

Methodist Church of New Zealand
Te Hāhi Weteriana o Aotearoa

Administration Division
P O Box 931
CHRISTCHURCH

Information Leaflet No. 151

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CHURCH ROLLS

MEMBERSHIP & PASTORAL

GUIDELINES FOR RECORDING

The maintenance of the Membership Roll is the responsibility of the Leaders' or Parish Meeting

[Law Book Section 1.7.1.2]

FUNCTIONS OF ROLL

The Membership Roll should provide the means to:

- include the names of all members living in the Parish, or area of the local church;
- maintain pastoral care;
- record who is entitled to take office, and to vote;
- enable constant review;
- provide numbers of annual statistical return.

Who should be included?

- Those who have been received as members, through adult baptism or by confirmation. [1.7.1.1]
- Those whose membership is transferred from other denominations. [1.7.2.3f]
- Those whom the Leaders' or Parish Meeting, at its discretion, enter on the Membership Roll. [1.7.1.2]

Some form of public recognition by a Parish or congregation of those received into membership is appropriate. [1.7.3.1]

It is appropriate to issue membership cards each year. [1.7.3.2]

COMPILING THE ROLL

- Roll Books are available from the Administration Division.
- A Membership Roll should be kept
 - either for each local church in a Parish, or
 - for the Parish, with separate sections for each local church.
- Entries are made, initially, in alphabetical order. Later names may be included alphabetically, or entered at the end of the Roll. On a re-writing of the Roll the names should be restored to alphabetical order.
- Rolls should provide the following information:
 - Name
 - Address
 - Date received into membership or entered on roll
 - How received (transfer, baptism, confirmation, etc.)
 - Status (active or inactive)
 - Change of status by Leaders' or Parish Meeting
 - Date of revision
 - Date of removal
 - Why removed (transfer, death, etc)
 - Remarks (eg. transfer sent to, date ; .././..)
- If rolls have been computerised, all the above information should be included, and should be, annually, printed and affixed within the Membership Roll, as a permanent record.

ACTIVE AND INACTIVE MEMBERS

- A distinction should be made between those
 - who are actively involved in the life of the church, and thus are **numbered** for Membership purposes, and

- those who are inactive, who can be recorded on a supplementary list, and if their status changes (eg. they again become actively involved) their names can be returned to the active list.
- Members who, because of age, frailty, etc. cannot participate actively should nevertheless be maintained as ‘active’ on the Membership Roll.

LAW BOOK REQUIREMENTS

Responsible Membership

Responsible membership will normally find expression through participation in worship and financial support of the Church. The standards on which membership of the Church is based are set out in the Church’s Mission Statement and its accompanying Principles, where, in particular, it is stated that “every member is a minister.” [1.1]

Membership Roll

A person who has been received as a Member of the Methodist Church and who evidences Christian commitment through regular participation in the worship and mission of the congregation shall be entitled to exercise all the responsibilities of full membership, and shall be recorded in the appropriate Membership Roll of the Parish [1.7.1]

The Membership Roll shall be reviewed at least annually by the Leaders’ or Parish Meeting. The names of those who cease to exercise responsible membership and/or who no longer participate actively in the local Church may be removed after adequate pastoral investigation. Notification of transfer of membership should be issued when a member moves from one Parish to another. [1.7.4]

Pastoral Roll

All persons under the pastoral care of the Church shall be recorded in a Pastoral Roll, in which all relevant details shall be noted. Such roll shall be revised regularly. [1.8.2]

Pastoral Discipline

Within the life and Practice of the Methodist Church responsible membership involves a creative tension between the “General Standards for the Guidance of Members” (Introductory Document IV) and the freedom to exercise individual conscience as disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. Within the context of the nurture of members the Church exercises pastoral care and discipline in accordance with the Code of Disciplinary Procedures. (Section 8) [1.9.1]

INTENTION OF THE LAW

As set out above, the Law Book makes it possible for Leaders' and Parish Meetings to remove from the Membership Roll the names of those who are inactive. This does not detract from the "the grace of baptism and confirmation", nor is it to give the impression that membership has been taken away. Members who are placed on the inactive roll do not have any change made in the record of their baptism or confirmation, and their names continue to be included in the Church's Pastoral Roll.

REVISING THE ROLL

The annual review should take place prior to the Leaders' or Parish meeting held in and prior to the end of June. Members who are actively involved, and, therefore, entitled to take office and officially vote, shall be numbered, so that accurate figures may be included in the annual statistical returns.

In active members should not be included in this 'numbering', and their names should be placed on a supplementary list, or recorded in some other way. It will, therefore, have been decided that they are not entitled to take office or officially vote. The recording of their names in this way is a reminder to the Leaders' or Parish Meeting of the need to exercise a special pastoral concern for such members.

In accordance with the provisions of the Membership Roll it is possible for a member's status to be changed from time to time. Inactive members, while not having membership status, are not to be regarded as having been removed from "membership of the Church".

REMOVALS AND TRANSFERS

When members move from a church or Parish to another a formal transfer should be sent by those members' Minister to the Minister of the Parish to which they are moving. On receipt of the transfer the members' names should be entered in the Membership Roll of the new church or Parish, and the Leaders' Meeting advised so that recognition of the transfer is made within the context of worship.

If the removal is to an area not served by a Methodist Parish or Cooperative Venture, the option of reciprocal membership with a local church, or the retention of membership in their former church or Parish should be offered to the member.