



Our History 1985-2020



In the early 1980's, the Kiskiminitas Presbytery of the United Presbyterian Church - USA responded to a need for pastoral care for truck drivers and other travelers along Route 80 in northwest Pennsylvania. They established and funded the Brookville/Strattanville Truckstop Ministry with a seed gift of \$18,000.00. A partnership with the Pennsylvania Council of Churches was formed and, with the leadership of Rev. Charles Dorsey, Director of Specialized Ministries, this vision of pastoral care was expanded to include all of Pennsylvania. The Carlisle area was targeted for a ministry program in 1985 since it represents the busiest stretch of state highway in Pennsylvania. Rev. Dorsey secured funding from six denominations, each providing \$5000.00 and two representatives to the founding committee. With the addition of ministry sites in 1992 at Breezewood and Erie, there were four chaplaincy programs in the State. The ministry at Carlisle was named the "Carlisle Area Trucker and Traveler Chaplain Ministry" and later changed to the "Carlisle Truck Stop Chaplain Ministry." The ministry was governed by a Steering Committee responsible to the PA Council of Churches which provided administrative and financial support, and oversight.

Rev. Jack E. Keeler was the first chaplain to serve in Carlisle (1985-1989). Following Chaplain Jack, Chaplain Glenn McQuown served a short while before Rev. Donald L. Mason, who was part of the Steering Committee since its inception, began serving as chaplain from January 1990 until 2004. Initially called to serve half-time, Chaplain Don spoke at many churches to develop relationships and establish a stronger financial support base, enabling it to become a full time program by March 1990. Don had an office at the SOCO Truck Stop, but spent most of his time moving among the four truck stops present at that time, engaging drivers in conversation with the goal of sharing the gospel, praying with them, and helping with any needs they had for meals, transportation and counsel.

Chaplain Rev. Dan Lehigh became chaplain in July of 2004 until his 'home-going' in May of 2016. Under Dan's mentoring, Chaplains Dave Braithwaite and Craig Shambaugh began as assistant chaplains providing weekend coverage. At a Board meeting, Chaplain Dan said, "It seems so strange that we beat the bushes for three years (looking for a replacement for Dan) and suddenly God provides two unbelievable candidates." In September of 2016, Chaplains Dave and Craig assumed the roles of joint chaplains providing seven day a week coverage. We praise God for these men who have different gifts and personalities making it possible to provide solid Biblical counsel and assistance in the various situations that arise each day.

A major milestone in our history was obtaining our current 45 foot 'step-down' racing trailer that is used for our office and chapel. The first thoughts and prayers for the trailer were uttered in October of 2005. After much searching by Chaplain Dan, a trailer was donated by Keen Transport in June of 2006. The trailer was modified, insulated, wired, painted, air conditioned and signage applied through the gracious efforts of several contractors and individuals. We now had a beautiful chapel trailer, but no place to put it. After almost three years of communications with various Petro management personnel and Middlesex Township, in August of 2009, we were finally granted permission to place the trailer just off the parking lot of the Iron Skillet Restaurant on Route 11. Chaplain Dan Lehigh is quoted in our minutes as saying that he "could not describe the incalculable impact that the service chapel has had on our ministry."

In July of 2009, the newly named "Carlisle Truck Stop Ministry, Inc." became incorporated as its own entity under the PA Department of State. By-Laws were established and, on May 3, 2010, the Ministry was granted tax exempt status by the IRS as a 501(c) (3) "public charity."

Over the years, the Ministry has expanded from initially having a part-time chaplain to having two

chaplains that now provide a seven day a week presence and 24 hour on-call coverage. We have six volunteers that assist in conducting two worship services on Sundays. More and more drivers have commented on how much they appreciate the chapel being open 24/7 and staffed seven days a week since so many truck stop chapels across the country have closed.

Our Cookie Collection and Distribution Event started with a lady who stopped by with a tray of cookies for Chaplain Don to hand out to truckers. It has grown to now collecting and distributing approximately 15,000 bags of cookies each year, all donated by local churches, organizations and individuals.

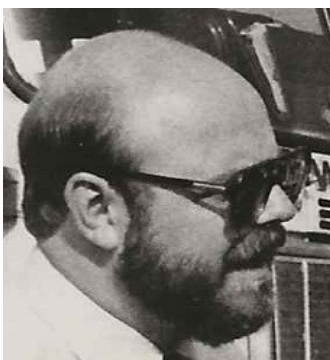
Our operating budget has grown from a few thousand dollars per year to over \$100,000.00 in 2019. In 2019 the Ministry received a \$5,000.00 grant from CommunityAid for an Emergency Lodging Program to be able to provide lodging for truckers and travelers that become stranded in the area.

The Lord has richly blessed the Ministry over the last 35 years. Literally thousands of lives have been touched and ministered to - truckers, travelers, truck stop employees, homeless, etc. - through solid Biblical counsel, prayer and assistance. We have been blessed with chaplains who love the Lord and are passionate about sharing God's love with others. Our chaplains have performed weddings, funerals and baptisms, and have 'blessed trucks,' averted suicides, restored marriages, made hospital visits and, most importantly, they have led many to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. Chaplain Dan once said, "This job would be so easy if you could do it without people. Seriously, no one should be in ministry if they don't love people. The joy of leading a soul to salvation is unmatched by any other earthly joy. My lifelong passion is, and has been, to go to heaven and to take as many people as possible with me." This continues to be our purpose and mission.

Long-term relationships have been established with many individuals, and it is always exciting to hear (even years later) from those whose lives have been touched by a chaplain's 'listening ear,' counsel, prayer, assistance or even a bag of cookies. We have been blessed financially through support from over 75 churches, scores of businesses and hundreds of individual donors. As we look forward, we thank the Lord for His provision and guidance and for your prayers and financial support as we minister to those who seek assistance and counsel. But foremost, we look forward to sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ. May He find us faithful!



Jack Keeler (1985-1989)



Glenn McQuown (1989)



Don Mason (1989-2004)



Dan Lehigh (2004-2016)



Dave Braithwaite (2016-Present)



Craig Shambaugh (2016-Present)