

"TURNING THOSE IN CRISIS TOWARD CHRIST"

# Emergency Chaplains

FEBRUARY 2021



## WELL DONE, GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANT!

*Chaplain Merritt Buchanan died on January 20, 2021, from complications due to COVID-19. Merritt faithfully served First Responders in Person County and led our Crisis Response Team there.*

*David Hess serves as Chief of the Roxboro Police Department and writes a monthly column that appears in the Roxboro Courier-Times. Following is an excerpt from his February column:*



*Merritt and Bonnie Buchanan*

As many know, our Emergency Chaplain, Merritt Buchanan, went home on January 20<sup>th</sup> to be with the Lord. He held a very special place in all our hearts, but the love and compassion he shared with public safety can never be replaced. Many of you shared your condolences, prayers, and heartfelt words in the days after his death. Chaplains from across the state offered their interim services for our staff.

Merritt received full public safety honors at his homecoming celebration. I want to personally thank Fire Chief Torain for his leadership and coordination of Merritt's service. Merritt received a homecoming service that he would not have asked for, but one worthy of his ministry to our public safety families.

As COVID cases seem to increase and the death toll is impacting at risk populations, please be sure to take necessary precautions. We all likely know someone personally who has contracted COVID or died from the virus. Candidly, I struggled with whether or not to receive the vaccination, for reasons that several of you may be struggling. Thoughts like, "Will I grow a sixth finger or turn into a zombie?", "I bet the vaccine is the mark of the beast", "I am just not sure what I am receiving", "I hardly ever get sick so I am good", "Last time I got the flu shot, I got the flu so I sure ain't getting the COVID shot" or "I don't trust the government."

When my dear friend Merritt was hospitalized, I could

no longer justify logic (or illogic) to myself. Having received the vaccination, I can tell you from personal experience, I am still alive without complications or weird anomalies.

Life is but a vapor. Here one second and gone the next. I can't imagine how I would feel if I contracted the virus knowing I could've reduced my chances with a vaccine, then got a loved one sick who died as a result of me rolling the dice. Again, I was determined I would not get vaccinated, but I could no longer play the equivalent of Russian Roulette with my loved ones. Ultimately, you have to decide what is best for your health and the health of loved ones.

I have and still do miss my dear brother Merritt. He often prayed with me, checked on my family, and brought joy to my life. To the Buchanan family, you are deeply loved. May the peace of God which surpasses all understanding guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.

## IN MEMORY OF CHAPLAIN MERRITT BUCHANAN (1948-2021)

**A video of Merritt's memorial service and other information is posted on our homepage:  
[www.EChap.org](http://www.EChap.org)**

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# Chaplain Field Reports

By: Ralph Thompson

*Merritt Buchanan received the Brantley Pearce Memorial/Chaplain of the Year award at our banquet in 2020. Touching lives and impacting people was a way of life for Merritt and the Lord used him to make a difference in many lives through chaplaincy. I pulled the following information from reports that Merritt sent to our office:*

**DECEMBER 14, 15, 17, & 21, 2020:** Merritt reported visiting Fire, EMS, Sheriff, and Police stations with Christmas goodies that he and Bonnie had made. While he talked with personnel, he performed his version of CPR—Collecting Prayer Requests. (Merritt would enter each request on a spreadsheet on his phone and would later pray over those names and needs)

**REQUESTED BY EMS,** Merritt went on a call where an infant had died. The house desperately needed repair. He and other chaplains raised money and recruited help to make improvements to the house. He tried to witness to the family but there was a language barrier. During one visit he put a family member on the phone with one of our Spanish speaking chaplains in Durham. The man prayed to receive Christ on the phone.

**NOVEMBER 30, 2020:** “Recorded a video for Person Memorial Hospital for the lighting of their Christmas tree. Read Luke 2:8-14 and concluded the scripture reading by saying, Hallelujah! Glory to God!”

**LATE ONE NIGHT,** Merritt responded to a scene where a man had died in his sleep. The man’s wife was all alone. She had no local friends or family. He went home and got Bonnie. They spent the night with the woman and stayed until family arrived from out of town the next morning.

**AN OLDER MAN** who lived by himself was found dead by a family member. Merritt arrived on scene and offered comfort to the man who had discovered the body. God opened up the doors to share the gospel and this man asked Jesus to save him....sitting there on the front porch swing.

**LAW ENFORCEMENT WAS CALLED** to conduct a welfare check for a woman who lived alone and had not been heard from in several days. Upon entry, they discovered that she was dead. Her beloved dog was dead as well, found laying beside her. Family members wanted the dog to be cremated and buried with the owner, but they had very little money. Merritt found them an affordable service to cremate the dog. He then loaded the dog in his truck and delivered to the pet cremation service.

**NOVEMBER 11, 2020:** “Offered a prayer and blessing for Veteran’s Day over the Person Memorial Hospital intercom at 11am this morning.”

**A YOUNG MAN NAMED KYREE** from Charlotte, NC was waiting for a heart transplant at Duke Hospital. He was there alone for days at a time. Someone in Kyree’s family knew somebody that knew Merritt. They got in touch with Merritt and asked him to visit Kyree. During the next several weeks he asked other chaplains to be involved. Merritt and five or six of our other chaplains took turn visiting Kyree in the hospital. Unfortunately, a suitable donor was never found and Kyree never received a medical heart transplant. What he did receive was a spiritual heart transplant. About a week before Kyree died, he surrendered his life to Jesus.

I wanted to share these reports, just a few of the hundreds that he filed, as a testimony of Merritt’s faithful obedience to his Lord and Savior. Thank you, my dear brother in Christ, for your service and your friendship. Until we meet again!

*Chaplain Ralph*

*Free Online Seminar for Churches/Small Groups  
(Now booking groups for 2021)*

## Intentional Neighboring

*Responding to Everyday Crisis, Everyday*

Prepare those in your group to engage friends, relatives, neighbors, co-workers, acquaintances, and even strangers with the love and comfort of Christ in difficult times.

*We will provide this online training event exclusively for your church or small group.*

Contact Chaplain Ralph for info: (919) 280-8908

## EChap Basic Training

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