the new officers are elected. If you change officers during the church year, please send these changes in to the Conference office or enter into eAdventist online, especially if they are the office of elder, treasurer, clerk or church (personal) ministries leader.
17. The clerk will complete the forms required for:
 - Registrations
 - Information
 - Credentials for Conference business meetings
 - Letters of Recommendation
 - Any correspondence or form requested by the pastor

18. Keep a record of member deaths including the dates and prepare a sympathy card to be sent to the family of the deceased.
19. Notify the pastor and church board of the requests for membership transfer to/from the church.
20. Request and/or send letters of membership transfer after approved by the church board and after the name has been published/read in the church for two consecutive Sabbaths enter directly into eAdventist.
21. Remove from membership the names of those who have died, transferred out, disfellowshipped or are missing (with the exception of deaths, after a business meeting of the church body has been conducted, not before.)
22. Note the transfer requests in the Family Unit Record (FUR), but do not add/remove names until a letter of confirmation has been received.
23. Write to discouraged members, invite them to church, send notices of activity, etc.
24. Write any letters authorized or directed by the board, file any correspondence and advise the board of such.
25. Write to church members in military service, sending the *Sabbath School Quarterly*, subscriptions to *Message*, *Adventist Review/Record* and/or *Vibrant Life*. Get board approval of such an action.
30. Write to those members who have moved to another city and/or country. Encourage them to attend church and to remain faithful.
31. Be concerned about members who have been absent and keep in contact with them by means of correspondence, giving them news about the church so they will always have in mind about their responsibilities in submitting tithes and offerings. Send the Sabbath School Quarterly for adults and children.
32. Report new baptisms/professions of faith according to the instructions on Pages 13-15 of this manual.
33. Note how many people in a family are baptized and not-baptized with all personal information on the Family Unit Record (FUR).
34. Ensure that copies of the new information for the membership are sent or given to the Pastor, Conference Membership Secretary and church record.

35. Maintain Membership File:

1. Complete a "Family Unit Record" FUR on incoming members and place in "Active Membership" file after they have been voted in by your church.
2. The FUR should include name, address, telephone number, date received (by baptism, profession of faith, or transfer), date of birth, etc., date dismissed by transfer, death, apostasy, or missing), and date and page number of *Church Record Book* entry. It should also include information on other family members (SDA or non-SDA, adult or child) living in the household.
3. Outgoing members should be removed from "Active Membership" file. Record date of official action and how member was removed. Their FUR should be retained in the "Transferred or Dropped Membership" file.

Please remember if a member is being removed as "Missing" or for "Apostasy" there first must be a vote by both the church board and the church in business session.

Church Clerk Relationships

How do the **Pastor and Church Clerk** work together?

The pastor and the church clerk work closely in helping keep accurate records, provide agendas, calendars and newsletters. As a clerk your responsibility and loyalty is to God, the pastor, the church board and the church at large. Your task is to make your pastor look good. Lift up and encourage your pastor. Furthermore, as a member you should be praying for your pastor daily.

You are privy to confidential information that is not to be given to any church member. It is vitally important that you have the ability to keep a confidence.

- Minutes
- Baptisms
- Preparing agendas
- Preparing Calendars of Events
- Preparing Church Directories
- Creating Church Newsletters

How do the **church members and Church Clerk** work together?

You are the first individual with which the church member comes in contact. You are the first image of the church. You are an indispensable leader of your local church. The image you portray will either positively or negatively affect others. You are the liaison between the church and the pastor.

- Transfers of membership
- You are the first person they contact
- Inform on minutes of the church board
- The statistician of the church

How do the **Conference and the Church Clerk** work together?

You provide accurate and timely membership information. You work together with the membership clerk at the conference as a **TEAM**.

- You are indispensable to the Texas Conference
- You are the statistician of your church for the Conference
- We need you. You are important!!!
- Each Quadrennial Session you will send us or enter directly into eAdventist your list of Constituency delegates as officers from your church.



What is e-Adventist?

The Adventist church is always looking for ways to upgrade and improve its membership system. The North American Division has been working with the Northwest Pacific Union to develop and implement a membership accounting system that would be universal and ultimately implemented worldwide. The result is **e-Adventist**, a comprehensive database published on a secure and protected website on the internet, accessible to all church clerks for the efficient and time-saving accounting of all church memberships.

The Texas Conference understands that some churches and church clerks may not be ready to dive into this type of technology. We will work with you and understand if it takes some time. However, by 2016 the Texas Conference has a goal that the vast majority of our churches will be able to come “online” with this program. Keep in mind an Assistant Clerk may be able to assist in learning eAdventist and entering reports made by the clerk.

It is vitally important that church records exactly match Conference records. On a manual accounting system, this is an impossible goal to attain. On the e-Adventist system, the success rate is virtually 100%. That is our goal, 100% accuracy.

There is a separate manual for maintaining the membership in e-Adventist. It is important to receive instruction at the clerk training sessions at the Church Officers’ Meeting, or go through training with the Conference Membership Clerk via phone and internet, and prove that you are able to handle the task of maintaining and upgrading information on a computer database.

If you would like to access eAdventist, please email the Conference Clerk at statistics@txsda.org or call the Conference office at 817-783-2223, ext 2127 and ask for the Membership Clerk.

Included in this section are also the standard rules and procedures governing membership. Turning completely to technology will not alleviate the need to submit back-up paperwork to the Conference office or ignore the rules set out by the North American Division and the General Conference.

It is our hope that this manual will help you do your job better and answer any questions you may have. If there are any unanswered questions, please do not hesitate to call the Conference Office.

Baptisms / Professions of Faith / Rebaptisms

Whenever a new member is baptized into the Adventist Church, we considered him or her as family. As such, membership in the Church is considered as a family unit. This also applies to rebaptisms, transfers in (or out) of the church and Professions of Faith.

What is a Family Unit?

This is a group of people (members and/or non-members) who share the same address, phone number and subscriptions (Review/Record). The family unit may also be a single individual. Each family unit has a designated Primary Contact and this person should be the first person entered into the e-Adventist system. On the Family Unit Record (FUR), this person would be the first person on the list with the remaining members in order below. (ex: Father - Primary Contact, then mother, child 1, child 2, etc.) The Primary Contact is usually a member of your church, while other family members can be members of other churches.

Whether you use e-Adventist or not, timely paperwork must still be submitted to the Conference Office. A hard copy record must be maintained and will be stored in the files of the Conference Office.

BAPTISMS/PROFESSIONS OF FAITH

The following procedures are standard membership procedures and should be followed carefully:

1. When a person is baptized the *Certificate of Baptism* must be signed by the pastor and the church clerk.
2. Make careful notes of how many in a family are baptized and *which are not*, with names, addresses, phone numbers, and dates of birth.
3. If you are not entering directly into eAdventist, fill out a Conference Clerk's Report or a blank FUR form with the names of new members entering the church by baptism, profession of faith or transfer and indicate the date on which they were accepted into the church. Be sure to state both the church they are transferring from and the church they are transferring to clearly. If you are not entering changes directly online, please mail, email or fax the form to the Conference office.
4. Make a copy of the form for the pastor.
5. Keep a copy for your own records.
6. Give to each newly-baptized member a church directory and a calendar of events for your church.

REBAPTISMS

Sometimes a member feels the need to be rebaptized. When this occurs, pay close attention to the reporting procedure as follows:

1. Rebaptism should be reported to the Conference Office on the Conference Clerk's Report, a Family Unit Record, or entered directly online.
2. *If the person being rebaptized is a member of the church*, report them to the Conference, but **DO NOT COUNT THEM** on your total for membership. Make sure on the Conference report that you have clearly indicated that this is a rebaptism so that the Conference does not become confused and try to add them to the membership count.
3. *If the person being rebaptized is not a member of your church*, but is a member of another SDA church, you will report them to the pastor and Conference as a rebaptism but process them as a transfer into your church and count their membership into your totals when the transfer is complete. (See the section on Transfers – In and Out, Pages 17 and 18)
4. A disfellowshipped member, upon rebaptism, needs to be reported to the conference as a baptism.

PROFESSIONS OF FAITH

Profession of Faith defined: is any individual who has been previously baptized by immersion, whether they have been baptized originally in the Seventh-day Adventist church or a church of any other Christian denomination, and who now professes to accept and uphold the truths as presented by the Seventh-day Adventist Church, shall be admitted to the church through a Profession of Faith. The *Certificate of Profession of Faith* is signed by the pastor and the church clerk.

There are four circumstances under which individuals who have accepted the Seventh-day Adventist message may be accepted into the local church by profession of faith:

1. A committed Christian coming from another Christian communion who has already been baptized by immersion as practiced by the Seventh-day Adventist Church.
2. A member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church who, because of world conditions, is unable to secure a letter of transfer from his/her home church.
3. A member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church whose request for membership transfer has received no response for at least a year from the church where he/she is a member. In this case, the assistance of the Conference/Mission/Field shall be sought. In case the requesting church is located in another conference/mission/field, the assistance of both conferences/missions/fields should be sought.
4. An individual who has been a member, but whose membership has been misplaced or has been withdrawn because he/she was a missing member, yet who in reality has remained faithful to his/her Christian commitment.

If the person meets one of the four above mentioned circumstances they are accepted into church fellowship by vote of the congregation. The clerk records the information in the Church Record Book and completes a Conference Clerk's Report, or FUR form and sends it to the Conference Membership Clerk.

Great care should be exercised in receiving members if they have formerly been members of some other church in the denomination. Instances are not lacking of persons removed from membership in one church later presenting themselves to other churches for membership on profession of faith. When a person applies for membership on profession of faith, earnest inquiries should be made concerning the applicant's former experience...

When persons apply for membership on profession of faith, and it is found that they are still members of another church in the denomination, no steps should be taken to receive them into membership until the church holding the membership grants their letters of transfer.

See *Church Manual* page 41, 42.

Transfers – In and Out of Churches In the Texas Conference of SDA's

TRANSFERS OF MEMBERS

The church clerk handles the correspondence between individual members and churches in the transferring of church membership.

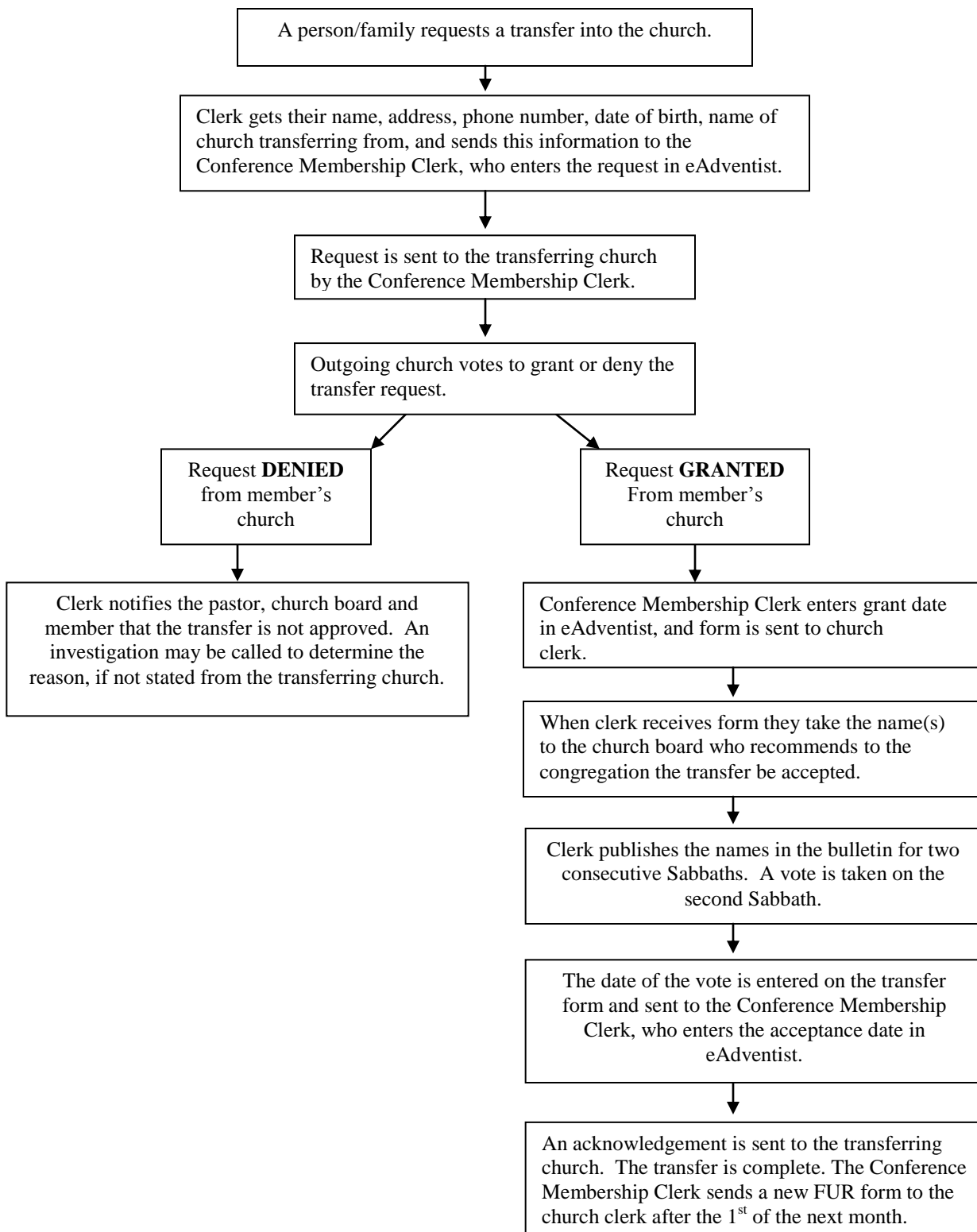
If you are an “offline” church clerk, eAdventist.NET is designed to work equally as well for you as for “online” clerks. If you are not entering directly into eAdventist, send your transfer request, recommendations and acknowledgements to the Texas Conference Office rather than directly to the other church. The sole exception being a transfer letter requested by a church of another conference and sent directly to you. In this case, you should complete the required information on the letter and send it back to the other conference. Then you would report the transfer on your monthly clerk's report to the Texas Conference.

Your conference office will provide you with Conference Clerk's Reports to help facilitate your interaction with the conference regarding membership transfers. Whenever a member needs to be added, deleted, or changed, complete the Clerk's Report form and send it to your conference. The conference clerk will enter the changes in eAdventist.

When you receive communication regarding a transfer, either from your conference, a member, or another church clerk, use the chart below to find the communication received and type of transfer taking place, and then follow the instructions given.

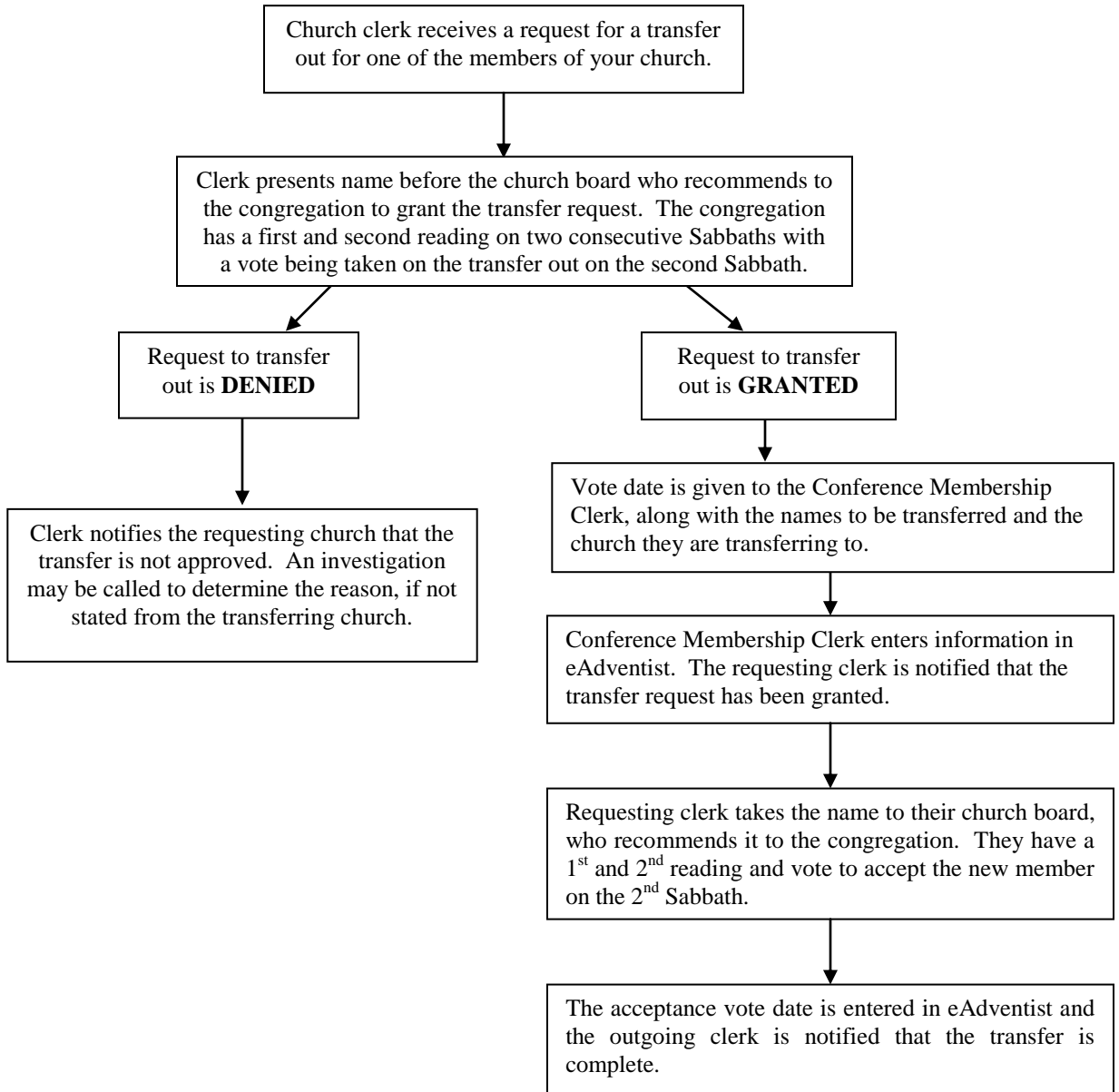
The following flow charts have been provided to show you the transfer process IN and OUT for church transfers that are not online with eAdventist.

TRANSFERS IN PROCEDURE – (for “OFF-LINE” CHURCHES)



Note: If you have a transfer request that you are uncertain about, please talk with your pastor.

TRANSFERS OUT PROCEDURE – (for “OFF-LINE” CHURCHES)



Note: Transfers out cannot be denied if the individual member is listed in good standing. If there are concerns you believe should be addressed, a letter of explanation or caution should be sent with the transfer.

Reporting Deaths and Missing Members

REPORTING A DEATH

When a member passes away, it is always a stressful time for the family left behind. This is where you, as the clerk need to be especially sensitive with the family. God has given you the gift of graciousness, understanding and compassion. These are the gifts you will need to use in this time of grief. As difficult as it may be, you need to ask for the following information:

1. A short biography for your church bulletin and the RECORD. (See form in appendix)

In your report to the Conference, you must report the name of the decedent, their date of birth and date of death.

MISSING MEMBERS

“If a member moves away from the vicinity of his church, it is his duty to inform the church elder or clerk of his new location. If however, a member leaves no address behind, and if he makes no effort to reach his home church and it is impossible to locate him, then, **after an absence of two years** he may be dropped from membership as “missing” by a vote of the church, provided the officers can certify that they have faithfully endeavored to locate him but without success. The clerk should record in the proper column, ‘Whereabouts unknown. Voted to designate as missing.’”

-- Church Manual p.252

REPORTING MISSING MEMBERS

If you cannot find the individual, the following steps should be taken:

1. Post in your Church Bulletin
2. Post on your Church Bulletin Board
3. Ask the Conference.
4. Ask church members/Pastor.
5. Search the internet.

If the individual is known:

1. Have the Pastor/Elders visit, inviting them to come back to church.
2. Write a letter to the individual letting them know that he/she is missed.
3. Have members call them.

If the individual does not want to come back to church:

1. The Pastor should make one final visit.
2. If possible, have the individual write a letter stating he/she does not want to be a member of the Seventh-day Adventist church.
3. If he/she does not want to write a letter, have a witness and document all conversations with the date, time and nature of the conversation.
4. Have a vote from the church board recommending dropping the individual from the books.

Steps you must take to drop a name as missing:

1. Search out to find the individual.
2. Visitations by the Pastor.
3. Church board action recommending the individual is dropped.
4. Notice should be printed in the church bulletin announcing a duly called church business meeting.
5. Write a letter to “John Doe” stating his name is under consideration to be dropped from the church list.
6. Invite him to attend the church business meeting.
7. Under NO circumstances should an individual be dropped other than through a CHURCH BUSINESS MEETING!!!!
8. The Pastor cannot do it!
9. The Church Board cannot do it!
10. The Church clerk cannot do it!

Things to remember:

1. YOU CANNOT DROP A MEMBER FOR NON-ATTENDANCE!
2. It should be harder to drop a name from the church books than it is to win them into the church!
3. *Do not drop names just because you want to drop them.*
4. If an individual writes a letter stating he wants to drop his name from the church, please honor the request. It can become a legal issue.

“Human beings are Christ’s property, purchased by Him at an infinite price, bound to Him by love that He and His Father have manifested for them. How careful then, we should be in our dealing with one another! Men have no right to follow their impulses and inclinations in dealing with fellow members who have erred. They should not even express their prejudices regarding the erring, for thus they place in other minds the leaven of evil. Reports unfavorable to a brother or sister in the church are communicated one to another of the church members. Mistakes are made and injustice is done because of an unwillingness on the part of some to follow the directions given by the Lord Jesus... Do not tell others of the wrong. One person is told, then another, and still another; and continually the report grows,

and the evil increases, until the whole church is made to suffer. Settle the matter 'between thee and him alone.' This is God's plan... Do not suffer sin upon your brother; but do not expose him, and thus increase the difficulty, making the reproof seem like revenge. Correct him in the way outlined in the Word of God." -- Ellen G. White (7T 260,261)

Removals

Disfellowshipping and Apostasy

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF CHURCH DISCIPLINE?

To seek Reconciliation.

“Whatever the offense, this does not change the plan that God has made for the settlement of misunderstanding and personal injuries. Speaking alone and in the spirit of Christ to the one who is in fault will often remove the difficulty. Go to the erring one, with a heart filled with Christ’s love and sympathy, and seek to adjust the matter. Reason with him quietly. Let no angry words escape your lips. Speak in a way that will appeal to his better judgment (James 5:20). Take to your brother the remedy that will cure the disease of disaffection. Do your part to help him. For the sake of the peace and unity of the church, feel it a privilege as well as a duty to do this. If he will hear you, you have gained him as a friend.

All heaven is interested in the interview between the one who has been injured and the one who is in error. As the erring one accepts the reproof offered in the love of Christ, and acknowledges his wrong, asking forgiveness from God and his brother, the sunshine of heaven fills his heart. The controversy ended; friendship and confidence are restored. The oil of love removes the soreness caused by the wrong...”

--Ellen G. White (7T 261,262)

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE IN DEALING WITH SIN?

“God holds His people, as a body, responsible for the sins existing in individuals among them. If the leaders of the church neglect to diligently search out the sins which bring displeasure of God upon the body, they become responsible for these sins.” (3T 269)

WHAT IF A MEMBER RESISTS CHURCH DISCIPLINE?

1. Only the unconsecrated resist church discipline (3T 270, 271)
2. Rules and regulations are necessary to preserve order and unity in the Church.

Censure and Disfellowship

When grievous sins are involved, disciplinary measures must be taken. There are two ways by which this is done:

1. By vote of censure
2. By vote of disfellowship

Censure has a two-fold purpose:

1. To enable the church to express its disapproval of a grievous offense that has brought disgrace upon the cause of God.
2. To impress the offending member with the need for amendment of life and reformation in conduct; also to extend to the individual a period of grace and probation.

Who places censure on an individual?

“An erring member may be placed under censure by a vote of the church at any duly called business meeting, provided the member concerned has been notified. The individual may be present if he or she so desires.” (SDA Church Manual, Revised 1995, 15th Edition, page 168)

Censure – What it Means

- A vote of censure is for a stated period of time, from a minimum of one month to a maximum of twelve months.
- It terminates the erring one's election or appointment to any and all offices he or she may hold.
- Removes the privilege of election to office.
- A member under censure has no right to participate by voice or by vote in the affairs of the church.
- Can have no public part in the exercises of the church such as teaching a Sabbath School class, etc.
- Is not deprived of Sabbath School, worship, or functions of the church.
- Membership cannot be transferred to another church during censure.
- Other important facts to remember:
 - Censure does not carry any provision involving severance of church membership in case of failure to comply with any conditions imposed.
 - At the expiration of the period of censure, inquire to ascertain whether the member under discipline has changed course.
 - If conduct is satisfactory, the member may be considered in regular standing without further action.
 - Church office must be by election.

- No church shall receive into membership a person who is under censure from another church.

Disfellowshipping Defined

- “To disfellowship a member means to expel an individual from membership.” (SDA Church Manual, Revised 1995, 15th Edition, p. 168)
- To cut off a member from fellowship with the church, the body of Christ is always a serious matter.
- It is the ultimate in the discipline that the church can administer.
- It is the extreme measure that can be meted out by the church.

Reasons for Disfellowshipping

1. Denial of faith in the fundamental of the gospel and in the cardinal doctrines of the church or teaching doctrines contrary to the same.
2. Violation of the Law of God, such as worship of idols, murder, stealing, profanity, gambling, Sabbath-breaking, and willful and habitual falsehood.
3. Violation of the seventh commandment of the Law of God as it relates to the marriage institution, the Christian home, and biblical standards of moral conduct.
4. Such violation as fornication, promiscuity, incest, homosexual practice and other gross sexual perversions, and the remarriages of a divorced person, with exception of the “innocent party” in a divorce for adultery or for gross sexual perversions.
5. Fraud or willful misrepresentation in business.
6. Disorderly conduct which brings reproach upon the cause.
7. Adhering to or taking part in a divisive or disloyal movement or organization, such as, “Independent Ministries”.
8. Persistent refusal to recognize properly constituted church authority or to submit to the order and discipline of the church.
9. The use, manufacture or sale of alcoholic beverages.
10. The use, manufacture or sale of tobacco in any of its forms for human consumption.
11. The misuse of, or trafficking in, narcotics or other drugs.
12. In cases of flagrant violation of the Law of God, which have brought public reproach upon the cause, the church may deem it necessary, even though a sincere confession has been made, to disfellowship the member to protect its fair name and its Christian standards.

At a future time the member can enter back through a rebaptism.

CAUTION IN DISCIPLINING MEMBERS

1. Ministers or churches are not to establish tests of fellowship.
2. Testing is done only at a duly called business meeting of the church. **THE CHURCH BOARD CANNOT DO IT.**
3. Disfellowship is voted by a majority vote of those present at the meeting.
4. The member has a right to be heard in defense.
5. Lawyers are not to represent members.
6. Members are not dropped for non-attendance.
7. Members must be notified that they are being considered for disfellowship and notified if it occurs.
8. A disfellowshipped member can be reinstated. (This is normally preceded by rebaptism.)
9. A member has the right of appeal for reinstatement.
10. Members are not to be dropped for pecuniary reasons (inability or failure to render financial help.)
11. You must drop a member on their personal request.

PROCEDURES FOR DISFELLOWSHIPPING

Can the pastor alone disfellowship? NO! So, how can there be a disfellowshipping?

1. The board makes a recommendation for disfellowship:
 - a. After the case is investigated (Matthew 18:16-18)
 - b. When there are two or three witnesses.
2. The pastor invites the church body to a business meeting.
3. The delinquent member is advised as to the date of the business meeting.
4. The church body votes at the business meeting. The majority of the votes determine the matter.
5. The quorum consists of those present. If the meeting has been properly called, the church and the day, hour and place of meeting is given.

Reporting Spanish Names

Ensuring Correct Reporting of Spanish Members

When entering new members into eAdventist, or in reports to the Conference:

1. Be sure there is no duplication of names. For example:

If a male -	Name:	Pedro
	Father's Surname:	Gonzalez
	Mother's Surname:	Moreno
	His Name is:	Pedro Gonzalez

Moreno appears separately on some documents, but is not used on your reports because in the U. S. it is not used and if you show it as Pedro Gonzalez Moreno, he would be known as Pedro Moreno, when he should be Pedro Gonzalez.

If a female -	Name:	Maria
	Father's Surname:	Gonzalez
	Husband's Surname:	Garcia
	Her name is:	María González de García or María García

Reason? Our sisters who come from other Spanish-speaking countries and are baptized in the U.S. have different last names. For example:

	Name:	Maria
	Father's Surname:	Gonzalez
	Mother's Surname:	Garza
	Husband's Surname:	Garcia

She may sign her name as:

María González
María Garza
María García

If she always signs as Maria Gonzalez de Garcia, it is all right because;

In the U.S. she would be known as Maria Garcia. In some documents they request the father and mother's surnames, but she would be known as Maria Garcia.

2. Make any note of changes of last name due to marriage.

3. In notifying the Conference or entering into eAdventist:

- Since there are many similar or identical Spanish names, please use complete names with date of birth and gender.
- Please be sure addresses are complete, including zip codes.
- Please be sure you have phone numbers with area codes.

Communication

Reports to the Conference

Is regular reporting important? YES!!! Experience shows that clerks who faithfully enter changes into eAdventist or send accurate and complete reports as events occur have fewer problems in maintaining their membership files. **DO NOT** allow your membership to lag behind. Know at all times how many members you have and who they are.

Now that the conference is using e-Adventist, you know that you can report your changes anytime. You do not have to wait to do it on a monthly basis. If you are on eAdventist, when you enter in baptisms, professions of faith, deaths, changes of address, etc. you are in effect doing your report. But if you are **NOT** on e-Adventist, you **MUST** send in a Conference Clerk's Report or FUR form with the updated information. Regularly means at least once a month, more often if you wish, if you have any changes to report. The monthly deadline to return Clerk's Reports and Attendance Reports is the 7th of each month. It gives you a week from the end of the previous month to get it sent in. It is vitally important for you to send regular, timely reports to the Conference. Even if you are not using e-Adventist yet to keep track of your membership, please remember; the Conference is keeping track for you and entering everything onto eAdventist.

Every item of information requested on the forms should be supplied; NO EXCEPTIONS! Special attention should be given to the transfer of members, and members received and dropped for various reasons as indicated on the Clerk's Reports and FUR form. The Conference Membership Secretary reports monthly to the Union Office and the Union Membership Secretary must report to the Division Office who report to the General Conference. Omissions or delay of the report on your part, seriously affects the work all along the way, especially when we get near the end of the year. Faithful attention to the details of the clerk's work greatly assists in keeping accurate records of our worldwide work.

We prefer that you report each event as it happens. You may send transfer information, deceased, missing, address changes, phone changes, add birthdates, etc. all on the Conference Clerk's report. Waiting until the end of the month can cause you to forget to report an event.

E-Mail reports are perfectly acceptable as are faxed ones, although sometime the small print is difficult to read on faxes.

The Church Record Book

The Church Record Book contains a place for recording church membership, giving the columns necessary to show how and when members were received or dismissed. This record must be kept chronologically, and supporting data for each entry should also be recorded in the section where the minutes are kept. The church membership record must be accurately and currently maintained in order to show the official standing of the membership.

In addition to the regular minutes that are kept for board and business meetings, (these may be in the church record or simply in a file), it is well also to maintain an occasional entry for unusual happenings in the church. For example, a dedication, an important visit of the General Conference President or a story of special significance to the church. These entries become of historic value to the church in just a few short years. One church clerk has in her records a faithful registry of the pastors who have served the church and their years of service. These notations can all be kept in the Church Record Book furnished by the Texas Conference Office.

MAINTAIN PERMANENT CHURCH RECORD BOOK

1. Enter the name of each person added to the church in the *Church Record Book*, indicating date of baptism, transfer or profession of faith.
2. When a member transfers to another church, record date of congregational vote after the second reading. Record date of acknowledgement that member was accepted into receiving church. Indicate church to which the person transferred.
3. Record the date of a member's death in the *Church Record Book*.
4. When a member is dropped by the congregation at an official church business meeting, record the date that the action was taken beside the person's name.

What is the Conference Church?

The purpose of the Conference Church is for individuals that live far away from an established church facility or are unable to travel to a church building. In other words, the Texas Conference Church is only a database to keep track of these individuals and to keep them informed via mailings of the goings-on within the church.

You may not transfer a member to the conference church just because he or she does not know where they will be going or what they want to do with their membership. Their member status resides with your church until they make a decision to transfer to a specific church or otherwise change their status.

Some people request transfer to the Conference Church because they are having difficulties with the pastor, officers or other members of the church. This situation requires the utmost in tact when being addressed. If the member requesting transfer has a problem with understanding the purpose of the Conference Church, let them know you will submit the request to the Conference for consideration and the Conference will handle the situation from that point.

So, who can transfer?

- Persons or families living in isolated parts of the conference with no possibility of being ministered to by a local congregation who would otherwise be without church privileges.

To transfer a person:

1. Submit a written request with a reason for transfer. Send all information to the Conference Membership Secretary.
2. The Executive Committee handles Conference Church membership transfers. They will vote on whether or not to accept the transfer at their next meeting.
3. When accepted, you will handle the transfer out of your church like any other transfer.
4. If the transfer were to be rejected, a letter will be sent to the member from the Conference explaining the reason for rejection and a copy will be sent to the pastor.

Retention of Materials

With the change to e-Adventist system the question arises;

“Do I have to send in paperwork to the Conference office anymore?”

The answer is: **YES.**

Not only should a computerized copy via e-Adventist be maintained, but all the paperwork that you completed prior to inputting that information into the computer should also be continued. In addition, the pastor and the Conference should receive copies for their records as well. On a regular basis, church records are audited and it is imperative that the church and Conference records match exactly.

Following is this schedule that must be maintained for auditing purposes:

1. Church Record Book – This is a permanent file never to be destroyed.
2. Church Board Meeting and Church Business Meeting Minutes. – These are permanent files.
3. Membership transfer forms, (green cards, FURs) – 3 months (until information has been recorded in the Church Record Book and has been entered in eAdventist by local church clerk or Conference Membership Clerk and the acknowledgement of transfer form.

SUGGESTED FILES TO BE MAINTAINED

1. Church Board Minutes
2. Church Business Meeting Minutes
3. List of Church Officers
4. Correspondence (In and Out)
5. Church Bulletins
6. Current Membership FUR Forms in alphabetical order
7. Transfers of Membership Forms
8. Missing Members FUR Forms
9. Apostatized Members FUR Forms

SUGGESTION FOR KEEPING MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION UP TO DATE

Hand out a form (you could use a blank FUR form or a copy of their current FUR form) and ask the members to complete all the information or make any changes and turn in at the end of the church service. Or you could create your own form including the information that is listed on the FUR form. Work to get dates of birth, school information for children, marriage dates, names of all those living in the family, whether members or not. **DO THIS AT LEAST ONCE A YEAR.**

SUPPLIES

The following supplies for church clerks are available as follows:

1. Church Record Book – Texas Conference Office of SDAs or the ABC Store in Keene, Dallas, Texas – 817-558-0100.
2. Family Unit Record forms – Conference Membership Clerk
3. Request to Transfer – Contact Conference Membership Clerk by phone or email
4. Request to Recommend – Printed off and sent by Conference Membership Clerk
5. Request to Acknowledge – Printed off and sent by Conference Membership Clerk
6. Acknowledgement of Completed Transfer – Printed out and sent by Conference Membership Clerk
7. Conference Printout of Local Members – sent out upon request of church clerk
8. Certificate of Baptism in English or Spanish – Conference Office Membership Clerk
9. Certificate of Profession of Faith in English or Spanish – Conference Office Membership Clerk

ITEMS USEFUL TO THE CHURCH CLERK

1. SDA Directory of Churches – This is a book listing all churches in the North American Division. It is available through the ABC in Keene, TX. This information is also available on PlusLine.org.
2. SDA Church Manual – Also available through the ABC in Keene, Texas.

Please note: The contact information for any church clerk can be found on eAdventist by searching organizations for the name of the church and then clicking on the “contact” tab. This works for both in Conference churches and out of Conference churches.

APPENDIX

Sample Letter to Missing Members

Dear _____:

For several weeks now your church family has noticed an empty space where you normally sit (in choir, Sabbath School class, Pathfinder club, etc.) Part of the joy of worship is to experience the presence of God with those you love.

We miss you greatly and pray that we may worship together with you this coming Sabbath.

If you are experiencing some problems, or if you want us to pray for you, please do not hesitate to pick up the phone to make a simple phone call or write me a brief note. We are here to help you spiritually and you are constantly in our prayers.

Sincerely,

Pastor

Sample Letter for SAT Test

High School
Street Address
City, State, Zip Code

To Whom It May Concern:

This is to verify that _____ is a member in regular standing in the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

He/She observes the biblical Sabbath from Friday at sunset to Saturday at Sunset for worship, and as a result, does not participate in secular activities during these sacred hours.

We respectfully request that he/she be allowed to take the SAT test that is scheduled for a Saturday on another day of the week.

Sincerely,

Pastor

Sample Letter to Newly Baptized Members

Dear _____:

We share the joy and thanksgiving to God for your baptism and entry into our church family on last Sabbath. Your presence will certainly do much to assist us in fulfilling the gospel commission to carry the gospel to the entire world.

We at _____ Church are determined to see Jesus in peace and to do so with every member of our church family present on that great day.

Please note the following services and times which are designed for our spiritual growth:

Prayer meeting:	Wednesday, 7:30 p.m.
Sabbath School:	Saturday, 9:30 a.m.
Pastor's Bible Study Class:	Saturday, 10:00 a.m.
Choir Rehearsals:	
Children:	_____
Youth:	_____
Adult:	_____
Friday Vespers:	Friday, 7:30 p.m.
Adventist Youth Meetings:	Saturday, 4:00 p.m.

(If you have children, we have special classes for them every Sabbath morning beginning at 10:00 a.m.)

For your convenience we have listed below some important phone numbers you may want to keep handy:

Pastor:	_____
1 st Elder:	_____
Deacon:	_____
Treasurer:	_____
Member nearest you:	_____
Spiritual Guide:	_____

We welcome you with love into our church family and pray God's blessings upon you and your family as we walk together in the footsteps of our Master. We have the blessed hope that Jesus is coming soon. Let us, through the grace of Christ, strive for that goal.

Sincerely,

Pastor

Clerk

Sample Letter for Sabbath (Work #1)

To Whom It May Concern:

_____, an employee of your company, is a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and observes the seventh day of the week as Sabbath according to the Scriptures, from sunset Friday until sunset Saturday each week, (see Exodus 20:8-11; Leviticus 23:32; and Mark 1:32)

We would appreciate you allowing Mr. /Ms. /Mrs. _____ to have Sabbaths off work in harmony with his/her religious convictions. He/She does not request to have Sabbaths off in order to have an extra day at home to catch up on odd jobs or to engage in recreation or amusements. Secular activities – shopping, sports, employment and entertainment – are laid aside. The Sabbath is sacred to him/her, and he/she devotes these hours to God.

It would be a violation of Mr. /Ms. /Mrs. _____'s deeply-held religious convictions to work on the Sabbath. We therefore respectfully request that you make an accommodation for his/her religious beliefs, observances and practices in harmony with Title VII of the Civil Rights Act and the guidelines of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

Mr. /Ms. /Mrs. _____ is willing to swap shifts with another employee who might have a different religious practice, or he/she will work Saturday nights after sundown, Sundays, or whatever other solution you might suggest. I would be happy to assist you in finding a solution if you wish.

Sincerely,

Pastor
(or Director of Public Affairs and Religious Liberty)

Sample Letter for Sabbath (Work #2)

Date

Flatstone Flat Tire Company
666 Wheels Circle
Wagon Wheel, NM 87666

Dear Mr. Flatstone:

This is to certify that _____ is a member in good standing with the _____ Seventh-day Adventist Church in (city/state).

As a Seventh-day Adventist, he/she observes the seventh-day of the week as our Sabbath day of worship from Friday at Sunset to Saturday at sunset. We do not request that he/she have the Sabbath off in order to have an extra day at home to catch up on odd jobs or to engage in recreation, amusements, or secular activities such as shopping, sports, employment or entertainment. The Sabbath is sacred to us and we devote these 24 hours to God. It would be a violation of our deeply-held religious convictions to work on the Sabbath.

I, as his/her minister, respectfully request that you make accommodations for his/her religious beliefs, observances and practices in harmony with Title VII of the Civil Rights Act and the guidelines of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

Thank you for addressing this matter as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Pastor

Sample Letter for Sabbath (Work #3)
(from the person requesting)

Date

Company Name

Address

City, State, Zip Code

To Whom It May Concern: (or a specific person if known)

Recently I became a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and have begun to observe the seventh day as the Sabbath as taught by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in harmony with the Old and New Testament teachings in the Bible.

I do not request to have the Sabbath off in order to have an extra day at home to catch up on odd jobs or to engage in recreation or amusements. Secular activities – shopping, sports, employment or entertainment – are laid aside. The Sabbath is sacred to me and my family, and I devote these hours to God.

It would be a violation of my deeply-held religious convictions to work on the Sabbath, which begins at sunset Friday and ends at sunset Saturday. I therefore, respectfully request that you make an accommodation for my religious beliefs, observance and practice in harmony with Title VII of the Civil Rights Act and guidelines of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

I would cooperate in helping to work out an accommodation and have the following suggestions:

1. Change to a shift or department that does not operate on Friday night or Saturday.
2. Swap shifts with another employee.
3. Work on Sundays or holidays in place of Saturday.
4. Work a flexible schedule so that I can leave the job on Friday afternoon or an hour before sunset.
5. Make a temporary accommodation while a permanent one is being arranged. (This could entail a temporary assignment to another job or use of a portion of my annual leave.)
6. Examine some other plan that you might suggest as a solution.

I will be glad to discuss this further with you in person at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely yours,

Church Member Name

Sample Letter of Recommendation

New Mexico University

Subject: Letter of Recommendation for _____

To Whom It May Concern:

I have had the pleasure of knowing _____ for approximately _____ years. As Pastor of the _____ church I have been very impressed with _____. Not only is _____ a kind and sincere person, but also a dedicated church member.

I highly recommend _____ for _____ with your institution because he/she is a bright and dedicated individual with extensive capabilities and the will to follow what the Lord asks of him/her. _____'s motivation extends beyond his/her willingness to sacrifice for an education, and to the greater purpose of receiving an education for a higher calling.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call me.

Sincerely,

Pastor

SAMPLE Seventh-day Adventist Church
Minutes of a Meeting of the Church Board
Any town, Date, Time

MEMBERS John Brown (Chairman), Mary Jane (Clerk/Statistical Secretary), Martha
PRESENT: Berry, Laurie Dunham, Hugh France, Clarence Graham, Keith Henny, Muriel
 Hilamb, Leon Ingham, Dan Jack, etc.

ABSENT: Edward Dunham, Brian Gerholm, Ben Lilao, etc.

INVITEE: George Ur

AGENDA APPROVAL

15 - 32 VOTED, To approve the agenda as presented (or with the additions as
 suggested).

MINUTES

15- 33 VOTED, To approve the minutes of date (month, day, year).

TREASURER'S FINANCIAL REPORT

15- 34 VOTED, To receive the treasurer's report for date (Month year).

INSTALLATION OF WINDOWS IN YOUTH ROOM

15-35 VOTED, To approve \$5,000 from the building fund account to be used for the
 installation of new windows in the youth Sabbath school room.

TRANSFER OF MEMBERSHIP (OUTGOING)

15 - 35 VOTED, To recommend to the Sample church the transfer of membership for
 Shelley and Paul Robles to the Shreveport SDA Church, Shreveport, LA.

PURCHASE OF OVERHEAD PROJECTOR

15-37 VOTED, To authorize the purchase of an overhead projector for the church
 for not more than \$450.00.

ADJOURNMENT

15-38 VOTED, To adjourn.

Minutes of Bd Mtg
Page 2
(date)

Pastor John Brown,
Chairperson

Mary Jane,
Church Clerk/Statistical Secretary

OBITUARY INFORMATION

The RECORD requests that this form be filled in completely. Please type or print legibly.

Name:

Date of Birth:

Place of Birth:

Date of Death:

Place of Death:

Place of Burial:

Church Membership:

SURVIVORS (Immediate family only. Correct spelling and legibility is important):

Name	Relationship	City	State

Number of Grandchildren:

Great-grandchildren:

Great-great-grandchildren:

OTHER INFORMATION (Include denominational service, if any):

Transfers of Membership

Your Church Name

Attn:

Church Clerk
Your Church Name
Church Address
Your City, State Zip Code
USA

Return Address:

Membership Records
Texas Conference
P.O. Box 800
Alvarado, Texas 76009

Or fax to: 817-783-5266

Phone: 817-783-2223 ext. 127

REQUEST TO RECOMMEND *Transferring to...*

Any other Church Name (Any City, State) – Clerk: Clerk's Name, Phone Number

Barney Rubble

Requested 9/10/2015

Date recommended: _____

Signature (church clerk): X _____

Mail or fax to Return Address above

Transfers of Membership

Your Church Name

Attn:

Church Clerk
Your Church Name
Church Address
Your City, State Zip Code
USA

Return Address:

Membership Records
Texas Conference
P.O. Box 800
Alvarado, Texas 76009

Or fax to: 817-783-5266

Phone: 817-783-2223 ext. 127

RECOMMENDATIONS TO ACKNOWLEDGE *Transferring from...*

Any other Church Name (Any City, State) – Clerk: Clerk's Name, Phone Number

Barney Rubble

Requested 9/10/2015

Date recommended: _____

Signature (church clerk): X _____

Mail or fax to Return Address above

Transfers of Membership

Your Church Name

Attn:

Church Clerk
Your Church Name
Church Address
Your City, State Zip Code
USA

Return Address:

Membership Records
Texas Conference
P.O. Box 800
Alvarado, Texas 76009

Or fax to: 817-783-5266

Phone: 817-783-2223 ext. 127

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS *Completed transfers to...*

Any other Church Name (Any City, State) – *Clerk: Clerk's Name, Phone Number*

Barney Rubble

Accepted 9/10/2015