

# SPRING 2025 NEWSLETTER

## What is LCCS?

Lewis County Chaplaincy Services is a 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization committed to serving our communities during emergencies.

Volunteer chaplains respond throughout the county to support all emergency agency personnel and the citizens in our community during times of emergency crises.

LCCS is funded through generous contributions from individuals, businesses and organizations in our community.

### Board of Directors

Brian Carter, Exec. Director

Kevin Curfman, Ret. Fire Captain, President

Lorraine Railsback, Vice. Pres. Former EMT/Firefighter

Chris Knudsvig, Sec/Treas.

Matt Bissonnette, Pastor

Laura Hanson, Riverside Fire Authority

Chief Gabe Frase, Lewis County Sheriff's Office

# The ChapLine

Lewis County Chaplaincy Services

"Compassionate Caring in Crisis"

## Annual Commissioning Dinner

The annual commissioning dinner was held on January 14, 2025 at Ramblin' Jacks Restaurant in Chehalis. Chaplains, first responders, families and supporters of LCCS gathered to welcome two new chaplains.



Chaplains Gary Stevens and Matt Johnson have completed their basic training and were commissioned by President Kevin Curfman. Chaplain Stevens will be responding from the Centralia area and Matt from the Morton area.

Port Blakely Timber contributed \$3000 for the purchase of six new pagers for the chaplains. Tara McQueen, of Port Blakely Timber, accepts a certificate of appreciation for their support of the first responders, citizens and chaplains in Lewis County. This company has been supportive of other emergency organizations in the past and we thank them for the continued support for Lewis County!



## LCCS Newsletter is Active Again!

We are happy to let you know that the LCCS newsletter, **The ChapLine**, is once again being published and should be coming out twice each year.

We hope it will be a way to keep the emergency responders, citizens and supportive organizations and individuals updated on the activities of LCCS.

For the chiefs and managers of emergency response agencies, it will be a way to show how the chaplain's program can benefit your department in extending additional services to the community as well as benefiting your personnel as they deal with crisis situations on a daily basis.

We have many individuals and organizations that support LCCS. We want them to see the results of their support and to see what additional support may be needed. We never charge for our services and depend on donors like them to provide the financial support we need for training, equipment and administrative costs.

To receive this newsletter directly to your email, go to our website at [lewiscountychaplaincy.org](http://lewiscountychaplaincy.org) and use the **Join Our Mailing List** link.

### LCCS Call Numbers by the Year

|      |     |
|------|-----|
| 2022 | 110 |
| 2023 | 129 |
| 2024 | 137 |

## Brian Carter, Executive Director



Brian Carter has served as the executive director of LCCS since April of 2016 and has served as a chaplain for over 15 years. He

became interested in becoming a chaplain after seeing a presentation by a LCCS chaplain in 2009 at a Lewis County Ministerial Association meeting. Afterwards, he felt a calling that simply said "You do that".

Brian has over 25 years of pastoral experience. He has a bachelor's degree in Christian Education, is a graduate of the Police and Fire Chaplain's Training Academy in Burien, WA., and is a member of the Federation of Fire Chaplains. He is employed fulltime as a chaplain for Assured Hospice.

Brian is also assigned as the Chehalis Fire Department Chaplain through LCCS. He has received special recognition as a volunteer from Sheriff Steve Mansfield in 2012 and a commendation from Fire Chief Ken Cardinale in 2018 for outstanding service to the department.

Brian's vision for LCCS includes continuing to increase the number of chaplains across the county, having a chaplain assigned to each emergency agency in Lewis County, and expanding the executive director's position from the current quarter time to a full-time position.

Brian lives in Chehalis with his wife, Julie. They have three grown children and three grandchildren.

## Mission Statement

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

## Funding LCCS

By Kevin Curfman, President

When the Lewis County Chaplaincy Services was formed in 1989, there was no source of funding. Some departments made donations of various used equipment such as pagers or services that helped greatly, but there was no income other than that for many years.

When my daughter Becki, was about 8 years old, she apparently had heard me mention the lack of funding and that we were working on funding sources. She took it upon herself to go to a nearby creek and dig clay from the bank. She then took it home and formed it into small bowls and pots. Once it was dried, she sold her pots to friends, family and teachers, to raise money for the chaplaincy. This



was one of our first cash inflows to the chaplaincy.

We still joke about how Becki's "pot

business” raised money for the program. The \$8 or \$9 did not immediately help us with funding, however, as I put it in an envelope in the file and could not bring myself to spend it. It remained for 20 years or so as a reminder to me of the compassion people can have to help others. It was just around 10 years ago when it was put into the LCCS bank account.

We have come a long way since that time. We have received a matching grant from Weyerhaeuser years ago to purchase equipment and have just recently received a grant from Port Blakely Timber to purchase some new pagers. Many individuals, businesses and organizations have become our partners as we provide chaplaincy services in our communities. Our annual auction is also a major fundraiser.

These donors have the same compassion and desire to help those dealing with an emergency crisis as Becki did with her fundraising efforts. We greatly appreciate their contribution in helping us to fulfill our mission.

If you would like to help support this critical ministry, go to our web site at [lewiscountychaplaincy.org](http://lewiscountychaplaincy.org) and click on Supporting LCCS, or contact our executive director at [bcarterministry@gmail.com](mailto:bcarterministry@gmail.com) or call him at 360-520-4052.

## The High Cost of Responding

All first responders, volunteer or career, face an incredible amount of stress in their jobs. This is true whether they are working as a law enforcement officer, firefighter,

EMT, dispatcher or coroner. They are exposed to situations that most people, hopefully, never experience during their lifetimes. On the emergency scene, first responders are required to make life and death decisions, sometimes with very little information. They see the tragic results of drunken drivers, uncontrolled fire and even individuals’ unfortunate choices of ending their own lives.

Dispatchers have a unique situation as they take calls from a frantic citizen who may or may not have accurate information, as they see their loved one not breathing in front of them or their home being consumed by fire. Sorting through the screams and panic, dispatchers must decide what resources are needed, dispatch them, and try to direct the caller in providing aid or evacuating the building.

Once the emergency scene has been stabilized, personnel from the coroner’s office are called in to care for the deceased. Although they may deal with death on a daily basis, the broken bodies and carnage still take their toll on the responder.

All of these situations can create trauma for the responder regardless of their training and experience. It may be from a single major incident or from continual exposure to traumatic scenes over



many years. This can result in post-traumatic stress disorder or other issues that, if not dealt with, can affect their health, family relations and even lead to the end of the responders career.

According to the Ruderman Family Foundation in a 2018 study, more firefighters and police officers died from suicide than in the line of duty. They found that in 2017, 93 firefighters and 103 police officers died in the line of duty from all causes including being shot, stabbed, drowning or dying in a vehicle accident while on the job. In the same year, 129 firefighters and 140 police officers died from suicide.

Because suicide is commonly underreported, the rates of death by suicide could be more than double the line of duty deaths.

Fortunately, there are now many resources for responders to turn to for help. The chaplains are one of those. They are always available for the responder to talk to confidentially after that especially bad call or anytime. They can also refer the responder to additional resources, if needed.

Many agencies now also have peer counseling and the Lewis County Incident Stress Management Team is also available to help at any time. It can be activated through LC Dispatch center.



### LCCS Annual Dinner Auction!

October 4, 2025 at the Jester Auto Museum in Chehalis

Come enjoy the evening and support the chaplains!