

Illinois Corps Of Fire Chaplains (ICFC)

Serving Responsibly, Supporting Faithfully, Training Effectively and Setting New Standards for Fire and Emergency Response Chaplaincy in Illinois.

January 2009

The Chaplain, the Servant Leader



“Leadership comes from integrity - that you do whatever you ask others to do” Scott Berkun

The work of the chaplain in fire and emergency services is one of the most rewarding ministries you'll ever experience - having the opportunity to be among heroes, helping our community in times of great need, being in on the action and bringing a light to some of the darkest corners of the heart anyone will ever know. It is also the most difficult journey you'll ever walk, with unseen paths and treacherous terrain in every step. Let's not kid ourselves on this one. These lessons are hard learned. If you think that you can come into the fire house as 'the Pastor' or with the attitude that you belong there because of a new title or even just really good intentions, you are likely in for a kick in the pants (and the ego) you will not soon forget.

While we rightly want to live out the role of leading others to where God wants them to be we must first humble ourselves, getting to know the people we are serving just as we hope that they will take time to get to know us. This takes time, effort, sacrifice, commitment, perseverance and unstained integrity. These virtues are really what the fire service is all about and what we strive for.

Finding a place in a culture and community that is resistant to change, with fortress-like heart walls and a mistrust of outsiders is a job that will put doubt in the hearts of the best of pastors seeking to be the chaplain for their department. In this refining process we change and grow, often times discovering gifts we never even knew were in us. While thorny at times, the passage is measured and the rewards are great. God called you here for good reason and in holy moments you will find and share strength.

If we chaplains are to be understood and accepted we must be willing to understand and accept the way things work in the fire service. We must learn and respect the chain of command and its purpose to provide order and safety in times of chaos. We need train to understand not only our own role and responsibility but to be knowledgeable about jobs we will never be asked to do. We must be willing to be repeatedly rejected and even suspected in order to be present for that moment when we are needed. We must accept that this is not a once in a while activity when it is convenient for us but a lifelong dedication to public service and God given duty to others in their time of need.

As Chaplains we stand for the presence of God in the midst of trial, the voice of hope in a sea of despair, the passion of sacrifice when life wears you out. Entrusted with a sacred duty, we must be willing to stand by as a servant first, displaying the heart of a leader for whatever God's calling may require.

Training Resources

[FFC Great Lakes Regional Fire Chaplain & CISM Training Institute](#)

Monday and Tuesday April 20-21, 2009

Wayne Twp. Fire Department Headquarters & Education Center

700 N. High School Rd Indianapolis, IN 46214

ICISF Pastoral Care Intervention II

January 26-27, 2009 Concordia University, Beloit, WI

Cost of course is \$95 (\$105 after 1/16). You are on your own for lodging/meals (cafeteria on campus).

For more information contact Chaplain Bill Wagner at w3inbeloit@aol.com or call 608-362-8755



Why do we work with MABAS? The ICFC has partnered with MABAS to organize and train chaplains for effective service in their departments and communities. Some of our departments have active chaplains, but there may be nearby departments with no chaplain program in place. Together we can recruit chaplains for those departments. MABAS Division Chaplain Committees meet and train together monthly, building relationships and establishing policy for large scale incidents or providing coverage when the regular chaplain is unavailable. MABAS helps to bring a consistent standard of care across the state, building a vital network for support and training. Is your MABAS Division Chaplain Program in place? www.mabas.org

2009 – Our Response for a New Year

It's been about a year since the beginnings of our MABAS Chaplain Program began, and our accomplishments are many. I am grateful to our fine Board of Directors and the IL MABAS Chaplain Program Leadership team for their hard work and dedication. As we begin the NEW YEAR, let's be thankful to God for the work that has been done. I am thankful to you for your work in God's name!

- ICFC has located and contacted over 125 chaplains in 31 Divisions in IL this year
- The ICFC was incorporated in March of 2008 and is seeking full 501c3 status
- The ICFC website got over 7600 hits in 2008
- 32 new members joined the state organization
- 23 MABAS Divisions have departments that have active chaplain programs
- Five MABAS Divisions have established full chaplain committees and developed policy
- Nine CISM training opportunities were offered to Illinois Chaplains
- Two Federation of Fire Chaplains Basic Chaplain trainings were held in neighboring states
- More than 20 new chaplains were recruited and are serving in their departments
- Five Illinois Chaplains attended the Federation of Fire Chaplains National Conference
- Two chaplains were deployed for LODD events in Illinois
- Two disaster response deployments were fulfilled for flooding in neighboring states
- Thousands of people; personnel, families and community residents were served with true grace and great care by fire and emergency response chaplains in our state

*BECOME A MEMBER
Just send in your 2009 Annual Dues.
Check out our 2 for 1 offer - \$75
gets you both ICFC and FFC
Membership. Join today!*

May God Bless you all and keep you safe. Thank you for your service.

Chaplain Jennie Swanson (Hanover Park)
ICFC President and FFC Great Lakes Regional Director