

The ChapLine

A Seasonal Newsletter of
Lewis County Chaplaincy Services

Compassionate Caring in Crisis



Dear community leaders, friends and fellow chaplains:



Brian Carter

Just imagine someone in our own community being unexpectedly faced with a life-altering crisis such as a house fire. Suddenly a family has lost everything!

Their world is turned upside down. Where will they sleep tonight? In one terrifying moment their lives are thrown into total disarray. How can they cope?

Oftentimes a family member dies unexpectedly leaving survivors wondering just what to do next. No one should have to face this sort of calamity alone! But sadly, these incidences occur with startling regularity, right here in our county. Fortunately, Lewis County Chaplaincy Services is ready to respond.

Now in existence for over 27 years, Lewis County Chaplains have served alongside our first responders in thousands of crisis situations. We are there to help people work their way through the initial shock and the extreme stresses that accompany these life-changing occurrences.

Lewis County Chaplains are a team of specialists trained in crisis care. We have deep compassion for those who find themselves faced with the unthinkable, the nearly unimaginable. We are there to serve.

The chaplaincy also assists in caring for emergency responders who face high stress scenarios almost daily.

As chaplains, we *are* people of faith, and our faith does inspire us to serve the community in this way - but it is not our mission to *spread religion* as such. Our mission is simple for it addresses the issues of human need in times of crisis.

Lewis County Chaplaincy Services is committed to assisting emergency agencies in meeting the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of emergency crisis victims, their families and the first responders.

Unpaid volunteers staff the chaplaincy program, and they have narrowly managed to keep this valuable community asset alive. Some modest donations from several local churches and a few private individuals and designated grants have narrowly sustained us. We are NOT a government-funded agency. We rely on community participation.

Lewis County Chaplaincy is now at a critical point. While we have attained a level of quality service, it is amidst a growing need for our services. The calls for our help are outdistancing our resources.

Equipment-wise, we are in urgent need of new communication equipment in order to adequately interface on site with our fire and police personnel. Our list of essentials includes the basics of uniforms and apparel appropriate to seasonal needs. In short, we are in urgent need of additional funding to continue our humanitarian services. Indeed our growth

calls decisively for a full time director to adequately organize, plan and direct this needful program.

Thus we are attempting to raise enough money to purchase needed equipment, pay tuition for our volunteers' special schooling at the Police and Fire Chaplains Academy in Burien as well as to sustain a full time director. Sustaining sources for continued services are now urgent. The Lewis County Chaplains program is an approved 501c(3) organization and donations are tax deductible.

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Please be watching for upcoming events and radio activity in addressing these urgent needs for supporting Lewis County Chaplaincy Services. Please consider participating in a meaningful way in the support of our team of 20-plus volunteer field chaplains and 30 specialists in jail services.

We know our community is well served by these dedicated individuals who volunteer their time and their efforts.

We are very grateful for the many caring people in our communities who make Lewis County a truly desirable place to dwell.

With sincere thanks,

Brian Carter, Executive Director
Lewis County Chaplaincy Services

SOUND TRAINING for a SOUND PURPOSE

By Matthew March

The number-one question I am asked whenever I mention to people that I am serving as a chaplain is, "What is a chaplain?"

Then when I tell them what I do as a chaplain, the number two question follows: "Isn't that incredibly difficult?"

Every call, and every on-call shift presents the possibility that I will be asked into the worst day of someone's life. Every call and every on-call shift presents the possibility that I will face a situation that hits a little too close to home.



Pastor Matt March

Every on-call hour presents the possibility that someone will ask me a question that really has no viable answer.

To clip the pager to my belt and go out to meet the unknowns of a chaplain call is difficult, and it is a calling that I do not take lightly. Answering calls at three in the afternoon or three in the morning, and being on top of my game every time takes more than I have just within myself. To be a chaplain, I have to be connected with others and have their support when my own tank runs dry.

I had the privilege this last fall to attend the Chaplain Training Academy at the Washington Criminal Justice Training Center located in Burien, Washington. Chaplains from all over the country and various parts of the world come to this academy.

The training course is intensive, thorough, and it is conducted twice yearly.

My table mate for the week was from Eastern Canada, and he serves the local fire department in a town where he is a Roman Catholic Priest.

First and foremost, the training week is a time of opportunity to become connected to the larger body of people who also answer the call to support their communities through fire and police chaplaincy. In addition to the class work, we spent some quality time in sharing and learning from one another.

There were people there who were just beginning as chaplains, and yet some have been chaplains for decades. Each of us brought to the table insights to share in this challenge of chaplaincy.

A close second was the chance to step back from answering calls and dig into just what it is that happens on an emergency scene. For example, we were taught about *Trauma Brain* and how to deal with it. Trauma brain is a euphemism to describe what happens to a human being when the situation becomes more than he/she can handle. For instance, a husband awakens in the morning and finds his wife has expired in her sleep. He may become incapable of even answering routine questions about her. Or a parent who has lost a child in a fire may become irrational and do things they wouldn't normally do.

We learned that such occurrences are not necessarily abnormal, and to be unsurprised when people, even those we know, do things completely out of character. It was helpful insight - not only for dealing with the general public, but also for our own interactions with other first responders. They, too, can be facing an emotionally wrenching time in dealing with a given situation.

Throughout the week, we had the opportunity to experience both hands-on and simulated police and fire training scenarios in order to better

"I attest that this training is invaluable to a chaplaincy assignment in our community."

understand their processes when we respond to emergency scenes with them. We had the chance to talk with law enforcement and fire personnel and hear from them first-hand as to what they need most from us as chaplains.

This excellent learning experience as presented by skilled specialists at the Police Training grounds would not have been available to me or to my Lewis County Chaplaincy colleagues without the support of our community members and organizations who support us financially. I attest that this training is invaluable to a chaplaincy assignment in our community.

One day my own family may be in need of a chaplain, and I would really want that chaplain to have experienced the Chaplain Academy's outstanding instruction.

Again, our organization cannot offer this quality training opportunity without the community's financial support from people like you. We thank you for the encouragement and the betterment of our services this support brings to the soundness of our overall chaplaincy.

When you need us, we will be there!

[Rev. Matthew March is Pastor of St. Johns Lutheran Church in Chehalis, and he serves as a Chaplain for LCCS.]

ABE LINCOLN ONCE SAID:

"The struggle of today, is not altogether for today -- it is for a vast future also. With a reliance on Providence, all the more firm and earnest, let us proceed in the great task which events have devolved upon us."

– 12/3/1861 Message to Congress

CARE AND COMFORT IN TIME OF NEED

by Chaplain Jim Martin

When Mel Lyon and I chatted over lunch one day, he invited me to prepare an article for *The Chapline*. I asked him as to what he had in mind, and he said that writing in the first person tends to be especially interesting to readers and that telling my own story, based on my years of experience in the chaplaincy and as an EMT would make a good place to start.

I mentioned that three words come to mind when I think about what we do as chaplains. He asked "What are they?" and I said: "Care, Comfort and Need." He said, "Good! Make that your title, Jim, and just follow your instincts." I said, "OK."

I do not lay claim to being a great teacher or an astute philosopher. I am just a person who is humbled by knowing that all that I am or ever will be is because God has shown me His grace and mercy. So, I will share a few personal words just for a perspective

My birth year was 1971, and I was born at Madigan Military hospital. My childhood was less than ideal. I grew up in two homes. In one I was a *latch key kid* with too many liberties - and in the other, I was so heavily restricted that it seemed my only sense of freedom came when actually in classes at school.

From a very early age, however, I developed an inner sense that I belonged to something bigger than myself. Looking back, I realize this was coupled with a desire to serve and help others. For this I am truly grateful.

I joined the Boy Scouts while I was in elementary school. It fulfilled my need to belong, and there I learned a lot about helping others.

The Boy Scout Creed states that a Scout is "trustworthy, loyal, helpful,

friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent." I feel it would be beneficial for every adult today to review, reflect and assimilate these twelve precepts. If everyone lived by them, this world would truly be a better place. Scouting was an informative and powerfully formative experience for me.

Therefore, as I grew into adulthood it was a natural for me to opt into becoming a volunteer firefighter. That opportunity was presented to me in the

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year 2000.

I became certified as an EMT-B and became an instructor in CPR. Much later while visiting the Southwest Washington fairgrounds in Chehalis. I conversed with a chaplain at the chaplaincy's fair booth. That chaplain said he thought I might be interested in training for the chaplaincy - and he was right. But it was still some years later that I actually opted to add this additional affiliation with the Lewis County Chaplaincy Services (LCCS) - a service that truly helps others.

This is a form of ministry as well as an essential community service. It provides an avenue for becoming more and more useful to my God and for my community.

One day I was out driving with an older man, a firefighter, who was my passenger. We began talking about the ups and downs of being first responders. As we rounded a bend he suddenly became physically shaken up and emotionally distraught.

"Hey, are you OK?" I inquired. He responded, "Right there," he pointed, "that's the place where those kids were burned up in their car!" I could

immediately sense his enormous pain and emotional trauma erupting once again from deep within. Just the sight of that spot where it had happened years before triggered instantly the trauma of his prior experience.

I was troubled for some days afterward as I reflected on the deeply painful response of this man, one whom I highly respected. He was still carrying the hurt, the empathy, the sympathy and the sorrow even though it was from a time long past. I was myself having a hard time accepting the fact that even the strongest among us need care and comfort at times from the hardness of certain memories. I was awakened to the reality of the needs within the hearts of our police and fire first-responder community.

As chaplains, we assist in lending "*care and comfort in time of need*" both for our officials who are fire and law enforcement first responders - as well as to the citizens and families of the general public.



Jim Martin

the great opportunity to serve as a chaplain.

Whenever I approach a situation where help is needed - and I know I must be strong and that I must have wisdom - I am ever encouraged by the words of the Psalmist who wrote *in the first person* so long ago: "**Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me**" Psalm 23:4 (NIV).

Jim Martin, LCCS Chaplain/EMT

Although as chaplains we deal with death, injuries, homicides, broken hearts and human suffering - often in the face of horrendous circumstances, I thank God for

THE BIRTH OF Lewis County Chaplaincy Services By Kevin Curfman

The year was 1986, and I was on duty as the new EMT at Thurston County Fire Department #1, it was my job to bring the gurney into the living room while other EMTs were working with the cardiac arrest in the bedroom. I stood silently with the family for 45 minutes not knowing just what to say as the family slowly realized that the husband and father was not going to survive. When the resuscitation efforts were stopped and he was pronounced as deceased, I found myself pondering that scenario even as I wheeled the empty gurney back outside.

A year later, in 1987, I started my firefighting career with the Chehalis Fire Department. But that emergency call made at Rochester, Washington, still stuck in my mind.

When I read about a certain chaplain's program operating in Edmonds, Washington, I came to the realization that indeed there could be a better way to care for families who are in emergency mode; better than what I was able to do that night. Shortly after gaining that insight it became coupled with some guidance from the International Chaplains Ministry - and thus the Chehalis Fire Department's Chaplaincy Service was formed.

Within a couple of years it was adopted by other fire departments, and then it merged with the existing Lewis County Sheriff's Office chaplains program to become the current program of today.

Over the years, the Lewis County Chaplaincy Services (LCCS) has grown from the nearly impossible feat of having just one chaplain to serve the entire county to having the current group of 20 volunteer chaplains deployed across the county. We have increased our focus to include being there for the emergency responders as well as for the general public's needs. Today and for the past two years LCCS

have also been overseeing the special needs of inmates held at the Lewis County Jail. This came in response to the urgent request from administration of the jail. For these needs a special corps of 30 volunteers are on hand.

Over the years one thing has stayed consistent, and that is the chaplain's heart to serve the hurting regardless of what setting they are in. Our volunteers are carefully selected, and they are trained to serve the responders and citizens so as to render meaningful help in whatever crisis they may be facing.

Because the program has grown and the frequency of need for this kind of service has increased exponentially, we are now beginning special fund raising to provide for a full-time director. The need for organization and administrative assistance has grown well beyond the abilities of a single volunteer chaplain.

Brian Carter, an experienced chaplain, has been fulfilling the role of director on a volunteer basis since April of 2016. It is, however, asking too much for one volunteer chaplain to organize, manage and direct a team that now numbers in the fifties.



Kevin Curfman

Brian has a passion to serve our county through the chaplaincy. He thoroughly understands the program, and his gift for providing sound organization and leadership for a growing chaplaincy is profound.

We now have a small group of individuals working to raise funds from grants, fund-raising events, and both individual and corporate donations.

We will be posting more information on our website at lewiscountychaplaincy.org and also on our **Facebook** page about the fund raising efforts. If you are someone who might be interested in partnering with LCCS, or know of someone to help

provide funding for this highly worthy operation, please do refer them to our website or give us a call.

Thank you so much.

Kevin Curfman, President
Lewis County Chaplaincy Services

THANKS TO THE SOUTHWEST WASHINGTON FAIR BOARD

The Chaplaincy extends a hearty thanks to the Southwest Washington Fair Board for a very enjoyable event this August. Thanks to all fair personnel whose hard work and attention to details served our community so well.

A CHAPLAIN'S DAILY PRAYER

"Let us reach out and touch someone with a helping hand. Help us to never lose sight of Your continual guidance in our lives as we work for our fellow man."

THE CHAPLINE

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