

# GUIDELINES FOR CHAPLAINS OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS



# **Guidelines for Chaplains of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints**

© 2022 by Intellectual Reserve, Inc.  
All rights reserved.  
Version: 5/21.  
PD60004543 000.  
Printed in the USA  
Unpublished work (copies not distributed  
to the general Church membership or to the public)

# Contents

Introduction . . . . .	1
1. Endorsement . . . . .	3
2. Relationships with Local Priesthood Leaders . . . . .	4
3. Priesthood Ordinances and Blessings. . . . .	5
4. Civil Marriages. . . . .	7
5. Worship Services . . . . .	8
6. Prayers . . . . .	9
7. Memorial Services and Other Ceremonies. . . . .	10
8. Restrictions . . . . .	11
9. Privileged and Confidential Communications and Privacy Laws . . . . .	14
10. Guidelines for Chaplains of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Code of Ethics . . . . .	15
11. Administrative Reports . . . . .	16
Appendix A: Request to Perform Civil Marriage. . . . .	17
Appendix B: Procedure for Civil Marriage Ceremony . . . . .	18

# Introduction

This book provides guidance to chaplains endorsed by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Church) as they fulfill their responsibilities to their employer or volunteer agency. The instructions are general in nature and may not address every situation a chaplain may encounter in his or her ministry.

For additional information, contact the Military Relations and Chaplain Services Division by phone at 1-801-240-2286 or by email at [PST-Military@ChurchofJesusChrist.org](mailto:PST-Military@ChurchofJesusChrist.org)

## The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saint Chaplains

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints chaplains serve people of all faiths. They must be able to minister effectively in a pluralistic religious environment without compromising their own religious beliefs. They ensure that individuals are afforded religious freedom and help facilitate the religious and spiritual needs of these individuals. If a chaplain is unable to provide certain religious rites, he or she seeks assistance from other chaplains or local religious leaders.

Chaplains serve in a variety of settings, including the following:

**Military**—Army, Air Force, and Navy (US Navy chaplains also serve the US Marine Corps and Coast Guard)

**Healthcare**—hospital, hospice, and assisted living or nursing homes

**Correctional**—prisons, detention centers, and rehabilitation centers

**Public safety**—law enforcement, fire departments, border patrol, and customs

**Education**—colleges and universities

**Corporate**—workplaces

**Civic, private, and nongovernment**—US Civil Air Patrol, veterans organizations, and relief agencies

Some chaplains serve in unpaid volunteer positions. Others are in full-time or part-time paid positions. Salaries are paid by the hiring entity. The Church does not provide compensation to chaplains for their services.

## Chaplain Ministry Responsibilities

The scope of chaplain ministry varies depending on the setting. However, most chaplains have the following responsibilities:

- Advise commanders or supervisors regarding the impact of religion on operations.
- Advise commanders or supervisors on moral, ethical, and spiritual matters.
- Deliver inspirational messages.
- Offer prayers in various settings.
- Conduct memorial and funeral services.
- Provide pastoral care and counseling—showing love, compassion, and service to others in need as the gospel directs.
- Accompany officials and staff on death notifications and provide comfort to grieving family members and friends.
- Conduct crisis intervention.
- Conduct suicide awareness and prevention training.
- Provide worship services.
- Teach religious education classes and provide resource materials.
- Facilitate religious needs with other chaplains or local clergy.
- If a priesthood holder, perform priesthood blessings of comfort and healing of the sick.

## Reporting Lines

Chaplains endorsed by the Church have two reporting lines: to the government or civilian entity they serve and to the Church as their designated endorsing agent. Chaplains may be endorsed by the Church, but they are not considered Church employees or its agents.

# 1. Endorsement

## 1.1

### Initial Endorsement Requirements

Before a person can begin service as a chaplain, he or she must receive official endorsement from the Church. Below are the requirements for endorsement:

- Submit an application for ecclesiastical endorsement to the Military Relations and Chaplain Services Division.
- Possess a current temple recommend and live worthy to enter the temple.
- Complete interviews with the bishop and stake president to assess worthiness, maturity, and suitability to represent the Church as an endorsed chaplain.
- Complete chaplain advisory board review.
- Complete psychological personality evaluation (required for military chaplains).
- Complete a General Authority interview (required for military chaplains).
- Serve faithfully in Church callings. (It is preferred, but not mandatory, that chaplains have served full-time missions. However, they should have extensive experience serving in the Church; many institutions require a minimum of two years of ministry experience.)
- Have a working knowledge of *General Handbook: Serving in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*.
- Complete academic and specialized training requirements established by the institution. Many organizations require their chaplains to complete Clinical Pastoral Education.

## 1.2

### Annual Endorsement Requirements

Most institutions and organizations require annual certification of a chaplain's endorsements. For example, the Armed Forces Chaplains Board requires each faith group to annually submit a list of the military chaplains it endorses. Below are the requirements for continued endorsement of a The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saint chaplain:

- Possess a current temple recommend and live worthy to enter the temple.
- Serve faithfully in Church callings.
- Maintain decorum consistent with Church standards of personal behavior.
- Submit required reports to the Military Relations and Chaplain Services Division by email at [PST-Military@ChurchofJesusChrist.org](mailto:PST-Military@ChurchofJesusChrist.org).
- Attend the Annual Chaplains Training, unless excused by the Church's endorsing agent.
- Complete an annual interview with the stake president to reaffirm that the chaplain is temple worthy, meets family obligations, and fulfills Church callings.
- Adhere to the "Guidelines for Chaplains of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Code of Ethics" (see *Guidelines for Chaplains of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 15).

## 1.3

### Withdrawal of Endorsement

If a The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints chaplain no longer adheres to the established standards, the Church may withdraw endorsement. Each situation is prayerfully reviewed by the endorsing agent and assigned General Authorities.

## 2. Relationships with Local Priesthood Leaders

### 2.1

#### Church Callings

All chaplains should have callings in their ward or stake. Chaplains should counsel with ecclesiastical leaders if their duties and responsibilities conflict with their callings in the Church.

### 2.2

#### Establishing Church Units or Groups

Local priesthood leaders, under the direction of area leaders, have the responsibility to provide support to Church members in prisons, hospitals, military installations, and assisted-care or rehabilitation centers. This may include organizing Church units or providing worship services. Chaplains serving in these facilities work closely with local priesthood leaders to ensure that Church members are afforded the blessings of the gospel (see *General Handbook*, 38.9.4).

#### 2.2.1

##### Institutional Restrictions on Religious Services

Chaplains ensure that priesthood leaders understand the policies and procedures that are unique to the government and institutional entities where they serve. Some entities have restrictions that limit the scope of the religious program that can be provided to Church members.

Church volunteers should not interfere in the treatment plans for patients in hospitals, assisted-care centers, or rehabilitation centers. These institutions are often bound by federal, state, and institutional regulations to protect the safety of individuals and preserve confidentiality.

#### 2.2.2

##### Service Member Groups in War Zones or Remote Areas (Military)

If military members are deploying to war zones or remote areas, chaplains should coordinate with priesthood leaders to ensure that group leaders are called and set apart. They should coordinate with the Military Relations and Chaplain Services Division to determine if there are functioning service member groups or Church units at the deployed location (see *General Handbook*, 38.9.5).



## 3. Priesthood Ordinances and Blessings

Chaplains who hold the priesthood may perform priesthood ordinances and blessings. In some cases, prior authorization is required from the local priesthood leader who holds the appropriate keys. This chapter outlines instructions and requirements unique to chaplains. For more information, see *General Handbook: Serving in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 18.3.

### 3.1

#### Naming and Blessing Children

Before giving a child of Latter-day Saint parents a name and a blessing, chaplains should receive authorization from the local bishop or branch president. This authorization is not required if the blessing is requested by parents from other faith traditions.

Sometimes service members ask The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints chaplains to christen their children. In these cases, the chaplain should carefully explore with the service members what christening means. He should clearly explain that he cannot baptize the child, but he can give the child a blessing, or he can assist in arranging for clergy from another denomination to perform the baptism.

For more information, see *General Handbook*, 18.6.

### 3.2

#### Interviews for Convert Baptisms and Priesthood Ordinations

Interviews for convert baptisms are normally conducted by full-time missionaries under the direction of the mission president. In war zones or areas where there are no established missions, the Area President may authorize a The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints chaplain to conduct baptismal interviews and perform baptisms and confirmations.

The Area President may also authorize a chaplain to conduct worthiness interviews and perform priesthood ordinations.

Chaplains should document all baptisms, confirmations, and priesthood ordinations on the appropriate form and send the completed documents to the area offices so that the individual's membership record can be created and the ordinances recorded.

For more information, see *General Handbook*, 18.7, 18.8, 18.10.

### 3.3

#### Sacrament

The sacrament is a priesthood ordinance and must be administered under the direction of those who hold priesthood keys.

When participating in military exercises that prevent members from attending church services, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints chaplains may conduct a sacrament service, including administration of the sacrament, with prior approval from the bishop or branch president.

When military chaplains are deployed to remote areas or war zones, they are authorized to hold sacrament services for Latter-day Saint service members. When feasible, they should report their activities to designated priesthood leaders who have responsibilities over the geographical area.

When a service member is isolated from other Church members while deployed, he may receive authorization from his bishop to administer and partake of the sacrament if he is a priest in the Aaronic Priesthood or holds the Melchizedek Priesthood. If there is more than one member at a deployed location, a group leader should be called to conduct church services and administer the sacrament.

For more information, see *General Handbook*, 18.9.

**3.4**

## Anointing and Blessing the Sick and Giving Blessings of Comfort and Counsel

Chaplains who hold the Melchizedek Priesthood may administer to the sick or afflicted and give priesthood blessings of comfort and counsel. Authorization from priesthood leaders is not required.

Normally, two or more priesthood holders administer to the sick, but if two are not available, one may perform both the anointing and the sealing. If consecrated oil is not available, a blessing may nevertheless be given by the authority of the priesthood without the anointing.

For more information, see *General Handbook*, 18.12, 18.13, 18.14.

**3.5**

## Dedicating Graves

A chaplain who dedicates the grave of a Latter-day Saint should be authorized by the priesthood leader who conducts the funeral service, as applicable.

If requested by family members, chaplains may dedicate the grave of someone not of our faith without prior authorization. If family prefers, a graveside prayer may be offered rather than a dedicatory prayer.

For more information, see *General Handbook*, 18.16.

## 4. Civil Marriages

Latter-day Saint military chaplains on active duty may perform a civil marriage without prior approval if civil law authorizes them to do so. Nonmilitary chaplains and chaplains assigned to Reserve or National Guard units must receive approval from the Church's Military Relations and Chaplain Services Division. Submit the request at least two weeks prior to the wedding date (see "Appendix A: Request to Perform Civil Marriage," *Guidelines for Chaplains of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 17). The chaplain should be familiar with and follow local marriage licensing procedures.

### 4.1

#### Marriages of Latter-day Saint Couples

Although chaplains may perform a civil marriage for Church members, it is preferred that the bishop of the bride or groom perform the ceremony. If the couple wants the chaplain to perform the marriage, the chaplain should inform their bishop(s) before the ceremony takes place.

After the ceremony, the chaplain sends a letter to the bishop(s) of the couple's home ward(s). This letter should include all the information needed to update membership records. The chaplain must also comply fully with legal requirements for reporting and record keeping.

### 4.2

#### Religious Marriage Ceremony Following Civil Marriage

Couples who are married by a justice of the peace or other civil authority often desire to have a religious ceremony. Chaplains are authorized to perform the wedding ceremony following the procedures in "Appendix B: Procedure for Civil Marriage Ceremony," *Guidelines for Chaplains of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 18.

### 4.3

#### Premarital Counseling

Chaplains are encouraged to conduct premarital counseling with the couple before performing the marriage. Counseling should emphasize the importance of the vows the couple will make with each other.

### 4.4

#### Marriage Ceremonies

The marriage ceremony should be performed in a dignified setting. Rehearsals are often needed to ensure that everyone is aware of the sequence of events and how the ceremony will be conducted. Chaplains should give a short sermon about the importance of love, kindness, selfless service, and respect between husband and wife. When performing civil marriages, chaplains should use the wording found in General Handbook, 38.3.6 (see also "Appendix B: Procedure for Civil Marriage Ceremony," *Guidelines for Chaplains of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 18). If couples want to use personalized vows, they may do so during the ring exchange portion of the ceremony.

### 4.5

#### Marriage Renewal Ceremonies

Chaplains frequently participate in marriage enrichment programs where couples may desire to renew their wedding vows. Such ceremonies are often held to celebrate a wedding anniversary or following a military deployment or period of family separation. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints chaplains may perform these ceremonies.

### 4.6

#### Fees

In some faith traditions, it is customary for couples to provide monetary compensation to the clergy who performs their marriage. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints chaplains may not accept any fee or other compensation for performing a marriage.

## 5. Worship Services

Since the United States government is prohibited from establishing a state religion, it cannot dictate the religious content of worship services. Therefore, chaplains are free to teach, counsel, and preach from their respective denominational doctrine.

In worship settings where participants come from many different faith traditions, such as a general Christian worship service or a nondenominational service, chaplains should exercise discretion and base their sermons and teaching on doctrine and beliefs that are shared in common.

When conducting Latter-day Saint worship services, chaplains should follow Church practices and policies and teach Church doctrine and scripture.

### 5.1

#### Sermons

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints chaplains should prepare and deliver inspiring sermons so that all may be edified. Extremes in presentation (loud volume, dramatic movement, and so forth) should be avoided.

### 5.2

#### Offerings

In many churches, it is common practice to pass a collection plate during the worship service. Members of the congregation are asked to make an offering.

In the military, these funds are collected as part of the non-appropriated fund and used for various ministerial activities under the supervision of the chaplains.

Chaplains may give a prayer of thanks for the offerings, asking that they be used in a manner that will bless the lives of those who receive them.

### 5.3

#### Religious Rites from Other Faiths

In general, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints chaplains should not perform religious rites from other faiths. Rather, they should arrange for another chaplain, civilian minister, or certified lay leader to perform these rites.

#### 5.3.1

##### Christian Communion

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints chaplains should ask another Christian chaplain or qualified lay leader to conduct the Communion portion of the Christian worship service.

However, when assigned to isolated areas or war zones where there are no other chaplains available, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints chaplains may provide Christian Communion in the following manner:

The chaplain assistant prepares trays with bread or wafers and grape juice. The chaplain then reads the following verses from 1 Corinthians 11:23–25:

##### Scripture Reading for Bread or Wafers

“The Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.”

##### Scripture Reading for Grape Juice

“After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.”

#### 5.4

### Attire

When conducting a worship service, chaplains should wear either their uniform or conservative attire appropriate for Sabbath day worship.

## 6. Prayers

When providing a prayer at a mandatory function, chaplains must be sensitive and respectful to all present and follow general, inclusive guidelines established by their supervisors. In this setting, chaplains function in their institutional or governmental role. A chaplain's participation at mandatory functions is classified as government or institutional speech, not religious worship. Ending the prayer in the name of Jesus Christ may be offensive to non-Christian attendees who are required to be present. In such situations, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints chaplains may end their prayers using words such as "in His holy name, amen" or "in His sacred name, amen."

On the other hand, when The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints chaplains are functioning in their ecclesiastical role and are giving a prayer in a Christian or Latter-day Saint worship service where those in attendance have come voluntarily, they should close the prayer with "in the name of Jesus Christ, amen." For more information on prayer, see *Preach My Gospel: A Guide to Missionary Service* (2004), 73.

## 7. Memorial Services and Other Ceremonies

### 7.1

#### Memorial Ceremonies and Memorial Services

Most government and non-government institutions distinguish between memorial ceremonies and memorial services. Memorial ceremonies are mandatory functions held under the direction of the unit commander or supervisor. Chaplains should follow the guidelines established by their respective institutions when leading a memorial ceremony. A memorial ceremony is not considered a religious service, but it may include religious elements, such as prayers, scripture readings, and hymns. The content of the ceremony is predominantly a celebration of the individual's life. Chaplains should be sensitive to the beliefs of all present at the ceremony.

Memorial services, on the other hand, are not mandatory.

Like memorial ceremonies, they are still under the direction of the commander or supervisor, but they are led by the chaplain. Memorial services contain more religious elements than memorial ceremonies.

### 7.2

#### Funeral Services

A funeral is considered a religious service and is conducted in accordance with the religious practices of the deceased. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints chaplains are often called upon to conduct funeral services. For more information about funerals, see *General Handbook*, 29.5.

When conducting a funeral service for someone who is not a Latter-day Saint, chaplains should be sensitive to the feelings and beliefs of the family and friends of the deceased.

### 7.3

#### Patriotic Ceremonies

Guidelines for participation in military or other institutional ceremonies are established by the commanders or institutional supervisors. Chaplains should present inspirational vignettes, prayers, devotionals, or spiritual thoughts with sensitivity toward those who may have differing beliefs. Service members who are preparing for war often look to the chaplain as a source of faith, hope, and courage. Messages given by the chaplain should encourage these virtues.

### 7.4

#### Other Events

Supervisors may require chaplains to participate in other non-worship events, such as suicide prevention or ethics training. In these settings, the supervisor may establish guidelines for the content being presented.

## 8. Restrictions

If there are any questions concerning restrictions for chaplains, please contact the Military Relations and Chaplain Services Division.

### 8.1

#### Malevolent Literature

Chaplains should not permit any literature that attacks a religion or faith group to be distributed or placed in literature racks at the base chapel or area of employment or deployment. Chaplains should give any inappropriate literature to their supervisor.

### 8.2

#### Bearing Arms

Chaplains in the military are considered non-combatants under the Geneva Conventions of August 12, 1949. US Armed Forces regulations and policies forbid them to bear arms. Security protection for the chaplain is provided by the chaplain assistant. However, other chaplains may bear arms if required by their agency. For example, a US Border Patrol chaplain also serves as an agent and is required to bear arms when in uniform.

### 8.3

#### Creeds

Creeds are statements or shared beliefs of a religious community (somewhat similar to the thirteen Articles of Faith). Some of the most widely accepted Christian creeds are the Nicene Creed and the Apostles' Creed. The Nicene Creed deals with the nature of Christ and the Trinity. The Apostles' Creed outlines the basic beliefs of Christianity and is primarily used by liturgical churches, such as the Roman Catholics, Lutherans, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and Methodists.

Creeds of other faith groups often have doctrinal statements that are not in harmony with Latter-day Saint beliefs and practices. When conducting

liturgical worship services, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints chaplains should ask other chaplains or lay leaders to lead the recitation of the creeds.

### 8.4

#### Repentance and Resolution of Transgressions

Bishops have the responsibility and necessary priesthood keys to help individuals repent and resolve their transgressions. Chaplains may assist individuals in this process but should always refer Church members to their bishop to resolve any transgression.

### 8.5

#### Robes, Stoles, Sashes, or Clergy Collars

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints chaplains should not wear robes, stoles, sashes, or clergy collars that represent religious vestments. Vestments are liturgical garments and articles worn by clergy from certain Christian denominations, such as the Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Anglican, and Lutheran faiths.

The US Army chaplaincy has a generic stole, which is a uniform item for chaplains and is worn during special ceremonies honoring fallen service members who are being transported home. This stole has the seal of the United States of America at each end and is not considered a vestment. It may be worn by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints chaplains.

### 8.6

#### Proselytizing

Chaplains should be exemplary in the way they live the gospel of Jesus Christ and how they interact with others. They may answer inquiries regarding their

beliefs and religious practices but should not engage in proselytizing activities with those they serve in their chaplain ministry. Those desiring to actively investigate the teachings of the Church should be referred to the full-time missionaries.

## 8.7

### Counseling LGBT Individuals

#### 8.7.1

#### Counseling Individuals with Same-Sex Attraction

At times, an individual who experiences same-sex attraction will seek spiritual guidance from a chaplain. These individuals may also identify as lesbian (a woman who is sexually attracted to other women), gay (a man who is sexually attracted to other men), or bisexual (a man or woman who is sexually attracted to both men and women). Chaplains should strive to handle all situations in a spirit of compassion, kindness, and love as they counsel from a gospel perspective.

Chaplains should be sensitive to the differing perspectives of the individuals who approach them for guidance. For example, some individuals may view their same-sex attraction as a defining part of their identity. Others may view same-sex attraction as an inclination that they are seeking to come to terms with while still living the law of chastity. Understanding these individuals' religious backgrounds, perspectives, and goals will help chaplains determine the best way to offer support and counsel.

As members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we believe that same-sex attraction is not inherently sinful. Only when a person acts upon these attractions does the behavior become a sin.

It is not appropriate for chaplains to counsel same-sex couples regarding their sexual relationship, physical intimacy, or expressions of love and affection, because such acts are contrary to the teachings of God. Same-sex couples who are seeking counsel on these matters should be referred to

other chaplains, civilian ministers, or mental health professionals who specialize in such therapy or relationship sustainment issues. When a chaplain feels a need to refer LGB individuals or couples to another professional, he or she should do so with kindness, compassion, and a caring attitude—never in a condescending or judgmental manner.

To learn more about the official doctrine and teachings of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints regarding same-sex attraction, see “Same-Sex Attraction” in the Life Help section of [ChurchofJesusChrist.org](http://ChurchofJesusChrist.org). This resource features firsthand accounts of Church members who experience same-sex attraction, as well as informative essays that explain key concepts and vocabulary terms. For specific helps on counseling individuals with same-sex attraction, see *General Handbook: 21 Ministering and Life Help* at [ChurchofJesusChrist.org](http://ChurchofJesusChrist.org). On Appendix A, we show a link ([ChurchofJesusChrist.org/military/forms](http://ChurchofJesusChrist.org/military/forms)) to the obtain a copy of the Request to Perform a Civil Marriage form.

#### 8.7.2

#### Counseling Transgender Individuals

Transgender individuals may seek spiritual guidance from a chaplain. These individuals face complex challenges. They should be treated with sensitivity, kindness, compassion, and an abundance of Christlike love. All are welcome to attend Church meetings and activities.

Some people experience feelings of incongruence between their biological sex and their gender identity. As a result, they may identify as transgender. The Church does not take a position on the causes of people identifying themselves as transgender.

If Church members have questions about specific policies, chaplains should refer them to their bishop (see *General Handbook*, 38.6.23).

For more information on understanding and supporting transgender individuals, see “Transgender” in the Life Help section of [ChurchofJesusChrist.org](http://ChurchofJesusChrist.org).



## 8.8

## Same-Sex Marriage

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints chaplains do not perform same-sex marriages or conduct any ceremony renewing same-sex marriage vows, even though such marriages are now recognized as legal by the states and federal government.

The Church's official position on same-sex marriage is described in the following statement by the Council of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

“Legal proceedings and legislative action in a number of countries have given civil recognition to same-sex marriage relationships. . . . As we confront this and other issues, we encourage all to bear in mind our Heavenly Father's purposes in creating the earth and providing for our mortal birth and experience here as His children. ‘God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth’ (Genesis 1:27–28). ‘Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh’ (Genesis 2:24). Marriage between a man and a woman was instituted by God and is central to His plan for His children and for the well-being of society. Strong families, guided by a loving mother and father, serve as the fundamental institution for nurturing children, instilling faith, and transmitting to future generations the moral strengths and values that are important to civilization and crucial to eternal salvation.

“Changes in the civil law do not, indeed cannot, change the moral law that God has established. God expects us to uphold and keep His commandments regardless of divergent opinions or trends in society. His law of chastity is clear: sexual relations are proper only between a man and a woman who are legally and lawfully wedded as husband and wife. We urge you [Church leaders] to review and teach Church members the doctrine contained in ‘The Family: A Proclamation to the World.’

“Just as those who promote same-sex marriage are entitled to civility, the same is true for those who oppose it. The Church insists on its leaders' and members' right to express and advocate religious convictions on marriage, family, and morality free from retaliation or retribution. The Church is also entitled to maintain its standards of moral conduct and good standing for members.

“Consistent with our fundamental beliefs, Church officers [including chaplains] will not employ their ecclesiastical authority to perform marriages between two people of the same sex, and the Church does not permit its meetinghouses or other properties to be used for ceremonies, receptions, or other activities associated with same-sex marriages. Nevertheless, all visitors are welcome to our chapels and premises so long as they respect our standards of conduct while there.

“We affirm that those who avail themselves of laws or court rulings authorizing same-sex marriage should not be treated disrespectfully. The gospel of Jesus Christ teaches us to love and treat all people with kindness and civility—even when we disagree.

“As members of the Church, we are responsible to teach the gospel of Jesus Christ and to illuminate the great blessings that flow from heeding God's commandments as well as the inevitable consequences of ignoring them. We invite you to pray that people everywhere will have their hearts softened to the truths of the gospel, and that wisdom will be granted to those who are called upon to decide issues critical to society's future” (First Presidency letter, March 6, 2014).

## 9. Privileged and Confidential Communications and Privacy Laws

### 9.1

#### Privileged and Confidential Communications

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints chaplains follow the policies on confidentiality established by the institution by which they are employed or for which they volunteer. They have a solemn duty to keep confidential all information that individuals give them in confessions, pastoral counseling, and interviews. However, some jurisdictions may require chaplains and clergy to report incidents such as child abuse.

In the military, each individual is entitled to the privilege of confidential communication with a chaplain. Privileged communication includes information shared privately with a chaplain as a matter of conscience or as a formal act of religion. This right to confidentiality belongs to each individual, and a chaplain cannot be required to violate that right by disclosing privileged communication in a court of law or to the authorities without informed consent from the individual who shared it. If authorities challenge the confidentiality required of chaplains, the chaplains should seek advice from the legal office of the government or non-governmental entity where they serve.

### 9.2

#### Privacy Laws

Among the US laws governing privacy, there are two in particular that chaplains should be aware of: the Privacy Act of 1974 and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). The Privacy Act protects individuals' records that can be retrieved by personal identifiers, such as a name, social security number, or other identifying number or symbol. This law prohibits the disclosure of these records without the written consent of the individual. HIPAA governs the protection of patients' medical records and health care information. Normally, any information that is released requires the patient's prior consent.

## 10. Guidelines for Chaplains of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Code of Ethics

- I will adhere to the doctrine and practices of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.
- I will follow the instructions and policies established by the Church for maintenance of my endorsement.
- I understand that, as a chaplain, I must work in cooperation with chaplains of other faith traditions. Together, we will strive to minister as completely as possible to the individuals and their families under our care.
- I will offer pastoral care and ministry to people of all faiths with the same commitment with which I serve members of my own faith.
- When conducting religious services that include persons from other faith traditions, I will draw upon those beliefs, principles, and practices that we have in common.
- If I am asked to supervise other chaplains, I will respect the practices and beliefs of those I supervise. I will not ask any chaplain to perform a religious rite or worship service that would violate his or her religious beliefs or practices.
- I will seek to build constructive relationships with staff members and colleagues.
- As a disciple of Jesus Christ, I will maintain temple worthiness, observe personal and family devotions (including prayer and scripture study), and magnify my callings in the Church. I will live so that my personal practices are consistent with the Savior's teachings.
- I will ensure the free exercise of religion for members of my work environment, their families, and other associated individuals.
- I will treat all people with dignity and respect.
- I will keep confidential any privileged communication I receive in my ministry as a chaplain (see *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, "Privileged and Confidential Communications and Privacy Laws," 14).
- I will not proselytize those I serve, but I retain the right to answer sincere questions about my faith when asked.
- I recognize the sacred trust afforded me as a chaplain.

I will never betray that trust or exercise unrighteous power or influence over others. I will hold myself to the highest standard of moral and ethical behavior and will only do what is in the best interest of the people under my care.

## 11. Administrative Reports

Monthly chaplain reports should be submitted to Military Relations and Chaplain Services Division. If chaplains have any questions concerning reporting procedures, contact the Military Relations and Chaplain Services Division by phone at 1-801-240-2286 or by email at [PST-Military@ChurchofJesusChrist.org](mailto:PST-Military@ChurchofJesusChrist.org).

# Appendix A: Request to Perform Civil Marriage

Chaplains should use this form to request permission from the Church’s Military Relations and Chaplain Services Division to perform a civil marriage. The official form can be accessed online at [ChurchofJesusChrist.org/military/forms](http://ChurchofJesusChrist.org/military/forms).

<small>THE CHURCH OF</small> <b>JESUS CHRIST</b> <small>OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS</small>			<b>Appendix A: Request to Perform Civil Marriage</b>		
<b>Chaplain Information</b>					
Name of requesting chaplain			Location		
Date of marriage			Date submitted		
Relationship between the chaplain and the individuals requesting marriage					
Reasons for request					
<b>Information about Person Requesting Marriage</b>					
Name			Religious preference		
If a Latter-day Saint, name of bishop			Phone	Has the bishop been contacted <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Comments					
<b>Information about Intended Spouse</b>					
Name			Religious preference		
If a Latter-day Saint, name of bishop			Phone	Has the bishop been contacted <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Comments					
<b>For Church headquarters use only</b>					
Approved <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No				Date	
<small>© 2018 by Intellectual Reserve, Inc. All rights reserved. 9/18. PD60004696000</small>					

## Appendix B: Procedure for Civil Marriage Ceremony

From General Handbook: Serving in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 38.3.6:

“To perform a civil marriage, a Church officer addresses the couple and says, ‘Please take each other by the right hand.’ He then says, ‘[Bridegroom’s full name and bride’s full name], you have taken one another by the right hand in token of the vows you will now enter into in the presence of God and these witnesses.’ (The couple may choose or nominate these witnesses.)

“The officer then addresses the bridegroom and asks, ‘[Bridegroom’s full name], do you receive [bride’s full name] as your lawfully wedded wife, and do you of your own free will and choice solemnly promise as her companion and lawfully wedded husband that you will cleave unto her and none else; that you will observe all the laws, responsibilities, and obligations pertaining to the holy state of matrimony; and that you will love, honor, and cherish her as long as you both shall live?’

“The bridegroom answers, ‘Yes’ or ‘I do.’

“The Church officer then addresses the bride and asks, ‘[Bride’s full name], do you receive [bridegroom’s full name] as your lawfully wedded husband, and do you of your own free will and choice solemnly promise as his companion and lawfully wedded wife that you will cleave unto him and none else; that you will observe all the laws, responsibilities, and obligations pertaining to the holy state of matrimony; and that you will love, honor, and cherish him as long as you both shall live?’

“The bride answers, ‘Yes’ or ‘I do.’

“The Church officer then addresses the couple and says: ‘By virtue of the legal authority vested in me as a chaplain in the [branch of military or civilian organization], I pronounce you, [bridegroom’s name] and [bride’s name], husband and wife, legally and lawfully wedded for the period of your mortal lives.

“May God bless your union with joy in your posterity and a long life of happiness together, and may He bless you to keep sacred the vows you have made. These blessings I invoke upon you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

“The invitation to kiss each other as husband and wife is optional, based on the cultural norms of the couple being married.”

