

EVANGELICAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Procedure and Policy Handbook for The Chaplains Work and Care Committee & EPC Chaplains

- Work of the Committee**
- Application for EPC Chaplaincy**
- EPC Chaplains/Military Chaplain Candidates**

FIRST EDITION APPROVED BY THE 32ND GENERAL ASSEMBLY JUNE 2012

SECOND EDITION APPROVED BY CHAPLAINS WORK AND CARE COMMITTEE MAY

2017 (Grammatical edits November 2017)

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Section A. EPC Chaplaincy General Information

Introduction: The purpose of this handbook is to provide policy guidance to EPC Chaplains, those being called to the Chaplaincy, the Chaplain Work and Care Committee, and the EPC Chaplain Endorser. It is written in response to a tasking by the 30th General Assembly. In cases where this handbook conflicts with the EPC Book of Order or other EPC constitutional documents, they will take precedence. Suggested changes or improvements to this handbook are welcome.

- 1. Chaplains are Essential:** Chaplains are an essential part of the EPC ministry and corporate witness. Chaplains are established by the **EPC Book of Order**, *Book of Government*:

§9-5 The office of Teaching Elder

Within the office of Teaching Elder there are a variety of callings that require ordination. God distributes to each gifts according to the common needs of the Church. These include:

E. Chaplain

A court of the Church, a hospital, the military, institutions, universities, or other appropriate fields of service may call a Teaching Elder as Chaplain if the Presbytery deems it appropriate. In such cases, the Chaplain shall always have as a primary responsibility the sharing of the Good News of God in Jesus Christ.

The Presbytery may authorize the Chaplain to administer the sacraments in that role.

§9-11 The Ruling Elder as a Commissioned Pastor

A Ruling Elder may be temporarily authorized by Presbytery as a Commissioned Pastor for a congregation without a Pastor to preach the Word, evangelize, moderate a Session, administer the sacraments, perform marriages (if civil law allows), preside at funerals and provide pastoral care. Presbyteries may also approve and give appropriate powers to a Ruling Elder to serve as a Commissioned Pastor in mission churches, church planting and church revitalization works, or in chaplaincy positions in hospitals, hospices, prisons or other institutions.

- 2. The Chaplains Work and Care Committee (CWCC):** The CWCC was established as a permanent committee of the EPC General Assembly by *Act of Assembly* 11-13, reflected in *Rules for Assembly* X.10-1L, to oversee the recruitment, endorsement, and support of EPC Chaplains.

- 3. Principles of Chaplain Ministry and its Setting**

- a. Chaplain ministry particularly emphasizes the role of incarnational presence. This “Ministry of Presence” is a cornerstone of Chaplain Ministry for all chaplains. It is a wonderfully redemptive ministry of reassurance, encouragement, and honest counsel. However, Christian Chaplains find this cornerstone to be a particularly rich resource, as they draw upon the example of Jesus, who became incarnate among us, both fully God and fully Man. Chaplains are first, fully members of God’s Kingdom and Christ’s Body, the Church. They are ordained to represent and exercise the ministry of the Church. But as with Christ, who was also fully Man, chaplains are also fully a part of their receiving institutions, whether military or civilian.
- b. Chaplains can also contribute large measures of “common grace” to people in institutions, to institutions themselves, and through them, to the world at large. They do this by providing various programs and teachings aimed at a general, pluralistic, and not necessarily Christian, audience. By building up the bulwarks of morality, ethics, character, and healing—founded on Biblical roots but expressed in ways understandable to most people, Christian or not—they protect the common good in accordance with God’s will, even within the realm of sinful society.
- c. In that vein, the positive Biblical role of institutional support, even for institutions not specifically furthering God’s Kingdom, is seen in the ministries of Joseph in Egypt, Elisha helping even wicked King Joram of Israel (2 Kings 6), Daniel serving Babylon, and Esther wisely influencing the King of Persia. Chaplains on occasion and in that Biblical tradition, exercise advising and even governing authority through their institutions. Such ministry must be undertaken with great wisdom, caution, humility, discretion, and accountability in order to protect both its proper exercise, and the reputation of Gospel ministry at large, while working in the constraints that pluralism sometimes requires.

4. Placement of Chaplains “outside the bounds” of Kingdom Institutions

- a. Chaplains are assigned, for their ministry, outside the structure of the EPC. Part-time Chaplains who are also Pastors, or have other valid calls, may retain “in-bounds” status due to their other calls; but their Chaplain ministry itself is “outside the bounds” of the EPC. The call to ministry is from an institution, often non-religious, to a Minister who represents the Church, inviting that Minister to serve as a Chaplain within the institution.
- b. In every case of Chaplaincy, the Chaplain is organically connected with the calling body. The Chaplain participates in the life of that body as one of its members. This is a high privilege and a holy calling, to serve “outside the bounds” of the Church, God’s Kingdom institution, yet representing God’s higher institution to the lower institution in which the Chaplain serves. It is incumbent on the Chaplain to remember which is higher!
- c. Chaplain ministry has classically been seen as being practiced within a “total institution.” A total institution is one that takes those in it out of the normal realm of society. The total institution has much greater control over the person’s

life—ultimately in many ways, total control—than does an institution, such as a church or a commercial business, which people can freely enter or leave. Total institutions have been defined as: 1) hospitals; 2) hospice; 3) prisons; 4) the military; and even 5) educational institutions, which may also be considered, to some degree, due to their dynamics, as “total institutions.”

- 1) In order to minister effectively within a total institution, it has been found necessary for the Chaplain to be a member of, and organically part of, the institution. This makes the Chaplain subject to most of the same demands and rewards that are shared by other members. This is the essence of incarnational presence.
 - 2) In recent times, other institutions that are not “total” in nature have sought the blessings of Chaplain Ministry. These include civil entities such as: 1) law enforcement; 2) firefighting; 3) military auxiliaries such as the Civil Air Patrol; and 4) corporate/marketplace entities. Several corporations have begun to hire Chaplains because of the demonstrable benefits for their employees. In particular, some corporations representing teams in the field of professional sport, have designated or hired Chaplains. Such Chaplains provide for the spiritual needs of players and staff who, due to travel and the demands of work, experience some dynamics of the “total institution.”
 - 3) In some cases, particularly with law enforcement and firefighting, Ruling Elders may be called to Chaplain Service. In such cases, the Pastors and Sessions involved should take special care to train the Chaplains, in conjunction with the EPC’s Chaplains Work and Care Committee (CWCC), and to ensure adequate supervision and accountability for the type and quality of ministry. A presbytery may consider authorizing Commissioned Pastor Status where appropriate.
- d. Whether a Civilian Institution or Military one, these are valid venues for service by EPC ministers as Chaplains. It is incumbent on the Chaplains though, and on their presbyteries and congregations, to be diligent in their communion, contact, and mutual accountability. It must be remembered that Chaplain ministry is a ministry of Christ’s Church—and in our case, a ministry of the EPC.
 - e. Chaplains, especially those ministering in “total institutions,” should remember that their primary allegiance and membership is with the Body of Christ and the EPC. It will sometimes be tempting for the Chaplain to take on so many characteristics, priorities, and practices of the calling institution, that the primary purpose of the Chaplain’s presence may be compromised, obscured, or even lost. Chaplains who remember their first allegiance, and who focus on their ministry as their primary purpose within the institution, will provide the greatest benefit for the institution and its people
 - f. Chaplains should not be assigned roles which compromise or conflict with their role as a Chaplain and as a Teaching Elder of the EPC.
 - g. The Chaplain should be aware that institutions, and their people, need not only be provided priestly and pastoral roles, but also on occasion, the prophetic role.

As the prophets of Israel frequently found, this may set the prophet over against prevailing norms, leading even to persecution and rejection. The Chaplain should prayerfully and collegially consider whether a given situation calls for prophetic ministry; and then, wisely plan to apply that ministry for maximum positive effect.

- h. The Chaplain, as with Missionaries and Evangelists, may endure lengthy periods of loneliness in terms of fellowship and support. It is all the more important, then, as a matter of personal health and effectiveness, to keep in touch with like-minded servants of Christ, and especially with fellow members of the EPC whenever possible.
- i. The CWCC shall be the EPC's designated body for endorsing Chaplains, training them, providing pastoral care for them, and partnering with Presbyteries to ensure the quality and sustainability of Chaplain Ministry.

5. Presbyterian Partnership with those Called to Chaplain Service

- a. Chaplaincy is a valid, important, and growing calling in today's world. It represents a strategic opportunity for ministry that is specifically Christian, yet also a ministry of common grace in places not otherwise accessible to Ministers or Pastors. The Church, and specifically the EPC, should endeavor to encourage its members to consider God's call to Chaplaincy work.
- b. The Presbyteries ordain Ministers to the office of Teaching Elder. One of the callings in which Teaching Elders may serve is that of Chaplain. In this calling, they should carefully follow the guidelines of the EPC's current *Procedure Manual for Ministerial and Candidates Committees*. A Candidate should be ordained for a call as a Chaplain only after a "pending endorsement" has been granted through the CWCC. Such endorsement becomes effective only upon presbytery's approval for ordination and call.
- c. Presbyteries should endeavor to keep in touch regularly with Chaplains ordained under them, or geographically located within their confines, and offer their support. Chaplains are often in positions that are institutionally and geographically isolated, which is often a lonely situation. Chaplains, as members of their respective Presbyteries, should take special care to submit their required annual Presbytery report (different than the CWCC Annual Report), helping to keep connected and the Presbytery up to date.
- d. Two models of Presbytery membership, each valid, are available to Chaplains serving in Chaplaincy positions for lengthy periods. Military Chaplains, who often move, should prayerfully consider which model would work best.
 - 1) One model is to maintain membership with their ordaining Presbytery for the length of one's Chaplain service. This has the advantage of maintaining long-term relationships in that Chaplain's "home area." However, the Chaplain may not be able to regularly attend Presbytery meetings due to their assigned location. The Chaplain choosing this model should so inform Presbytery, and may wish to apply for status as an Associate Member (*Book*

of Government 19-2B). Chaplains choosing model #1 should attend meetings of the Presbytery in which they are geographically located, as a visitor. This provides important connectivity with fellow EPC members.

- 2) A second model is to change Presbytery membership with each move. This could entail undergoing Presbytery examinations every three years, or so. The advantage is that the Chaplain becomes directly connected with EPC people and ministries in his or her geographical area of service, receiving encouragement and direct support. Also, over time, the Chaplain becomes well familiar with the EPC as a whole—certainly an advantage should the Chaplain eventually feel called to enter congregational service. However, it is the opinion of the CWCC that model #1 would likely suit Active Duty Military Chaplains the best because of frequent moves within one’s career.
- e. Chaplains are bound to follow the requirements of their calling institutions. As such, they may not be free to attend all meetings of Presbytery. Presbyteries should therefore be sympathetic to Chaplains’ requests for excused absences. Chaplains, in turn, should inform their institutions that maintenance of their endorsement normally involves a minimum of one Presbytery attendance annually, as well as annual attendance at the Chaplain’s Workshop and General Assembly. Chaplains are always encouraged to attend their Presbytery or geographically located Presbytery as frequently as their situation allows.
- f. Presbyteries should also carefully follow all guidelines and requirements regarding ministers serving out of bounds of the EPC. Special care should further be taken to evaluate if a proposed part-time Chaplain ministry, absent any other call to ministry, is sufficient to warrant ordination.
- g. EPC congregations (or similar evangelical and Reformed congregations) can often be a refuge of strength and renewal for the Chaplain and his or her family, when the Chaplain does not have duties leading worship. The Chaplain can also be a resource to the congregation. Congregations should also consider creative ways by which they may support those institutions in which Chaplains connected with the congregation serve. Many opportunities exist to supplement Chaplain Ministries, especially in times of limited resources.
- h. Congregations and Presbyteries are also asked to support the EPC’s Chaplain Ministry as a whole through the CWCC. Support can be provided to the CWCC with monthly or annual contributions. This support will enable the CWCC and Endorser to better fulfill its mission, and also provides support to Chaplains to attend GA and the like, rather than having to bear all the expenses personally.

6. Acts of the General Assembly Related to Chaplaincy

EPC Military Chaplains Leading Worship with Other Faith Groups:

“While our Chaplains are encouraged to exercise their ministry in the Armed Forces with the maximum of collegiality in cooperation with persons of varying beliefs, the EPC does not approve joint leadership of a

worship service with persons representing faith groups outside the historic Christian tradition, as defined by the Apostles' Creed. (*Act of Assembly 99-12*; Minutes, 19-45)

7. EPC Position Papers and Pastoral Letters

- a. A Position Paper is intended to set forth the "mind" of the General Assembly of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church on some particular issue or subject. It is not intended to be a thorough theological statement nor a complete exegetical Biblical study on a particular issue.
- b. The purpose of such a Position Paper is to enable the Evangelical Presbyterian Church to make a statement to itself, the Christian community, or the world in general, on a subject of recurring interest or one on which there is current compelling interest. Position papers are not constitutional, neither do they represent in and of themselves "essentials" of the church.
- c. Position papers are first introduced in a preliminary form and circulated throughout the church for a period of comment. Thus, the majority votes of two general assemblies are necessary to become a position paper.

Position Papers

http://www.epc.org/resources/documents#PosPap

Abortion	Sanctity of Marriage
Divorce and Remarriage	Suffering, Death and Dying
Holy Spirit	Value and Respect for Human Life
Human Sexuality (Preliminary Paper)	Woman's Ordination

- d. A pastoral letter is intended to shine the light of God's word broadly on a general area of concern to the Church. Requiring the approval of only one General Assembly, it is not as definitive as a Position Paper, which requires the approval of two General Assemblies (including a minimum of one year circulation among the presbyteries). The primary purpose of a pastoral letter is to guide churches within the EPC rather than to identify our positions to the world. (*Act of Assembly 97-13*).

Pastoral Letters

http://www.epc.org/resources/documents#PasLet

AIDS/HIV	Domestic Abuse
Use of the Catechisms	Open Theism
Children and the Lord's Supper	Organ Donation and Transplantation
Civil Disobedience	Evaluating Membership in Secret Fraternal Organizations

Section B. Guidance for CWCC

1. **The General Assembly supports Chaplain Ministry through the Chaplains Work and Care Committee (CWCC). Committee Responsibilities and Purpose:**
 - a. **CWCC Responsibilities.** The CWCC is responsible to: 1) grant selective endorsements for Chaplain service; 2) see that those endorsed as Chaplains maintain a valid Gospel ministry, and appropriately represent the EPC in their work and life; 3) to maintain regular contact with their assigned EPC Chaplains at least twice a year, provide annual training through the Chaplains Workshop, and deliver pastoral care for Chaplains and their families; 4) to maintain records of, and advisory contact with, those Chaplains not needing endorsement by their calling institutions; and 5) to maintain coordination of Chaplain ministries with the Office of the General Assembly; 6) Facilitate the process for individuals seeking to enter military Chaplain Candidate programs.
 - b. **Chaplains Work & Care Committee (CWCC) Purpose.** The CWCC is dedicated to obeying Christ's Great Commission by providing qualified individuals to serve as Chaplains in various institutions, both Military and Civilian. The CWCC endorses and ecclesiastically supports ordained, qualified Chaplains, approves military Chaplain Candidates, and encourages presbyteries and congregations in biblical ministry to military personnel and their families that attend their churches. In carrying out its purpose, the CWCC functions in the following ways:
 - i. Develops and implements policies and procedures for Chaplain Ministry.
 - ii. Establishes and maintains a process to provide endorsements for those qualified for Chaplaincy ministries.
 - iii. Provides recognition and support of persons serving in Chaplain positions not requiring denominational ecclesiastical endorsement.
 - iv. Facilitates the process for individuals seeking to enter military Chaplain Candidate programs.
 - v. Provides for pastoral care for Endorsed Chaplains and their families.
 - vi. Maintains liaison with the appropriate contact point of each presbytery, to:
 1. Provide current information regarding criteria, policies and procedures for the appointment of ministers as Chaplains.
 2. Provide a technical service to the presbyteries by recommending qualified candidates to the Chaplaincy.
 3. Ensure address changes of a Presbytery's Chaplains are provided.
 - c. Maintains cooperative relationships with the National Conference on Ministry to the Armed Forces (NCMAF), Endorsers Conference for Veterans Affairs

Chaplaincy (ECVAC), Armed Forces Chaplain Board (AFCB), National Association of Evangelicals Chaplains Commission (NAECC), Chaplains Alliance for Religious Liberty (CALL), and other approved ministry partners, and the leadership of other institutional Chaplaincies by:

- i. Certifying to the proper agencies the ecclesiastical endorsements and approvals granted by the EPC.
 - ii. Serving as a representative body for problems referred by or concerning Chaplains, both individually and collectively.
 - d. Maintains contact and liaison with individual Chaplains serving in the Armed Forces and civilian institutions (such as medical, hospice, prison, law enforcement, and corporate) through regular reports, newsletters, written correspondence and personal visits as authorized by the CWCC and Office of the Stated Clerk.
 - e. Helps congregations minister to their members that are in the armed forces.
 - f. Informs presbyteries of significant developments, trends, issues and problems concerning Chaplains and members of the Armed Forces and those in civilian institutions, and reports annually on the activity of the CWCC to the denomination.
 - g. Helps presbyteries promote the Chaplaincy ministry to their particular churches.
- 2. CWCC Membership (Rules for Assembly 10-1M)**

Committee on Chaplains Work and Care

Membership: The Committee consists of six members, including at least three members with experience as Chaplains, and at least two Ruling Elders. Whenever possible, one position on the Committee will be filled by an Active Duty Military Chaplain, normally the EPC's most senior in rank. The Chairman is elected by the Committee and is responsible for coordinating the work and business of the Committee in consultation with the Office of the Stated Clerk and the Chaplain Endorser. The Committee should have a good balance of those with military background and those without.

- 3. Financial Support.** The ministry of the CWCC shall be financially supported primarily through "Per Chaplain Askings," and through contributions of interested individuals, congregations, presbyteries, and other groups (See "How to Donate" in Section D.8.e).
- a. The CWCC shall be free to communicate with and to receive donations to designated benevolence funds from individuals, churches or other organizations, both within and outside of the EPC.
 - b. It is understood that Chaplains have a moral responsibility to share in the cost of

their endorsement and support. However, in keeping with the EPC ethos of Per Member Askings with congregations, this financial contribution, though highly encouraged, shall be given voluntarily (as a tax-exempt gift to a designated EPC benevolence fund), not as an assessment of dues. This “Per Chaplain Asking” represents a minimum amount that is requested and encouraged as an expression of their part in the ministry of the larger Church. (See Section D.8.a-e, page 28)

- c. The recommended amounts for Per Chaplain Askings shall be set by the CWCC and reviewed annually. (See Section D.8.a-e, page 28)
4. **Meetings.** The CWCC shall ordinarily meet twice each year, in keeping with Rules of the Assembly. One meeting will be in-person; the other may be through video-conference. The chairman may call special meetings of the CWCC (either in person or by video-conference), normally for the purpose of interviewing and endorsing Chaplains.
5. **Quorum.** For either regular or special meetings of the CWCC, a quorum shall consist of a majority of the committee. The Endorser is a voting member of the Committee and counts toward a quorum.
6. **Financial Policy and Procedures.** The financial policies and procedures of the CWCC and the Endorser’s work, shall conform to the policies and procedures of the Office of the General Assembly. The policies of the office of the General Assembly take precedences should there be any conflicts with statements in this procedure and policy handbook.
7. **Procedures.** Procedures for reviewing Applicants for Chaplaincy and military Chaplain Candidate applications and interviews are outlined in Section C below.

Section C. Ecclesiastical Endorsement: This section describes the requirements for Approval of “Applicants for Chaplaincy” and “Chaplain Ecclesiastical Endorsement”. Also, see www.epc.org/chaplaincy

1. Application for endorsement. Applicants shall:

- a. Meet all presbytery requirements for membership as a “Candidate under Care” in good standing, or a Teaching Elder in good standing, verified by signature of the Ministerial or Candidates Committee Chair on the Application for Chaplain Endorsement.
- b. Meet all of the requirements of the institution to which Chaplaincy application is being made. In the case of Military Chaplaincy for example, this would include at least 120 hours of undergraduate credit, the M.Div. degree (a minimum of 72 semester hours of graduate seminary study), Ordination, and Ecclesiastical Endorsement. In the case of Civilian Chaplaincy, Civilian institutions may have different requirements. It should be noted that the Evangelical Presbyterian Church may have higher educational standards than “calling” institutions.
- c. Have a minimum of two years of practical ministry experience or internship (or its equivalent), such as preaching, youth work, evangelism, teaching, missions, counseling, etc. This requirement may be waived in the case of involvement in the military Chaplain Candidate Program for seminarians, or in extraordinary circumstances.
- d. Submit a completed Application Form for Chaplaincy (Military or Civilian), a Personal Information Form (PIF), required references, and any other documents as required. For additional Application information and to request the above forms, contact the Office of the Stated Clerk by emailing epchurch@epc.org.
- e. that ecclesiastical endorsement or approval may be withdrawn by the CWCC upon the request of the individual, the individual’s presbytery, or for cause. Further details are found below.

2. Maintaining Ecclesiastical Approval/Endorsement. The CWCC expects its Endorsed Chaplains and those approved to enter Military Chaplain Candidate Programs to:

- a. Attend a local EPC church (assuming one is reasonably nearby), or an appropriate Reformed, evangelical congregation, if not fully engaged in their own military or civilian chapel or church ministry.
- b. Maintain regular contact with their presbytery of membership, and attend presbytery meetings unless providentially hindered. If geographically separated from their member presbytery, expectation would be to attend meetings of the presbytery within whose boundaries they are serving. This is particularly true for Military Chaplains whose assignment locations regularly change. Most Chaplaincy calls are from agencies outside the bounds of a presbytery (G.10-8B.2). In many situations, Associate Membership in the presbytery will be

appropriate (G.19-2B).

- c. Participate in the annual Chaplains Workshop and General Assembly activities. If unable to do so due to financial constraints, military mission requirements or institutional demands that conflict, or family issues that preclude, you must request to be excused by contacting the Chaplain Endorser at your earliest opportunity. Contribute annually according to guidelines expressed in the Per Chaplain Askings section (Pg. 28 Section D.8.a-d). (Chaplain Candidates are exempted)
- d. Participate in the training required or offered by the military or other institutional service for which endorsement is utilized.
- e. Submit an Annual Report to the CWCC, and also provide any other information relative to their ministry when requested by the CWCC or their presbytery.
- f. Chaplain Candidates will keep the CWCC aptly informed on such matters as change of seminary (including graduation updates), address change, family status, and any other information of importance to the CWCC. The candidate shall also provide the church and the presbytery in which the candidate is under care, with this updated information.

3. Withdrawal of Endorsement

- a. In view of our responsibility to God, the Church, and to institutions both civilian and military, the CWCC will not look lightly upon a person who holds an EPC endorsement but appears to treat it as a matter of convenience, or demonstrates little interest in the principles, practices, and ministry of the EPC. The members of the CWCC are obligated to see that mutual responsibilities indicated in this handbook are being fulfilled in a manner that is pleasing to God and in line with EPC doctrine and expectations.
- b. Endorsements or Approvals can be withdrawn at the discretion of the CWCC. Such action might be prompted by any of the following: dismissal by the calling agency, commencement of formal ecclesiastical judicial procedures (*Book of Discipline*, chapters 6 – 10), initiation of disciplinary sanctions (*Book of Discipline*, chapter 11), violation of the Uniform Code of Military Justice or other applicable laws, failure to follow ethical standards, or failure to cooperate with/fulfill CWCC or presbytery requirements. If endorsement is withdrawn but accusations are proven to be unsubstantiated, the CWCC, after due consideration, may reinstate endorsement.
- c. Chaplains, Chaplain Candidates, or those in process as Applicants for Chaplaincy may end their Application or request the withdrawal of Endorsement/Approval, by submitting a request to the Chaplain Endorser, or if appropriate, the office of the Stated Clerk.

Section D. Guidance for Chaplains

1. Practice of ministry by EPC Chaplains within all institutional environments

- a. Book of Order, Book of Government §9-5E states that an EPC Minister, serving as a Chaplain, “Shall always have as his primary duty the sharing of the Good News of God in Jesus Christ.” This ministry of sharing will often take a different form than the ministry of a Pastor in an EPC congregation.
- b. Chaplains typically practice their ministry within institutions, whether military or civilian, in the following four ways (also known as the Four Foundations):
 - 1) Provide religious ministry and support for those of their own faith.
 - 2) Provide assistance in connecting individuals of different faiths and religious beliefs to a related support person.
 - 3) Provide care for all people in their organization along with their colleagues, family, and friends.
 - 4) Provide advisement to military commanders and other institutional leaders regarding moral and ethical concerns, the morale and welfare of the institution’s members, and appropriate means by which leaders may fulfill their responsibility to protect the free exercise of religion.
- c. It’s worthwhile to examine these “Four Foundations” of Chaplain Ministry more fully:
 - 1) First Foundation. This First Foundation has two “pools” of people:
 - a. The first “pool” of those to whom this ministry is addressed may be seen as a series of concentric circles, of Christians receptive to the ministry of an EPC Minister, beginning with EPC persons; expanding to persons of Reformed, Presbyterian, and Evangelical backgrounds; and on to Protestants and others not Catholic or Orthodox, such as Non-denominational, Baptists, Pentecostals, and so forth. While the EPC Chaplain will not provide worship ministry for Catholic and Orthodox Christians for example, there will nonetheless be opportunities on occasion to cooperate in events and alliances as strategic partners, all as Christians.
 - b. The second “pool” for provision of direct Christian ministry will be those non-Christians who are open and willing to receive such ministry. The

Chaplain is always watchful for opportunities to share the Gospel message. Institutions hosting Chaplain Ministry typically allow evangelism in their midst—under varying guidelines of free practice that may sometimes need challenge—while forbidding proselytism. The institutional definition of these terms, evangelism and proselytism, is

functional, not theological. Functionally, evangelism is defined as sharing one's faith message with those who have given their consent to hear it; while proselytism is defined as imposing the message on those who have not had the opportunity to give consent, or who have specifically withheld consent, or indicated outright opposition. EPC Chaplains, as a matter of respect and courtesy within an institution wherein persons' freedoms have been somewhat restricted, should refrain from proselytism, but should engage in evangelism at every appropriate opportunity.

- 2) Second Foundation: The Chaplain is also called, as a member of their institution, to facilitate ministry for all. This will, on occasion, lead to the seemingly counter-intuitive action of helping some groups that we find to be in error, to hold their meetings and receive religious ministry from those qualified by their groups to lead them. We must remember in these cases that the Chaplain holds a position, as a guarantor of religious freedom, quite different from a Minister in general society. There are three helpful ways to look at these actions:
 - a. First, we hold that God gave the first humans in Eden, the freedom to follow His commands—or not. Because Chaplain ministry is often given in an environment that physically restricts persons in a given institution from seeking normally available avenues of ministry, it is helpful, following God's example of Eden, to provide freedom of religious choice and expression—even when we believe the choice taken to be wrong. If God provided this freedom, who are we to provide less, when given the power, than did God? (It is noteworthy that in the world today, some of the most egregious persecutions of Christians, and restrictions of religious liberty, take place in both secular and religious environments that reject this Biblical freedom for all).
 - b. Second, by providing these religious freedom protections and opportunities for others, we safeguard those same protections and opportunities for ourselves. We thus provide authentic space, within institutions, to seek our own free exercise of ministry practice, in accordance with our own groups' requirements and beliefs, and our own consciences.
 - c. Third, we believe that when a genuine "free market" exists for faith, belief, and practices, the Gospel of Christ will do well! Just as the early Christians thrived and grew in a pagan world—even on a very unlevelled "playing field" that often disdained and persecuted them—we believe that Gospel ministry today will bring forth a joyful response from many people who seek its liberation and life.
- 3) Third Foundation: The Chaplain cares for all, without regard to belief or allegiance. This is another ministry of common grace. Jesus noted with approval, in Luke 4:25- 27, that Elijah's and Elisha's ministries encompassed those outside of God's chosen people. Chaplains often have access to people's lives that Pastors do not have, because their circle of care includes all those within their assigned institutional structure. The Chaplain's care of all these

persons, whether of the Church or not, should be that of a loving shepherd: to encourage, to comfort, to visit, to heal, to teach, to befriend, and to give a cup of water in our Lord's name (Matthew 10:40-42 and 25:31-46).

- 4) **Fourth Foundation:** The Chaplain also advises the institution, in particular the leaders, of which he or she is part. This advice constitutes a primary duty and takes many forms. It's proper for the Chaplain, in this advice, to consider the overall welfare of the institution and its people, vigorously advocating for the highest standards of good, and always highlighting the essential dignity of each person as made in the image of God.
2. **Sacraments.** Chaplains minister to some degree with the role and authority of Evangelists. A Chaplain may be, in a given situation, the only representative of the EPC, or indeed of Christ's Church at large. To this end it is necessary that Chaplains have authority to provide the sacraments of baptism, and the Lord's Supper, wherever they minister. The Chaplain should keep in mind that sacraments are not private, but provide God's grace for the Body of Christ in general. The Chaplain should therefore attempt, whenever possible, to provide the sacraments in the context of public worship. If they are provided in other settings for individuals, the Chaplain should endeavor to have present some expression of the larger Body of Christ, such as mature laymen and known Christian leaders.
 3. **Worship Services.** The Chaplain should take care to safeguard the purity of gospel ministry practice. This includes care in choosing public ministry partners, so that a scandal not be brought upon the Body of Christ. The General Assembly has stated (Act of Assembly 99-12) that Chaplains shall not co-lead worship with anyone whose endorsing group does not affirm the Apostles' Creed (Latter Day Saints and Christian Scientists for example), or with anyone whose endorsing group advocates practices at variance with God's Word and God's Law in the field of ethics (*Minutes of the 32nd General Assembly*, p. 225)
 4. **Public Ceremonies.** The Chaplain should understand that there is considerably more latitude in practice, as these are not Christian worship services. Such events fall in the category of providing common grace. Participation in such events, including the leading of public prayers, should be done with due consideration for the purpose of the event, and the people present—particularly recognizing that people are often required to attend. Therefore, if not specifically Christian, it would be advised to pray in such terminology and salutation that would not be an affront to those present that are of other faiths, just as we would expect the same grace extended to us.
 5. **Boundaries/Expectations in Ministering to Homosexual, Bi-Sexual, Transgender Individuals, and to Same-Sex Couples.** EPC Chaplains shall profess, teach, and live by Scriptural standards of moral law, depending on the work of the Holy Spirit to enact the Gospel's transformative power. See www.epc.org/chaplaincy for current guidance on dealing with persons who practice homosexual behavior, claim homosexual or transgender identity, or are in a Same-

Sex relationship. (See Attachments 1 and 2, and www.epc.org/positionpapers)

- 6. Contrary Teaching.** EPC chaplains shall not legitimize contrary teaching by:
- a. Co-leading worship in their official position, in partnership with any person endorsed by a faith group that officially advocates violation of God's moral law or with persons representing faith groups outside the historic Christian tradition as defined by the Apostles Creed (Act of Assembly 99-12). Public/civic ceremonies, and the normal staff work of religious ministry programs, present a different case, not subject to this restriction. Providing teaching, training, or counsel that advocates approval of, reasonably appears to advocate approval of, or condones violations of God's moral law.
 - b. In cases of question, conflict, or issues/situations an EPC chaplain finds to be contrary to our standards, he/she should consult early on the EPC Endorser or, if unavailable, a CWCC member.
 - c. It is impossible to name every situation that may arise in the practice of a chaplain's ministry. EPC Chaplains in every case should strive to fulfill their call as stated in *Book of Government* 9-3A and 9-5E:

Book of Government 9-3A. Life and Character of Officers

According to Scripture, those who bear office in the Church should exhibit certain characteristics of life. This includes being above reproach, sound in the faith, wise in the things of God, and discreet in all things. Persons who fill this office should exhibit a lifestyle that is an example to all, both in and outside the Church. A congregation preparing to elect persons to this holy office should carefully study appropriate passages of Scripture relating to the Ruling Elder and be very prayerful in selecting persons to this office.⁵²

Book of Government 9-5E. Chaplain

A court of the Church, a hospital, the military, institutions, universities, or other appropriate fields of service may call a Teaching Elder as Chaplain if the Presbytery deems it appropriate. In such cases, the Chaplain shall always have as a primary responsibility the sharing of the Good News of God in Jesus Christ.

The Presbytery may authorize the Chaplain to administer the sacraments in that role.

- 7. CWCC Support to all Institutional Chaplains, (Military and Civilian) and particular support to Military Chaplain Candidates.** The Endorsed or Approved Institutional Chaplain (Military and Civilian) or Approved Military Chaplain Candidate may expect:

- a. Appropriate information, prayer, mentoring and counsel through its Chairman, its individual members, or other Chaplains endorsed by the EPC.
- b. Official representation (primarily through the Endorser) with their chaplaincy's organizational leadership. For Civilian Chaplains, this would include the leadership of the organization for which the Chaplain is endorsed, and whom they

are serving, including corporate leadership as necessary. For Military Chaplains, this would include their local military installation leadership, as well as the Office of the Chief of Chaplains of the Military Service for which they are endorsed.

- c. Pastoral care, including appropriate information and counsel through the members of the CWCC, or other Chaplains endorsed by the EPC.
- d. Prayers and support, as well as the CWCC encouraging the same from the chaplain's presbytery and of local churches and individuals within the denomination.
- e. Military Chaplain Candidates should be assigned an active duty, reserve component, or retired military EPC chaplain as a mentor while in the Chaplain Candidate Program.

8. Per Chaplain Askings, Designated Contributions, and Other Financial Sources.

- a. For military Reserve and National Guard Chaplains, Per Chaplain Askings are approximately 2% of accomplished annual duty base pay. Examples from 2017 include:

O-2 (over 6 years)	\$155 per year
O-3 (over 10 years)	\$196 per year
O-4 (over 14 years)	\$239 per year
O-5 (over 18 years)	\$274 per year
O-6 (over 22 years)	\$330 per year

- b. For Active Duty Military Chaplains, approximately 1% of annual base pay. Examples from 2017 include:

O-2 (over 6 years)	\$581 per year
O-3 (over 10 years)	\$735 per year
O-4 (over 14 years)	\$896 per year
O-5 (over 18 years)	\$1028 per year
O-6 (over 22 years)	\$1238 per year

- c. VA Chaplains, part-time, approximately 2% of pay; full-time, approximately 1% of pay. This equates out properly because of the differing income received between part-time and full-time chaplains.
- d. Part-time, paid, Civilian Chaplains (endorsed), approximately 2% of pay; full-time paid Civilian Chaplains (endorsed), approximately 1% of pay. This equates out properly because of the differing income received between part-time and full-time chaplains. Designated contributions from Chaplains and other interested individuals will be deposited in the Chaplains Work and Care Benevolence Fund and receipted as charitable contributions, according to the financial policies of the General Assembly. These contributions are used solely to financially assist chaplains who do not receive funding from other sources to attend the Chaplains Workshop and

General Assembly, as well as certain work of the CWCC. To make contributions, the following process should be followed:

How to Donate

1. Go to epc.org
2. Click on “DONATE”, then “Donate Now”, then “Click to support the EPC”
3. Go to Dropdown Menu and Click on “Pastoral, Chaplain and Church Projects”
4. Go to Dropdown Menu below this, and Click on “Chaplain Work and Care” and enter your Donation amount
5. Enter in your Personal and other Donation Information below, then Click “Submit”

Contributions may also be made by sending a check to:

*Evangelical Presbyterian Church
Office of the General Assembly
5850 T.G. Lee Blvd., Suite 510
Orlando, FL 32822*

** Enter “CWCC (477)” on memo line of check

- e. The Committee and Chaplains may ask and encourage churches, individuals, and other institutions such as chapel communities, to contribute to the CWCC.

Section E. Chaplain Endorser

1. **The Office of the Chaplain Endorser.** (Rules for Assembly 2016-2017X.L.3) The Moderator shall nominate to the General Assembly a Teaching Elder (normally a retired military chaplain) to serve as the EPC Chaplain Endorser for a three-year term, which is renewable. The Endorser will be operationally accountable to the Office of the Stated Clerk; reports to the CWCC, and to the General Assembly (primarily to the Assistant Stated Clerk); and maintains liaison with the Office of the General Assembly and its Committee on Administration. The position of Endorser is a valid pastoral call, entailing Terms of Call.
2. **The Work of the Chaplain Endorser:**
 - a. The Endorser is an ex-officio member of the Chaplains Work and Care Committee with voice and vote. In consultation with the Office of the Stated Clerk and CWCC, the Endorser oversees the endorsement application process.
 - b. The Endorser facilitates an interview with each applicant for endorsement, whether personally or by designating another person to conduct the interview. This would include a member of the CWCC, a Chaplain (full-time, part-time, or retired) endorsed by the EPC, or in the case of necessity, a Chaplain of another faith group who is fully trusted by the Endorser, or an EPC Teaching or Ruling Elder. The interviewer shall provide the CWCC a full account of the interview, with a recommendation for action.

- c. The Endorser is the EPC designated signatory for Chaplain Endorsements and “Approval” documentation.
- d. The Endorser provides direct guidance, training, and pastoral care to Chaplains and their families.
- e. The Endorser is the official representative of the EPC regarding Chaplaincy matters to government agencies, institutional Chaplain Certification agencies, and Chaplain endorsing conferences and associations with which the EPC has affiliation.
- f. The Endorser is the EPC representative for pastoral care of EPC chaplains and Military Chaplain Candidates through direct pastoral visits and other appropriate means at their place of service or seminary, as well as Applicants for Chaplaincy and those inquiring about Chaplain Vocation. Travel is approved by the Office of the Stated Clerk in accordance with Committee on Administration actions and policies to conduct endorser visits to Military Chaplains at their duty stations, and Civilian Chaplains at their work locations.
- g. The Endorser represents the EPC at ecumenical and interfaith endorsing conferences of which it is a member, including: The National Conference on Ministry to the Armed Forces (NCMAF), Endorsers Conference for Veterans Affairs Chaplaincy (ECVAC), Armed Forces Chaplain Board (AFCB), National Association of Evangelicals Chaplains Commission (NAECC), and Chaplains Alliance for Religious Liberty (CALL).
- h. The Endorser prepares an annual report, in cooperation with the CWCC Chairman, to be submitted to the General Assembly, and provide information and news releases on Chaplaincy programs as appropriate.
- i. Should the Endorser resign or become unable to serve, the Stated Clerk or the Clerk’s designee shall serve in that position until a new Endorser is nominated and elected.

Attachment 1

Specific Guidance for Evangelical Presbyterian Church Chaplains Regarding Ministry to Same-Sex Couples

Under the guiding authority of their endorsing body, the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC):

- 1) No EPC chaplain will provide pre-marital/marital counseling, or officiate, participate in, or provide official witness to any event or ceremony which may reasonably be construed to condone, ratify, or promote marriages or equivalents to marriage between persons of the same sex.
- 2) EPC chaplains may provide direct relationship counseling, couples retreats, or any other related type of event or issue that involves same-sex couples, as long as the chaplain does not give the impression that such relationships are condoned.

The principles guiding our thinking and practice are:

- EPC chaplains receive authority from, and are guided by the Bible, which affirms that marriage is designed by God to be between one man and one woman.
- The EPC acknowledges that federal and state governments, along with several courts, have redefined marriage to include same-sex couples. Our responsibility, however, is to hold to biblical standards of marriage.
- Evangelical Christians treat all people with dignity and respect, including those in relationships outside biblical norms.

Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, Transgender (LGBT) Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Coast Guardsmen and Marines have long been coming to their chaplains seeking ministry. We have always treated each person as one whom Christ loves and for whom He died. We will continue to provide this ministry with truth and grace. However, our biblical convictions tell us that marrying same-sex couples is not “ministry” and we consider such relationships sinful.

Chaplain leadership and military institutions should understand that EPC chaplains must adhere to their own ordination vows and involve themselves only in activities or ministry that their endorsing body, the EPC, requires or allows.

EPC chaplains will always provide cooperation without compromise. For example:

“What should be the extent of my participation in chaplain-led activities (such as Army Strong Bonds and Navy CREDO) where same-sex couples are present?” EPC chaplains should seek ways to be gracious and engaging in their approach to ministry. An EPC chaplain could affirm involvement in traditional relationship retreats while suggesting that there be a two-pronged approach to said retreats; one in which chaplains would minister to traditional couples, and the other in which chaplains, who are permitted to do so by their endorsing body, would minister to non-traditional couples (such as same-sex couples). Such an approach provides support without compromise. EPC chaplains should be swift to affirm what they can do, not just their restrictions.

Institutional chaplains face similar issues. EPC chaplains serving in any venue must continue to be consistent in their witness and counsel. Tailoring the Gospel message in any way that appears to condone sinful behavior is not in keeping with EPC chaplain standards. EPC chaplains will seek to follow Christ’s example, who always ministered “Truth in love.”

Approved October 2013

Attachment 2

Ministry Policy for EPC Chaplains Dealing with Persons Who Practice Homosexual Behavior and Claim Homosexual Identity

EPC chaplains are called to work in diverse environments with people of dramatically diverse backgrounds, conditions, lifestyles, and beliefs. The nature of chaplaincy and its ministry means that chaplains may work directly with persons who might not normally be encountered in civilian congregation-based pastoral ministry. In every such case, the chaplain, as stated in *Book of Government* 10-3.E, "... shall always have as his primary duty the sharing of the Good News of God in Jesus Christ."

EPC chaplains minister, as part of God's Good News, God's moral law. This law, found explicitly in Scripture, and, according to Romans 1, seen and known by all people through the witness of Creation, applies both to believers and non-believers, as explained in our *Westminster Confession of Faith*:

- 19-5 The moral law, however, does pertain to everyone, saved and unsaved, forever, not just with respect to its content but also in relationship to the authority of God, the Creator, who gave it. In the gospel Christ, does not in any way remove this obligation, but rather strengthens it.
- 19.6 Although true believers are not justified or condemned by the law as a covenant of works, the law is nevertheless very useful to them and to others. As a rule of life, it informs them of God's will and of their obligation to obey it. It also reveals to them the sinful pollution of their nature, hearts, and lives, so that, examining themselves from its point of view, they may become more convinced of the presence of sin in them, more humiliated on account of that sin, and hate sin the more. Thus, they gain a better awareness of their need for Christ and for the perfection of his obedience. The prohibitions against sin in the law are also useful in restraining believers from pursuing the desires of their old nature, and the punishments for disobedience in the law show them what their sins deserve and what afflictions they may expect for them in this life, even though they have been freed from the curse threatened in the law...
- 19.7 None of these uses of the law is contrary to the grace of the gospel. They rather beautifully comply with it, because the Spirit of Christ subdues and enables the will of man to do voluntarily and cheerfully what the will of God, revealed in the law, requires to be done.

EPC chaplains should be mindful of the universal application of God's law, both to believers and non-believers. In a day when even some churches proclaim that portions of the moral law

do not apply, EPC chaplains should maintain a rigorous Scriptural basis, and faithful hermeneutic, as the measure of their ministry.

EPC chaplains should therefore hold forth in their ministry, public and private, the full grace of God's Gospel that includes all of the law's definitions, practices, and purposes. In the case of homosexual behavior and claimed identity, the following standards apply:

Westminster Larger Catechism

Q. 138. What does the seventh commandment require?

A. The seventh commandment requires us to be sexually pure in body, mind, inclinations, words, and actions, and to maintain that purity in ourselves and others. We are to monitor what we look at as well as what we experience with our other senses; and we are to live temperately, keeping pure company and dressing modestly. Those who cannot control their sexual desires should marry, loving and living together with their spouses. We should also work hard at whatever we are called to do, avoiding all opportunities for indecency, and resisting any temptation to say, think, or do anything indecent or obscene.

Q. 139. What particular sins does the seventh commandment forbid?

A. In addition to failing to do what is required, the seventh commandment forbids: adultery, fornication, rape, incest, sodomy, and all unnatural desires; all impure imaginations, thoughts, purposes, and inclinations; all corrupt and nasty talk or listening to such, lewd looks, shameless or frivolous behavior, and immodest dress; prohibiting lawful marriages and allowing unlawful ones; condoning, tolerating, or organizing prostitution and visiting prostitutes; restrictive vows of celibacy, unnecessary delays in marrying, having more than one wife or husband at the same time; unjust divorce or desertion; idleness, gluttony, drunkenness, and keeping impure company; obscene or pornographic songs, books, pictures, dancing, or theatrical presentations; and all other encouragement to or indulgence in impure activities by us or others.

Book of Discipline 1-10 Definition of "Immorality"

Immorality is conduct inconsistent with the biblical standards for conduct, including but not limited to bickering, brawling, debauchery, drunkenness, gossiping, hatred, idolatry, impurity, slander, and sexual immorality such as adultery, fornication, homosexual practice, and bestiality. ...

EPC chaplains may also refer to the EPC Position Paper on Homosexuality¹ for a more full treatment of ministry guidance regarding this issue. It recommends ministry emphases of education, 2) friendship, 3) healing resources, and 4) prayerful intercession.

EPC chaplains should therefore minister in the spirit of the statement sent by the EPC to the Armed Forces Chaplains Board in 2010:

The position of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC) is stated in its *Position Paper on Homosexuality*, that "Homosexual practice is a distortion of the image of God as it is still reflected in fallen man, and a perversion of the sexual relationships God intended it to be." May we respectfully state for the record that we stand opposed to all forms of hate speech and practice; that we affirm the human dignity and rights of all Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender (GLBT) persons; that we personally respect the personhood of, and appreciate the contributions of, GLBT persons in society; and that we appreciate our personal relationships with such persons, many of whom receive our ministry.¹

In providing their ministry, EPC chaplains shall always show great respect for the Image of God imprinted on every person. This respect shall include respect for human rights, asserted to the maximum extent morally and legally possible. However, should the claim of human and/or civil rights be applied in such ways to challenge, undermine, or censor the "first freedom" of religious rights—either of the chaplain, or those in the chaplain's care—then the chaplain must assert, above all, faithfulness to the fullness of God's Gospel. This faithfulness must be expressed wisely (Matthew 10:16), understanding the times (2 Peter 3:3), and if possible, without giving offense (Hebrews 12:14).

In summary, EPC chaplains shall:

- 1) Profess, teach, and live by Scriptural standards of moral law, depending on the work of the Holy Spirit to enact the Gospel's transformative power.
- 2) In accordance with best practices of chaplain ministry and with a maximum of respect and love for all persons regardless of their beliefs or conditions: provide religious ministry and support for those of our own faith; facilitate for all religious beliefs; care for all people in their organization with their family and friends; and advise commanders and institutional leaders to ensure the free exercise of religion.
- 3) Not legitimize contrary teaching. EPC chaplains therefore shall not:
 - a) Co-lead worship (as defined in the EPC *Book of Worship*, 2-1²) in their official position, in partnership with any person endorsed by a faith group that officially advocates violation of God's moral law. (Public/civic ceremonies, and the normal staff work of religious ministry programs, present a different case, not subject to this restriction.)

¹ <http://www.epc.org/about-the-epc/position-papers/homosexuality>

² Book of Worship §2-1: The acceptable way of worshipping God is established by God Himself. Proper worship is defined and outlined in God's revealed will and is to be followed in giving glory to Him. True and proper worship therefore finds its prescription in Holy Scripture. Only God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are to receive such worship. Such worship shall include the reverent and attentive reading of the Scriptures, the sound preaching and conscientious hearing of the Word, and singing of psalms and hymns, the proper administration and right receiving of the sacraments, and prayer with thanksgiving. Such public worship of God shall also include times of solemn prayer and fasting, as well as special days of praise and thanksgiving. All worship should at all times and in all places, be performed in a holy and religious manner. The public worship of God is not to be carelessly or willfully neglected or forsaken.

- b) Provide teaching, training, or counsel that advocates approval of, or reasonably appears to advocate approval of, or condones violations of God's moral law.

- 4) Practice ministry of word and deed, in public and private, that brings the full counsel of God to bear, insofar as is possible and practicable with given people and situations, providing prophetic proclamation in the face of expectations of cultural conformity.

- 5) In cases of question or conflict, consult the EPC endorser early in a given process.

It is impossible to name every situation that may arise in the practice of a chaplain's ministry. EPC chaplains in every case should strive to fulfill their call as stated in *Book of Government* 10-2:

Those who fill this office should, according to the Scripture, have certain qualifications. They should be sound in the faith and have an aptitude for teaching. Their lives should reflect holiness and discipline which brings honor to Christ and which causes them to be well thought of by those outside the Church. They should have wisdom and discretion . . .

As this pure ministry of Word and Sacrament is exercised incarnationally by chaplains, we count on God to bless such efforts with great spiritual fruitfulness!

*Adopted by the 31st General Assembly
Evangelical Presbyterian Church
June 2011*