WINTER 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.

The ChapLine

Lewis County Chaplaincy Services

"Compassionate Caring in Crisis"

The Christmas Season is Here!

by

Kevin Curfman, LCCS President

As we approach the holiday season, most of us look forward to family gatherings, great meals and giving gifts to family and friends. For many people, however, it will also be a time of grieving for loved ones who have passed away and will not be sitting at the dinner table this year.

These people are in our thoughts and prayers as they go through this chapter in their lives. Many of these families we have served over the past year and we want them to know they are not forgotten.

Our hope for everyone this season is to be able to remember and honor those who have passed, to build and strengthen relationships, and to create great memories with family and friends.

The Lewis County Chaplaincy annual meeting will be held at 6:00 PM, January 6th at Ramblin' Jacks at 1336 Rush Road, Napavine.

You are invited to join us for a no-host dinner, commissioning a new chaplain and sharing our vison for 2026.

We hope to see you there!

Please RSVP to chaplain@lewiscountychaplaincy.org

Welcome to our new Executive Director!

Andrew Short
Executive Director

After serving LCCS for many years as Executive Director, Brian Carter has announced his resignation as of the end of this year. His decision to step out of the position is based on a potential move out of the area to be closer to family. We thank Brian for his dedication and the hard work he has put in over the years.

The LCCS Board of Directors advertised the Executive Director position and has selected Andrew Short for the one-quarter-time role. He and Brian are currently working through a transition period that includes training, administrative handoff, and familiarization with the goals, mission, and chaplain response.

Andrew's first experience with emergency services began in high school when he served as a volunteer firefighter. After graduation, he joined the U.S. Army, serving both stateside and in a combat deployment. During his military service, he served as a sergeant in the infantry, leading teams in both training and emergent situations.

After transitioning off active duty, Andrew again served as a firefighter and EMT-B. He later took on senior leadership roles across faith-based, nonprofit, healthcare, and for-profit organizations. His most recent work was with Bethel Church in Chehalis as Director of Operations.

In February of this year, tragedy struck Andrew's family when their 13-year-old daughter, Taryn, passed away from sudden cardiac arrest. During that time, the professionalism, care, and compassion of Lewis County responders deepened his respect for emergency services and rekindled the passion that first drew him to public safety.

Andrew is excited to be involved with LCCS and looks forward to working with emergency responders and citizens across the county.

"This role is deeply meaningful to me. Philippians 4:13 reminds us that Christ provides the strength we need in both seasons of abundance and in times of grief and loss. After losing Taryn, I saw that same strength reflected in the first responders who walk with others through their hardest moments. It's an honor to support them, and to come alongside a community that showed my family such love."

Andrew lives in Centralia with his wife, Leanna, and their family.

Annual Auction

The annual LCCS dinner auction was held on October 4th at Jester's Auto Museum in Chehalis. Although attendance was much lower than expected, those that were there were treated to a great dinner provided by Jim's Smoke House. Entertainment was provided by Ben Parsons, the lead guitarist for the up-and-coming band, Carl and Wes.

Former Sherriff John McCroskey was our auctioneer for the evening and auctioned off numerous items that included overnight accommodations at a cabin, a beautiful handmade quilt, a chainsaw and many others. The silent auction also had many great items for the bidders to browse and place their bids.

Director Brian and his wife, Juli, were presented certificates for their dedicated service to LCCS. In addition to Brian's work as director and chaplain, Juli has coordinated our annual auction since its inception.

One unexpected surprise was the flag and "Thank You Chaplains!" sign being flown during the auction next door from Ron and Penny Maul's ladder truck.

A special Thank You! to all who attended as well as the donors that provided the items for the auction.

Watch for our Trade-Up Fundraiser coming this spring! Get your trades ready as we start with something small and trade for something bigger and better! Join our Facebook page "Lewis County Chaplaincy" to follow the fun!

Interment Service

The Lewis County Coroner's Office held an interment service in October for the remains of unclaimed decedents.

In conjunction with John Panesko, owner of the Pioneer Cemetery in Chehalis, 13 unclaimed remains were interred. These were individuals who had no family or their families had abandoned them for various reasons.

Chaplain Kevin Curfman presented a short message, followed by Coroner Warren McCleod officially turning the remains over to cemetery owner, John Panesko, for interment. This service provided a dignified burial for these individuals.

TRAIN TO BE RESILIENT

by Stephanie Conn

Emergency responders deal with difficult situations every day that can affect their mental and physical health. Each issue of The Chapline includes a topic to promote emergency responder health.

This column is inspired by my recent attendance at a traumatic stress conference where resilience was the theme. Overwhelmingly, experts agreed that resilience isn't something you have, it's a process. Like officer safety, physical fitness, or sobriety, it's something that requires a daily commitment.

Ten key areas were identified:

1) positive attitude,

2) flexible thinking,

3) personal moral compass,

4) having a resilient role model,

5) facing fears,

6) active coping,

7) supportive social network,

8) physical fitness,

9) regular emotional, physical and cognitive training and

10) recognize and use your strengths. (1)

Let's take a look at each of these.

Positive attitude is realistic optimism, which means that you acknowledge your adversities AND you maintain your faith that, despite this, you WILL prevail. I usually remind my clients of their ability to persevere by asking if they've ever NOT survived a day of their life.

Flexible thinking relates to being able to roll with the punches. When we fight the inevitable, such as change and failure, it amps up our stress levels and limits our ability to move forward. Shift happens. You may not like it but, if you can't do anything about it, you have to accept that and see if there is anything to learn from the situation.

Having a personal moral compass may or may not be related to religious faith. It's about knowing your purpose in life and living according to it. What is your mission statement for life? Are you living according to it? If not, take the first step toward a life that serves your purpose.

I recently asked a large group of cops to identify their role models. Much to my surprise, they said they could identify who was not their role model but not who inspired them. Sometimes seeing who we don't want to turn out like is great motivation to take better care of ourselves and our relationships but it isn't enough. Having a role model – a mentor, if you will – to inspire us improves our resiliency.

Encouraging officers to face their fears seems unnecessary. Cops face fears that others run away from for a living. Let me be more specific. Face your personal fears, those difficulties you're having that you pretend don't exist because you do not know what to do about them. Maybe you've noticed that you're not doing well after a call and you've been ignoring some of the signs of it. It could be that you notice your marriage isn't what it used to be but you pretend that everything is fine. Running from your problems is a race you will NEVER win. Face your fears instead of being chased down by them.

A related concept, active coping, entails taking measures to manage the stressor you're facing. It involves facing your fear and then determining what you can do to

change the situation. If you can't change it, find ways to deal with it. It might mean asking for help from your support system or telling yourself something encouraging to deal with the situation, such as "I can get through this" or "This, like everything else, is temporary".

I can't say enough about having a strong support network. The more people in it, the merrier. Build a strong network when things are going well so that, when times are tough, you have many sources of support. Some people can support you emotionally while others offer practical support. Sometimes you want to talk to someone. Other times you just need to get a break from your stressful situation, like going camping. One friend may be great at listening while another lifts your spirits by just being there with you at the campfire. Try to include people from various sources so you have a wide array of interesting people in your life and diverse sources of support.

Physical fitness is critical to being resilient. Sometimes we don't need to talk about our stressors, we just need to burn off stress and get some endorphins to feel better. Building physical strength often results in emotional strength and better clarity and focus. Taking a break from worrying about our problems, getting out of our head and into our bodies, can be the best thing for us.

A related resilience factor is emotional and cognitive training. Keeping our mind sharp, including our emotional intelligence, helps us to manage situations where we may not be able to change anything but our reaction. Staying active by engaging in challenging activities across various interests will keep us sharp. For instance, you could coach a hockey team and learn a craft like wood carving or cooking.

The last resilience factor, recognizing and using strengths, is a challenge for many. Our tendency is to focus on our weaknesses. This is unfortunate, as it limits rather than inspiring us. Interestingly, you would point out strengths your friend could use to make it through a difficult situation.

Try this with yourself. Do you have a track record of being creative when helping others get through tough times? Harness this strength to help you through your current situation.

I hope you find something you can use and best of luck in training to be more resilient!

A Humorous Christmas PSA!

Click on link above or visit

firefighterfenton on youtube.com and search for "Reasons Not to Call 911"

Resources Added to Website

We have recently added a Community Resource page and a Responder Resource page to our LCCS website at www.lewiscountychaplaincy.org

The community resources are there to help citizens to know what to do after a fire or after the death of a loved one. It can be overwhelming for an individual after a traumatic event such as these.

The Responder Resources are resources to help the first responder deal with the stress and the challenges that they face daily in doing their jobs.

More resources will be added to these pages as they become available.