



Diocese of Toronto
Anglican Church of Canada

Guidelines for the Designation of a Church as a Chapel of Ease

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Guidelines for the Designation of a Church as a Chapel of Ease

The designation of a church as a “chapel of ease” (Chapel) is a pastoral response to the need for continuing pastoral care to a local community when sustaining the congregation as a full point of a multi-point parish or as a stand-alone parish is not viable.

The decision to make this designation rests with the Area Bishop subject to the approval of the Bishop and Diocesan Council. The decision will be made in conjunction with the decision to disestablish the congregation or parish, as the case may be, under Canon 13.

A sponsoring congregation acceptable to Diocesan Council will be identified to whom title of the property will be transferred with Council and Trusts Committee approval. The Churchwardens of the sponsoring congregation will advise the Chapel attendees under what terms and conditions they may use the Chapel. Normally this arrangement will have a term of a minimum of two (2) years and a maximum of five (5) years, with an evaluative review after one (1) year.

A “**chapel of ease**” is a place of worship that has particular attributes that distinguish it from other Anglican churches in which congregations come together for worship and ministry:

- a. A Chapel is not simply a church in a stage of closing. A Chapel needs a clear purpose, be it pastoral, historical, communal, or geographical.
- b. A group of Chapel attendees does not have canonical status; it is analogous to other fellowship groups within a parish or congregation (eg Chancel Guild, Youth Group, men’s fellowship, etc.)
- c. A Chapel is related to a sponsoring congregation or parish¹ through title as set out in paragraph “i” below
- d. The Chapel attendees are under the pastoral care of the incumbent of the sponsoring congregation.

¹ For the purposes of these guidelines, the term “sponsoring congregation” may refer to one point in a multi-point parish, or it may refer to a single point parish. The key concept is that the sponsoring body is: a) one which is under the oversight of an incumbent and two churchwardens and b) has its own “corporation”, and only one, through and under which the temporal affairs of the church are managed.

- e. The terms and conditions under which the Chapel attendees meet for worship must be acceptable to both the incumbent of the sponsoring congregation or parish, and the Area Bishop
- f. The Chapel attendees have no expectation of regular worship services led by a cleric.
- g. It is expected that there will be at least one worship service per year held in the Chapel.
- h. The Chapel attendees are responsible for arranging a cleric to conduct worship services as needed. The cleric must be a priest in good standing and appointed by the Bishop.
- i. The title to the Chapel's real property will be registered in the name of "The Incumbent and Churchwardens of [the sponsor congregation], Trustees".
- j. The incumbent and churchwardens of the sponsoring congregation are responsible for ensuring that all Diocesan policies and obligations are met for property, buildings, upkeep, and insurance of the Chapel.
- k. The Chapel attendees may gather for purposes other than worship.

Sample Terms & Conditions

The name of the church is *The Chapel of xxxx in the parish of YYYY* and all written information about the Chapel will refer to it as *The Chapel of xxxx in the parish of YYYY*.

- Chapel attendees as a group have no canonical status separate and distinct from the congregation of [sponsor congregation name]. The Chapel is under the pastoral care and authority of [name], who is the incumbent of [the sponsoring congregation/parish name].
- Chapel attendees gather for ministry and/or worship from time to time under the oversight of the Incumbent and Churchwardens of [sponsor congregation name] as do other ministry groups in the congregation.
- The Chapel attendees will pay for all costs arising from operating the Chapel. The Churchwardens will monitor and oversee the financial arrangements. As with other groups in the congregation, the group of Chapel attendees is expected to cover the costs associated with their particular ministry.
- For ease of liaison, the Chapel attendees are to nominate a "coordinator" from amongst their group. This person is the contact person for the Churchwardens and may, subject to annual approval by vestry, participate on the Advisory Board.
- Future decisions about the disposition of the Chapel rest canonically with the [sponsor congregation name], Trusts Committee, and Diocesan Council, as appropriate.

- Donations to the Chapel will be directed to [sponsor congregation name] with the donor's direction indicated on the donor's cheque or correspondence.
- Buildings use and maintenance will meet all health and safety standards and Diocesan requirements for building inspections and insurance.
- **NOTE:** where the Chapel has an attached cemetery:
 - The cemetery is transferred to the oversight of the churchwardens of [sponsor congregation name]. If the churchwardens decline to maintain canonical oversight of the cemetery (and its cemetery trust funds), a meeting should be arranged with the Chief Administrative Officer of the diocese to discuss an appropriate resolution.

Further Guidance for Churchwardens

Responsibilities of a Sponsoring Congregation

- The churchwardens of the sponsoring congregation will ensure that all diocesan obligations and policies are followed and met as they do for other ministry groups in the parish/congregation. This includes insuring that the building is maintained, all expenses met, and adequate insurance coverage carried. In particular, the churchwardens will satisfy themselves that the Chapel attendees are in compliance with all diocesan policies such as screening in faith and sexual misconduct.
- While Chapel finances should be included in the sponsoring parish's Audit of Churchwardens' Accounts pursuant to Canon 14(14), it may be preferred to have the Chapel finances accounted for separately to ensure all Chapel costs are being covered by the Chapel attendees. Tax receipts are issued by the sponsoring congregation.
- Insurance coverage of the sponsoring congregation will be extended to cover the Chapel and its ministry. All additional costs associated with additional insurance costs will be covered by the Chapel attendees.
- Chapel attendees may be members of the vestry of the sponsoring congregation if they otherwise qualify in accordance with the canons.
- Title to all real property connected with the Chapel will be transferred to "The Incumbent and Churchwardens of [the sponsor congregation], Trustees".
- If for any reason, the Chapel ceases to function and the building/land is sold within the first four years of this arrangement, then the disposition will fall under the disestablishment provisions of Canon 13.