



COWLITZ CHAPLAINCY

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Mission #1

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. John 1:14.

This verse was on my mind throughout the Christmas season. I shared my reflections with the other Chaplains, and now I want to share them with you.

The Word is the Son of God. At Christmas he left his throne in heaven and became Immanuel, God with us. He took on human flesh and came into our world.

As Chaplains we get called out to the worst things that people experience. In 2017 we were called out to support families for 17 suicides. These tragic events included men and women, older people, and teens and young adults, and they were not all just around the holidays or during gloomy weather.

Thinking about what we are called to do magnifies the glory of the Son of God. He witnessed all the pain sin brought into the world since Adam and Eve. He could foresee all the pain for centuries to come, which included his own suffering and death. Yet he chose to come. He chose to answer the call. He chose to come into all the misery of this world to fulfill the mission the Father had for him.

The first thing the Son of God did was show up. As Chaplains we often talk about the ministry of presence. The first thing we need to do is respond to the call and show up. Believe me, that is not easy. Reflect on a time when a family member or a friend was going through a crisis time in their life. There was a voice in your head telling you that you should go and be with them, but there was also a big voice in the pit of your stomach that wanted to stop you from going because you knew how uncomfortable you were going to feel, plus you had no clue what you should say. As Chaplains we can all relate to that, but we go; and I encourage you to go too because just your presence will mean so much to

your family member or friend.

The word “dwelling” implies a temporary dwelling like a tent. The Son of God became flesh and set up a tent in our lives. His entire earthly ministry only lasted three and a half years from his baptism to his crucifixion. As Chaplains we are only in most people’s lives for a short time. One person said to me, “You are like the Lone Ranger. You show up out of nowhere, save the day, and then you are gone.” I would never say we save the day, but we do show up, provide a supportive presence, perhaps some follow up counsel, or even a funeral, but then we are off to the next crisis.

Into all the misery of the world, the Son of God came full of grace and truth. I believe the apostle John put grace and truth in a specific order. As Chaplains we always seek to lead with grace. Sometimes people are in a crisis because of very poor choices they have made, however, we always lead with grace. We show up, dwell with them in their sorrow, and we extend grace. As someone has said, “Nobody cares what you know until they know that you care.” Sometimes we never get to the truth part. Sometimes the only truth we express to people is that we care about them. And if we do get to share any truth with them, it is always wrapped in grace. As the apostle Paul reminds us we must always speak the truth in love. As Chaplains our goal is that people will receive our grace, and then seek the Son of God who is full of grace and truth.

As you go through 2018 I hope the words of John 1:14 will be a theme for your life. Sadly you will have family members and friends who go through crisis times. Go to them; just show up. Be present with them. Camp in their sorrow. Your presence will become God in the flesh to them. Lead with grace, listen with grace, and speak the truth in love.

As Chaplains we want you to have a wonderful 2018, and thank you for your continued partnership with us.

Chaplain Tom Haan

Chaplain Activity

In November and December the Chaplains were called out to assist first responder agencies 34 times. That brings the total for the 2017 to 250 times, that is 47 more times than our previous record of 203 times in 2014. Thankfully, the Lord's grace and strength was poured out to us as we responded to so many crisis events this past year.

One of the really sad numbers from this past year is the fact that we responded to 17 suicides in our county. Plus, there were some suicides we were not called to for various reasons, and some we were not called to, but later did the notification of death to the family. We discovered there are different suicide prevention groups working in the county, but there is not much for follow up support. We have connected with some resources outside of the county, and work to connect survivors of suicide with those resources, but if you know of specific support services for survivors of suicide in our county, please let us know.

The holiday season brought an event of great joy, and an event of great sorrow to our Chaplain family. Chaplain Francisco and his wife Luz welcomed a new baby girl, Anna, into their home. Chaplain Mario and wife Nancy tragically lost their son Aaron. We are very grateful for the support and prayers for both of these Chaplain families.

There have been several new additions to the first responder community in the last couple of months. The Sheriff's Office added Deputy Craig Murray. Craig and his wife also welcomed a baby daughter, which also means that Officer Brent Murry of Woodland PD is a new grandpa! At Longview PD, Officer Shayda Panah graduated from the academy, and they also have new hires Pacer Said, Elijah Heston, Josh Bredenberg, and Daniel Butler. At Kelso PD Cody Joslen, Adam Swartout, and Brian Rominger graduated from the academy, and Jon Freeman is currently at the academy. Kalma PD welcomed new academy graduate Caitlyn Neil.

Among the firefighters Longview Fire welcomed Mike Lewis and Greg Hawks. We offer are condolences to Lt. Derek Stabell who lost his grandfather, but we also con-

gratulate Chief Jurmu whose daughter Angela became a new bride.

Thanks for Supporting Us

The Chaplaincy welcomes Kristina Cook from Woodland as our new Marketing Director! She is married and has four children. She is studying at LCC to finish a degree in marketing, and is currently running the Woodland Small Business Association. Welcome Kristina! Kristina's main focus will developing and maintaining our monthly donations. She will be connecting with the churches in the county, as well as helping more businesses get connected to the Chaplaincy. She will also be developing ways for individual household to support our mission.

SAVE THE DATE!

AMR is organizing a Chili Cook Off to support our mission. It will be held March 3, 2018 from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. at Youth and Family Link 907 Douglas St. Longview, WA

The 2018 Cowlitz Chaplaincy Benefit Dinner and Auction will be May 18, 2018 at the Cowlitz County Event Center starting at 5:30 p.m. Go to www.cowlitzchaplaincy.org for all the details

2018 Cowlitz Chaplaincy Golf Classic
September 15, 2018
Three Rivers Golf Course in Kelso, WA

Grocery Outlet

Grocery Outlet on Ocean Beach in Longview will donate 5% of your purchase if you present the card we have in our office. Please stop by our office or call us at 360-425-7222 to get your card and one for a friend!

Cowlitz Chaplaincy

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"Supporting those who support our communities' first responders"