Chesapeake Conference Guidelines
for
Church Establishment

The following guidelines are for the formation of a Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Chesapeake Conference. The definition of each stage of Church formation is also provided to inform and guide in the process of planning and decision-making. It is realized that each Church formation is unique, but requests for variations to these guidelines must be submitted to Conference Administration, which may refer the matter to the Chesapeake Conference Executive Committee for approval. The establishment of any of the 3 (three) stages of Church formation described herein may not be undertaken until approval is obtained in accordance with the guidelines outlined in this document.

CHURCH • COMPANY • GROUP
DEFINED

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST *CHURCH*

Definition

A minimum of 50 (fifty) baptized Seventh-day Adventist believers meeting regularly for Sabbath Worship; organized by Conference leadership; approved by the Chesapeake Conference Executive Committee; and, ratified at a regular Chesapeake Conference constituency meeting.

Organization Requirements

1. A pastoral leadership plan approved by the Chesapeake Conference Executive Committee.
2. The election of elder, treasurer, clerk, and other organizational offices where applicable, as outlined in the *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual* (current edition to application submission).
3. Plans for the establishment and maintenance of a permanent (rented, leased, or owned) meeting location.
4. Plans for the accomplishment of mission, evangelism, discipleship, church growth, and a balanced church program must be prepared in consultation with Conference Administration and the Evangelism/Church Growth Director.
5. The maintenance of membership records in accordance with the *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual* and Chesapeake Conference guidelines.
6. An annual review of growth and mission metrics with the pastor (follow-up reviews may be required, as indicated by Conference Administration).

Financial Requirements

1. Financial support of the local church as voted by the church in business session.
2. Regular monthly tithe remittances to the Chesapeake Conference.
3. Financial support of world missions.
4. Support of the financial plan and adherence to the offering schedule of the Chesapeake Conference, the Columbia Union, and the General Conference as approved by the Chesapeake Conference Executive Committee.
5. Financial records that demonstrate the minimum annual tithe remittance as approved by the Chesapeake Conference Executive Committee.

6. The maintenance of financial records in accordance with the Chesapeake Conference guidelines that are approved by the treasury department.

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST *COMPANY*

Defined

A minimum of 25 (twenty-five) baptized Seventh-day Adventists meeting regularly for Sabbath Worship, organized and recognized by the Chesapeake Conference Executive Committee. Membership of the believers is maintained by the Chesapeake Conference Church.

Organization Requirements

1. A pastoral leadership plan approved by the Chesapeake Conference Executive Committee.
2. Conference appointment, in consultation with the group, of a Company leader or Volunteer Lay Pastor, and treasurer (if needed, as indicated by circumstances).
3. The appointment of other organizational offices by the Company in business session.
4. The establishment and maintenance of a meeting location.
5. Plans for church establishment, mission, evangelism, discipleship, growth, and a balanced program must be prepared in consultation with Conference Administration and the Evangelism/Church Growth Director.
6. An annual review of growth and mission metrics with the pastor of the sponsoring church.

Financial Requirements

1. Financial support of the Company as voted by the Company in business session.
2. Financial support of world missions.
3. Support of the financial plan and adherence to the offering schedule of the Chesapeake Conference, the Columbia Union, and the General Conference, as approved by the Chesapeake Conference Executive Committee.
4. Regular, monthly tithe remittances to the Chesapeake Conference.
5. The maintenance of financial records in accordance with the Chesapeake Conference guidelines that are approved by the treasury department.

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST *GROUP*

Definition

A group (unspecified number) of Seventh-day Adventist believers meeting regularly for Sabbath Worship, organized by a Seventh-day Adventist church with the approval of the Chesapeake Conference Administrative Committee. Membership of the members is maintained in a sponsoring Seventh-day Adventist Church or the Chesapeake Conference Church.

Organization Requirements

1. A pastoral leadership plan approved by the Chesapeake Conference Administrative Committee.
2. Established appointment of a Group leader or Volunteer Lay Pastor, and assistant treasurer from the sponsoring Church. If group does not have a sponsoring church, the Chesapeake Conference Administrative Committee and the Evangelism/Church Growth Director, in consultation with the group, will appoint a group leader or Volunteer Lay Pastor.
3. The Evangelism/Church Growth Director will appoint a coach for the Group leader/Volunteer Lay Pastor.
4. The initial appointment of other organizational offices by the sponsoring Church in business session.
5. The establishment and maintenance of a meeting location.
6. Plans for mission, evangelism, discipleship, church growth, and a balanced program must be prepared in consultation with Conference Administration and the Evangelism/Church Growth Director.
7. An annual review of growth and mission metrics with the pastor of the sponsoring Church and Group leader.

Financial Requirements

1. Financial support of the Group as voted by the Group and the sponsoring church in business session.
2. Financial support of world missions as voted by the Group.
3. Support of the financial plan and adherence to the offering schedule of the Chesapeake Conference, the Columbia Union, and the General Conference as approved by the Chesapeake Conference Executive Committee.
4. Regular, weekly financial remittances to the sponsoring Church's local church treasurer or to the Chesapeake Conference Church.
5. Establish a plan with the sponsoring church for the Conference-approved maintenance of financial records prior to being organized into a Company or a Church.

GROUP • COMPANY • CHURCH ORGANIZATION PROCEDURE

The purpose of a Group or Company is for the eventual formation of a new Church.

- Most often the approach is to first form a group, then to form a Company, if more autonomy would be helpful. After a minimum period of one year, the proposal for Church formation could be presented to the Chesapeake Conference Executive Committee.
- A Company may be formed without Group formation .

STEPS TO GROUP OR COMPANY ORGANIZATION

1. Submit a request to the Chesapeake Conference Executive Committee through the Evangelism/Church Growth Director, including the completion of a Group or Company organization application form.
    - Application for a Group must be a recommendation from the business session of a sponsoring church organization.
    - Application for a Company must be made by a sponsoring Church or the potential Company nucleus of Seventh-day Adventist members.
2. Chesapeake Conference Administration, in consultation with the Evangelism/Church Growth Director, will advise the Group or Company
    - if more information is needed
    - to coordinate a date for the official Group or Company organization.
3. The official organization will be completed in compliance with the organizational guidelines in the Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual. (Chapter 5: "Church Membership").

STEPS TO CHURCH ORGANIZATION

1. Must be either an organized Group or Company for a minimum of one year.
2. Submit a request to the Chesapeake Conference Executive Committee, through the Evangelism/Church Growth Director, including the completion of a church organization application form.
3. Demonstrate the ability to fulfill all of the organized church criteria.
4. The Chesapeake Conference Administration, in consultation with the Evangelism/Church Growth Director, will advise the Group or Company
    - if more time is needed for the demonstration of viability.
    - to coordinate a date for the official Church organization.
5. The official organization will be completed in compliance with the organizational guidelines in the Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual. (Chapter 14: "Organizing, Uniting and Dissolving Churches")

GROUP OR COMPANY FORMATION
APPLICATION FORM*

Application and proposal for Group or Company status must be submitted to the Chesapeake Conference Executive Committee for approval.

The following information must be included in the application.

1. Reasons for the formation of a new Church, including a description of mission and vision
2. Location of the new Group or Company
3. Name of the new Group or Company
4. Number of non-members in the surrounding area
5. Name of the closest church to the new Group or Company
6. Membership of the closest Seventh-day Adventist Church, Group, or Company
7. Information about the defined evangelistic target (geography, special group, other)
8. List names and present membership location of the proposed group or company members
9. List proposed Group or Company leader, treasurer, and clerk
10. Enclose a letter of recommendation for the new Group or Company formation from the sponsoring church (if applicable)
11. Enclose initial time table for new Church formation

The application must be signed by

1. Group or Company Leader/Volunteer Lay Pastor
2. Pastor of Sponsoring Church

*Forms are available from Chesapeake Conference Administration and the Evangelism/Church Growth Department at www.ccosda.org/planting.

CHURCH FORMATION
APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Application for Church formation must be submitted to the Chesapeake Conference Executive Committee for approval.

Include the following information in the application.

1. Reasons for the formation of a new Church, including a description of mission and vision
2. Enclose the Group or Company's approved mission statement
3. Location of the new church
4. Proposed name of the new Church
5. Suggested pastoral leadership for the new Church
6. Date the Group or company was officially organized
7. Number of members at the beginning of the Group or Company formation and the number of members at the time of Church formation application
8. Information about the defined evangelistic target (geography, special group, other)
9. Provide evidence of evangelistic response and membership growth since the formation of the Group or Company. Indicate the source of the new members (letters in, baptism, profession of faith)
10. List names and present membership location of the proposed church members
11. List proposed church elder, treasurer, and other proposed leadership
12. Provide copies of financial records that would affirm this proposal (budget, financial statement)
13. Enclose a letter of recommendation for the Church from the sponsoring Church (if applicable)
14. Enclose a letter from the constituent school board indicating participation in a financial commitment to the school (if applicable)
15. Enclose initial time table for the establishment of a permanent church building (if applicable)

The application must be signed by

1. Group or Company leader/Volunteer Lay Pastor
2. Pastor of sponsoring church

*Forms are available from Chesapeake Conference Administration and the Evangelism/Church Growth Department at www.ccosda.org/planting.