

U.S. Department  
of Transportation

United States  
Coast Guard



Commandant  
United States Coast Guard

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COMDTINST M1730.4B  
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## COMMANDANT INSTRUCTION M1730.4B

Subj: RELIGIOUS MINISTRIES WITHIN THE COAST GUARD

- Ref: (a) USCG Uniform Regulations, COMDTINST M1020.6 (Series)  
(b) Supply Policy and Procedures Manual, COMDTINST M4400.19 (Series) (NOTAL)  
(c) NAFA Manual, COMDTINST M7010.5 (NOTAL)  
(d) NWR Manual, COMDTINST M1710.13  
(e) Title 10, United States Code (NOTAL)  
(f) USCG Personnel Manual, COMDTINST M1000.6 (Series)  
(g) USCG Regulations, COMDTINST M5000.3 (Series)  
(h) U. S. Navy Regulations, (NAVREGS) 1990  
(i) Manual For Courts Martial, United States 1984, Rule of Evidence 503
1. PURPOSE. To promulgate policy, assign responsibilities and implement chapters 1 through 4 of this manual for religious ministries within the Coast Guard.
  2. ACTION. Area and district commanders, commanders of maintenance and logistics commands, commanding officers of headquarters units, chief of offices and special staff divisions at Headquarters and Commanders, Coast Guard Activities Europe shall ensure compliance with the provisions of this instruction.
  3. DIRECTIVE AFFECTED. COMDTINST M1730.4A is canceled.

4. DISCUSSION. The religious ministries program is an official and integral part of the Coast Guard's responsibility to meet the needs and rights of its personnel. There is a definite need to provide spiritual and moral leadership for Coast Guard personnel. Such leadership is provided in large measure by active and reserve Navy chaplains. These Navy chaplains are attached to Coast Guard units and provide ministry through the development and execution of Command Religious Programs (CRP).

a Assignment.

- (1) The United States Navy supplies active duty chaplains to the Coast Guard on a reimbursable basis. The Navy chaplain billets are authorized by the Department of Defense and are provided for by a joint service agreement with the Coast Guard.
- (2) Naval reserve chaplains are assigned to various Coast Guard commands on a limited basis. For administrative purposes they are assigned to and are members of a national Naval Reserve Religious Support unit but their primary duty is with active duty Coast Guard units.

b The Chaplain, United States Coast Guard. The supervision of all chaplains and other clergy providing ministry to the Coast Guard is provided by Commandant (G-CH).

c Uniform. Active duty and reserve Navy chaplains assigned to Coast Guard units are strongly encouraged to wear the Coast Guard uniform as prescribed in reference (a). Coast Guard uniforms will be provided to active duty and reserve Navy chaplains in accordance with reference (b).

5. POLICY.

a In keeping with existing regulations, it is Coast Guard policy that commanding officers shall provide for the free exercise of religion by all personnel of their commands. Further, it is Coast Guard policy to accommodate the doctrinal or traditional observances of the religious faith practiced by individual members when they will not have an adverse impact on military readiness, individual or unit cohesion, health, safety or discipline. Coast Guard personnel, their dependents, and other authorized persons, will be provided appropriate opportunities to observe the requirements of their religious beliefs and principles, except by reasons of necessity. Determination of this necessity rests entirely with the commanding officer.

- b Unit commanding officers are to provide programs of ministry in support of the free exercise of religion. The CRP is an essential element of a command's total administration and is to be supported and managed as an integral part of a command's appropriated operating expenses. Religious offering funds will be established and administered under references (c) and (d). (See chapter 3 of this manual.)
- c Policies and procedures for implementing religious ministries within the Coast Guard are set forth in chapters 1 through 4 and are in accordance with references (e) through (i).
- d Active duty chaplains assigned to Coast Guard will submit a semi-annual report to Commandant (G-CH) using a form provided by that office.

/s/ ROBERT E. KRAMEK  
Admiral, U.S. Coast Guard  
Commandant

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## CHAPTER 1. RESPONSIBILITIES FOR RELIGIOUS MINISTRY

### A. General.

1. Authority. Reference (e) provides for the conduct of divine services at units where chaplains are assigned.
2. Policy.
  - a. In keeping with the provisions of reference (e) and Coast Guard policy, unit commanding officers shall provide for the free exercise of religion for Coast Guard personnel, their dependents, and other authorized persons, and seek to accommodate the religious practices and observances of individual members when they will not have an adverse impact on military readiness, unit cohesion, health, safety or discipline.
  - b. Chaplains assigned to Coast Guard commands shall provide ministry and facilitate the free exercise of religion for all members of the Coast Guard, their dependents, and other authorized persons through the Command Religious Program (CRP).

### B. Command.

#### 1. Command Responsibilities.

- a. Comply with the stipulation of section 9-2-21 of reference (g) in the conduct of divine services.
  - (1) The Sabbath shall normally be observed on Sunday and only necessary work or that which is in the interest of welfare and morale should be required on that day. The religious beliefs of those members which require them to observe some day other than Sunday as their Sabbath are entitled to respect, and shall be reasonably accommodated consistent with the needs of the Service. To the extent that military conditions permit, personnel who celebrate the Sabbath on a day other than Sunday will be afforded the opportunity to observe the requirements of their religious principles and should normally be excused from duty on that day to the same extent that other personnel are excused on Sunday. Members who observe their Sabbath on a day other than Sunday should be required full duty on Sunday or some other alternative service in order that the observance of their religious beliefs does not result in lesser or lighter duty than that performed by other personnel. Decisions as to whether work is necessary rest with the commanding officer, and obedience to military orders is always required, in any event. In a case where accommodation with the religious preferences of an individual does not seem possible or reasonable, the commanding officer shall seek solutions which attempt to avoid punitive action.

- (2) Consistent with the exigencies of the service, unit commanding officers are encouraged to give favorable consideration to applications for leave or liberty for Coast Guard members to attend religious retreats, conferences, symposiums, extended worship services and other rites or acts of obligation. Determination whether to grant leave or liberty rests entirely with the commanding officer and may be based on considerations of the needs of the service and whether such attendance would be harmful to good order and discipline. This is particularly important when appropriate services are unavailable in the local area.
- b. Unit commanding officers shall not restrict the free exercise of religion of personnel of the Coast Guard unless there is military need to do so. Such requirements may exist in directives from higher authority or as determined by the commanding officer.
- c. Commands to which chaplains are assigned shall share this resource with other co-located Group, MLC, District or Area units. Chaplains are a scarce commodity and are most effective when given wide latitude to serve all Coast Guard members and their families in a given geographic area.
- d. Support of the CRP, including personnel, funding and logistics, is an essential element of a command's total operation. These matters will be managed as an integral part of the command's overall planning, programming, and budgeting activities (see chapter 2).
- e. Adhere to the non-combatant status of chaplains. Reference (h) establishes that all Navy chaplains, active duty and Reserve, are non-combatants and shall not bear arms at any time. Chaplains will not be placed in any duty status which would compromise their status as non-combatants.

## 2. Chaplain's Position in the Command.

- a. As the principal advisor to the unit commanding officer on matters of religion and morals, the chaplain shall be assigned as a department head or as a principal staff officer directly under the executive officer or chief of staff, as appropriate.
- b. As a principal advisor to the unit commanding officer, the chaplain shall have direct access to the unit commanding officer as provided in section 9-2-3 of reference (g). Additionally, as chaplains are often located geographically, they are a regional asset and will have ease of access to personnel and commands of a given geographic area.

3. Administrative Support. Yeomen assist chaplains in the administration and coordination of programs in support of the CRP. The assignment of yeomen to the chaplain is an integral element in command personnel authorization actions. Yeomen duties in support of religious ministries within the command must be given appropriate consideration when assigning collateral duties.
4. Layreaders. Unit commanding officers may assign a volunteer Lay Reader to serve for a period of time to meet the religious needs of a particular religious faith group. The commanding officer may seek the advice of the command's chaplain or a chaplain attached to a higher echelon, regarding the selection of an appropriate Lay Reader. Chapter 4 gives specific guidance on Lay Readers.
5. Chapel Lay Advisory Bodies. When a command establishes a regular schedule of divine services for a congregation of a faith group, e.g. Protestant Services, Catholic Services, Jewish Services, Muslim Services, etc., an advisory body of the laity may be established. The purpose of such a group is to speak for the lay worshiping group, to provide advice to the chaplains and to the commanding officer, on issues such as disbursement of offerings, music selections, social and fellowship events, and participation in the liturgies. Groups should be established in writing by the commanding officer and should present to him/her a proposed set of by-laws. The composition of such a lay advisory body should include representatives from various segments of the chapel program, to include: choirs, youth groups, education class teachers, ushers, lectors, etc. These lay groups are advisory in nature and full authority always resides with the commanding officer, and by designation, with the command chaplain.

## CHAPTER 2. PROGRAMMING FOR RELIGIOUS MINISTRIES

A. General. Planning, programming, and budgeting activities are the command's responsibility.

B. Staffing and Personnel.

1. Staffing.

- a. Commandant (G-CH) will plan and program for Chaplain Corps resources in accordance with standard Coast Guard policy and procedures and in conjunction with the Navy Chief of Chaplains.
- b. Commandant (G-CH) will advise and assist in planning and programming Chaplain Corps resources and report to the Navy Chief of Chaplains on all matters pertaining to chaplain staffing.

2. Personnel. Assignment of all Navy chaplains is made by the Chief of Naval Personnel based upon the recommendations of, and in coordination with the Navy Chief of Chaplains.

3. Logistics.

4. Command Support.

- a. Units of the Coast Guard will use local operating funds and appropriated funds to support religious ministries within the command.
- b. Command appropriated fund support of religious ministries is interpreted to include, but is not limited to:
  - (1) Providing consumable supplies and services such as ecclesiastical vestments and paraments, liturgical accouterments, sacramental wine and breads, oil, candles, grape juice, Seder supplies, rosaries, religious medals, religious literature including materials and supplies for religious education programs, printing, and transportation.
  - (2) Providing non-consumable items such as equipment, furnishings and facilities essential to religious ministries.
  - (3) Retreat expenses to include transportation, lodging, rental of equipment, and expenses incurred in order to provide for congregational celebration of religious and traditional holidays that directly enhance the pastoral ministries of a Command Religious Program.



- (4) Contracting for services such as organists, choir directors, directors of religious education, wedding coordinators, child care providers during chapel services and chapel sponsored functions, and resource persons to lead special programs in support of the CRP.
  - (5) Funding travel and per diem expenses incurred in normal itinerant and circuit-riding ministries.
  - (6) Funding the training of chaplains in short-term courses including the Navy Chief of Chaplains' sponsored Professional Development Training Courses and other short term Professional Development Training Workshops to fulfill military and professional requirements.
  - (7) Issuing funded temporary additional duty orders for chaplains to participate in meetings sponsored by faith group and professional organizations; up to 15 calendar days annually is appropriate. Since chaplains must maintain a professional credential (endorsement) as a condition of service, commands should provide for each chaplain assigned to attend his/her parent ecclesiastical body's conference, synod or like assembly. These meetings bear directly on a chaplain's professional qualifications and primary military duties, and clearly enhance the chaplain's value to the Coast Guard.
- c. Procurement of ecclesiastical material in support of religious ministries is processed through normal supply channels.
  - d. To meet the religious needs of personnel in areas where military chaplains are not available or to provide additional professional personnel necessary to supplement existing religious ministry, unit commanding officers may obtain the services of appropriately endorsed civilian clergy as auxiliary or contract chaplains. Procedures governing employment and payment of auxiliary and contract chaplains are outlined in reference (d).
5. Fees. No fees or gratuities will be charged or received for the use of government facilities in the performance of any religious act, sacrament or rite. No fees or gratuities will be charged or received by the chaplain, chaplain's yeoman, civilian GS secretary or contract assistant, for any religious act, sacrament or rite, or funerals performed or supported on government-owned property for persons entitled to receive such services.

D. The Religious Offerings Fund (ROF).

1. General. Many faith groups provide the opportunity for voluntary contributions and benevolence as a part of their worship and religious life. An ROF may be established to serve the religious needs of the contributors, to allow for the collection and disbursement of offerings as an act of worship within the context of the CRP. Appropriate recipients of support from the ROF are organizations or individuals generally recognized as benevolent or service-oriented or religious bodies recommended by the contributors to the ROF. The ROF may also be used to support fellowship events directly sponsored by the Command Religious Program.
2. Policy.
  - a. The CRP is a command function and is supported by appropriated funds. The ROF is a non-appropriated fund established by and administered under the authority of the commanding officer. Reference (c) provides information and guidance on the establishment and management of non-appropriated funds. These funds will be used primarily for projects of religious benevolence beyond the limits of the CRP, not as an alternative to support for the CRP and should substantially reflect the wishes of the donors. The provisions of reference (d) and this paragraph do not preclude the receipt and use of designated contributions to the ROF for items to enhance worship of a more general nature or to heighten the significance of a special religious service or activity. Beside benevolence, offerings may be used for general purposes such as chapel fellowship activities, an occasional honoraria, purchase of altar flowers, seasonal decorations, occasional lay teacher training, substitute child-care not provided by normal means of contracted service paid for with appropriated fund, etc., and/or to provide non-general use items such as individual baptismal candles, first communion veils and other similar items as a benevolent expression from the religious faith group.
  - b. Only one ROF will be established aboard any command. All funds collected in the context of the CRP will be deposited and accounted for in that command's ROF. No group will receive religious offerings apart from the ROF. Most commands having chapel programs will require a sub-account for each worshiping group.
  - c. Disbursements from the ROF will be approved by the commanding officer and made in accordance with Coast Guard policy. The commanding officer may delegate to the ROF administrator in writing the authority to approve expenditures up to a designated limit established by the command.
  - d. When an ROF or sub-account within that fund is dissolved for any reason the commanding officer will authorize disposition of the ROF property and liquidation of all outstanding indebtedness.

3. Religious Offerings Fund Administrator and Custodian.

- a. The senior chaplain of the command shall be appointed in writing by the commanding officer as the administrator of the ROF. The administrator is a direct representative of the commanding officer and exercises executive control over the ROF. The administrator shall approve disbursements up to limits established by the commanding officer and according to the intentions of the donors. Disbursement requests above a designated limit will be submitted to the commanding officer for approval.
- b. One or more custodians may be appointed by the administrator subject to the approval of the commanding officer. Where separate sub-accounts are established for specific religious faith groups, it is expected that a custodian will be appointed for each sub-account. The administrator may designate himself/herself as custodian for a sub-account. If deemed necessary by the administrator, custodians may be appointed for each of the religious offerings sub-accounts of groups contributing to the ROF. Custodians shall be members of the command and may be chaplains. The responsibilities of the custodians may include, but are not limited to:
  - (1) Receiving the counted and verified offerings for the ROF sub-accounts.
  - (2) Safeguarding, depositing, and accounting for all ROF monies and other ROF assets.
  - (3) Preparing financial reports as required.
  - (4) Making disbursements in accordance with paragraph 2.D.2.
- c. When either the ROF administrator or custodian is expected to be absent from an activity for a prolonged period of time the commanding officer may appoint an acting administrator or custodian for the duration of the absence.

4. Accounting.

- a. Accounting will be under the general policy guidance of reference (d).
- b. Accounting records will be maintained for each religious faith group represented in the ROF with transactions and disbursements limited to available cash balances in each account.
- c. At the end of each quarter an ROF Statement of Operations and Net Worth will be prepared for the review and approval of the commanding officer. Upon his/her endorsement, the report will be posted in the chapel or otherwise made available to the donors.

- d. An audit of the ROF will also be conducted:
  - (1) Annually, at the close of the fiscal year;
  - (2) When the ROF administrator is relieved;
  - (3) When an ROF custodian is relieved;
  - (4) When the ROF is dissolved; and
  - (5) When otherwise directed by the commanding officer.
- e. The commanding officer will appoint an auditor to perform the ROF audit.
- f. All documents will be retained for the time periods indicated in reference (d).

## CHAPTER 3. THE CHAPLAIN CORPS

### A. General.

1. Establishment. Congress established the Chaplain Corps as a staff corps of the Navy under the provisions of section 5142 of Title 10, reference (e).
2. Mission. The Chaplain Corps is comprised of professionally qualified chaplains appointed from religious faith groups of the United States. Its purpose is to provide for the free exercise of religion for members of the sea services, their dependents, and other authorized persons by providing ministries appropriate to their rights and needs. As non-combatants chaplains shall never bear arms or find themselves in command of any combatant unit.

### B. Chaplains.

1. Endorsement. Chaplains are qualified clergy certified and endorsed by religious faith groups recognized by the Department of Defense. The maintenance of this endorsement is the responsibility of the chaplain and is an essential element of the professional qualification as a Navy chaplain. Loss of ecclesiastical endorsement requires administrative processing under "Navy Regulations."
2. Responsibility. Chaplains are assigned or attached to a specific unit or station for the primary purpose of providing and facilitating religious ministries within that unit or station. Chaplains have responsibilities to the commanding officer and to the appropriate supervisory chaplain at the next higher echelon in the command organization.
3. Address. Chaplains are traditionally addressed in oral or written communication as "Chaplain" regardless of rank.

#### Address on letter and envelope:

RANK GIVEN NAME SURNAME, CHC, USN OR USNR  
(Surname)

#### Salutation:

Dear Chaplain

4. Uniforms. Navy Chaplain Corps officers assigned to Coast Guard organizations are encouraged to wear the appropriate uniform prescribed for Coast Guard officers.
5. Functions.
  - a. Advise the commanding officer on all matters related to religious ministries within the command, as well as other moral and ethical issues.
  - b. Administer the CRP by conducting divine services, administering sacraments and ordinances, performing rites and ceremonies according to the manner and forms of the chaplain's particular faith group and facilitating the provision of religious ministries for personnel of other faith groups.

- c. Develop plans, programs and budgets to execute religious ministries within the command.
  - d. Advise supervisory chaplains of the unit, or the command to which the unit is attached, of necessary actions concerning the programming of chaplain assets and other support requirements.
6. General Duties. With the approval of the commanding officer, a chaplain attached to a unit or station shall perform the following general duties:
- a. Conduct divine services.
  - b. Facilitate the free exercise of religion for all.
  - c. Provide appropriate sacramental ministry and pastoral care.
  - d. Visit personnel confined to brigs or correctional facilities.
  - e. Provide pastoral counseling upon request and exercise strict confidentiality in accordance with Reference (h).
  - f. Maintain liaison with local religious groups in U.S. or foreign communities in order to develop public awareness of the religious activities in the sea services.
  - g. Keep the public affairs officer informed of the chaplain's activities which may be of public interest.
  - h. Report semi-annually a summary of activities to the Chaplain of the Coast Guard.
7. Collateral Duties.
- a. When assigning collateral duties to the chaplain, the governing factor for unit commanding officers shall be the recognition of the primacy of the chaplain's duty of religious ministry.
  - b. Chaplains will not be assigned collateral duties which involve:
    - (1) Actions in violation of the religious practices of the chaplain's ecclesiastical authority.
    - (2) Violation of non-combatant status.
    - (3) Serving as director or treasurer of fund drives.

- (4) Serving in any capacity relating to the solicitation, collection, or disbursing of any monies, except as custodian of a ROF or other non-appropriated fund which has its direct mission and purpose the receipt and disbursement of funds for expressly humane and/or charitable purposes, but not to include CG Mutual Assistance, Red Cross, or relief assistance functions.
- (5) Serving as a member of a court-martial or rendering judgment in disciplinary cases.
- (6) Standing watches other than that of duty chaplain.
- (7) Serving as the Family Advocacy Representative (FAR).

C. The Chaplain of the Coast Guard.

1. The Chaplain of the Coast Guard is the senior chaplain assigned to the staff of the Commandant of the Coast Guard.
  - a. Duties of the Chaplain of the Coast Guard:
    - (1) Advise the Commandant on all matters relating to religion and religious ministries within the Coast Guard.
    - (2) Advise the Chief of Chaplains on matters concerning religious ministries which require the attention of the Chief of Chaplains.
    - (3) Monitor billets and billet requirements for chaplains and advise the appropriate authority on the initiation of manpower authorization change requests.
    - (4) Participate in inspection programs for the purpose of evaluating the effectiveness of command religious programs.
    - (5) Facilitate the ministry of chaplains assigned to the Coast Guard.
    - (6) Facilitate development of ministry models to meet the unique needs of the Coast Guard.
    - (7) Provide orientation and continued training for all chaplains.
    - (8) Identify training needs.
    - (9) Report semiannually a summary of chaplain activities to the Navy's Chief of Chaplains.

2. The Assistant Chaplain of the Coast Guard is a collateral assignment of the chaplain assigned to Headquarters Command. He will perform such duties and serve as Chaplain of the Coast Guard upon the delegation of responsibilities by the Commandant, Chief of Staff, or Chaplain of the Coast Guard.

D. Supervisory Chaplains.

1. A supervisory chaplain is the senior chaplain assigned to a staff or unit. Supervisory chaplains are department heads or principal staff officers with responsibility to the unit commanding officer through the chief of staff or executive officer for administering, supervising and facilitating religious ministries and chaplain activities. This responsibility includes the professional supervision of chaplains, assigned enlisted and civilian personnel, and of chaplains in subordinate commands, as appropriate.
2. Functions of Supervisory Chaplains include:
  - a. Advising Commandant (G-CH) of necessary actions concerning programming of chaplain and administrative support billets and other support requirements.
  - b. Developing plans, programs and budgets to execute religious ministries within the command.
  - c. Administer the religious ministries program to meet the religious needs of all personnel of the command.
  - d. Supervising the activities of all assigned chaplains, enlisted personnel and civilian employees.
  - e. Facilitating the continued training and professional development of all personnel within the CRP.



## CHAPTER 4. LAY READER PROGRAM

A. General. Lay Readers may be chosen by the command to assist in leading worship of a group of members of a specific faith tradition. They should be appointed, trained and equipped to aid a commanding officer in the provision of worship opportunities while at sea or at isolated duty stations which do not have the direct services of a chaplain of that faith tradition.

B. Command.

### 1. Command Responsibilities.

- a. Commanding officers are encouraged to seek the advice and assistance of local Coast Guard chaplains in the selection and training of Lay Readers for their commands. Consideration should be given to a candidate's reputation, motivation and conscientious adherence to his/her faith. Lay Readers will be appointed for one year terms, and may be reappointed thereafter.
- b. Commanders and commanding officers shall be responsible for utilizing chaplain resources to train Lay Readers, to monitor their activities and to order religious support equipment and consumable supplies as required.

### 2. Lay Reader Responsibilities.

- a. The prospective Lay Reader should receive formal training prior to receiving an official command appointment.
- b. Prospective Catholic Lay Readers will also be required to have additional training by a priest in order to be appointed an Extraordinary Minister of the Eucharist (LEM) by the Archdiocese for Military Personnel. No Catholic Lay Reader is allowed to hold a Eucharistic service without this appointment.
- c. Each Lay Reader who has satisfactorily completed training deemed appropriate by a chaplain should then receive a letter of appointment which can be placed in his/her service record. Catholic LEMs' appointment letters should also be placed in their service records. For sample appointment letter, see Enclosure (1).

- d. Lay Readers' supplies will be provided a secure storage space. The locale of this equipment will be noted in Enclosure (2), and copies will be kept by the Executive Officer, District/Area Chaplain, and the Lay Reader. LEMs are to be provided a small, locked, area where the Consecrated Hosts can be kept, and this locale should be noted in Enclosure (2).
  
- e. Lay Reader supply kits have been placed aboard many cutters. Prior to lengthy deployments, Lay Readers should inventory needed supplies and procure them using OG-30 funds. Catholic LEMs should contact the designated Catholic chaplain in advance of deployment to secure an adequate supply of Consecrated Hosts. At the end of the deployment, the Eucharistic Host must be returned to the coordinating Catholic chaplain.

- Encl: (1) Sample Lay Reader Letter of Appointment form  
(2) Sample Lay Reader Supply Storage Locale form

Encl: (1) to COMDTINST M1730.4B

LAY READER LETTER OF APPOINTMENT

In accordance with COMDTINST M1730.4B,

\_\_\_\_\_  
(name, rate, rank)  
is appointed

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Name of Faith Group)

Lay Reader until: \_\_\_\_\_  
(date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(CO's signature)

Encl: (2) to COMDTINST M1730.4B

LAY READER SUPPLY STORAGE LOCALE

The \_\_\_\_\_ supplies are stored aboard  
(Name of Faith Group)  
\_\_\_\_\_ at: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Lay Reader: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Copy: Executive Officer  
Chaplain  
Lay Reader