

## **MILITARY CHAPLAIN GUIDELINES** **LUTHERAN CHURCH-CANADA**

### **INTRODUCTION**

1. These Guidelines are in conformity with the doctrine and practice of Lutheran Church–Canada (LCC). Their aim is to assist LCC pastors ministering to the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) in better understanding their role and the expectations placed on them. Chaplains will receive their endorsement from the President’s Ministry Council (PMC) of LCC who are in position to represent the various aspects of LCC’s common vision, and their Divine Call from the congregations of LCC through the Board of Directors. The ministry of Chaplains is comparable to the ministry of missionaries of LCC.

2. Chaplains serve both as members of the CAF under the authority of the state and as missionaries under the authority of the Church. According to the Lutheran theology of the two kingdoms, chaplains are operating in the structure of the state, under the authority of the Law, to help maintain justice and freedom in God’s creation. As commissioned officers, chaplains obey rightful laws and orders.<sup>1</sup> As missionaries, chaplains are a leaven to administer the Gospel and serve the people entrusted to their care with the love Christ exemplified.<sup>2</sup> In a secularized society this ministry is increasingly an evangelistic ministry of Word and witness to the hope of the Gospel rather than one comparable to a parish Pastor; yet by virtue of their ordination and call, the ministry of chaplains is the same ministry of Word and Sacrament as defined by the book of Concord and applied by the LCC handbook. Therefore, LCC chaplains will be particularly careful not to compromise their ordination vows and confessional convictions while serving in a largely non-Lutheran, pluralistic environment and as part of multi-faith chaplain teams.

3. Military chaplains serve in an increasingly pluralistic environment reflecting the composition of our country. Pastors willing to work in this environment, particularly those with a missionary heart and a willingness to sacrifice themselves for others are needed by the CAF to provide pastoral care, spiritual leadership, and religious support for the military community. There are many marvellous opportunities to minister to the unchurched in their ministry. Chaplains are and should be instruments in nourishing those who are members of the Body of Christ and in winning souls for God’s kingdom. LCC’s principal reason for having chaplains in the CAF is to proclaim the Gospel, administer the sacraments, and provide for the spiritual care of military members, Department of National Defence (DND) civilian employees and their families. The expectation of the Royal Canadian Chaplain Service (RCChS) is that Lutheran Chaplains will minister to their own, facilitate the worship of others, and care for all.

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<sup>1</sup> Luke 3:14; Romans 13:1-4; 1 Peter 2:13-14; Acts 5:29

<sup>2</sup> John 13:34, 35; Matthew 25:31-40

4. Although chaplains usually minister in ordinary circumstances, they may be asked to minister in extraordinary circumstances, both at home and abroad<sup>3</sup>. The members they serve may be in Canada today, but deployed anywhere around the world tomorrow. They may be the last ones to offer the hope and comfort of the Gospel of Christ to those they serve, and are expected to minister with integrity, especially in situations that may require pastoral discretion.

## RELATIONSHIPS

5. LCC pastors may apply to the CAF to serve as chaplains in Regular or Reserve Forces.

6. Candidates applying to serve in the CAF must receive the ecclesiastical recommendation of their Regional Pastor. This recommendation ensures that there is no ecclesiastical reason why they ought not to serve.

7. Pastors receiving the recommendation of their Regional Pastor shall be interviewed by the LCC DMC as to their suitability for service in a military environment. The DMC is a rostered LCC Pastor who serves as military liaison between the Synodical President, LCC Military Chaplains and the LCIC ICCMC representative. (See Appendix 1 – Job Description and Responsibilities of the DMC).

8. The DMC will recommend to the PMC whether an applicant should be endorsed.

9. Upon approval by the PMC, the application of the candidate shall be forwarded to the Royal Canadian Chaplain Service (RCChS) of the CAF via the Lutheran Council in Canada (LCIC) representative<sup>4</sup> to the Interfaith Committee for Canadian Military Chaplaincy (ICCMC).

10. LCC candidates are normally commissioned as military chaplains upon successful completion of their Basic Chaplain Training<sup>5</sup>. Until that time they would have the same status in the Church as other Candidates.

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<sup>3</sup> Chaplains as a support trade, can find themselves in any environment; Army, Navy, Air Force or Special Forces. Their context of ministry may be on a base, ship or wing. They may serve members in the field, at sea or in garrison. A chaplain's location may be on a training exercise, on operations, or on deployment; in Canada or abroad. They are expected to be flexible and faithful, consulting their fellow LCC chaplains, the DMC, and/or the LCC leadership in situations that necessitate clarity and direction.

<sup>4</sup> This representative may be from LCC or ELCIC. The representative will also interview the candidate and make a recommendation following the same to the ICCMC as a whole, on the suitability of the candidate for recruitment. The ICCMC will then recommend to the Chaplain General of the RCChS that the candidate would receive a mandate/endorsement to serve as a military chaplain, and proceed to a suitability board, where the candidate would be interviewed by the RCChS leadership. If the candidate is determined to be suitable, they would then receive and offer of enrolment and proceed to training.

<sup>5</sup> There are three concurrent processes to becoming a Military Chaplain. On the military side, one must complete the recruitment process (Aptitude, Physical, Medical tests and security screening) culminating with one swearing an oath of allegiance to Her Majesty the Queen and commissioned as an officer in the CAF. The ecclesiastical process is outlined above and culminates with one successfully completing their Basic Military Officer Qualification followed by their Basic Occupational Qualification and receiving their Chaplain Scarf. The third process is that LCC candidates are called by the synod to serve as military chaplains, and installed into this office in accordance with the rites and rubrics of a special installation service (Chaplain). Until that time they would have LCC Candidate Status.

11. The DMC is to keep in regular contact with chaplains serving in both the Regular and Reserve Forces, and provide full pastoral oversight and spiritual care to Regular Force Chaplains, and pastoral oversight and care to Reserve Chaplains in matters pertaining to military chaplaincy. The DMC will conduct Pastoral visits with LCC chaplains annually, if possible, and concerns shall be brought to the Synodical President of LCC. Chaplains will thereby be assured of the ongoing support and prayers of LCC.

12. The LCC Military Deanery is primary means by which the DMC delivers the services of LCC to Military Chaplains in the CAF. The Military Deanery consists of all currently serving LCC Military Chaplains (Regular or Reserve) in the CAF. (See Appendix 2 – LCC Military Deanery Scope of Duties)

13. The Senior Lutheran Chaplain (SLC) is designated by the RCChS of the CAF. The SLC will bring any concerns of any Lutheran chaplain to the RCChS, and where appropriate to the chaplain's denomination. These concerns will normally come through the LCIC representative to the ICCMC.

14. A summary of LCC Chaplain activities will be reported annually by the DMC to the Synodical President.

## **NORMS FOR THE MINISTRY OF CHAPLAINS**

15. The ministry of chaplains is concerned primarily with spiritual ministry, with major emphasis upon the proclamation/sharing of God's Word and of witness to the hope of the Gospel, counselling and personal contact (the cure of souls). The administration of the sacraments will also play a very important role when ministering to our own.

16. When leading Divine Services in chapel, the chaplain will preach Law and Gospel as applied to the audience. While being flexible to the audience, services will be in the tradition of the Evangelical Lutheran Church.

17. As long as LCC chaplains are not directed to do anything contrary to the Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions, they are expected to follow orders and guidance from those who have legitimate authority over them.<sup>6</sup>

18. LCC chaplains shall represent our church body's confessional position and practices.

19. LCC chaplains should be judicious when required to attend interfaith services. They must ask themselves whether God is glorified, the community is edified, and if our confession is not compromised. Pluralism dictates that every chaplain has a right to worship according to his confession, and in the name of the Saviour. Accordingly, LCC chaplains will not formally participate in inter-faith or multi-faith worship rites or services as officiants and/or celebrants.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Chaplains have an ecclesiastical authority through the DMC to the synod. They have a military chain of command to whom they as officers are subordinate. They have a responsive relationship to their Chaplain Team supervisors who have no command authority, but supervise, mentor, guide and direct their ministry. They have a responsive relationship beyond their immediate chaplain supervisor when serving on Temporary Duty, Working Groups, RCChS initiatives, Faith Community Coordinator roles, etc.

20. LCC chaplains will participate in military ceremonies, parades, commemorations and other official military functions with chaplains of other faiths or denominations. They will be mindful of the multi-faith environment in which they minister, yet they will strive to proclaim the gospel of Christ clearly. They will always offer Christian prayers while avoiding language offensive to those outside our faith and confession. (See Annex D – The RCChS policy on Public Prayer)

21. LCC chaplains are to administer the Lord's Supper in accordance with the Scriptures, the Lutheran Confessions and the practices of our Church body. The 1999 document "Closed Communion in a Contemporary Context" provides guidance in this regard. To that end, LCC chaplains shall announce before the service that it will be held in conformity with the rites, rubrics and practices of the Evangelical Lutheran Church.

22. The LCC chaplain will not normally be a celebrant in any service other than a Lutheran Divine Service. The LCC chaplain will not distribute Communion in services other than a Lutheran Divine Service. He will not receive Communion from pastors not in altar and pulpit fellowship with LCC. LCC Chaplains ought to be guided by AC Art.VIII.

23. While all chaplains have the right to minister in accordance with the policies of their church bodies, in the CAF they must cooperate with other chaplains who fulfill the needs of their own denominations which Lutheran Chaplains are not in a position to fulfill. Therefore, the LCC chaplain will tactfully facilitate the bringing in of chaplains or Civilian Officiating Clergy from other denominations or faiths to fulfill those requests (this mainly applies to Faith Community Coordinators).

24. Theological differences are accepted in the chaplaincy, but arrogance and uncooperativeness are unacceptable.<sup>7</sup> The LCC chaplain's superiors need team players. The LCC chaplain will want to earn a place on that team by being loyal, creative, supportive, productive, enthusiastic, and willing to perform assigned tasks as professionally as possible. If demands are made that run contrary to LCC's doctrinal positions or practices, an open discussion will often solve the problem. The chain of command is sacrosanct in the CAF, and the first conversation one must have is with their military and/or Chaplain supervisor. If the issues cannot be resolved locally, the DMC and the SLC should be consulted and called upon to try to resolve the situation. When no resolution can be found at these levels, the DMC will contact the LCC Synodical President and/or the ICCMC Lutheran Rep for advice and support.

25. LCC chaplains have a special responsibility for the spiritual welfare of Lutheran Military personnel, DND employees, and their families. They will make sure as much as possible that Lutheran ministry is provided to them: Confirmation instruction, Divine Services, cure of souls and pastoral care, etc... To that end, LCC pastors of congregations located nearby CAF bases where no LCC military chaplains are stationed ought to be encouraged to be welcoming of LCC military personnel.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Chaplains serve the context of a pluralistic, multi-faith RCChS. LCC pastors are recruited because of, not in spite of our unique confessional position and practices. They are expected to minister according to their liturgical and sacramental tradition. This diversity is what brings strength and has resulted in the RCChS being an example of the same to military Chaplaincies around the world.

26. In regard to confirmation, catechesis and baptism, it is incumbent upon our chaplains to strongly encourage Lutheran personnel to identify with local LCC congregations and yet offer a Lutheran ministry to those who prefer to worship on the military installation.

27. Lutheran chaplains may be asked to participate in marriages and funerals. LCC's 2001 "Guidelines for Congregational and Pastoral Practice" provide guidance in this regard.

28. Although Military Chaplains are members of the LCC Military Deanery, they are also expected to be active at the Congregation, Circuit, Conference, Region, and Synod level.

## **ABBREVIATIONS**

AC	Augsburg Confession
CAF	Canadian Armed Forces
CMSMS	Committee for Missions and Social Ministry Services
DMC	Dean of Military Chaplains
DND	Department of National Defence
ICCMC	Interfaith Committee for Canadian Military Chaplaincy
LCC	Lutheran Church–Canada
LCIC	Lutheran Council in Canada
PMC	President's Ministry Council
RCChS	Royal Canadian Chaplain Service
SLC	Senior Lutheran Chaplain

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