



HANDBOOK FOR EFCA CHAPLAINS AND CANDIDATES

Revised 2021

This handbook provides parameters and guidelines for chaplains and candidates endorsed by the Evangelical Free Church of America (EFCA) and assists in the primary processes of endorsement and expectations while serving as an EFCA chaplain.

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 in an institution (hospital, university, community service, marketplace, etc.) or government (military, Bureau of Prisons, or VA) setting. Chaplains are an extension of the Church in pluralistic and inter-cultural settings. Responsibilities will include preaching, teaching, counseling, and rendering various forms of pastoral care according to EFCA doctrine and distinctives. Additional expectations of chaplains include administrative and organizational demands.

Because of the impracticality of providing clergy of every faith or denomination at a secular institution or military command, chaplains (a) make provision for meeting the religious needs of those who are adherents of other churches, and (b) cooperate with other chaplains in meeting the religious needs of members of the chaplain's own faith group.

Ecclesiastical Endorsement

An Ecclesiastical Endorsement is an official document completed by the Chaplain Endorser certifying the chaplain (a) has obtained professional ministry experience (PME), (b) has completed the ministerial credentialing requirements and standards of his/her faith group and remains in good standing, and (c) is competent and recommended for ministry to a particular organization, agency, or institution to which the individual has applied.

The Chaplain Endorser will issue Chaplain candidates an Ecclesiastical Endorsement to those who are members in good standing of a local EFCA church and have the maturity and educational aptitude to meet the demands of chaplaincy. Candidates are expected to complete their education, obtain PME, and complete the ministerial credential required for their role prior to beginning active chaplain service. A new endorsement will be required when the candidate moves from candidate to chaplain status.

An Ecclesiastical Endorsement is required by all military branches for service as a Chaplain (Army, Navy, Air Force) and by agencies such as the Bureau of Prisons and Veterans Affairs. Healthcare agencies and other institutions may also require an Ecclesiastical Endorsement. The Endorsement alone is not sufficient for obtaining chaplain positions.

General Requirements for EFCA Chaplains Desiring Ecclesiastical Endorsement

1. You must be a member in good standing and maintain membership of a local EFCA church throughout your endorsement as a chaplain.
2. You will be required to secure an EFCA credential.
 - a) A [Ministry License \(three-year renewable\)](#) is the first credential you will need to obtain.
 - b) If you are serving in the **military**, it is required you obtain an EFCA [Certificate of Ordination](#) for men and a [Certificate of Christian Ministry](#) for women before your chaplaincy begins. The Ministry License must be obtained prior to this credential.
 - c) For **institutional** chaplain roles, the minimum credential is the Ministry License (three-year renewable) except for federal positions. Some employers of institutional chaplains may require the Certificate of Ordination or the Certificate of Christian Ministry as well as PME, Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE), and board certification.

Before beginning the credentialing process, contact the district where you reside to learn about their specific process. Contact information for the districts can be found on [EFCA.org](#).

Credentialing information can be found on the [credentialing pages](#).

3. You are expected to:
 - a) Demonstrate a high level of spiritual maturity
 - b) Complete practical ministry experience (PME) within a qualified ministry-setting prior to beginning active chaplain service
 - c) Show evidence of a willingness to minister in a pluralistic environment without compromising personal convictions or the [EFCA Statement of Faith](#)
 - d) Complete the additional EFCA requirements to maintain your credential while serving in a non-EFCA ministry:
 - a. Membership in a local EFCA church
 - b. Accountability to the District Superintendent (or district representative)
 - c. Annual ministry report (the annual chaplain report, sent to the Endorser, will be accepted)
 - d. Attendance at an EFCA district or national conference every other year or chaplain training event.
4. Read the EFCA Chaplain Handbook and submit the completed Application for Endorsement to the Endorser

What the endorsed chaplain should expect from the EFCA Endorser:

1. An endorsed chaplain may request an updated endorsement (as required) if they:
 - a) Meet the military or institutional requirements
 - b) Remain in good standing with his/her local EFCA church
 - c) Maintain his/her national ministerial credential
 - d) Complete annual or semi-annual reports
 - e) Pay annual dues as specified in Appendix A
2. The endorsee may expect official representation from the EFCA Chaplain Endorser to:
 - a) The office of the various Chiefs of Chaplains
 - b) The organization to which a chaplain may be a staff member
 - c) Organizations such as Evangelicals Chaplains Commission (ECC), the National Conference on Ministry to the Armed Forces (NCMAF), the Armed Forces Chaplains Board (AFCB), The Endorsers Conference for Veterans Affairs Chaplaincy, and the Association of Professional Chaplains (APC)
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 all endorsed chaplains.
4. The chaplain can expect to be provided counsel and support from the Chaplain Endorser when questions of concern may arise from one's workplace that impacts ministry or other professional duties.
5. The endorsed chaplain may expect the prayers and support of the EFCA Endorser.

6. If the chaplain has been accused of or adversely treated by the employing organization the EFCA Endorser will act as an advocate for the chaplain.

What the EFCA Endorser should expected from the endorsed chaplain:

Chaplains carry a dual responsibility to the EFCA denomination and to their respective organization and/or employer.

Note: Chaplains who carry a dual role as a local pastor and a volunteer or part-time chaplain will be expected to maintain their primary accountability to their local district and a secondary accountability to the EFCA Endorser.

1. The endorsee will maintain denominational accountability which includes:
 - a. Doctrinal alignment to the EFCA Statement of Faith
 - b. Personal conduct and spiritual lifestyle in accordance with a minister of the Gospel.
 - c. As a training requirement, you must attend one of the following EFCA events: EFCA One, the EFCA Theology Conference, your EFCA district conference, or an EFCA Chaplain conference function (minimally) every other year.
2. The endorsee will maintain membership and contact with their local EFCA church, to the District where they reside, and to the EFCA Endorser.
3. The endorsee shall keep the Endorser informed of new assignments, promotions, deployments (of longer than 90 days), schools attending, changes in email or mailing addresses and phone numbers, and other pertinent information.
4. The endorsee shall submit an annual (institutional) or semi-annual (military) report(s) to the EFCA Chaplains Ministries office (Chaplains@efca.org) providing information relative to their ministry.
5. The endorsee shall contribute annual dues (See Appendix A, "EFCA Chaplains Schedule of Annual Dues").
6. It is expected that all EFCA credentialed chaplains serving either institutional or military constituencies will seek a new endorsement each time you reaffirm the EFCA Statement of Faith (every three years).
7. All Chaplains will report any pending adverse actions toward them to the Chaplain Endorser as soon as they are aware of such actions. This is an obligation, not a request.

Withdrawal of Ecclesiastical Endorsement

An Ecclesiastical Endorsement may be withdrawn by the EFCA Chaplain Endorser upon:

- A valid request from the individual
- Failure to maintain their EFCA credential or abide by the EFCA policies, the EFCA Statement of Faith, or the Chaplain Handbook
- Causes such as illegal conduct, moral failure, or incompetency in performing assigned tasks
- Failure to meet such standards as non-payment of annual dues or submission of regular reports

In case of moral failure or illegal conduct, the EFCA Chaplain Endorser will inform the EFCA Board of Ministerial Standing (BOMS) of the incident. BOMS is responsible to adjudicate all charges and prescribe appropriate disciplinary action for any minister holding an EFCA credential.

Summary

In view of the responsibility to God, the EFCA, and their local EFC church as well as the institutions to which chaplains serve, the ministerial credential and Ecclesiastical Endorsement are an important step in the chaplain's call to ministry. 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 to the Lord and in keeping with the tenets of our Faith.

CHAPLAIN CANDIDATES

Military Candidate Chaplains

The following section is for candidate chaplains desiring Ecclesiastical Endorsement with a branch of the military (Army, Air Force, or Navy) or their respective Reserve components (i.e., Army National Guard, Air Guard, and Reserves). A military chaplain candidate must be qualified and competent in ministry, and also competent in the military. General EFCA requirements for credentialing and endorsement, found in the previous section of this Handbook, will apply.

The primary task of the chaplain candidate is to develop the ability to effectively employ ministry skills and practice their faith in a military context.

Seminarians may apply for the chaplain candidate program of the respective military branch if they have less than half of their degree program completed. Each branch has separate and specific requirements for its chaplain candidate program. The seminarian will also be required to obtain an Ecclesiastical Endorsement from the EFCA Endorser for the chaplain candidate program that is only good for the candidate program and does not carry past the chaplain candidate program.

The chaplain candidate is expected to take Basic School Chaplain training during (or immediately following) seminary training. The prospective chaplain candidate, if accepted into the program, is commissioned as an officer in the National Guard or Reserves. They not fully regarded as a chaplain until seminary has been completed, the candidate has obtained a [Ministry License](#), completed the [Certificate of Ordination](#) (for men) or the [Certificate of Christian Ministry](#) (for women), has completed their credentialing ceremony, and has received a new endorsement to be a chaplain. Commissioning will require duty one weekend a month and two weeks in the summer while in the chaplain candidate program. The Army and Air Force chaplain candidate program is a maximum of six years. The Navy Chaplain Candidate program is a maximum of eight years. Careful planning by the chaplain candidate must occur to complete the program in the specified time.

For a military chaplain candidate, remember as stated above, the first credential you obtain is the EFCA [Ministry License](#). It will **not** be renewable. At the end of the three-year period of holding the Ministry License, the candidate must successfully complete the [Certificate of Ordination](#) (for men) or the [Certificate of Christian Ministry](#) (for women).

Guidelines for Chaplain Candidates

The following guidelines for EFCA chaplain candidates are designed to assist them in determining what pastoral ministries they can engage in as candidates. As those who receive academic evaluations instead of officer efficiency reports, they should be compliant with the direction of their supervisory chaplain if that direction does not violate EFCA faith and practice.

Preaching

A primary function of pastoral work is preaching. Given the opportunity, chaplain candidates should practice using the voice given them to preach God's Word. It is valuable for chaplain candidates to get practical feedback from supervisory chaplains on the practical matters of communicating to a military congregation.

Baptism

It is not recommended that candidates baptize. The understanding of the theology of baptism, especially in a military context, is complex so baptism is better left to chaplains.

Child Dedication

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

Communion

Candidates can conduct such communion services. They are often called upon to conduct communion services in the field or chapel during their training. It is recommended they do it in close consultation and supervision of a chaplain. In conducting communion, it is important a candidate think carefully about her/ his theology of communion and the practical impact it has on conducting a communion service.

Weddings

Candidates should not conduct weddings. Military marriages pose several issues that require solid grounding in the doctrine of marriage and its practical ramifications. The legal requirements for being the presiding official at a wedding will vary greatly between states.

Counseling

Candidates need not be a trained pastoral counselor to be of help to a troubled person by listening and reflecting God's love. However, candidates need to be aware that many of the counseling issues chaplains deal with have to do with regulations, customs, and practices of the military with which they may not be familiar. It is important in these matters, and those involving serious mental, psychological or emotional distress, that the candidate have 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 matter.

Memorial Services and Funerals

There is nothing to prohibit a chaplain candidate from conducting a funeral or memorial service. 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

These ministry activities are a good place for candidates to get ministry experience. Candidates should take advantage of supervisory chaplains' experience and guidance in sharpening ministry skills.

Official Prayers

Official prayers are an opportunity to represent faith and spiritual values to a wide and diverse audience and should be given careful attention. 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. 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.

Expectations of the Military Chaplain Candidate:

- Candidates will need to meet the general requirements of the EFCA and of military chaplains listed in this Handbook.
- Candidates will pay annual dues of \$50 due by October 1 (see Appendix A for payment instructions).
- Candidates will remain in contact with the Endorser and submit an annual report to him. The annual report form follows:

MILITARY CHAPLAIN CANDIDATE ANNUAL REPORT
Chaplains Ministries



Please send this report to:

Chaplains@efca.org or

EFCA Chaplains, 901 East 78th Street, Minneapolis, MN 55420-1300

Report Ending 31 Dec 20____ Branch of Military Service entering _____

Name: _____

Home Address: _____

Cell/Home Phone: _____ Other Phone: _____

Email (1): _____ Email (2): _____

Church Membership: _____ City, ST: _____

Is this an EFCA church? Yes ___ No ___ Note: Endorsed chaplains and candidates are required to maintain local EFC church membership throughout your time of endorsement.

I am currently enrolled as a student at: _____ City, State: _____

Military chaplains are required to obtain an MDiv.

Date of Graduation (anticipated, if not yet obtained): _____

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. Use additional paper if more space is needed.

MILITARY CHAPLAIN CANDIDATE ANNUAL REPORT

General requirements to become an EFCA military chaplain for Active Duty, Guard or Reserve Chaplain as found in the Military Chaplain section of this manual will also need to be completed.

Recap your specific timeline/dates to fulfill these requirements (use additional paper, if necessary):

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Reminder: Chaplain Candidate dues (\$50 annual) are to be paid by 1 October of each calendar year.

Note: Candidates who have submitted their application fee during the current year have fulfilled the requirement for that year.

Institutional Chaplain Candidates

***An Ecclesiastical Endorsement is not required by all institutions to work as a chaplain.
Check with your employer to learn their requirements.***

The following section is for candidate chaplains desiring EFCA Ecclesiastical Endorsement in institutions such as Veterans Affairs centers, medical centers, prisons, senior-care centers, municipal services (police and fire departments), universities/colleges, the marketplace, and specialty areas like sports teams where a national level Ecclesiastical Endorsement is required by the employer.

The primary task of the Institutional Chaplain Candidate is to develop the ability to effectively employ ministry skills and practice their faith in settings outside the local church. Chaplains are often asked to provide spiritual guidance, comfort, bereavement support, and crisis support to individuals, their families, and on occasion, the institution's staff. Institutional chaplains will respect all person's religious traditions and practices of faith bodies that are not their own.

General EFCA requirements for credentialing and endorsement, found in the previous section of this Handbook, will apply.

Institutions often require formal education and training which may include:

- 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 a M.Div. or the equivalency)
- Clinical Pastoral Education (minimum of 1-4 units, depending on the respective institution).

Expectations of the Institutional Chaplain Candidate:

- Candidates will need to meet the general requirements of the EFCA, of institutional chaplains listed in this Handbook, and of the institution they will serve.
- Candidates should contact the Chaplain Endorser as soon as possible, if they experience any conflict at work with doctrinal or work-related challenges that could terminate their employment.
- Candidates will pay annual dues of \$50 due by October 1 (see Appendix A for payment instructions).
- Candidates will remain in contact with the Endorser and submit an annual report to him. The annual report form follows:

**INSTITUTIONAL CHAPLAIN CANDIDATE ANNUAL REPORT
Chaplains Ministries**



Please send this report to: Chaplains@efca.org or
EFCA Chaplains, 901 East 78th Street, Minneapolis, MN 55420-1300

Minimum requirements for institutional chaplain endorsement are:

1. Membership in a local EFCA church
2. EFCA Ministry License – Three Year Renewable

Report Ending 31 Dec 20 _____

Name: _____

Home Address: _____

Cell/Home Phone: _____ **Other Phone:** _____

Email (1): _____ **Email (2):** _____

Church Membership: _____ **City, State** _____

Is this an EFCA church? Yes ___ No ___ Note: Endorsed chaplains and candidates are required to maintain local EFC church membership throughout their time of endorsement.

I am currently enrolled as a student at: _____ **City, State:** _____

Anticipated degree earned: _____

- 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 a M.Div. or the equivalency)

Date of Graduation: _____

Clinical Pastoral Education (minimum of 1-4 units, depending on the respective institution).

Anticipated completion date (if required): _____

INSTITUTIONAL CHAPLAIN CANDIDATE ANNUAL REPORT

- General requirements to become an EFCA institutional chaplain are found in the Institutional Chaplain section of this manual. Recap your specific timeline/dates to fulfill these requirements.
- In addition, utilize this space for personal comments regarding your family, prayer needs or suggestions of how the EFCA or Endorser may better assist you.

Feel free to use additional paper if more space is needed.

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Reminder: Chaplain Candidate dues (\$50 annual) are to be paid by 1 October of each calendar year.

Note: Candidates who have submitted their application fee during the current year have fulfilled the requirement for that year.

MILITARY CHAPLAINS

The following section is for chaplains desiring Ecclesiastical Endorsement with a branch of the military (Army, Air Force, or Navy) or their respective Reserve components (i.e., Army National Guard, Air Guard, and Reserves). A military chaplain must be qualified and competent in ministry, and also competent in the military. General EFCA requirements for credentialing and endorsement, found in the previous section of this Handbook, will apply.

General requirements to become an EFCA military chaplain

Note: Each branch varies somewhat in determining its own requirements. EFCA requirements for the Ecclesiastical Endorsement remain as stated in the general section of this Handbook.

1. Be a U.S. citizen.
2. 120-semester hours undergraduate degree (B.A. or B.S.).
3. 72 semester hours (minimum) of seminary from an accredited evangelical program. Graduate work must be in theology, Bible and practical ministry-related subjects leading to an M. Div. degree. 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.
4. Age requirements will apply depending on which branch and component you are seeking.
5. Physical and medical condition of the applicant will be important considerations. Must be able to pass Armed Forces physical and meet height and weight standards.
6. Practical Ministry Experience (PME) (of not less than three years) within the local church setting following seminary. This means that the applicant has sufficient pastoral experience to function as a chaplain to Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and Guardians. Some waivers may be granted for PME outside of the local church context or for military necessity. Ministry prior to seminary or during seminary is usually not accepted by the military.
7. Must be able to pass (Secret level) background investigation.
8. Complete all requirements for a Certificate of Ordination (men) or Certificate of Christian Ministry (women) from the EFCA.
9. Both the military and the EFCA will require separate interviews prior to the accession of a chaplain into the respective military chaplaincy program. The EFCA interview will assess all aspects expected to be an EFCA chaplain.
10. Completion of the Application for Ecclesiastical Endorsement (including all forms, appropriate transcripts, references, testimony, and other data).

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

1. Keep the EFCA Chaplain Endorser (Chaplains@efca.org) informed of any changes of address, phone numbers, emails, schools attending, promotions or deployments (of greater than 90 days), permanent changes station (PCS), or if you are being passed over for promotion or are in trouble for criminal or theological reasons.
2. The chaplain must have obtained the Certificate of Ordination (men) or Certificate of Christian Ministry (women) (following PME and the Ministry License) before active duty begins. Failure to complete the Certificate of Ordination or Certificate of Christian Ministry can result in loss of the EFCA Endorsement. (See General Requirements for further information)

3. Chaplains must maintain their EFCA credential by following the requirements of the EFCA when one is not serving in an EFCA church.
 - a. Membership in a local EFCA church
 - b. Accountability to the District Superintendent (or district representative)
 - c. Annual ministry report (the annual chaplain report, sent to the Endorser, will be accepted)
 - d. Attendance at an EFCA district or national conference every other year or chaplain training event.
4. Annual dues (see Appendix A) must be received by the first of October each calendar year.
5. Military Semi-Annual Reports are due each June and December of the calendar year. Completed reports should be sent to: Chaplains@efca.org or EFCA Chaplains, 901 East 78th Street, Minneapolis, MN 55420-1300. The report summarizes your ministry and provides the EFCA with updated information. A form is provided in this document.
6. Please remain vigilant regarding the requirements of your military branch or organization when an updated Ecclesiastical Endorsement is needed. A new endorsement is required when a promotion is received. Chaplains should notify the Endorser as promptly as possible. Response time for updated endorsements can take up to ten days.
7. Adhere to the appropriate ethical standards as set by the EFCA in conjunction with one's institutional standards. The ethical statements are important for all chaplains to follow in one's ministry setting.
8. Chaplains will read, sign, and forward *The Covenant and The Code of Ethics for Chaplains of the Armed Forces* to the Endorser upon commencement of ministry within the Armed Forces (see applicable page). You may retain a copy for yourself.

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

11/16/2015

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, and 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 United States 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 United States Armed Forces, that I will 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 for 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 not 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 consecutive 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 prayers and devotion, endeavoring to maintain wholesome family relationships, and regularly engaging 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 for the free exercise of religion for all members of the military services, their families, and other authorized personal. When on active duty, I will only accept added responsibility in civilian 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 any privileged communication received by me during the conduct of my ministry. I will not disclose confidential communications in private or in public.

I will not proselytize from other religious bodies, but I retain the right to evangelize to those who are not affirmed.

I will show personal love for God in my life and ministry as I strive together with my colleagues to preserve the dignity, maintain the discipline, and promote the integrity of the profession to which we have been called.

I recognize the special power afforded to 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.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

**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 historic pattern of marriage as well as biblical human sexuality as outlined in the Scriptures. Marriage remains clearly defined, in Scripture, 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. **Notification of the Endorser is required if you are asked to be the trainer for this kind of training.**

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.

MILITARY CHAPLAIN SEMI-ANNUAL REPORT
Evangelical Free Church of America



Please send this report to: Chaplains@efca.org and to your home church leadership
or EFCA Chaplains, 901 East 78th Street, Minneapolis, MN 55420-1300

Report Ending 31 Dec 20_____ or Ending 30 June 20_____

Name: _____ Rank: _____

Home Address: _____

Work Phone: _____ Cell/Home Phone: _____

Email (1): _____ Email (2): _____

Church Membership: _____ City, ST _____

Is this an EFCA church? Yes ___ No ___ Note: Endorsed chaplains are required to maintain local EFC church membership throughout their time of endorsement.

Branch of Service: _____ Active Reserve

Duty/Unit Assignment: _____

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

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chapel Leadership | <input type="checkbox"/> Counseling | <input type="checkbox"/> Administration |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Duty Station Worship | <input type="checkbox"/> Visitations | <input type="checkbox"/> Bible Studies |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Preaching/Teaching | <input type="checkbox"/> Special Project | <input type="checkbox"/> 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.

1. Include special projects and significant events in this period.
2. 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 sheet of paper if more space is needed.

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Reminder: Annual dues are to be paid by 1 October of the calendar year. See Schedule of Dues (appendix A) in the Chaplain Handbook for the amount of your dues and instructions regarding how to submit payment.

INSTITUTIONAL CHAPLAINS

An Ecclesiastical Endorsement is not required by all institutions.

Check with your employer to learn their requirements.

The following section is for chaplains desiring Ecclesiastical Endorsement from the EFCA for ministry as an institutional chaplain. Facilities where institutional chaplains serve include: Veterans Affairs centers, medical centers, prisons, senior-care centers, municipal services (police and fire departments), universities/colleges, the marketplace, and specialty areas like sports teams. General EFCA requirements for credentialing and endorsement, found in the previous section of this Handbook, will apply.

AGREEMENT AND UNDERSTANDING OF ALL EFCA ENDORSED CHAPLAINS SERVING INSTITUTIONAL MINISTRIES

1. It is important that chaplains keep the EFCA Chaplain Endorser (Chaplains@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. EFCA chaplains are expected to meet the requirements of the institution they are serving.
3. In addition, it is required they obtain and maintain an EFCA credential. The minimum credential allowed for most institutional chaplaincy is the Ministry License - Three-year Renewable. However, the employing institution may require the highest credential offered by the endorsing faith body. Failure to maintain one's credential will likely result in the suspension or loss of the credential and withdrawal of their EFCA endorsement.
4. Annual dues can be paid online via the chaplain's webpage (<https://chaplains.ministries.efca.org/>) or forwarded to: EFCA Chaplains, 901 East 78th Street, Minneapolis, MN 55420-1300 no later than the 1st of October. The annual dues can be paid at any time during the year. 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 and instructions for making payment).
5. An annual report is required for institutional chaplains and due by December 1 of the calendar year. These should be sent to Chaplains@efca.org or mailed to EFCA Chaplains, 901 East 78th St., Minneapolis, MN 55420-1300. The annual report summarizes 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.
6. 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 do not 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 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 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
Chaplains Ministries



Please send this report to:

Chaplains@efca.org or

EFCA Chaplains, 901 East 78th Street, Minneapolis, MN 55420-1300

Report Ending 31 Dec 20 _____

Name: _____ Title: _____

Home Address: _____

City, ST Zip: _____

Cell/Home Phone: _____ Office Phone: _____

Email (1): _____ Email (2): _____

Church membership: _____ City, ST: _____

(EFCA church membership is required for endorsement)

Institution Serving: _____ City, ST: _____

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

Chapel Leadership Counseling Administration Visitation Institutional Worship Leader

Bible Studies Preaching Special Project(s) (describe) _____

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

Board Certified through APC? Yes No Date of certification: _____

I am currently a student at: _____

INSTITUTIONAL CHAPLAIN ANNUAL REPORT

Narrative Report:

Please describe your ministry focus, special projects, and significant events. Include personal comments regarding your family, prayer needs or suggestions of how the EFCA or Endorser may better assist you. Use another page if more space is needed.

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Reminder: Annual dues are due October 1 of the calendar year.

- **Salaried-Institutional chaplains: \$100** (*Includes Hospice, Hospital, Senior Health Care, Corporate, etc.*)
- **State and Federal employed chaplains: \$150** (*Includes Bureau of Prisons or Veteran's Affairs and State Prisons*)
- **Volunteer: No dues are requested**

(Page 2 of 2)

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. 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, Senior Health Care, Corporate, etc.
Institutional – Volunteer	\$0 (or donation)		Hospice, Hospital, 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)
 - <https://go.efca.org/resources/form/automatic-monthly-donation-form>

- 2) Credit Card

Online: <https://chaplains.ministries.efca.org/>
 Go to middle Icon on the page, click "Pay dues"
 Follow the screens to make your payment

- 3) Paid in full via check to:

EFCA Chaplains
 901 East 78th Street
 Minneapolis, MN 55420-1300

Appendix B



EFCA Statement of Faith Adopted by the Conference on June 19, 2019

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 glorious 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.

Appendix C

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) to be Endorsed by the EFCA as Chaplain

(March 2021)

What is the first step I should take if I want to be endorsed as an EFCA chaplain?

Contact the chaplain endorser (chaplains@efca.org) with a brief note of introduction which includes:

1. Contact information (email and phone)
2. Church membership (including location of the church)
3. Which area of chaplain ministries you desire to serve
4. Current education status (including school, anticipated year of graduation and degree obtained)
5. Anticipated time frame(s) to meet chaplain qualifications for active duty or institutional employment
6. Questions for the Endorser

What is an Ecclesiastical Endorsement?

An Ecclesiastical Endorsement is a national level official document from one's denominational representative certifying that the chaplain or candidate has the maturity, educational aptitude, and professional ministry experience (PME). It also indicates they have 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 a particular organization, agency, or institution to which that individual has applied.

An ecclesiastical endorsement is required by all military branches for service as a Chaplain (Army, Navy, Air Force). An ecclesiastical endorsement is also required by agencies such as the Bureau of Prisons and Veterans Affairs. Hospitals, hospice, police departments and other agencies may require an Ecclesiastical Endorsement. Corporate chaplains may also be required to be endorsed.

How may I obtain an endorsement through the EFCA to serve as a chaplain?

5. You must be a member in good standing of a local EFC and maintain membership in a local EFC throughout your endorsement as a chaplain.
 6. You will be required to secure an EFCA credential. Before beginning the credentialing process, contact the district where you reside to learn about their specific process. See EFCA.org for contact information for each district.
 - d) A [Ministry License - Three-year renewable](#) is the first credential you will need to obtain.
 - e) If you are serving in the **military**, it is required you obtain an EFCA [Certificate of Ordination](#) for men and a [Certificate of Christian Ministry](#) for women before your chaplaincy begins. The Ministry License will have been obtained prior to these credentials.
 - f) For **institutional** chaplain roles, the minimum credential is the Ministry License (three-year renewable). Some employers of institutional chaplains may require the Certificate of Ordination or the Certificate of Christian Ministry as well as PME and board certification.
- Credentialing information can be found on the EFCA website credentialing pages. www.efca.org. Professional Ministry Experience (PME) is necessary and usually follows the receiving of the Ministry License.
7. Read the EFCA Chaplain Handbook and complete the application for endorsement to the Endorser.

What is the Military Chaplain Candidate Program?

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

Most programs will require that the chaplain candidate take the Basic School Chaplain training during (or immediately following) seminary training. The prospective Chaplain Candidate, if accepted into the program, is commissioned as an officer in the US National Guard or US Reserves, but not fully regarded as a chaplain until seminary has been completed and the Candidate has obtained a credential through the denominational body to which he/she has obtained the ecclesiastical endorsement. Commissioning will require duty one weekend a month and two weeks in the summer while in the chaplain candidate program. The Army and Air Force chaplain candidate program is a maximum of six years. The Navy Chaplain Candidate program is a maximum of eight years. Careful planning by the chaplain candidate must occur to complete the program in the specified time.

Will an Ecclesiastical Endorsement guarantee acceptance into the military or any job as a chaplain?

The Endorsement alone is not sufficient for obtaining chaplain positions. It is simply one requirement among many. The military has its own specific requirements as do healthcare agencies and other institutional organizations.

What are the requirements beyond 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:

11. Be a U.S. citizen.
12. 120-hours (semester) undergraduate degree (B.A. or B.S.)
13. 72 semester hours (minimum) of seminary from an accredited evangelical program. Graduate work must be in theology, Bible and practical ministry-related subjects leading to an M. Div. degree. 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.
14. Age requirements will apply depending on which branch and component you are seeking.
15. Physical and medical condition of the applicant will be important considerations. Must be able to pass Armed Forces physical and meet height and weight standards.
16. Practical Ministry Experience (PME) (of not less than three years) within the local church setting following seminary. This means that the applicant has sufficient pastoral experience to function as a chaplain to Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and Guardians. Some waivers may be granted for PME outside of the local church context. Ministry prior to seminary or during seminary is usually not accepted by the military.
17. Must be able to pass (Secret level background investigation)
18. Complete all requirements for a Certificate of Ordination (men) or Certificate of Christian Ministry (women) from the EFCA.
19. Both the military and the EFCA will require separate interviews prior to the accession of a chaplain into the respective military chaplaincy program. The EFCA interview will assess all aspects expected to be an EFCA chaplain.
20. Completion of the Application for Ecclesiastical Endorsement (including all forms, appropriate transcripts, references, testimony, and other data).

What are the basic requirements to be eligible to apply for an institutional chaplain?

1. Undergraduate Degree -- B.A./B.S. of 120 hours (min.)
2. May require a seminary degree -- M.Div., Th.M. or equivalent (of not less than 72 semester hours).
3. Completed Credential from the EFCA. (see Credentialing requirements)
4. May require 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).
5. Application completed for Ecclesiastical Endorsement if required by hiring institution.

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

1. Retain membership in good standing within a local EFCA Church during endorsement.
2. Payment of dues and Chaplain Ministry Reports.
A table of specific dues is available through the EFCA Chaplain Handbook.
 - Semi-Annual Reports are expected for military chaplains.
 - Annual Reports expected for institutional chaplains.Reports are emailed to chaplains@efca.org or mailed to the EFCA, 901 E. 78th Street, Minneapolis, MN 55420.
A form is provided for each of these two divisions of chaplain ministry.
3. Attend training at least once every two years (District Conference, EFCA Theology Conference or the national EFCA One Conference, and the Endorser's training meet these requirements).
4. Maintain regular contact through the District to which one is accountable as well as to the Endorsing Agent.

