



## HANDBOOK FOR EFCA CHAPLAINS AND CANDIDATES

Revised February 2017  
EFCA Chaplains Commission

### GENERAL INFORMATION

**Introduction:** This handbook provides parameters and guidelines for chaplains and candidates serving under the Evangelical Free Church of America (EFCA) umbrella. The intention is not to give exhaustive explanations and policies but assist present and potential chaplains in the primary processes of credentialing and endorsement. In addition, requirements and expectations of EFCA chaplains are briefly outlined. Since most chaplains operate outside the traditional pastoral setting, one cannot overemphasize the importance that all credentialed chaplains render. Chaplains perform strategic ministry and they are an extension of the Church and are vital to the witness of the Word and the gospel in pluralistic and inter-cultural contexts.

#### **What Does It Mean to Be an EFCA Chaplain?**

Chaplains are credentialed ministers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ with a specific vocational calling to serve within an institutional (hospital, university, community service, marketplace, etc.), government (Bureau of Prisons, VA, or military) environs. Chaplains are evangelical pastors to their constituents and carry a wide spectrum of responsibilities within their respective sphere of influence. Being 'evangelical' carries distinctive characteristics. An evangelical chaplain is one who (a) holds to the Bible as being the inerrant Word of God; (b) shares his/her faith in the gospel in an uncompromising manner; (c) supports the Christian body of Christ (the Church) as being the foundational center of the continuance of the Gospel, and (d) serves to carry the Grace of God through pastoral acts, preaching and teaching, to his/her constituents. Those who represent the EFCA as chaplains are expected to (a) obtain and maintain an EFCA ministerial credential indicating theological competencies/proficiencies/mastery, (b) demonstrate a high level of spiritual maturity, and (c) complete necessary practical experience within a qualified ministry-setting prior to working within a secular context. Chaplain responsibilities will include preaching, teaching, leading Bible studies, prayer groups and rendering many forms of pastoral care. Additional expectations of chaplains will include administrative and organizational demands including the managing of staff and being a spiritual leader within their ministry calling.

The religious context of the Armed Forces and most secular institutions, like that of the American society at large, is one of religious pluralism, in which independent churches and religious bodies coexist in mutual respect. Because of the impracticality of providing clergy of every faith or denomination at every secular institution or military command, the Armed Forces and the churches of America have evolved jointly a pattern of cooperative ministry. The principle of cooperative ministry places on every chaplain the obligation to: (a) make provision for meeting the religious needs of those in the institution who are adherents of other churches, and (b) cooperate with other chaplains and commands (or institutional settings) in meeting the religious needs of member of the chaplain's own faith group.

## 1. General Requirements for EFCA Chaplains Desiring Credentials and Ecclesiastical Endorsement

- A. **Institutional** - Ministers seeking credentialing in specialty ministry fields (i.e., hospital, educational, hospice, or prison settings, etc.)
- College/University undergraduate studies, normally having a Bachelor's Degree with a minimum of 120-semester credits.
  - Post Graduate studies in theology, Bible, and counseling (most hiring institutions will expect or require an M.Div. or the equivalency)
  - Clinical Pastoral Education (minimum of 1-4 units, depending on the respective institution)
  - Ministerial Credential from EFCA
    - Vocational Ministry License (Renewable five year)
    - Certificate of Christian Ministry, or
    - Certificate of Ordination (preferred)
  - Practical Ministry — (minimum of three years) within the local church or other qualifying ministry
  - Ecclesiastical Endorsement
- B. **Military** - Chaplains seeking service within a branch of the military – Army, Air Force, Navy, or their respective Reserve components (i.e. Army National Guard, Air Guard, etc.)
- US Citizenship (the only exception may be from the Army National Guard)
  - College Degree (120-semester units-min.) from an accredited educational institution
  - Post-Graduate Degree (or equivalency) of between 72-90 hours from an accredited evangelical theological institution. EFCA Chaplains historically have had a minimum of 90 semester hours to be endorsed. Less than this will be approved on a case-by-case basis.
  - Age limitations (which vary with each branch)
  - Satisfactory physical fitness and absence of medical complications
  - Absence of moral waivers
  - Practical ministry (minimum of three years) for active duty chaplain accessions
  - Ministerial credential from the EFCA (Certificate of Ordination for men & Certificate of Christian Ministry for women)
  - Ecclesiastical Endorsement

## 2. Ecclesiastical Endorsement

An Endorsement is an official document (in a letter form or prescribed format) from one's denominational representative indicating that the chaplain or candidate has (a) completed all the basic ministerial requirements and standards of his/her faith group, (b) is in good standing regarding his/her ministerial credential, and (c) is competent and recommended for ministry to an organization, agency or institution to which that individual has applied.

### A. Requirements for Ecclesiastical Endorsement:

1. The chaplain applicant shall meet all the requirements of the EFCA for a ministerial credential as indicated in *Ministerial Credentialing in the EFCA* drafted by the EFCA Board of Ministerial Standing through the local district in which the applicant is residing.  
(<http://go.efca.org/resources/document/credentialing-ministerial-credentialing-efca>)
2. The applicant shall meet the standards for endorsement set by the Chaplain Endorser and the EFCA Chaplains Commission. This is accomplished by completing the application and interview processes.
3. The military applicant, for active duty, shall have a minimum of three years (post-seminary) practical ministry experience. This can include internships or various types of pastoral experience. Ministry experience should be a minimum of 30 hours per week or greater. Normally an active duty applicant will have most, if not all, of the following pastoral experience: (a) preaching, (b) counseling, (c) teaching of the Scriptures, (d) administration of ordinances, (e) pastoral care opportunities, (f) wedding ceremony, and (g) funeral or memorial service. All military applicants must give evidence that he/she has competently carried out these ministry experiences.
4. The applicant (either military or institutional) shall give evidence that he/she has demonstrated competency through pastoral/other leadership in ministry. The applicant must also give evidence to a willingness to minister/work within a pluralistic environment without compromising personal convictions as well as the EFCA Statement of Faith (2008).
5. Individual applicants desiring military service must give evidence that one can minister appropriately to military personnel and their families, or to the constituency served by the chaplaincy to which he/she is seeking endorsement. This is generally determined by a senior military chaplain prior to beginning military chaplaincy.
6. The military applicant shall be able to submit to military authority and be willing to honor and abide by the requirements and guidelines of the military and the EFCA.

An Ecclesiastical Endorsement may be withdrawn by the EFCA Chaplains Endorser upon a valid request of the individual, failure to maintain their EFCA credential, or for causes such as illegal conduct, moral failure, or incompetency in performing assigned tasks, or failure to meet such standards as non-payment of annual dues or submission of regular reports. In the case of moral failure or illegal conduct, the appropriate denominational provisions for ministerial discipline will be followed. This is initiated by the EFCA Chaplain Endorser and followed up through the EFCA Board of Ministerial Standing (BOMS) and, where necessity dictates, through the District Superintendent or his representatives(s). An Ecclesiastical Endorsement may also be withdrawn for failing to abide by the EFCA policies and requirements of the Statement of Faith and the Chaplain's Handbook set forth by the EFCA Chaplain's Commission.

**B. What the endorsed chaplain should expect from the EFCA Endorser and the Chaplains Commission:**

1. An endorsed chaplain may expect an updated endorsement (as required) for the EFCA Chaplains Commission/Endorser while the chaplain continues to meet the military or institutional requirements. The endorsed chaplain must remain in good standing with his/her ministerial credential and remain faithful in completing annual reports and annual dues as specified in Appendix C.
2. The endorsee may expect official representation from the EFCA leadership (the Chaplain Endorser) to the office of the various Chiefs of Chaplains or with the organization, military or otherwise, to which a chaplain may be a staff member. Representation by the EFCA Chaplain Endorser (or designated representative), on behalf of all endorsed EFCA chaplains to a number organizations such as National Association of Evangelicals Commission on Chaplains (NAECC), the Armed Forces Chaplains Board (AFCB), Veterans Affairs (VA), the Association of Professional Chaplains (APC) or the National Conference on Ministry to the Armed Forces (NCMAF).
3. The endorsee may expect from the EFCA Endorser, appropriate and timely chaplain-related information and counsel regarding important trends, required data, and news vital to individual members and to all endorsed chaplains.
4. The endorsed chaplain may expect the prayers and contact support from the EFCA denomination, the Commission, the Endorser and the local churches. The chaplain can also expect to be provided counsel and other support from the Chaplain Endorser when questions of concern may arise from one's workplace that impacts ministry or other professional duties.

**C. What the EFCA Chaplains Commission and Endorser should expect from the endorsed chaplain:**

1. The endorsee shall maintain periodic contact with the district (where one is currently residing) and the Chaplain Endorser.
2. The endorsee shall keep the Endorser informed on such matters as new assignment changes, promotions, and other pertinent information.
3. The endorsee shall complete and forward an annual (institutional) or semi-annual report(s) (military) to the EFCA Chaplains Ministries office ([Chaplains@efca.org](mailto:Chaplains@efca.org)) providing information relative to the matters of ministry in which one is engaged.
4. The endorsee shall contribute dues each year of a designated amount (See dues chart in - Appendix A).
5. Chaplains carry a dual responsibility - (a) to the EFCA denomination and (b) to their respective organization and/or employer. Implicit with all credentialed EFCA chaplains is the responsibility and accountability to the EFCA. Accountability includes doctrinal alignment, personal conduct and spiritual lifestyle as described in the 2008 EFCA Statement of Faith. To manage the denominational side of this accountability, all EFCA endorsed chaplains will maintain accountability to their local sending church, to the District for which they are a part, and to the EFCA Endorser.
6. Seek a new endorsement each time you reaffirm the EFCA Statement of Faith (every five years).

7. As such, it is expected that all EFCA credentialed chaplains serving either institutional or military constituency will
  - a. Hold local membership in an EFCA Church;
  - b. be accountable to the EFCA district where you are residing;
  - c. should plan to attend the EFCA One conference (national leadership event), an EFCA District Conference, an EFCA theology Conference, or an EFCA Chaplain Conference function (minimally) every other year;
  - d. be in good standing with the annual fees/dues and required reports. The exception to this policy involves those chaplains who carry a dual role as both a local pastor and a volunteer or part-time institutional or military (Guard or Reserve) chaplain. Those individuals will be expected to maintain their primary accountability to their local district and a secondary accountability to the EFCA Endorser.

#### **D. Summary**

In view of the responsibility to God, the Christian Church at large, the EFCA and the institutions to which chaplains serve, the Commission cannot and does not regard the chaplain's credential (nor the Ecclesiastical Endorsement) simply as an administrative necessity. The chaplain does not hold an EFCA Ecclesiastical Endorsement as a matter of convenience. These matters are important and the ministerial credential (and subsequent Endorsement) is an important step of the chaplain's call to ministry. All chaplains must be on guard against any tendency to have little interest in the principles, practices, and ministry of the local church, the district, or the denomination, from which he/she is credentialed and endorsed. The Endorsee and Endorser are obliged to maintain a constant vigil to see that mutual responsibilities indicated in the EFCA Statement of Faith and the EFCA Chaplain Handbook are being fulfilled in a manner that is pleasing the Lord of the Church and in keeping with the tenets of our Faith.

## MILITARY CHAPLAINCY

### **Expectations and understanding of all chaplains preparing for active duty or serving in a reserve component:**

A. Keep your denomination and Chaplain Endorser informed of any changes of address, phone numbers, email, as well as schools attending or deployments (of greater than 90 days) you may encounter.

B. For credentialed chaplains, the responsibility remains with the chaplain to be accountable to the EFCA local church and EFCA District where the EFCA credential has been completed. If one has received a license, the credentialed holder must remain accountable to the district for continued study and preparation toward full Ordination or Certificate of Christian Ministry. This should occur immediately following the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of the issuance of the license. Failure to complete the process toward Ordination, or final Certificate, can result in loss of Endorsement.

C. Payment of your annual dues can be paid online or forwarded to EFCA Chaplains Ministries, 901 East 78<sup>th</sup> Street, Minneapolis, MN 55420-1300, no later than the 1<sup>ST</sup> of October (on a yearly basis). The annual dues can be sent/paid at any time during the year. Please indicate on the check or credit card payment: CHAPLAIN ANNUAL DUES and the specific year the payment is intended (See Appendix A).

D. Military Semi-Annual Reports are due each June and December of the calendar year. These reports should be sent to: EFCA Chaplains, 901 East 78<sup>th</sup> Street, Minneapolis, MN 55420-1300 or [Chaplains@efca.org](mailto:Chaplains@efca.org). The report summarizes your ministry and provides the EFCA with new information, such as address, emails, phone numbers, unit, promotion, and specific projects/ministry for which one is involved, as well as, prayer needs and family status.

E. Please remain vigilant regarding the requirements of your military branch or organization when an updated Ecclesiastical Endorsement is needed. For EFCA endorsed chaplains, a new endorsement is required every five years when the chaplain completes the reaffirmation to the EFCA Statement of Faith. Chaplains should notify the Endorser as promptly as possible when one is needed. Response time for updated endorsements can take up to ten days for compliance.

F. Adhere to the ethical standards adopted by the National Conference on Ministry to the Armed Forces (see applicable page) and the appropriate standards as set by the EFCA in conjunction with one's institutional standards. The ethical statements are provided on a separate page but are important for all chaplain to read, copy and follow in one's ministry setting.

G. Chaplains/Candidates will have read the aforementioned paragraphs and will follow the ethical covenant and code of ethics upon commencement of ministry within the Armed Forces. Chaplains will be asked to read, sign (and retain a copy), and forward the statements of *The Covenant and The Code of Ethics for Chaplains of the Armed Forces to the endorser*.

# The Covenant and the Code of Ethics for Chaplains of the Armed Forces

## The Covenant

Having accepted God's call to minister to people who serve in the Armed Forces of our country, I covenant to serve God and these people with God's help: to deepen my obedience to the Commandments, to love the Lord our God with all my heart, soul, mind and strength, and to love my neighbor as myself. In affirmation of this commitment, I will abide by the Code of Ethics for Chaplains of the Armed Forces and I will faithfully support its purposes and ideals. As further affirmation of my commitment, I covenant with my colleagues in ministry that we will hold one another accountable for fulfillment of all public actions set forth in our Code of Ethics.

## The Code of Ethics

***I will hold*** in trust the traditions and practices of my religious body.

***I will carefully*** adhere to whatever direction may be conveyed to me by my endorsing body for maintenance of my endorsement.

***I understand*** as a chaplain in the Armed Forces that I must function in a pluralistic environment with chaplains of other religious bodies to provide for ministry to all military personnel and their families entrusted to my care.

***I will seek*** to provide pastoral care and ministry to persons of religious bodies other than my own within my area of responsibility with the same investment of myself as I give to members of my own religious body. I will work collegially with chaplains of religious bodies other than my own as together we seek to provide as full a ministry as possible to our people. I will respect the beliefs and traditions of my colleagues and those to whom I minister. When conducting services of worship that include persons of other than my religious body, I will draw upon those beliefs, principles, and practices that we have in common. I will, if in a supervisory position, respect the practices and beliefs of each chaplain I supervise, and exercise care not to require of them any service or practice that would be in violation of the faith practices of their particular religious body.

***I will seek*** to support all colleagues in ministry by building constructive relationships wherever I serve, both with the staff where I work and with colleagues throughout the military environment.

***I will maintain*** a disciplined ministry in such ways as keeping hours of prayer and devotion, endeavoring to maintain wholesome family relationships, and regularly engage in educational and recreational activities for professional and personal development. I will seek to maintain good health habits.

***I will recognize*** that my obligation is to provide ministry to all members of the military services, their families, and other authorized personnel. When on active duty, I will only accept added responsibility in civilian work or ministry if it does not interfere with the overall effectiveness of my primary military ministry.

***I will defend*** my colleagues against unfair discrimination on the basis of gender, race, religion or national origin.

***I will hold*** in confidence all privileged and confidential communication.

***I will respect*** all persons of other religious faiths. I will respond to any expressed need for spiritual guidance and pastoral care to those who seek my counsel.

***I will show*** personal love for God in my life and ministry, as I maintain the discipline and promote the integrity of the profession to which I have been called.

***I recognize*** the special power afforded me by my ministerial office. I will never use that power in ways that violate the personhood of another human being, religiously, emotionally or sexually. I will use my pastoral office only for that which is best for the persons under my ministry.

*Updated 3/2011 by the Ethics Subcommittee of the National Conference on Ministry to the Armed Forces*

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**MILITARY CHAPLAIN SEMI-ANNUAL REPORT**  
**Evangelical Free Church of America – Chaplains Commission**



Please send this report to: EFCA Chaplains, 901 East 78<sup>th</sup> Street, Minneapolis, MN 55420-1300 or [Chaplains@efca.org](mailto:Chaplains@efca.org) and to your home church leadership

Report Ending 31 Dec 20\_\_\_\_ or Ending 30 June 20\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Rank: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell/Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email (1): \_\_\_\_\_ Email (2): \_\_\_\_\_

Service: \_\_\_\_\_ Active/Reserve: \_\_\_\_\_

Duty/Unit Assignment: \_\_\_\_\_

Check the ministries you were involved in during this past year:

\_\_\_ Chapel Leadership                      \_\_\_ Counseling                      \_\_\_ Administration

\_\_\_ Duty Station Worship                      \_\_\_ Visitations                      \_\_\_ Bible Studies

\_\_\_ Preaching/Teaching                      \_\_\_ Special Project                      \_\_\_ Special Project (2)

\_\_\_\_\_

Deployed – TDY/TAD: \_\_\_\_\_

Date selected for promotion: \_\_\_\_\_ Promotion effective date: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Release date: \_\_\_\_\_ Resignation date: \_\_\_\_\_ Retirement date: \_\_\_\_\_

Next assignment known/where: \_\_\_\_\_

PCS date: \_\_\_\_\_

## MILITARY CHAPLAIN SEMI-ANNUAL REPORT

**NARRATIVE REPORT:** Please describe your ministry. Include special projects and significant events in this period. Please utilize this space for personal comments regarding your family, your tour of duty, prayer needs or suggestions of how the EFCA or Endorser may assist you. Feel free to use another piece of paper if more space is needed.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Reminder: Have your annual dues been paid?

**Guidance Statement**  
**Marriage and Related Functions by Military Chaplains Serving**  
**The Evangelical Free Church of America**

Military Chaplains Credentialed and Endorsed by the EFCA

The Evangelical Free Church of America's mission is building transformational churches to all peoples while heralding the Good News of Christ. The EFCA exists to encourage pastors, missionaries, and chaplains to remain faithful to the Scriptural teachings regardless of what the current trends of the culture may bring.

In light of the changes within our federal government concerning the repeal of "*Don't Ask; Don't Tell*" policy, and the June 2013 ruling by the Supreme Court regarding the unconstitutionality of the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), military chaplains must remain faithful to the biblical and historical pattern of marriage as outlined in the Scriptures. Marriage remains clearly defined as between one man and one woman.

EFCA Chaplains should not violate nor compromise their own convictions nor should they ignore the biblical principles and injunctions of marriage by participating, conducting, leading or directing same-sex marriage ceremonies. EFCA chaplains cannot minister in a context that would give any appearance of condoning the homosexual lifestyle or other ungodly sexual behavior whether in a pre-marriage counseling session or in a retreat setting when same-sex couples are attending.

However, this does not prohibit chaplains from engaging in teaching or training those of different sexual orientation or behavior if it does not compromise the chaplain's religious beliefs or the EFCA's stance on non-biblical lifestyles.

As a church body, we cannot envision nor enumerate all other particular intersection(s) a chaplain or Christian leader may have to contend with in the ensuing months or years on related subjects. We ask each chaplain to pay close attention to how each ministry encounter might bring balance between our calling to proclaim God's Word to the lost, loving all peoples while maintaining fidelity to our understanding of the Holy Scriptures in regard to the Homosexual lifestyle, Same-sex couples, and Gender dysphoria.

In summary, while military chaplains are given ample opportunities and leeway to be servants to 'perform' or 'provide' for their constituents and service members, a clear line must be drawn by the chaplain when tasked or encouraged to perform in any compromising context that condones, encourages or blesses a behavior that contradicts the clear teachings of Scripture.

## **INSTITUTIONAL CHAPLAINCY**

### **Scope**

Institutional chaplaincy is a ministry that is unique and varied. Institutional chaplains serve medical centers, correctional facilities, senior-care centers, prisons, universities/colleges, the marketplace, and Veterans Affairs centers. Additionally, there are those who provide ministry within municipal services such as police departments and fire stations, as well as specialty areas such as sports chaplains.

### **AGREEMENT AND UNDERSTANDING OF ALL EFCA CREDENTIALLED CHAPLAINS SERVING INSTITUTIONAL MINISTRIES**

1. It is important that chaplains keep the EFCA Chaplain Endorser [Chaplains@efca.org](mailto:Chaplains@efca.org) or [Phil.Wright@efca.org](mailto:Phil.Wright@efca.org) informed of changes of mailing address, email address, and phone numbers as they occur. Particularly important is any change of work site or the status as a vocational minister/chaplain.
2. An EFCA Chaplain is required to meet the EFCA credentialing requirements as well as the requirements of the institution they are serving. Failure to complete necessary paperwork or the status of one's credential will likely result in the suspension or loss of the credential, failure to receive a future ecclesiastical endorsement or the withdrawal of an endorsement.
3. Payment of annual dues can be paid online or forwarded to: EFCA Chaplains, 901 East 78<sup>th</sup> Street, Minneapolis, MN 55420-1300 no later than the 1<sup>st</sup> of October. The annual dues can be paid at any time during the year through an online contribution or sent directly by check. Please indicate on the check or credit card payment: EFCA Chaplain Annual Dues and the specific year the payment is intended (See Appendix A for dues amount)
4. An annual report is required for institutional chaplains and due by 1 December of the calendar year. These should be sent to: EFCA Chaplains, 901 East 78<sup>th</sup> St., Minneapolis, MN 55420-1300 or [Chaplains@efca.org](mailto:Chaplains@efca.org). These annual reports summarize overall ministry for the year completed. State any new addresses, phone numbers or email addresses. Also, indicate how the Chaplain Endorser may help or provide the needed support for prayer or specific needs.
5. Adhere to the ethical standards and policies of the EFCA Statement of Faith, the EFCA Chaplains Covenant, and the Code of Ethics, and standards and policies established by your institution if they don't violate or contradict those of the EFCA.

## The Covenant and the Code of Ethics for Chaplains serving in Institutions

### The Covenant

Having accepted God's call to minister to people who serve in an institutional body, I covenant to serve God and these people with God's help, to deepen my obedience to the Commandments, to love the Lord our God with all my heart, soul, mind and strength, and to love my neighbor as myself. In affirmation of this commitment, I will abide by the Code of Ethics for Chaplains as set by the EFCA and I will faithfully support its purposes, ideals, and Statement of Faith. As further affirmation of my commitment, I covenant with my colleagues in ministry that we will hold one another accountable for fulfillment of all public actions set forth in our Code of Ethics.

### The Code of Ethics

**I will hold** in trust the traditions and practices of my religious body.

**I will carefully** adhere to whatever direction may be conveyed to me by my endorsing body for maintenance of my endorsement.

**I understand** as a chaplain in an institutional body that I must function in a pluralistic environment with people and chaplains of other religious bodies to provide for ministry to all personnel and their families entrusted to my care.

**I will seek** to provide pastoral care and ministry to persons of religious bodies other than my own within my area of responsibility with the same investment of myself as I give to members of my own religious body. I will work collegially with chaplains of religious bodies other than my own, as together we seek to provide as full a ministry as possible to our people. I will respect the beliefs and traditions of my colleagues and those to whom I minister. I will, if in a supervisory position, respect the practices and beliefs of each chaplain I supervise, and exercise care not to require of them any service or practice that would be in violation of the faith practices of their religious body.

**I will seek** to support all colleagues in ministry by building constructive relationships wherever I serve, both with the staff where I work and with colleagues throughout the local faith community.

**I will maintain** a disciplined ministry in such ways as keeping hours of prayer and devotion, endeavoring to maintain wholesome family relationships, and regularly engage in educational and recreational activities for professional and personal development. I will seek to maintain good health habits.

**I will recognize** that my obligation is to provide ministry to all members of the institutional family--whether patient, prisoner, worker or staff.

**I will defend** my colleagues against unfair discrimination on the basis of gender, race, religion or national origin. **I will hold** in confidence all privileged and confidential communication.

**I will respect** all persons of other religious faiths so as to respond to any expressed need for spiritual guidance and pastoral care to those who seek my counsel.

**I will show** personal love for God in my life and ministry, as I maintain the discipline and promote the integrity of the profession to which I have been called.

**I recognize** the special power afforded me by my ministerial office. I will never use that power in ways that violate the personhood of another human being, religiously, emotionally or sexually. I will use my pastoral office only for that which is best for the persons under my ministry.

*Adapted from the Code of Conduct from the Veterans Affairs Chaplaincy booklet of January 2012.*

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

INSTITUTIONAL CHAPLAIN ANNUAL REPORT  
Evangelical Free Church of America – Chaplains Commission



Please send this Report to: EFCA Chaplains, 901 East 78<sup>th</sup> Street, Minneapolis, MN 55420-1300 or [Chaplains@efca.org](mailto:Chaplains@efca.org) and home church leadership.

Report Ending 31 Dec 20\_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell/Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email (1): \_\_\_\_\_ Email (2): \_\_\_\_\_

Institution Served: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Check the ministries you were involved in during this past year:

- |                                  |                              |                                  |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| ___ Chapel Leadership            | ___ Counseling               | ___ Administration               |
| ___ Institutional Worship Leader | ___ Visitations              | ___ Bible Studies                |
| ___ Preaching                    | ___ Special Project<br>_____ | ___ Special Project (2)<br>_____ |

I am currently a student at: \_\_\_\_\_

Length of service in your present ministry: \_\_\_\_\_ Full Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Part Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Volunteer: \_\_\_\_\_

Board Certified through APC? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Date of certification: \_\_\_\_\_

Retirement Date (anticipated): \_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## INSTITUTIONAL CHAPLAIN ANNUAL REPORT

### **Narrative Report:**

Please describe your ministry. Include special projects and significant events in this period. Please utilize this space also for personal comments regarding your family, prayer needs or suggestions of how the EFCA or Endorser may better assist you. Feel free to use another piece of paper if more space is needed.

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Reminder: Have your annual dues been paid? Institutional Dues: \$100 (annual) due October 1.  
(Includes Healthcare, Corporate, BOP, VA, Hospice, Long Term Care Chaplains, Etc.)**

## **MILITARY CHAPLAIN CANDIDATES**

### **Guidelines for Chaplain Candidates**

*Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, and in purity. 1 Timothy 4:12 (NIV)*

### **GOAL**

An effective military chaplain is more than an ordained minister who happens to be in the military, but a true military minister. This requires that a prospective chaplain become fully qualified and fully competent in ministry, and also fully competent in the military. The primary task of the chaplain candidate is to develop the ability to do effective ministry in the military. Chaplain candidates are not chaplains. Their goal is essentially educational. The design of practical and unit assignments is first to train military to have. Chaplain candidates are evaluated as students, not as practitioners.

It follows then that the training chaplain candidates receive in practical and attachments to units is to be done only under the supervision of an experienced chaplain. Through the mentoring of senior chaplains, the candidate is able to develop his or her ability to effectively employ ministry skills in the unique culture of the various military services.

This primary focus will impact the kind of ministry that a chaplain candidate does and the way he or she does it. The chaplains and the chaplain candidate are in a unique situation in the military. Seminary training and denominational credentialing ensure that they are, or will be, fully qualified as spiritual leaders for the church. Chaplains and candidates must answer to their own faith group on matters of faith and practice. The military training then is aimed at ensuring that chaplains are able to represent and practice that faith in a military context.

### **GUIDELINES**

As a non-sacramental church, the EFCA gives considerable margin for lay people to conduct ordinances and other practices that in many denominations are strictly reserved to ordained clergy. This can lead to some confusion as to how much a chaplain candidate should do in the way of tasks normally associated with the pastoral ministry of ordained clergy. These guidelines are designed to assist chaplain candidates in determining what pastoral ministries they can and should undertake as chaplain candidates.

In general, again, chaplain candidates are not chaplains or even assistant chaplains. As those who receive academic evaluations instead of officer efficiency reports, they first, should be compliant with the direction of their supervisory chaplain if that direction does not violate EFCA faith and practice. With that understanding, some guidelines for EFCA chaplain candidates follow.

#### ***Preaching***

A central part of EFCA pastoral work and worship is preaching. Given the opportunity to preach, chaplain candidates should preach. Preaching is a function of training and faith traditions, and EFC chaplain candidates should practice using the voice given them to preach God's Word. It is also valuable for chaplain candidates to get feedback from supervisory chaplains on the practical matters of communicating to a military congregation.

#### ***Baptism***

It is not recommended that candidates baptize. Although individual EFC churches may permit lay people to conduct the ordinance of baptism, the understanding of the theology of baptism, especially in a military context, is complex and rife with confusion. In view of this fact, and the limited time frames for chaplain candidate ministry, baptism is better left to chaplains.

### ***Communion***

For service members, communion often takes on a significance that is greater than one would typically find in most EFCA churches. Chaplain candidates are often called upon to conduct communion services in the field or chapel during their training. Candidates can conduct such services. It is strongly recommended that they only do so in close consultation and under the supervision of a chaplain. In conducting communion, it is important that a candidate think carefully about her or his theology of communion and the practical impact that has on conducting a communion service.

### ***Weddings***

State laws determine the requirements for being the presiding official at weddings. The legal requirements vary considerably. With a few exceptions, however, the minimum requirement is a valid clergy credential. Furthermore, military marriages pose many issues that require a solid grounding in the doctrine of marriage and its practical ramifications. In view of this, candidates should not conduct weddings.

### ***Child Dedication***

Although in the EFCA, this is not viewed as an ordinance, the fact that it is widely associated or confused with baptism. For similar reasons as those given for not doing baptisms, candidates should not do dedications.

### ***Counseling***

Candidates will have ample opportunity to talk to service members with a variety of problems and concerns. One need not be a trained pastoral counselor to be of great help to a troubled person by listening and reflecting God's love. At the same time, candidates need to be aware that many of the counseling issues that chaplains deal with must do with regulations, customs, and practices of the military with which they may not be fully familiar. It is important in these matters, and those involving serious mental, psychological or emotional distress, that the candidate has close supervision from, and in consultation with, a supervisory chaplain. It is also imperative that candidates are up to speed on privileged communication and confidentiality before engaging in formal or informal counseling. You should get clarification as soon as possible from your supervisory chaplain on the guidelines of your service and your status in this very important matter.

### ***Memorial Services and Funerals***

As this does not involve an ordinance, there is nothing to prohibit a chaplain candidate from conducting a funeral or memorial service from the perspective of the EFCA. However, candidates need to be aware that practices and customs of various ceremonies and services are often carefully prescribed by the respective services. A candidate should only do these in close consultation with a supervisory chaplain.

### ***Lead Worship and Bible Studies***

Such ministry activities are a good place for candidates to get ministry experience. AS in other areas of ministry, candidates should take advantage of supervisory chaplains' experience and guidance in sharpening ministry skills.

### ***Official Prayers***

Prayer is our spiritual lifeline. Someone said preachers should be ready to preach, pray or die at any time. Official prayers are a wonderful opportunity to represent faith and spiritual values to a wide and diverse audience. As such, when they do deliver such prayers, chaplains and candidates should always give careful attention to them. At the same time, it is important to realize that prayers at command functions can be a matter of tension in the military. Commanders and senior service leadership can and sometimes do specify how these prayers are to be delivered. Candidates should consult with a supervisory chaplain for guidance on command expectations for official prayers, recognizing it is permissible to decline to participate if this guidance is too restrictive.

### **CONCLUSION**

As chaplains-in-training, chaplain candidates have a requirement to combine their education and experience with the goal of becoming a skilled minister in a military environment. Being a chaplain candidate is a great opportunity to grow and develop in both areas. These guidelines are designed to help candidates make progress on the path to being an effective chaplain who brings service members to God and God to service members.

## **Policy & Guidelines for Obtaining an EFCA Credential and Endorsement For Military Chaplain Candidates**

1. The prospective candidate seeking a credential for chaplaincy must complete an M.Div. Degree (or an equivalent of no less than 72 hours; it is recommended that the EFCA Candidate complete up to 90 semester hours) from an accredited evangelical seminary prior to submitting a request for a Vocational Ministry License leading to Ordination or Certificate of Christian Ministry.
2. The applicant should complete an Application for Endorsement from the Ecclesiastical Endorser of the EFCA and be approved prior to requesting a credential application from a district of the EFCA. The Endorser will send a letter to the Chairman of the District Board of Ministerial Standing (DBOMS) indicating a recommendation of the applicant's desire for military service upon request of the military candidate.
3. The applicant must be a member in good standing of a local EFCA Church and serving in ministry in a church-setting or other qualifying ministry prior to applying for the Vocational Ministry License.
4. For a military chaplain candidate who successfully completes the initial licensing council, the Vocational License is granted for a five-year term which is **NOT** renewable. Those chaplains who have completed this initial step will be required to return to his/her district to complete the final step (Certificate of Ordination or Christian Ministry Certificate) at a time and location set by the district and the minister/chaplain within the five years. A candidate may secure a DD2088 (Ecclesiastical Endorsement) for the Guard or Reserves following the successful completion of the initial credential. The understanding is that the candidate will complete the Certificate of Ordination (for all males) or the Certificate of Christian Ministry (for all females) within the initial five years.

Appendix A

EFCA Chaplains Schedule of Annual Dues

Category	Amount (Annual)	Rank/Status	Comments
Military	\$300	Grade of 0-1 through 0-3	The Reserve Component Chaplain pays 50% of the amount shown. The exception will be for those who serve full-time duty (as a Guard 'technician' (GS) or serving on active duty for more than five months of the year.)
	\$500	0-4 through 0-6 and above	Reservist Component Chaplain pays 50% of this amount unless called to active duty service or in full-time chaplain ministry
	\$75		Military Chaplains not in any drill status
Federally Employed (Bureau of Prisons or VA)	\$150	GS-11 and above	National Guard Technician
State Employed	\$150		State Prisons
Institutional – Salaried	\$100		Hospice, Hospital, Elim Care, Senior Health Care, Corporate, etc.
Institutional – Volunteer	\$0 (Donation accepted)		Hospice, Hospital, Elim Care, Senior Health Care, Corporate, etc.
Chaplain Candidates	\$50		Exception - those who pay initial fees which account for the first year of being commissioned in the Candidate Program

Annual dues schedule January 2012, EFCA Chaplains Commission

**Note:** If a chaplain is a member within two categories (above), the higher amount of the two will be the assessed annual dues.

Annual dues can be paid during the calendar year by 1 October in any of the following manners:

- 1) Direct Deposit (monthly) of your check (see your disbursing or financial officer at your military locale or institution)
- 2) Paid in full via check to:  
EFCA Chaplains  
901 East 78<sup>th</sup> Street  
Minneapolis, MN 55420-1300
- 3) Credit Card  
Online: <http://www.efca.org/give> Find: "Give Now" button  
Under "Donation Information"  
Designation: Other  
Other: Chaplain Annual Dues and year dues are intended

## **Charter and Operational Guidelines of the EFCA Chaplain's Commission**

### **Charter**

#### **A. Chaplains Service**

The Evangelical Free Church Commission on Chaplains is established to serve Evangelical Free Church chaplains who hold credentials or endorsement with the EFCA and serve in a military or civilian context.

#### **B. The Commission**

The EFCA Chaplain's Commission is the advisory board to the EFCA Chaplains. The Commission was formed in February 2001 and is the official agency representing the interests of their chaplains in the EFCA to the EFCA national leadership and the EFCA Board of Ministerial Standing. The EFCA Chaplains Endorser serves as the Executive Director of the Chaplain Commission and will represent the interest of EFCA Chaplains to the National Association of Evangelicals, the National Conference on Ministry to the Armed Forces, the Association of Professional Chaplains, the Chaplains Alliance of Religious Liberty, the respective leaders of military branches, and other agencies and organizations related to military and institutional chaplains.

#### **C. Mission Statement**

The EFCA Chaplains Service exists to serve EFCA endorsed chaplains through policy, resources, counseling and other professional support as required.

#### **D. Offices and Membership of the Chaplains Commission**

The Commission shall be represented by one chaplain representative from each of the branches of the military, namely, the United States Army, the United States Navy, and the United States Air Force. The Commission shall include representative chaplains from civilian institutions such as: Long-term care institutions, health care organizations, police or prison institutions and/or other chaplain ministries represented by EFCA chaplains. (There shall be a minimum of three Chaplain Commission members from the respective civilian institutions.) The Executive Director shall have the option of requesting other representatives to serve with the Commission at his discretion. All members of the Commission shall be appointed for a period of three years. The Executive Director of the Chaplain's Commission shall be appointed by the President of the Evangelical Free Church of America, and shall be accountable to the President or his designated representative.

#### **E. Goals**

The principle goals of the Chaplains Commission are as follows:

1. To provide a professional and informational resource for effective ministry within military and institutional environs.
2. To advise the EFCA Endorser (Executive Director), the EFCA and other endorsing agencies regarding chaplain's ministry through standard operating procedures and policy decisions.

#### **F. Functions and Purposes**

The Chaplains Commission exists to advise the Executive Director on significant developments, trends, issues, and problems facing chaplains. This will be accomplished by:

1. Providing current information regarding criteria, policies, and procedures for the appointment of ministers as chaplains.
2. Representing EFCA chaplains and being a liaison for them with the EFCA leadership, the EFCA Board of Ministerial Standing, the EFCA at large, and other appropriate agencies.

3. By serving as a representative body for problems referred by or concerning chaplains – individually and collectively.
4. Be reporting the activity of the Commission to the annual leadership conference of the Evangelical Free Church of America and the Board of Ministerial Standing.

#### **G. Financial Support**

All EFCA chaplains will render financial support to EFCA Chaplain Ministries, in accordance with the Schedule of Dues reflected in the current EFCA Chaplains Handbook (see Appendix A).

#### **H. Staff Officer**

The Chaplains Commission shall have as its chief operating officer an Executive Director (the EFCA Chaplain Endorser appointed by the President of the EFCA) who is responsible to the EFCA and who acts on behalf of the Commission.

#### **I. Amendments**

The Charter and Operational Guidelines may be amended only by written submission of proposed changes to the Chaplains Commission prior to any regularly scheduled meeting. Changes and amendments may occur upon a two-thirds vote of the members of the Commission after a review by the President of the EFCA.

## **Operational Guidelines**

#### **A. The Officers**

The Chaplains Commission shall appoint the following officers: Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, and Secretary.

#### **B. Meetings**

The Commission shall meet at least once per year at a time set by the Executive Director. Special meetings of the Commission may be called by the Executive Director with at least one-half of the membership present.

#### **C. Elections and Employment of Staff**

The Executive Director of the Chaplains Commission shall be appointed by the President of the EFCA. Commission members are selected by the Executive Director in accordance with Article IV of the Charter. Officers within the Commission are appointed annually for a term of one year. Should the Commission desire, for cause, to terminate the services of such member, or such member desires to resign, sixty days' notice shall be given unless waived by agreement.

#### **D. Duties of the Executive Director**

The Executive Director shall function as the Executive of the Commission and shall give supervision to all other Commission members. He shall have responsibility and authority for the general direction and oversight of the total program of the Chaplains Commission and EFCA chaplains. He shall be responsive and accountable to the policies and actions of the Commission under the supervision of the President of the EFCA.

#### **E. Quorum**

For either regular or special meetings of the Chaplains Commission, a quorum shall consist of not less than one-half of the representative members of the Commission.

#### **F. Amendments**

The Operational Guidelines may be amended at any regular meeting of the Commission by a minimum of a two-thirds vote of representatives present, provided that written notice of such action shall have been sent out about the notice of the meeting at least ten (10) days prior to the date of the scheduled meeting.

## **FAQ FOR PROSPECTIVE CHAPLAINS regarding CREDENTIALING, ECCLESIASTICAL ENDORSEMENT AND OTHER PROCESSES**

### **1. What is an Ecclesiastical Endorsement?**

An endorsement is a document (a specific form or letter) from the EFCA indicating that the chaplain or chaplain candidate is approved to serve as an EFCA chaplain through one or all the following:

- (a) has been granted a credential by the EFCA;
- (b) is qualified and approved for a specific type of ministry or program, and
- (c) is in good standing with the EFCA.

An ecclesiastical endorsement is required by all military branches for appointment as a Chaplain.

An ecclesiastical endorsement is also required by agencies such as the Federal Bureau of Prisons and Veterans Affairs. Hospice, police departments, medical facilities, and other organizations may require an Ecclesiastical Endorsement for positions as chaplains.

### **2. How may I obtain an endorsement to serve as a chaplain in the military, the Bureau of Prisons, VA or another institutional agency?**

- The chaplain must first complete a ministerial credential with the EFCA. This credential may initially be a Vocational Ministry License and may lead to the Certificate of Ordination. The certificate of Christian Ministry is also available to those seeking non-military chaplaincy. Please refer to EFCA credentialing guidelines for further information and requirements regarding application for a specific credential [www.efca.org/credentialing](http://www.efca.org/credentialing)
- Successfully complete an Application for Ecclesiastical Endorsement with the Endorser of the EFCA.

### **3. Will an Ecclesiastical Endorsement guarantee acceptance into the military or the VA as a chaplain?**

The Endorsement alone is not sufficient for obtaining chaplain positions. It is simply *one* requirement among many. The military, VA, and Federal Bureau of Prisons have its own specific requirements which may not be identical across all organizations.

### **4. What are the requirements for receiving an Ecclesiastical Endorsement to become an EFCA military chaplain?**

Each branch varies somewhat in determining its own requirements.

For military chaplains, the following general requirements are listed:

- 120-hours (semester) undergraduate degree (B.A. or B.S.)
- 72 semester hours (min.) of the seminary from an accredited evangelical program. Graduate work must be in theology, Bible, and practical ministry-related subjects.  
A person *may not combine degrees* (or programs) to qualify for the 72-hour minimum. The EFCA recommends the 90+ hour M.Div. program for military chaplain applicants.
- Age restrictions will apply.
- The physical and medical condition of the applicant will be important considerations.
- Practical ministry (of no less than two years) within the local church or ministry setting following seminary. This means that the applicant has sufficient pastoral experience to function from the start as a chaplain to Sailors, Soldiers, Airmen, Marines, and Coast Guardsmen. Some waivers may be granted for practical ministry outside of the local church context.
- Be a U.S. citizen.
- A background check with no history of serious misconduct resulting in the candidate's ability to be awarded, at a minimum, a secret level security clearance.
- Complete all requirements for receiving an EFCA Certificate of Ordination.

- Normally, both the military and the EFCA will require separate interviews prior to the accession board for a chaplain into the respective military chaplaincy program. These interviews attempt to assess emotional and spiritual maturity and whether the applicant has met other criteria expected of the military chaplain.
- Satisfactory completion of the *Application for Ecclesiastical Endorsement*, including all forms, and submit the appropriate transcripts, references, testimony, and other data.

### **5. What is the Military Chaplain Candidate Program?**

Seminarians may apply for the candidate program to the respective military branch if they have less than half of their degree program completed. Each branch has separate and specific requirements for its Candidate Program. The seminarian will also complete the forms and application for Ecclesiastical Endorsement/Approval from the EFCA Chaplain Endorser.

Most programs will require the chaplain candidate take the Basic School Chaplain training during, or immediately following, seminary training. Other short periods of training will be expected while the Chaplain Candidate attends seminary (e.g. summer active duty training). The prospective Chaplain Candidate, if accepted into the program, is commissioned as an officer, but not fully regarded as a 'chaplain' until seminary has been completed and the candidate has obtained a credential through the EFCA.

### **6. What required by the EFCA to obtain an Ecclesiastical Endorsement as a military Chaplain Candidate?**

The Application for Endorsement is on EFCA Chaplain's website. Overall the following items are expected:

- Satisfactory completion of the *Application for Ecclesiastical Endorsement* with applicant's photo.
- Letter of enrollment from the seminary applicant is attending/will attend.
- An official undergraduate transcript indicating the 120 hours (min.) has been completed.
- References from a colleague, a pastor and one additional leader (form provided).
- Testimony and Call to Ministry.
- Fee for processing application (non-refundable).
- Ethical Statement and agreement of alignment with chaplain policy guidelines.
- The release of information statement which gives permission for the Endorser to speak with the Chief of Chaplains regarding the candidate, if necessary.
- Interview of the prospective chaplain candidate with a senior EFCA chaplain or Chaplains Endorser.

### **7. What is required for Active Duty as a Military Chaplain?**

This may vary somewhat, but the following are expected.

- Complete seminary training.
- Completed EFCA credentialing which consists of examination at the Certificate of Ordination level for all candidates. Men will be awarded the Certificate of Ordination and women awarded the Certificate of Christian Ministry.
- Three years (min.) of practical post-seminary ministry.
- Completed Basic Officers Chaplain School. Exceptions may be made based on needs of the service branch.
- Chaplain (Capt./Col.) interview with the specific military branch and the EFCA Chaplains Endorser.
- Apply for Active Duty to the respective branch of the military and have received the updated DD2088 (endorsement form) for Extended Active Duty from the Endorser.

**8. What are the expectations of the EFCA denomination of all EFCA credentialed chaplains serving in institutional or military chaplaincy?**

All credentialed chaplains will be expected to comply with the following:

- Reports on Chaplain Ministry. Semi-annual reports are expected for military chaplains. Annual reports are expected for institutional chaplains. Reports are sent to EFCA Chaplain Ministries, 901 East 78<sup>th</sup> Street, Minneapolis, MN 55420 or [chaplains@efca.org](mailto:chaplains@efca.org)  
A form is provided for each of this two division of chaplain's ministry in this Handbook.
- Retain membership in a local EFCA church.
- Attend a District Conference, Theology Conference or EFCA One (the national leadership conference) once every other year (minimum).
- Maintain contact with the local church and the district to which one is accountable as well as the Endorser.
- Remain faithful through the payment to the EFCA of annual dues for the respective chaplaincy discipline of which one is a part (See Appendix A).

**9. What are the basic requirements to eligible to apply for a healthcare (hospital) chaplain?**

Hospitals and hospice normally require the following:

- Undergraduate Degree -- B.A./B.S. of 120 hours (min.)
- Seminary Degree -- M.Div., Th.M. or equivalent (of not less than 72 semester hours).
- Completed Credential from the EFCA. (see Credentialing Requirements). i.e. *Vocational Ministry License, Certificate of Christian Ministry or Certificate of Ordination*.
- Complete Clinical Pastoral Education (C.P.E.) of up to four units for most health care entry positions (1 year = 4 units of 400 hours each).
- Application and fee completed for Ecclesiastical Endorsement and forwarded to the Endorser.
- An Ecclesiastical Endorsement is normally sent to APCE, APC or, in some cases, directly to the hospital.

**10. Why must one complete the Certificate of Ordination prior to being eligible for Active Duty (Military Chaplains)?**

The Department of Defense requires all chaplains be fully credentialed prior to Active duty application.

## EFCA STATEMENT OF FAITH

Adopted by the Conference on June 26, 2008

The Evangelical Free Church of America is an association of autonomous churches united around these theological convictions:

### God

1. We believe in one God, Creator of all things, holy, infinitely perfect, and eternally existing in a loving unity of three equally divine Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Having limitless knowledge and sovereign power, God has graciously purposed from eternity to redeem a people for Himself and to make all things new for His own glory.

### The Bible

2. We believe that God has spoken in the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, through the words of human authors. As the verbally inspired Word of God, the Bible is without error in the original writings, the complete revelation of His will for salvation, and the ultimate authority by which every realm of human knowledge and endeavor should be judged. Therefore, it is to be believed in all that it teaches, obeyed in all that it requires, and trusted in all that it promises.

### The Human Condition

3. We believe that God created Adam and Eve in His image, but they sinned when tempted by Satan. In union with Adam, human beings are sinners by nature and by choice, alienated from God, and under His wrath. Only through God's saving work in Jesus Christ can we be rescued, reconciled and renewed.

### Jesus Christ

4. We believe that Jesus Christ is God incarnate, fully God and fully man, one Person in two natures. Jesus-Israel's promised Messiah-was conceived through the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He lived a sinless life, was crucified under Pontius Pilate, arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father as our High Priest and Advocate.

### The Work of Christ

5. We believe that Jesus Christ, as our representative and substitute, shed His blood on the cross as the perfect, all-sufficient sacrifice for our sins. His atoning death and victorious resurrection constitute the only ground for salvation.

### The Holy Spirit

6. We believe that the Holy Spirit, in all that He does, glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ. He convicts the world of its guilt. He regenerates sinners, and in Him, they are baptized into union with Christ and adopted as heirs in the family of God. He also indwells, illuminates, guides, equips and empowers believers for Christ-like living and service.

## **The Church**

7. We believe that the true church comprises all who have been justified by God's grace through faith alone in Christ alone. They are united by the Holy Spirit in the body of Christ, of which He is the Head. The true church is manifest in local churches, whose membership should be composed only of believers. The Lord Jesus mandated two ordinances, baptism and the Lord's Supper, which visibly and tangibly express the gospel. Though they are not the means of salvation, when celebrated by the church in genuine faith, these ordinances confirm and nourish the believer.

## **Christian Living**

8. We believe that God's justifying grace must not be separated from His sanctifying power and purpose. God commands us to love Him supremely and others sacrificially, and to live out our faith with care for one another, compassion toward the poor and justice for the oppressed. With God's Word, the Spirit's power, and fervent prayer in Christ's name, we are to combat the spiritual forces of evil. In obedience to Christ's commission, we are to make disciples among all people, always bearing witness to the gospel in word and deed.

## **Christ's Return**

9. We believe in the personal, bodily and premillennial return of our Lord Jesus Christ. The coming of Christ, at a time known only to God, demands constant expectancy and, as our blessed hope, motivates the believer to godly living, sacrificial service, and energetic mission.

## **Response and Eternal Destiny**

10. We believe that God commands everyone everywhere to believe the gospel by turning to Him in repentance and receiving the Lord Jesus Christ. We believe that God will raise the dead bodily and judge the world, assigning the unbeliever to condemnation and eternal conscious punishment and the believer to eternal blessedness and joy with the Lord in the new heaven and the new earth, to the praise of His glorious grace. Amen.

