

**CANADIAN UNITARIAN COUNCIL
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
OTTAWA, ON
MAY 2012**

NAME OF RESOLUTION: **LAY CHAPLAIN TERM FOR SMALL LAY-LED CONGREGATIONS**

SUBMITTED BY: Unitarian Fellowship of Sarnia and Port Huron

**APPROVED MAY 2012 at the Annual General Meeting of the
Canadian Unitarian Council, Ottawa, ON**

Background:

- A) At its Annual General Meeting (“AGM”) in 2001 the Canadian Unitarian Council (“CUC”) made significant changes to the Chaplaincy Program including setting a maximum term of six years for lay chaplains from the time they are licensed to perform marriages.
- B) The Lay Chaplaincy Program Manual, Revised 2010 on page 11 (“The Manual”) provides for term extensions *“up to a maximum of three years, with the approval of the CUC-LC Program Steering Committee.”* Further, The Manual states: *“After that, no more extensions will be approved. If necessary there will be a period of indeterminate length without lay chaplain services at the church/Fellowship.”* Under this provision, a small lay-led congregationⁱ and its community could be denied the ‘right to a rite’ reflecting Unitarian Universalist principals for an undefined period.
- C) The Manual, on page 3, also affirms that *“Lay Chaplaincy is an important outreach program of the congregation and the lay chaplains are representatives of our congregation in the wider community.”*
- D) Small lay-led congregations have a limited number of members to draw upon for the wide variety of volunteer duties required.
- E) Only certain individuals have the time, motivation and skill-set to fulfill the role of lay chaplain.

RESOLVED that in the case of small lay-led congregations, one year term extensions be granted on an annual basis by the respective Canadian Unitarian Council-Lay Chaplaincy Program Steering Committee, East or West, when such a congregation both:

- 1. makes this request and
- 2. can demonstrate that a vigorous but unsuccessfulⁱⁱ search for a succeeding lay chaplain has occurred.

**APPROVED MAY 2012 at the Annual General Meeting of the
Canadian Unitarian Council, Ottawa, ON**

NAME OF RESOLUTION: **REAPPOINTMENT OF LAY CHAPLAINS IN SMALL LAY-LED CONGREGATIONS**

SUBMITTED BY: Unitarian Fellowship of Sarnia and Port Huron

**APPROVED MAY 2012 at the Annual General Meeting of the
Canadian Unitarian Council, Ottawa, ON**

Background:

- A) The Lay Chaplaincy Program Manual, Revised 2010 on page 12 (“The Manual”) provides the following guidelines for the reappointment of a lay chaplain:
When a lay chaplain has completed the initial maximum term or resigns the lay chaplaincy position before the initial maximum term, she/he is permitted to reapply after a period of time. The time off before reapplying is usually one year off for each year served.
- B) The Manual, on page 3, also affirms that *“Lay Chaplaincy is an important outreach program of the congregation and the lay chaplains are representatives of our congregation in the wider community.”*
- C) Small lay-led congregations have a limited number of members to draw upon for the wide variety of volunteer roles required.
- D) Only certain individuals have the time, motivation and skill-set to fulfill the role of lay chaplain.

RESOLVED that the following be added to the guideline for “Reappointment” found on page 12 of the Lay Chaplaincy Program Manual, Revised 2010:

“In small lay-led congregations, only one year off is required before a reapplication of a former lay chaplain will be considered, provided the following criteria have been metⁱⁱⁱ:”

- The former lay-chaplain meets all the ‘Recruitment and Selection’ criteria as outlined on p. 10 of the Lay Chaplaincy Program Manual Revised 2010; and
- The congregation has demonstrated a ‘vigorous but unsuccessful search’ for a new candidate; or
- The congregation is approved for an additional Lay Chaplain as outlined on p. 10 of the Lay Chaplaincy Program Manual Revised 2010.

**APPROVED MAY 2012 at the Annual General Meeting of the
Canadian Unitarian Council, Ottawa, ON**

NAME OF RESOLUTION: **CHANGE IN NAME FROM LAY CHAPLAIN TO CELEBRANT**

SUBMITTED BY: Unitarian Fellowship of Sarnia and Port Huron

**DEFEATED MAY 2012 at the Annual General Meeting of the
Canadian Unitarian Council, Ottawa, ON**

Background:

- A) The Canadian Unitarian Council Chaplaincy Program was implemented in 1970.
- B) The term 'lay' was added to 'chaplain' at the 2001 Canadian Unitarian Council's Annual General Meeting.
- C) Webster's New World Dictionary defines 'chaplain' as:
1. a clergyman attached to a chapel, as of a royal court
 2. a minister, priest, or rabbi serving in a religious capacity with the armed forces, or in a prison, hospital etc.
 3. a clergyman, or sometimes a layman, appointed to perform religious functions in a public institution, clubs, etc.
- Hence, the use of the term 'chaplain' may mean, for many, someone with formal religious training who might also be available to provide pastoral counselling.
- D) Lay chaplains, as outlined in the Lay Chaplaincy Program Manual, Revised 2010 on p. 7 ("The Manual"), *"must be careful they do not provide advice or support that could be considered counselling."* It is required by the Canadian Unitarian Council ("CUC") that lay chaplain contracts include *"a declaration that the lay chaplain will not engage in counselling that goes beyond consulting on rites of passage."*
- E) The Manual (p. 1) states as the purpose of the position to *"prepare for and officiate at rites of passage, weddings, funerals and memorial services, child dedication service for the general public and, in congregations without a minister, for members of the congregation."*
- F) The term 'Celebrant' is becoming quite common nomenclature throughout the world for lay individuals who perform formal ceremonies to acknowledge various 'rites of passage'.
- G) In Quebec, a lay chaplain is called a 'Célébrant/ Célébrante.

RESOLVED that the name 'lay chaplain' be changed to 'celebrant' to more accurately portray to the public at large and to the Canadian Unitarian community, the role provided by this lay position.

**DEFEATED MAY 2012 at the Annual General Meeting of the
Canadian Unitarian Council, Ottawa, ON**

Appendix for Lay Chaplain Resolutions

Suggested Definitions:

The following definitions describe what the Unitarian Fellowship of Sarnia and Port Huron understand by the use of the terms “small lay led congregation” and “vigorous but unsuccessful search”. These definitions have been referred back the Lay Chaplain Committees East and West and the Executive Director’s Lay Chaplaincy Advisory Committee for further consultation, discussion and refinement.

i Small Lay-Led Congregation

A ‘small lay-led congregation’, within the Canadian Unitarian context and for the purposes of these resolutions, is defined as a ‘Family/Fellowship’ sized group, without a minister, having fewer than 100 active members and/or having less than 100 adults and children attending on an average Sunday.

ii Demonstration of a “vigorous but unsuccessful search”

Required annual activities must include but need not be limited to the following:

- Having had at least one article published in the congregation’s local newsletter about the Lay Chaplaincy program and what the L.C.(s) is/are doing.
- Having had the Lay Chaplain(s) present at a Sunday service about their role and what they accomplish concerning service to the congregation, outreach to the community and publicity about Unitarian Universalist principles.
- Evidence of regular invitations to consider Lay Chaplaincy (through newsletters, orders of service, verbal announcements).
- Evidence of personal approaches to members requesting consideration of becoming a Lay Chaplain.
- Providing a copy of the Lay Chaplaincy Committee Report presented at the congregation’s Annual General Meeting.
- Having sought support and assistance from the CUC LC Program Steering Committee Liaison in the recruitment process.

iii Rationale

There should be no assumption that a former Lay Chaplain could simply request a re-instatement after a one year’s absence and have this be automatically granted. Rather, a former Lay Chaplain would be considered in the same manner and through the same process as a new candidate for the position.

Further, a former Lay Chaplain should not have the right to block any potential and appropriate new candidate(s) from assuming a Lay Chaplain role. Congregations, even if a former Chaplain might be available once again, would need to conduct a vigorous search and/or follow the appropriate procedure to request an additional Lay Chaplain.