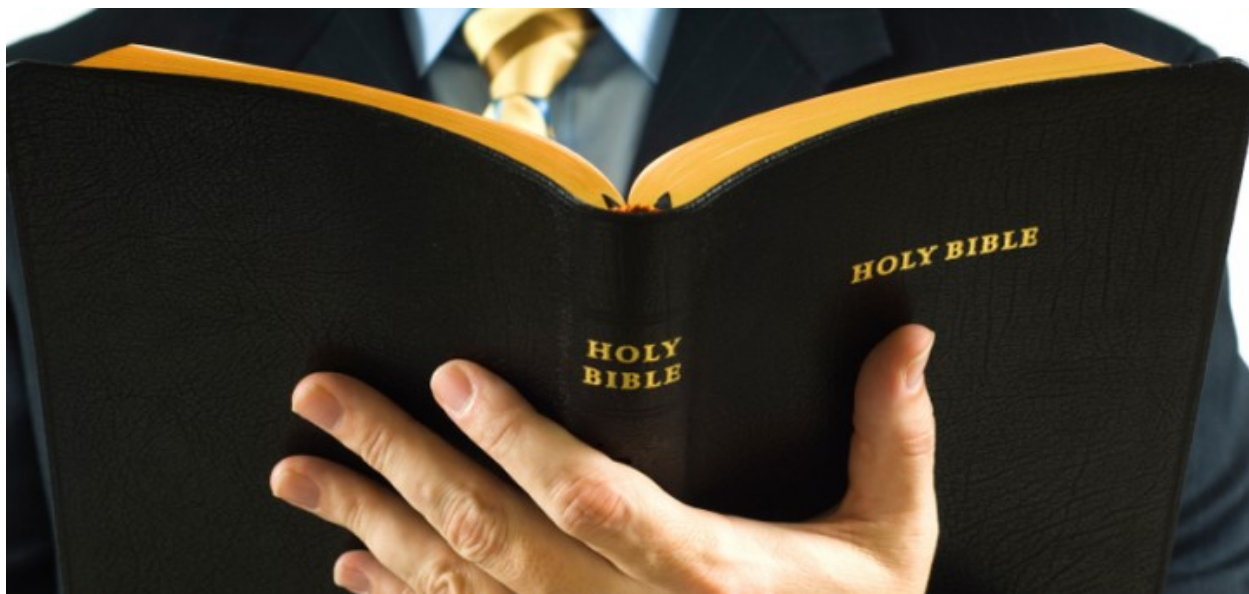


Mountain View Conference of Seventh-day Adventist

Lay Pastoral Leadership for The Churches Within the Mountain View Conference



Guidelines for the Volunteer Lay Pastor Strategy



Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
The Volunteer Lay Pastor (VLP)	
Mission Statement.....	4
Definition.....	4
Ministry Description.....	4
Qualifications.....	5
Background Check.....	5
Duties.....	5-7
Non-Authorization.....	7
Term of Appointment.....	7
Compensation.....	7
Coordinating Volunteer Lay Pastors	
Accountability.....	8
Key Responsibilities of the Conference and Ministerial Director.....	8-9
Training and Curriculum	
VLP's Training Program's Objectives.....	9

INTRODUCTION

The Mountain View Conference exists, as a sisterhood of churches, to foster a dynamic, personal relationship with God, empowering believers to reveal God's wonderful character, proclaiming the everlasting gospel in the context of Revelation 14:6-12, leading others to accept Jesus as personal Savior and unite with His remnant Church in preparation for His soon return. We must stay focused on this mission and do everything within our power to ensure that each one of our churches is a healthy disciple-making house of God.

This means that we must not only reach those who are not yet in the church but we must also do everything possible to foster Spiritual growth to the existing members. This is why we must ensure there is competent Pastoral Leadership within each of our churches even though each of our pastors have multiple churches and in many cases are spread very thin. It is our desire to not only strengthen our existing church but also plant new churches where appropriate within our field.

To obey Christ's command to take the gospel to the world making disciples, and fulfill our mission the Mountain View Conference needs more workers. Jesus' words are still true today that *"the harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few"* Luke 10:2 NIV. To fulfill the mission of Christ and reach new communities for God the Mountain View Conference needs volunteer leaders who can plant new churches and lead current mission groups, companies, or churches. Training volunteer lay pastors, elder, and other leaders is the best solution.

The Mountain View Conference cannot allow a lack of manpower to keep us from moving the mission forward within the communities of our conference. With competent training, encouragement, oversight, and the power of the Holy Spirit Volunteer Lay Pastors can work alongside our existing pastoral ministry team to accomplish even greater things for our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

With this opportunity in mind, the following guidelines will facilitate the Volunteer Lay Pastor strategy.

The Volunteer Lay Pastor (VLP)

Mission Statement

Our mission states, “The Mountain View Conference, as a sisterhood of churches, exists to foster a dynamic, personal relationship with God, empowering believers to reveal God's wonderful character, proclaiming the everlasting gospel in the context of Revelation 14:6-12, leading others to accept Jesus as personal Savior and unite with His Remnant Church in preparation for His soon return. The purpose of the Volunteer Lay Pastor is 1) to move the mission forward in smaller congregations or church plants; 2) mobilize and equip lay people to be effective leaders and grow in their ministry skills; 3) promote congregational vitality; and 4) fulfill assigned pastoral responsibility.

Definition

A VLP is a lay leader who has been voted as a local elder (not head elder) in the church where they will be serving, chosen by the 1) sponsoring church board as a volunteer lay pastor, 2) accepted by the Conference Administrative Team, and 3) demonstrates fitness for ministry. Yearly recertification for lay pastor's states will be contingent upon training that the Mountain View Conference Ministerial Department will provide. Input from the sponsoring church board will also be necessary. Character, leadership, spirituality, loyalty to church, theology, and a cooperative spirit need to be demonstrated.

Ministry Description

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. Paul describes the church as “his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.” Ephesians 1:23

God calls us into His body for the purpose of establishing a saving relationship with Him and 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.

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 God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” Ephesians 2:10

God calls every member of the church into ministry. The church is a kingdom of priest set free to ministry effectively for Christ. Our priesthood is to each other within the church and to the world. A VLP is a ministering servant of God, and, like every Christian, is called to ministry, gifted by the Holy Spirit, and in baptism ordained for ministry Ephesians 4:11-12.

Just as God supplies each person in the church with the resources for ministry, Scripture, Spiritual power, God's character, and spiritual gifts, a lay pastor is equipped for his or her ministry by the fits received from the Holy Spirit.

Qualifications

Qualifications to be a VLP are similar to those given in the church manual for a church elder. Below are a list of 8 qualifications that reflect these and are specific to a VLP's position:

1. Demonstrate an excellent character
2. Demonstrate a consistent growing Spirituality
3. Demonstrate leadership abilities
4. Demonstrate a teachable and trainable spirit.
5. Be fully committed to Jesus Christ.
6. Be fully committed to Seventh-Day Adventist Theology and the Spirit of Prophecy
7. Have a passion to seek and save the lost.
8. Be fully committed to the mission/vision/ values of the Mountain View Conference

Background Check

Every Volunteer Lay Pastor candidate will undergo a background check before they are granted official VLP status.

Duties

The ministry to which a person is called when they become a lay pastor can best be described in the following ways:

1. **Teamwork:** VLP's work under the leadership of a district pastor and/or the Ministerial Director of the Mountain View Conference. In addition they must work closely with the local church board and officers. It is important to keep in mind that a "lone ranger" style of leadership will only create problems and destroy the morale and forward movement of the congregation. A VLP just arrange to meet at least monthly with the district pastor or assigned leadership. (See #9 Ministry Mentoring below) This will ensure clarity and support for the mission and vision of the local church and the conference.
2. **Preaching and Worship Leadership:** A primary responsibility of the lay pastor is to fill the pulpit weekly or in the absence of the district pastor. This includes attention to the entire worship service, not just the sermon. The elders are the worship committee in small churches, and it is essential that the lay pastor work with them as co-leaders in worship.
3. **Visitation:** VLP's cannot do an adequate job of preaching unless they have regular contact with the congregation in their homes and, where appropriate, their places of employment. The VLP is usually expected to systematically visit the church members, give Bible studies to interested persons, and make contact with all church visitors. They need to clarify with the district pastor and the church board the expectations regarding

visits to the sick, funerals and referrals for pastoral care. Usually this will be shared with the Elders.

4. **Chairing the Board:** Chairing the church board will be worked out with the district pastor and local church board.
5. **Midweek Meetings:** VLP's should conduct prayer meeting, a Bible study group, a seminar, or a lay training class one evening a week, with the possible exception of the weeks the church board the church board meets. This is a vital part of a healthy, growing church.
6. **The Lord's Supper:** VLP's are authorized to organize and facilitate the observance of the Lord's Supper as a quarterly event in the congregation. This should be done in collaboration with the Elders and Deacons under the guidance of the district pastor.
7. **Planning:** Every congregation needs to have a yearly plan for church growth to ensure an ongoing, balanced program of outreach, soul winning and nurture. The process by which these plans are developed is as important as the actual plan. If the church leaders and members do not participate in planning, they may not support the plans. This happens when the church board or Church Ministries Council has a planning council each year, and then presents the plan to a general church business meeting along with the church budget. It will be the VLP's responsibility to act as facilitator for this process. The district pastor may also be available to help and encourage this process.
8. **Training Programs:** Participate and attend Conference scheduled programs and activities, including specified training programs, as directed by the Ministerial Department. The VLP must be involved in a continuing training process for certification as a lay pastor.
9. **Ministry Mentor:** Having a mentor, as a VLP is one of the best prescriptions for healthy growth in competence and protection from its vulnerabilities. Going it alone in ministry is not only a lonely place to be but it can be perilous. VLP's will meet with a designated pastoral mentor (in most cases, the district pastor) each month, in person if at all possible but phone calls are permitted when absolutely necessary however phone call meetings should never be the normal means connecting with the VLP's mentor. In this meeting, the VLP's mentor should discuss professional effectiveness of active ministry, to strengthen their personal and spiritual health, and to affirm their gifts for ministry.
10. **Reports:** VLP's must be aware that membership is to be reported on a monthly basis, by the local church clerk. They should work with the church clerk to ensure that all membership transfers, profession of faith, and baptisms are reported to the conference clerk.

11. Tithe and Offerings: Lay pastors should be aware that tithe and offerings are to be sent to the sponsoring church who will send them to the Conference or directly to the Conference on a monthly basis as follows:

- a. All tithe and offerings from the Mission Group are to be sent to and receipted by the sponsoring Church. Mission Group funds will only be processed through the sponsoring churches bank accounts. The sponsoring Church shall assume all financial and administrative responsibilities for the Mission Group, and its Board will exercise over the group the same authority that it has over its congregation.
- b. All tithe and offerings of a company are to be sent to the Conference, with the exception of the local expense offering, which is to remain with the Company. It is understood that a Company has an acting board; however, the Conference Executive Committee serves as the official board. Companies will need a treasurer to account for these funds. The VLP should not be the treasurer because of conflict of interest.
- c. All tithes and offerings of a Church are to be sent to the Conference, with the exception of the local expense offering, which is to remain with the Church. The congregation is encouraged to become a supportive constituent of a school if there is one in their area.

Non-authorizations

Because of state counseling requirements and church policies, VLP's are not authorized to officiate marriages or to ordain local leaders, organize churches, or disband churches. The President of the Mountain View Conference is the only one who can authorize the VLP to baptize. This is usually done only when there is no ordained pastor available.

Term of Appointment

A VLP is appointed for one year. Annual recertification will be contingent upon:

1. Attending training events for VLP's.
2. Input from the local church board.
3. An annual review by the Mountain View Conference Ministerial Department.

Compensation

The VLP is a volunteer position. VLP's serve without compensation. However, the VLP who leads a group with Conference approved "Company" or "Church" status will be eligible for a ministry related mileage reimbursement of up to 1000 miles a month at the current Conference mileage rate.

Volunteer Lay Pastors will not solicit financial gifts from members or visitors.

COORDINATING VOLUNTEER LAY PASTORS

Accountability

VLP's are responsible to a local district pastor. Both the VLP and the district pastor report to the Mountain View Conference Ministerial Director or his designee.

In the case of a church plant the VLP will report to the pastor of the sponsoring church. Ultimately all are responsible to the Mountain View Conference Executive Committee.

Key Responsibilities of the Ministerial Department

1. **Mentoring and Coaching:** The pastor and Ministerial Associates serve as mentor, coach, and guide for Lay Pastors as needed. In addition to coaching, they will observe the Lay Pastor's in their ministry environment as scheduling permits.
2. **VLP Continuing Education Program:** The Ministerial Director oversees training and development of VLP's. VLP's will be required to receive at least 20 hours of initial training and 20 hours of training per year thereafter. VLP's will attend all required training events the Ministerial Department sponsors for VLP's as well as any other training needed. They will be part of the Adventist Learning Community and use it regularly. In addition the conference will provide training in the following areas:
 - a. **Spiritual Vitality**
Spiritual Development for Ministry: This area explores the role of personal spirituality in effective ministry. It offers insights for developing a stronger personal bond with God and for fostering spiritual growth in others. This includes *Spiritual Servant Leadership:* This area outlines both biblical perspectives and recent thinking on leadership theory. It provides principles and tools that help leaders lead in godly ways and godly directions.
 - b. **Bible Exposition**
Biblical foundation of preaching: This area establishes the biblical mandate, scope, and purpose of preaching and develops the lay pastor's ability to study the Bible for the purpose of preaching. Training in *Biblical Preaching and Sermon Delivery* which establishes a framework for sermon development. It takes the mystery out of sermon formation by helping trainees identify building blocks of sermon creation and identifies keys to improve sermon delivery and audience reception.

c. People Skills

Emotional Intelligence in Ministry: This area explores how to develop the people skills necessary to thrive in ministry. It identifies the often sensed but unnamed skills of ministers who win the heart of parishioners. Training in pastoral counseling will be included in this area of training so the VLP know when to refer a person to a professional counselor.

d. Evangelism

Evangelistic Approaches: This area explores some of the most time-tested approaches to sharing the truth of Adventism, offering principles and tools for effective evangelism.

e. Team Building

A Theology of Church: This area develops a biblical understanding of church function and structure, providing a framework for building the church into a biblical team. This area of training will include *Becoming a Ministry Mentor:* This area presents methods for developing others into ministry. It gives principles of approach and suggests a process to be applied.

*All VLP's are encouraged to strive for personal growth in these areas apart from any training the conference sponsors so they can become effective workers for Christ.

The educational philosophy that guides this training includes three related principles:

- a. That each VLP in training already has certain elements of knowledge, experience, and natural skills that can be used effectively in ministry.
- b. That each pastoral competency has basic foundational elements that, if taught and practiced, will guide a natural and personalized development in that particular area of ministry.
- c. That these competencies are best developed through practice in a real ministry environment.

VLP's Training Program Objectives

- a. To have a certified VLP's to care for and encourage growth of Mountain View Conference churches, thereby strengthening the life of our churches advancing the Kingdom of God.
- b. Continuing to equip and development of VLP's already involved in ministry.

- c. Develop a firm understanding of Adventist identity and church operations and procedures.

2) Point Person Between Lay Pastors and Conference: The district Pastor or Ministerial Director will serve as a point person between the VLP, their church and the Mountain View Conference. They will encourage and supervise the monthly reporting of attendance, baptisms, tithe, visitors, etc.

3) Evaluation of Lay Pastor: A review and evaluation of the Lay Pastor will be done every year according to the following parameters:

- a. Evidence of growth in the assigned local church. Some areas of growth to be considered are as follows:
 - i. Overall spiritual health of the church and forward movement of the mission of the local church.
 - ii. Baptisms and increased worship attendance.
 - iii. Community outreach and evangelism.
 - iv. A comprehensive church growth plan that makes mission the primary focus of the church rather than the church being inward focused.
 - v. Church Tithes and Offerings, Campaign for Community, and Mountain View Mission Offering.
- b. Evidence of growth in the five areas of Continuing Education
- c. Attendance at meetings, gatherings, and retreats.
- d. Review of monthly reports from Lay Pastors and quarterly reports from church.
- e. Input from the local church board about the VLP's performance.
- f. Evidence to move on to the next level of the organization according to the below guidelines. (Mission group, company, etc.)

GUIDELINES FOR STARTING A NEW CHURCH PLANT GROUP

1. Demographic viability and location has to be confirmed by the Mountain View Conference
2. The lay-leader of the group will be appointed by the Mountain View Conference.
3. A mother church has been appointed for by the Mountain View Conference to support the group as they begin meeting and planning toward starting the new plant.
4. An "incubation" period on AVG of 3-6 months will be used for the purpose of spiritual fellowship and strategic church plant planning before the official launch of the new church plant.
 1. Create Community (Get to know one another).
 2. Prayer and Fasting.
 3. Read Steps to Church Planting: From Inception to Launch- Tom Evans, Book of Acts.

4. Write Out Core Values.
 5. Write Out 2 Year Evangelistic Plan.
 6. Write Out Clear Job descriptions for ministry assignments.
 7. Find a meeting place.
5. All Financial giving of the new Church Planting Group will be run through the mother church. A separate line item will be set up for all the donations made by the group members toward their planting project. The church plant is encouraged to keep their own line-item accounting records as the mother church will keep all funds as one lumped sum to be used by the group as needed.

Requirement for obtaining COMPANY STATUS in the Mountain View Conference:

1. 20 Baptized Members.
2. 25+ average attendance for the previous 3 months.
3. \$15,000 in projected annual tithe.
4. Local Church Finances: Once company status is voted, the group is to set up a bank account in consultation with the Conference Treasurer. The group agrees to establish a line item in their budget for a building fund. This fund will receive a monthly allocation from the combined budget.
5. Date set to complete the Natural Church Development survey. The Conference will cover the cost of the first survey. (<http://www.nadei.org/article/39/evangelism-services/natural-church-development/the-survey>) \$250
6. Assigned pastor or pastor-coach if group is lay led.

Requirements for obtaining CHURCH STATUS in the Mountain View Conference:

1. 35 baptized members.
2. 35+ average attendance for previous 3 months.
3. 10+ individuals have joined by baptism or profession of faith since the company was organized.
4. Company has held at least one public evangelistic series.
5. \$30,000 in projected annual tithe.
6. A strategy and timeline have been established for fund raising and the eventual acquisition of a church facility.
7. Treasurer has completed certification process with the Mountain View Conference treasury department. Treasurer and pastor cannot be from the same household.
8. Completion of the Natural Church Development survey with minimum average score of 50.
9. Voted commitment to support Adventist education: Option #1 - A monthly subsidy for member's children to attend an Adventist church school. Option #2 - A constituent relationship with an Adventist church school. Once the subsidy reaches an acceptable level, voting representation on the school board is to be expected.
10. Assigned pastor or pastor-coach if the church is lay led.

MOUNTAIN VIEW CONFERENCE OF SDA

**To apply to be a VLP please fill out the application below.
Thank you.**

YOUR NAME:

STREET ADDRESS:

EMAIL:

Please check any and all that apply:

- I am fully committed to the Seventh-day Adventist church in theology and its organization.**
- I return a faithful tithe and give offerings to my local church.**
- I am committed to the mission, vision and values of the Mountain View Conference. (If you are not sure what these are please contact the MVC president at 304-422-4581.**
- I am currently compliant with the Verified Volunteers Protection program. If not I will be by ___/___/____.**
- I am currently serving as an elder. Y N**
- If you are an head elder in your church, how many years have you served in this capacity? _____ yrs. If you are an elder in your church, how many years have you served in this capacity? _____ yrs.**

I have been a Seventh-day Adventist for _____ years.

MOUNTAIN VIEW CONFERENCE OF SDA

6) Give examples of how you have demonstrated a history of supporting your local pastor.

7) Give examples of how you have demonstrated leadership skills such as preaching, visitation and administration in your local church.

8) Please list other church offices/ministries/positions you have held over the years.

a)

b)

c)

d)

e)

f)

MOUNTAIN VIEW CONFERENCE OF SDA

9) Please provide names and contact information of individuals who we may contact as references:

NAME: EMAIL:

NAME: EMAIL:

Please tell us the name of the church you currently attend and hold membership in.

NAME: LOCAL CHURCH: EMAIL: CONTACT TEL. #

Please name a local SDA pastor who will work with you and be your coach.

■ **Approved by local church board. (Approval Date?)**

Approved by Mountain View Conference Executive Committee Date?
