

# Cowlitz Chaplaincy

Chaplain Steve White

Ordained Minister

Member International Conference of Police Chaplains

Member International Critical Incident Stress Foundation



Carmen and I are so pleased to be connected with Castle Rock Christian Church as one of your missionaries. God's 'call' on my life to be a Police Chaplain actually began in 1972 when I was first called into pastoral ministry. My best friend at the time, a King County Deputy Sheriff said; "*Who knows Steve, maybe someday you'll be our chaplain.*" Thirty years later (24 as a Senior Pastor) the door opened for me to become a volunteer Chaplain with Long-

view, (WA.) Police Department. I believe those 30 years were in fact “training” for what I do now as a full-time Police Chaplain working with Longview, Kelso and Castle Rock Police Departments. God’s timing is perfect and a wonderful thing!

Cowlitz Chaplaincy began in 1983 in response to the eruption of Mt. St. Helens. Then Sheriff Les Nelson realized something needed to be done to bring spiritual comfort to grieving families in times of crisis. What began as a totally ‘volunteer’ ministry now has two full-time Chaplains supplemented by volunteers. In addition to myself, Lyle Prather is the other full-time Chaplain.

As Police Chaplain I work with approximately 140 officers and support staff as well as their families. I’m available “24-7” to assist officers at various scenes such as death/suicide/homicide, domestic violence, police shooting, fires, and other critical incidents. In addition to providing support and care to officers and their families in times of crisis, I come alongside victims and their families providing care and comfort to them. When I arrive on a trauma scene it’s amazing the calm and peace that begins to settle down over everyone – you and I know it’s not ‘me’ – it’s the presence of Jesus and His love and grace that I bring with me. I never know what time of day or night my pager will go off, but in the darkest hours of people’s lives I am privileged to bring hope and comfort through Jesus and His love. We call it a *“Ministry of Presence.”*

So much of what I do demands a strong personal relationship with my officers. It takes time for police officers to trust anyone. The very nature of their work demands that they mistrust people – to do otherwise could mean serious injury or even death for them. Studies have long shown how devastating the job is to men and women who faithfully serve and protect as well as their families. So I spend countless hours riding in patrol cars, attending shift briefings, teaching classes, counseling officers and their families as well as attending social functions as much as possible. Because I understand both the “cop-world” and the “God-world” (two worlds that often collide) I become a ‘bridge’ of sorts between an officer and their own faith community.

Serving at the invitation of each department Chief, I receive no government funds for support. The departments do provide some equipment and training for me. According to Cowlitz County Sheriff Bill Mahoney, *“The chaplains provide critical intervention counseling to hundreds of people every year. As*

*Sheriff, I can tell you that the Chaplaincy is an important piece of our public safety service to the people of Cowlitz County. When help is needed a chaplain responds. We are blessed to have Lyle, Steve and all the volunteers to provide this critical service. Your support, both in prayer and in donations, is very much needed and appreciated.”*

Thanks for helping make this vital *“Ministry of Presence”* possible!



*'Chap' Steve*