

*A
MANUAL*

*FOR THE
LOCAL CHURCH CLERK OR
STATISTICAL SECRETARY*

Last updated 03/2009

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Role of the Church Clerk/Statistical Secretary

So you have been asked to serve your local congregation as church clerk/statistical secretary! Welcome to the world of the “Gifts of Helps, Energy and Orderliness” (1 Cor. 12:28) where church clerks work with statistics, lists, changes, numbers, people, history, and church procedures.

The role of the church clerk/statistical secretary is to minister to the congregation by documenting and maintaining the church records. The church clerk/statistical secretary works in close relationship with the pastor, other church officers, and members, keeps accurate minutes of church business and board meetings, and submits reports to the conference on a quarterly basis.

The clerk must recognize the need for careful and confidential guardianship of all church records. Even inactive members regard membership and church business as important to 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. Some churches will keep records in computer files while others use file cards and notebooks. Whatever methods are used, a good filing system is indispensable.

The church clerk/statistical secretary is responsible for acquainting him/herself with the latest edition of the *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual* which contains important information and procedures for the work of the clerk. Your pastor should have a copy of the current Church Manual, or you can access it online at <http://www.uccsda.org/membership/resources>.

To assist in the organization of church records, certain forms and office supplies are essential. These will vary according to local needs but suggestions to help facilitate the work of the church clerk will be provided. Samples of special forms are provided in this Manual under the section entitled “Forms & Supplies”. (Appendix A)

Responsibilities of the Church Clerk/Statistical Secretary

PREPARE CHURCH BOARD AND BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES

1. Supply copy of previous meeting minutes for each member.
2. Minutes should include the following:
 - Date and time of meeting
 - Place of meeting
 - Members present
 - Members absent
 - Invited guests present
 - Agenda items
 - Actions voted (number by month and year only the voted actions)
 - Major discussion items (even though no action voted)
 - Signature lines for the chairperson and the clerk to sign their names

A sample of church board minutes is provided (Appendix B).

Minutes should be typed as soon as possible after the meeting, while notes are still meaningful and details can be 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.

If the clerk is unable to attend a scheduled meeting, he/she should make arrangements, which are satisfactory to the chairperson, in advance for a replacement to record the minutes.

Membership Ministry Committee

Job description of the Membership Committee

1. Make every member a sacred trust
2. Review the total membership on a quarterly basis
3. Keep the church membership list current
4. Narrow the gap between the number of active and inactive members
5. Make recommendation to the church board or business session on membership issues
6. Provide a quarterly statistical report to the church in business session
7. Track membership involvement
8. Assure each member has regular written and personal communication from the church
9. Assure each member is receiving age appropriate materials
10. Provide appropriate committee with important event dates for each family (birthday, graduations, births, etc.)
11. Provide each member with Baptismal celebration materials
12. track each member that has moved to assure good communication with another SDA church family
13. Keep the new address information current
 - Keep sending the members that have moved the materials from your local church
 - Contact the pastor of the church or churches nearest the new address and encourage them to visit

Who should be on the Membership Ministry Committee?

1. To be decided by the church board or church in business session
2. Suggested Committee Members
 - Church clerk
 - Church clerk assistant (could be youth assistant)
 - Elder assigned to Membership Ministry
 - Individuals representing different church age groups
 - Treasurer
 - Pastor

MAINTAIN INCOMING MEMBERSHIP RECORDS

A person becomes a member of the local Seventh-day Adventist Church in one of three ways: (1) baptism, (2) profession of faith, (3) transfer of membership from another Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The responsibilities of the church clerk/statistical secretary are outlined as follows for each situation (see also *SDA Church Manual*, Chapter 6, section entitled “Transferring Members”):

Baptism

1. When a person is baptized, the Certificate of Baptism (Appendix C) must be signed by the pastor and the church clerk/statistical secretary.
2. When the person has been accepted into church fellowship by vote of the congregation, not just the church board (see *SDA Church Manual*, chapter 7, section entitled “The Church Clerk”), the clerk must record the person’s name, address, telephone number, date of birth, grade in school where applicable, date of baptism, and the officiating pastor on the Family Unit Record (FUR) (Appendix D). If the baptized person is a member of a family that is already members of your church, enter the information of the baptism onto the FUR of the family. If they are not a member of a family in your church, use a blank FUR to report the detailed information. Make a copy for yourself and mail the original to Membership Records at the Conference Office.
3. Record the same information in the *Church Record Book* or on computer file.

Profession of Faith

1. The *Certificate of Profession of Faith* (Appendix E) is signed by the pastor and the church clerk/statistical secretary.
2. When a person is accepted by profession of faith into church fellowship by vote of the congregation, the clerk must record the person’s name, address, telephone number, date of birth, date admitted to membership, and the name of the pastor on the Family Unit Record (FUR) (Appendix D). If the person is a member of a family that is already members of your church, enter the information of the baptism onto the FUR of the family. If they are not a member of a family in your church, use a blank FUR to report the detailed information. Make a copy for yourself and mail the original to Membership Records at the Conference Office.
3. Record the same information in the *Church Record Book* or on computer file.

MAINTAIN OUTGOING MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

In one of four ways a person may leave the membership of a Seventh-day Adventist Church. They are: (1) death, (2) transfer of membership, (3) apostasy, (4) considered missing. The following is how each one should be recorded:

Death

1. Record the date of birth and date of death on the Family Unit Record (FUR). Make a copy for yourself and mail the original to Membership Records at the Conference Office.
2. Record the same information in the Church Record Book or on computer file.

Apostasy and/or Missing

1. Members who have apostatized and/or who have been determined missing may be removed from church membership **ONLY BY VOTE OF THE CHURCH**.
2. Record the person's name, last known address, telephone number (if known), date of birth, and date removed from membership on the Family Unit Record (FUR). Make a copy for yourself and mail the original to Membership Records at the Conference Office.
3. Record the same information in the *Church Record Book* or on computer file.

Transfer Processes for Offline Church Clerks

What you MUST know...

Definitions

Online Church – Church and conference are both using eAdventist.NET to maintain membership information, including processing of transfers.

Offline Church – Church is NOT using eAdventist.NET for processing of transfers (might be maintaining names and addresses, but NOT processing transfers), but conference is

Offsystem Church – Church is not using eAdventist.NET in any capacity, and neither is its conference

FUR – A Family Unit Record form: whatever form your conference requires church to use to record family information such as multiple addresses, children, etc.

SUMMARY OF PROCESSES INVOLVED

As an “offline” church clerk, eAdventist.NET is designed to work equally as well for you as for “online” clerks. **The most significant change will be sending your transfer requests, recommendations and acknowledgements to your conference rather than directly to the other church.**

Your conference office will provide you with complete Family Unit Record forms (FURs) for the family units in your church, and a blank FUR that you can copy as you need it, to help facilitate your interaction with the conference regarding membership transfers. Whenever a member needs to be added, deleted, or changed, mark the changes on the FUR and send it to your conference. The conference clerk will enter the changes on eAdventist.NET and return updated FURs at regular intervals.

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.

Note: A request may come in one of two forms: 1) Request for Transfer of Membership (green) – (Appendix F), or 2) Transfers to Process with Requests to Recommend (white) – (Appendix G). A recommendation may also come in one of two forms: 1) Recommendation for Transfer or Church Membership (white, triplicate) – (Appendix H), or 2) Transfers to Process with Recommendations to Acknowledge (white) – (Appendix I).

<i>If you receive...</i>	<i>For...</i>	<i>Do...</i>
... a request from an individual stating that they want to join your church	... a transfer from any other church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send request to your conference • Wait for Recommendation
... a request via your conference	... a transfer to another church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vote • Send signed Recommendation with FUR to your conference • Wait for Acknowledgement
... a request from a church	... a transfer to that church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vote • Send Recommendation to your conference • Wait for Acknowledgement
...a recommendation via your conference	... a transfer from another church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vote • Send signed Acknowledgement to your conference • Your conference will return an updated FUR to you for your records • Transfer is complete
... a recommendation from a church	...a transfer from that church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vote • Fill in a blank FUR with the new member(s) information, sign and date the FUR and send to your conference • Send Acknowledgement to the church • Your conference will return an updated FUR to you for your records • Transfer is complete
... an acknowledgement and/or FUR via your conference	... a transfer to another church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transfer is complete
... an acknowledgement from a church	... a transfer to that church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send signed and dated FUR to your conference • Transfer is complete

HELP PREVENT MISSING MEMBERS

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

In a small church it is not hard to notice when someone is not regularly attending. A large church may notice when newsletters are returned by the postal service.

If the church clerk/statistical secretary takes note of those persons, he/she can send church bulletins with friendly notes and tell the pastoral staff that the member has been missing. An alert church clerk can keep a member from becoming “missing”. If only a short time has elapsed between first notice of an “undeliverable” letter and intervention by a pastor, elder or lay member, it may not be difficult to find the member and encourage a return to active fellowship.

It also should be noted that those who have been missing for longer periods of time, sometimes can be found by talking with members who have known them. Once found, they can be encouraged to return to church fellowship.

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 person is transferred.
3. Record the date of a member’s **death** in the *Church Record Book*.
4. When a member is **removed** by the congregation at an official church business meeting, record the date that the action was taken beside the person’s name.

KEEP LIST OF COMMITTEES

The church clerk/statistical secretary should keep a list of all committees appointed by the church. He/she should also provide for the chairperson of the group a list of the members comprising the committee, along with an outline of the task the committee is being asked to accomplish.

A sample of a committee and its terms of reference is provided in Appendix J.

DEVELOP CHURCH DIRECTORY

One of the responsibilities of the church clerk/statistical secretary is to have a church directory produced as needed. This may be printed or duplicated, or produced by a company that makes photo directories. It should include non-member spouses and unbaptized children from member-related homes, and regular attenders who are not yet baptized.

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

PREPARE CHURCH BULLETIN

In small churches where there is no church secretary, the church clerk/statistical secretary may assume the responsibility for the weekly church bulletin. However, this is a duty that may be delegated to someone with typing and/or computer skills if it is more convenient to do so.

OBITUARIES

If the family of a deceased church member wishes to have an obituary printed in the Union Paper, the church clerk/statistical secretary can contact the Union office to get the proper forms. For us the North Pacific Union is our contact, and they can be reached at 5709 N. 20th St. Ridgefield, WA 98642 or by phone at 360-857-7043.

FORMS & SUPPLIES

Obtained from the Office of the Conference Secretariat

1. Family Unit Record (FUR)
2. “Request for Transfer of Membership” cards (green)
3. Order Form for Clerk Supplies (Appendix K)
4. Conference Computer Printout of Local Membership

Obtained from the Adventist Book Center

1. *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual*

Suggested Files to be Maintained

1. Church Board Minutes
2. Church Business Meeting Minutes
3. Correspondence (In & Out)
4. Church Bulletins
5. Current Membership List
6. Transfer of Membership List
7. Missing Members List
8. Former Members List

**SAMPLE ADVENTIST CHURCH
CHURCH BOARD MINUTES**

Appendix B

Date	January 14, 2008
Place	Sample Adventist Church
Members Present	Name of chairperson, Chair; then each attending member alphabetically
Members Absent	list each absent member in alphabetical order here
Guests Present	List any guests in attendance
Devotional	Name of person giving devotional
Agenda 01-08	Voted to accept the agenda as presented, with the additions as suggested.
Minutes Approved 02-08	Voted to approve the Sample Adventist Church Board minutes of December 10, 2007.
Financial Report 03-08	Voted to record that the December 2007 financial report was reviewed.
Budget Proposal 04-08	Voted to recommend to the Sample Adventist Church the 2008 Proposed Budget.
Membership Transfers 05-08	Voted to recommend to the Sample Adventist Church the request to transfer the following individuals from Sample Adventist Church to Another Adventist Church: Jim and Suzy Member Voted to recommend to the Sample Adventist Church the request to transfer the following individuals from Another Adventist Church to Sample Adventist Church: Joe and Kathy Member
Evangelistic Series	Considerable discussion on the upcoming evangelistic meetings planned for the Sample area. It was suggested the pastor contact the speaker and bring back a report relative to a preferred time and location for the meetings.
Installation of Windows 06-08	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.
Overhead Projector Purchase 07-08	Voted to authorize the purchase of an overhead projector for the church for not more than \$450.00.
Closing Prayer	Name of person giving prayer

(Signature Here)

Name, Chair

(Signature Here)

Name, Clerk

MY COMMITMENT

1. I believe there is one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a unity of three co-eternal Persons.
2. I accept the death of Jesus Christ on Calvary as the atoning sacrifice for my sins and believe that through faith in His shed blood I am saved from sin and its penalty.
3. I renounce the world and its sinful ways, and have accepted Jesus Christ as my personal Saviour believing that God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven my sins and given me a new heart.
4. I accept by faith the righteousness of Christ, my Intercessor in the heavenly sanctuary, and accept His promise of transforming grace and power to live a loving, Christ-centered life in my home and before the world.
5. I believe that the Bible is God's inspired Word, the only rule of faith and practice for the Christian. I covenant to spend time regularly in prayer and Bible study.
6. I accept the Ten Commandments as a transcript of the character of God and a revelation of His will. It is my purpose by the power of the indwelling Christ to keep this law, including the fourth commandment, which requires the observance of the seventh day of the week as the Sabbath of the Lord and the memorial of Creation.
7. I look forward to the soon coming of Jesus and the blessed hope when "this mortal shall put on immortality." As I prepare to meet the Lord, I will witness to His loving salvation, and by life and word help others to be ready for His glorious appearing.
8. I accept the Biblical teaching of spiritual gifts and believe that the gift of prophecy is one of the identifying marks of the remnant church.
9. I believe in church organization. It is my purpose to support the church by my tithes and offerings and by my personal effort and influence.
10. I believe that my body is the temple of the Holy Spirit; and will honor God by caring for it, avoiding the use of that which is harmful; abstaining from all unclean foods; from the use, manufacture, or sale of alcoholic beverages; the use, manufacture, or sale of tobacco in any of its forms for human consumption; and from the misuse of or trafficking in narcotics or other drugs.
11. I know and understand the fundamental Bible principles as taught by the Seventh-day Adventist Church. I purpose, by the grace of God, to fulfill His will by ordering my life in harmony with these principles.
12. I accept the New Testament teaching of baptism by immersion and desire to be so baptized as a public expression of faith in Christ and His forgiveness of my sins.
13. I accept and believe that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is the remnant church of Bible prophecy and that people of every nation, race, and language are invited and accepted into its fellowship. I desire to be a member of this local congregation of the world church.

Baptism

symbolizes
 confession of faith in Christ
 adoption into the family of God
 commissioned for service

In harmony with our Lord's command,

_____ was baptized at _____

_____ on the _____ day of _____

_____ and received into the _____

Seventh-day Adventist Church

_____ of the _____

Conference

_____ on the _____ day of _____

Name _____ Date _____

Address _____

_____ Officiating Minister _____ Church Clerk



Family Unit Record

Address	City, State, Zip	Carrier Route	Confidential Addr?	Primo Mail?
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Mailing Address (PO Box if different than above)	City, State, Zip	Home Phone	Unlisted H?	Gleaner?	Review?
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Seasonal Address	City, State, Zip	Work Phone	Cell Phone
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Name	Marital Status	Family Position	Gender	Birth Date	Member?	Church	Occupation	Grade	Begin Date	Transfer Date	School Type

<input type="checkbox"/> Baptism	<input type="checkbox"/> Redoption	<input type="checkbox"/> Proof of Faith	<input type="checkbox"/> *Later Received	*Church	Date	Sign'd
<input type="checkbox"/> Decord	<input type="checkbox"/> Miring	<input type="checkbox"/> Renewed	<input type="checkbox"/> *Later Granted	*Church	Date	Sign'd

The work of God on the human heart is like the growth of a flower — first comes the sowing of the seed, then its germination, followed by the sprouting of the plant, the bud, and finally, the bloom. As we come closer to Christ, our understanding of His Word and His will becomes clearer, creating within us a desire to follow Him more closely. And as a result, we wish to fellowship with those whose experience has brought them to similar perceptions of God and His truth for these times.

MY COMMITMENT

1. I believe there is one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a unity of three co-eternal Persons.
2. I accept the death of Jesus Christ on Calvary as the atoning sacrifice for my sins and believe that through faith in His shed blood I am saved from sin and its penalty.
3. I renounce the world and its sinful ways, and have accepted Jesus Christ as my personal Saviour believing that God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven my sins and given me a new heart.
4. I accept by faith the righteousness of Christ, my Intercessor in the heavenly sanctuary, and accept His promise of transforming grace and power to live a loving, Christ-centered life in my home and before the world.
5. I believe that the Bible is God's inspired Word, the only rule of faith and practice for the Christian. I covenant to spend time regularly in prayer and Bible study.
6. I accept the Ten Commandments as a transcript of the character of God and a revelation of His will. It is my purpose by the power of the indwelling Christ to keep this law, including the fourth commandment, which requires the observance of the seventh day of the week as the Sabbath of the Lord and the memorial of Creation.
7. I look forward to the soon coming of Jesus and the blessed hope when "this mortal shall put on immortality." As I prepare to meet the Lord, I will witness to His loving salvation, and by life and word help others to be ready for His glorious appearing.
8. I accept the Biblical teaching of spiritual gifts and believe that the gift of prophecy is one of the identifying marks of the remnant church.
9. I believe in church organization. It is my purpose to support the church by my tithes and offerings and by my personal effort and influence.
10. I believe that my body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, and will honor God by caring for it, avoiding the use of that which is harmful; abstaining from all unclean foods; from the use, manufacture, or sale of alcoholic beverages; the use, manufacture, or sale of tobacco in any of its forms for human consumption; and from the misuse of or trafficking in narcotics or other drugs.
11. I know and understand the fundamental Bible principles as taught by the Seventh-day Adventist Church. I purpose, by the grace of God, to fulfill His will by ordering my life in harmony with these principles.
12. I accept the New Testament teaching of baptism by immersion and have been so baptized as a public expression of faith in Christ and His forgiveness of my sins.
13. I accept and believe that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is the remnant church of Bible prophecy and that people of every nation, race, and language are invited and accepted into its fellowship. I desire to be a member of this local congregation of the world church.

Name _____ Date _____

Address _____

Profession of Faith

This certificate reflects a public commitment by a previously baptized Christian to become a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

In harmony with the progressive work of God's Spirit,

_____ was accepted by profession of faith

and received into the _____

_____ Seventh-day Adventist Church

of the _____

_____ Conference

on the _____ day of _____

_____ Officiating Minister

_____ Church Clerk

1. Request for Transfer of Church Membership

To the Clerk of the Seventh-day
Adventist Church in

We have received a request from
....., who now holds membership in your church, to unite with the
..... Seventh-day Adventist Church
in As soon as your church
has given this request due consideration, and the transfer has been authorized,
kindly send notice of the same to:

Clerk:
Date: Address:
.....

(OVER)

Adventist.NET

Transfers of Membership

Spokane South Hill SDA Church

Attn:
Church Clerk
Spokane South Hill SDA Church
5607 S Freya St
Spokane WA 99223-8015
USA

Return Address:
Membership Records
Upper Columbia Conf of SDA
PO Box 19039
Spokane WA 99219-9039

Or fax to: 509-838-4882

Phone: 509-838-2761

REQUESTS TO RECOMMEND *transferring to:*

Spokane Central SDA Church (Spokane, WA) - Clerk: , 509-328-5900

John Doe

Requested 11/16/2005

Date recommended: _____

Signature (church clerk): X _____

Mail or fax to Return Address above

Adventist.NET

Transfers of Membership

Spokane Central SDA Church

Attn:
Church Clerk
Spokane Central SDA Church
828 W Spofford Ave
Spokane WA 99205-4664
USA

Return Address:
Membership Records
Upper Columbia Conf of SDA
P/O Box 19039
Spokane WA 99219-9039

Or fax to: 509-838-4882

Phone: 509-838-2761

RECOMMENDATIONS TO ACKNOWLEDGE *Transferring from*

Spokane South Hill SDA Church (Spokane, WA) - Clerk: , 509-448-6425

John Doe

Recommended 11/16/2005

Date accepted: _____

Signature (church clerk): X _____

Mail or fax to Return Address above

**Sample Seventh-day Adventist Church
COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP AND TERMS OF REFERENCE
Last Updated January 1, 1993**

Name of Committee: HEALTH MINISTRIES COMMITTEE

Membership: Health-Temperance Leader, Chairperson (Ex Officio)
Pastor (Ex Officio)
Secretary – Appointed by members

Appointed Members: (Type names here)

Type of Committee: Standing

Committee Size: 7-11 members

Quorum: Simple majority

Term of Office: One year

New Members Appointed by: Church Board

Frequency of Meetings: Quarterly

General Description of the Work of Committee:

Planning of Health and Temperance training, outreach, and nurture ministries in church and community. Serves to monitor, evaluate, and report to the church board the progress of the work relating to health and temperance. To facilitate the conducting of seminars and workshops in health and temperance and serve as guidance resource body.

Terms of Reference:

1. To coordinate planning for Health and Temperance training, outreach, and nurture ministries in the church and community. (Power to recommend to the Church Board.)
2. To focus on the needs of the church and community relating to health and temperance and develop strategies to meet those needs. (Power to recommend to the Church Board.)

Distribution of Minutes: Committee Members

ORDER FORM
FOR CLERK SUPPLIES

Memo to: Membership Department

From: _____

Church: _____

Address: _____

Postal Code: _____ Date: _____

Please send the following items: (There is no charge for forms. Indicate the amount you wish to have sent.)

____ Blank Family Unit Record form – White

____ Request for Church Membership – Ivory

____ Request for Transfer of Church Membership – Green

THE MINISTRY OF THE
Church Clerk

You may be reading this because you have been asked to serve your local church as clerk. Or perhaps you serve on a church nominating committee and wonder what the clerk is expected to do. In either case, if you understand the church as the body of Christ and understand the call to ministry as experienced by each member, this will help you see the role the clerk fills within a local church.

God supplies each person in the church with the resources for ministry – scripture, spiritual power, God’s character and spiritual gifts.

Bible Principles

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. Thus, the church is a creation of the Spirit.

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 to 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)

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 the members. The church clerks reports to the local conference and serves on the church board. Reporting to the clerk are sometimes assistant clerks, depending on the size of your church and if you need help. If you have experience in working with computers or a willingness to learn the computer programs necessary for this work, it might be beneficial to use one if it is available.

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. In a small church, the amount of

time you would need to spend would be dictated by the intricacy of your methods. 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. Or 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 Gifts

Church clerks need to work with lists, changed, numbers and people. They will exercise a majority, if not all, of the following spiritual gifts: helps, energy, orderliness, and love. The gift of *helps* (1 Cor. 12:28) enables the clerk to give more than merely perfunctory answers. The clerk, as the keeper of church records is a source of information on many items and is a great help in supplying statistics, history, and church procedures.

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

The body of Christ involves many diverse parts, but those with the gift for *orderliness* are particularly needed.

Indeed, 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 overemphasized. In small churches where no office secretary is hired, the clerk conducts most of the church's business. His or her contribution is invaluable.

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.

How To Plan

Determine how you will go about organizing the necessary records and making the reports to those entities which must receive them. At the beginning of your term of service, meet with those in your church who hold other leadership positions and set up a system of receiving and disseminating information to foster team work. Get to know the people in the church family, especially the new ones who are just transferring into the church or recently baptized. Help them get involved with the church program and feel a warm

welcome from you. Watch for those who may not attend regularly and mention these names to your pastor and first elder.

Tools for Ministry

A *Church Record Book* can be obtained from your local Adventist Book Center or your church may already have one in which the clerk has been keeping the minutes and business of the church. This book also contains a place for recording the church membership. A card file can also be used. Either method can be used for record-keeping in your church.

A computer can be very helpful in keeping the membership records of the church. You can use your own computer or one located at the church office. Those entities to which you must make reports can provide computerized forms and formats for your use.

Training

The Holy Spirit equips a Christian disciple by bestowing spiritual gifts to accomplish ministry. But these gifts need to be developed. Information and training may be provided by an individual whose prior experience in the exercise of this ministry qualifies them.

Besides learning from the wisdom of experienced persons, books about the skills involved and workshops conducted by your local conference provide some of the best material to use in training for this ministry.

Usually a yearly meeting for all church clerks in the conference is held either during camp meeting or at a church officers or Church Ministries convention. This meeting gives you an opportunity to ask questions and understand changed in procedures.

If your church is beginning to make use of a computer, you will find it helpful to take an introductory course on Personal Computers (PCs) that includes instruction on how to use word processing and data processing (or list management) programs. These are available from community colleges and state universities as well as commercial training firms.

Resource Materials

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.

The church clerk not only ensures that the church's records are maintained and the church's business is documented, but also seeks to know the people the statistical reports reveal.

The Caring Church Strategy
The ministry of the church clerk is vital
to accomplish the mission of your local church

A balanced church program is just as important as any of the individual offices or functions of the church. Your ministry is given meaning and effectiveness as you fit into the overall mission that Christ has for your congregation. The Holy Spirit calls you to teamwork and cooperation with the other leaders in your church, according to a united plan of action.

What are the essential elements of a healthy local church? There are at least four fundamental activities that must be present in any Adventist church for it to be successful:

1. **Reaching the community.** Healthy churches discover the kinds of people who live in their area and understand the needs of the people, so that they can provide activities designed to meet these needs and create a strong public awareness of the church.
2. **Winning people to Christ.** Healthy church cooperate with the Holy Spirit in establishing meaningful relationships with those attracted to Christ, provide opportunities for them to become acquainted with His Word and His fellowship, and challenge them to become His disciples.
3. **Nurturing the members.** Healthy churches provide for the continuing spiritual growth of all their members through enthusiastic worship, interesting Bible study, supportive friendships, and opportunities for significant service.
4. **Inspiring leadership.** Healthy churches have pastoral and lay leaders that help the congregation to identify the needs in the church and the community, clarify goals, gather the necessary resources and implement effective action.

“Christ’s method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, “Follow Me”. (Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing*, page 143.)

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 a 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 to 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, or produced for the church by one of the companies that makes photo directories. It should include nonmember spouses and unbaptized children from church – related households, as well as regular attenders 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.
6. **Church Bulletin.** If there is no church secretary, the responsibility for the church bulletin may belong to the church clerk. This is a duty that can be delegated to another person if it is more convenient to do so.

