

Membership Transfers

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

When members move to a different area, the clerk of the church holding their membership records should write to the secretary/clerk of the relevant conference requesting that a pastor in the new locality visit them and help facilitate their membership transfer to the new congregation. (Church Manual - 18th Edition; page 52)

Process for Granting and Accepting Membership Transfers

1. A church member asks the pastor or church clerk of the church they want to transfer to (the receiving church) to transfer their membership from the church it is currently at.
2. The clerk of the receiving church enters the transfer request into eAdventist or reports it to the conference membership clerk to enter.
3. The church the member is transferring from (the granting church), takes the request to the church board to recommend it, favorably or otherwise, to the church body.
4. The church body is made aware of the transfer typically by first and second readings announced during the church service.
5. The granting church members vote on the transfer request, favorably or otherwise, on the day of the second reading.
6. The clerk of the granting church enters the date the church body voted to grant (or deny) the transfer request into eAdventist or reports it to the conference membership clerk to enter.
7. The clerk of the receiving church is notified that the transfer request has been voted on and, if it has been granted, takes the request to the church board for recommendation.
8. The church board's recommendation is presented to the church for first and second readings announced during the church service.
9. The receiving church members vote on the transfer request, favorably or otherwise, on the day of the second reading.
10. The clerk of the receiving church enters the date the church body voted to accept (or deny) the transfer request into eAdventist or reports it to the conference membership clerk to enter.

See page 52 – 55 of the 2010 Church Manual for additional information.

Additional Transfer Information

- Only members in regular standing may be transferred to other churches.
- If a member's transfer request is denied by one of the churches, that church should notify the other church of the reason for the denial.
 - A person's membership remains in the granting church until the transfer is completed.
- Members waiting for their transfer to be completed before holding a church office can be voted into a church office contingent on their transfer being completed.
- A transfer request should never be submitted without the member's approval.
- The church board cannot vote to grant or accept membership transfers.
- Members who are not sure where their church membership is should give the receiving church clerk information to be able to search for their membership. If that is not successful, the member's information should be sent to the conference membership clerk who will assist in the search.

Membership Transfers, continued

- Only once it has been determined by both the church and conference clerks that a member does not hold membership in another church in the NAD should an alternate method of accepting them into membership be used.
- Transfers within the NAD should typically not take longer than 3 to 6 months.

Frequently Asked Transfer Questions & Answers

Q: How long do transfers usually take?

A: Membership transfers should typically not take longer than 3 to 6 months; however, there are a number of reasons why a transfer might take longer. (See next question.)

Q: What might make a transfer take longer?

- A: How long a transfer takes from request to acceptance depends on many different factors including:
- the time it takes to locate the person's membership record (if they don't know where it is),
 - the time it takes to mail transfer information to churches outside the North American Division or to clerks with no access to email,
 - the frequency of church board meetings at both the granting and receiving churches,
 - the time it takes to transition to a new church clerk if a change is being made,
 - the time it takes to determine if a member's transfer will be granted (for members who have not been attending the granting church for many years).

Q: What can I do to speed up the transfer process?

- A: Things you can do to speed up the transfer process include:
- Provide the person's full name (including previous names they might be listed under)
 - Provide the person's date of birth

- Contact the church clerk or conference clerk directly if the person is unsure of where their membership is

Q: Is it ok for my church to vote to accept the member before it is granted by the granting church?

A: Some churches do choose to accept transfers before they are granted; however, this is not recommended because if the person is not a member of that church the process will need to be repeated once the correct granting church is located. Or, if it turns out the member no longer has membership in the Adventist church they will need to be accepted by re-baptism or profession of faith which can be embarrassing for the member since they thought they were already accepted by transfer.

Q: The Church Manual says only members in regular standing may be transferred, does this include missing members?

A: The eAdventist system requires that the missing status be undone before a member is transferred. This typically can be done without board or church approval since the person's membership status has not changed. Clerks using eAdventist can look up a missing member and undo the missing status after which time the transfer can be processed as usual.

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