The Seventh-day Adventist Church was born out of a movement influenced by the writings of William Miller (1782-1849), an American Baptist lay leader. The writings of Ellen White, a second key figure, are also highly regarded by Church members. The movement, commonly called the Adventist Church, is regarded as a Christian movement with some unique beliefs and the Christian Bible is the key holy book of the faith.

The movement has a worldwide membership of approximately 15 million people in over two hundred countries and territories that are ethnically and culturally diverse.

This Church, commonly known as the Adventist Church, has always taken a special interest in health concerns, including playing a major role in health research.

Clergy are called pastors.
Profile of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ireland:
About 20% of Adventist members are Irish and other large numbers of members come from African countries, Brazil and the Philippines. Some Adventist congregations are led by pastors from Minority Ethnic Communities, and some services are in Romanian and Portuguese.

Religious contacts and religious practices:
The contact details for all Adventist clergy in Ireland are available at the website address at the end of the section. While Adventists restrict activity during the weekly Sabbath (similar to Jewish observance), clergy will be available as needed.

Food and the content of medicine:
Adventists avoid unclean foods:

- Adventists are likely to follow a vegetarian or vegan diet and not consume alcohol. Food needs should be clarified with the person.
- Jewish kosher rules may apply to medicines and these should be free of gelatine, blood and pig products. If no alternative is available the person should be informed so that they can make an informed decision.

Death-related religious rituals:
In times of critical illness or imminent death an Adventist pastor should be called so that the person and family can receive the spiritual support that they need.

Cleaning and touching the body:
The normal washing and preparation procedure can be carried out.

Initiation ritual/infant baptism:
Baptism, the initiation ritual common to Christian traditions, is conducted by full immersion after the age of accountability. Therefore, baptism of infants is not practised even in the case of imminent threat to life.
Profile of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ireland

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has had a presence in Ireland since the late 1800s.

Essential Practice Point

Adventist representatives indicate that the Church has approximately 500 members in the Irish State and has a number of congregations throughout the country. About 20% of members are Irish and the other large numbers of members come from African countries, Brazil, and the Philippines. All congregations are of mixed ethnicity, some are led by pastors from Minority Ethnic Communities and some services are held in the Portuguese and Romanian languages.

Care of the ill

Beliefs about the treatment of illness

Adventists emphasise the relationship between spirit, body and mind and place importance on the well-being of the whole person.

Religious contacts and religious practices

Essential Practice Point

- The contact details for all Adventist clergy in Ireland are available at the website address at the end of the section. This can be used to develop a local Adventist contact for religious services for members and relationship building with the community.

- The person is likely to wish to see an Adventist pastor for religious and spiritual support.

- Adventists observe Saturday as their weekly Sabbath (from Friday sunset to Saturday sunset) and restrict activity during this time. Adventist clergy will be available as needed.

- The Adventist Church, relatively speaking, places less emphasis on religious ceremony, rituals and symbols. The Sacrament of Holy Communion, common in many Christian churches, is usually administered by an Adventist pastor or lay elder of the church. If the sacrament is administered by clergy from another church wine must be non-alcoholic, for example pure grape juice.

Food and the content of medicine

Essential Practice Point

- Adventists, similar to Jews, avoid unclean foods. Adventist representatives indicate that followers are more likely to follow a vegetarian or vegan diet and not consume alcohol. A kosher diet (as in Judaism) is not likely to be requested. Food needs should be clarified with the person.

- Kosher rules may apply to medicines and these should be free of gelatine, blood and pig products. If no alternative is available the person should be informed so that they can make an informed decision.
**Ablutions and washing**

Some Adventists may request water for washing before the Sabbath, sunset Friday to sunset Saturday.

**Blood Transfusion and Organ Transplantation**

There are no religious objections to these procedures.

**Care of the dying**

**Death-related religious rituals**

**Essential Practice Point**

- In times of critical illness or imminent death an Adventist pastor should be called so that the person and family can receive the spiritual support that they need.
- Family may request that the pastor anoint the person which comprises a short ceremony including the placing of a small amount of oil on the forehead, a prayer and a short reading.

**Cleaning and touching the body**

**Essential Practice Point**

The normal washing and preparation procedure can be carried out.

**Postmortem requirements**

There is no religious objection to postmortem.

**Interment ritual**

Both burial and cremation are acceptable generally.

**Religious Icons and Symbols**

**Personal and religious items**

Adventists may carry a copy of the *Christian Bible*, while there are no other particular items of a religious nature worn by members.

**Use of religious symbols**

- A plain cross is appropriate in the mortuary area.
- It is not appropriate to display a crucifix, images of Mary (the Mother of Jesus), saints or icons from other traditions in a mortuary area where a deceased Adventist is laid out.
- Candles are not necessary.
Additional Notes on Maternity and Paediatric Care

Initiation ritual/infant baptism

Essential Practice Point

Baptism, the initiation ritual common to Christian traditions, is conducted by full immersion after the age of accountability, preceded by instruction and a personal acceptance of Christian teaching. Therefore, baptism of infants is not practised even in the case of imminent threat to life.

Foetal, infant and child death

- There are no particular religious requirements in relation to foetal death and stillbirth. The pastor will be willing to lead a ritual or service if requested by the family.
- Normally a service is held for other infants and children, while the nature of the service depends on the age of the child and the parents’ wishes.

Memento of a deceased child

There are no restrictions on giving a memento of a child.

Developing an Seventh-day Adventist Church Contact

Adventist clergy:
The names and contact details of Adventist clergy in Ireland are available at the website address www.irish.adventistchurch.ie/congregations

For information contact:
Irish Mission Office, 9 Newry Road, Banbridge, County Down, BT32 3HF.
Tel: (from the Republic of Ireland) 0044 28406 26361

Contributors

Pastor Douglas McCormack, former Pastor for the Dublin and Drogheda areas, provided the initial information for the section. Pastor David Neal, President, Irish Mission Office reviewed and approved the final version.