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Dan Kelly's Korner: Chaplain deputy is tending Berks sheriff's flock

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- If they're down and troubled, or they just need a helping hand, deputies in the Berks County sheriff's office can call on Deputy Brian S. Boyer to help them keep it together.

On Jan. 1, Sheriff Eric J. Weaknecht appointed Boyer chaplain of the sheriff's office, the first chaplain in the department's history.

Boyer, originally of Stowe, Montgomery County, and now living in Reading, joined the sheriff's office in 2007. He was a patrolman for the West Pottsgrove Township police department for 15 years before receiving a higher calling.

Boyer, 51, attended Ashland Christian Seminary in Ashland, Ohio, for four years, earning master's degrees in divinity and counseling.

He served as pastor of Skippack Mennonite Church in Montgomery County from 1996 until March 2006, when he left to pursue a career in counseling.

"I worked for a private firm counseling juveniles for about a year and I ran into one of the Berks deputies who told me I should apply up here," Boyer said.

Weaknecht said he saw an opportunity in Boyer to use both his law enforcement and liturgical skills to improve the department.

"The role of the chaplain is to make pastoral services available to deputies, their families and citizens of this community whenever they are requested," Weaknecht said. "There are other sheriff's departments throughout the country who have chaplain programs and a lot of them work with local clergy.

"We were fortunate enough to have a highly qualified deputy here already to perform the chaplain's services for us and be a sworn deputy."

Boyer, who is also a member of the department's honor guard, has spoken at the funeral of one deputy's mother and has attended other funeral and memorial services on behalf of the department.

The sheriff said that since Boyer is a former police officer, he is keenly aware of the stresses and strains of work in law enforcement.

Weaknecht said plans are to move the sheriff's warrants division to the 17th floor of the old courthouse that had been the former offices of the county communications center.



Reading Eagle: Lauren A. Little
Berks County Deputy Sheriff Brian S. Boyer is the department chaplain.

"He (Boyer) will have an office up there where he can provide counseling services," Weaknecht said.

No doubt once he has his own office his colleagues will be knocking on his door.

In Kelly's Korner, Dan Kelly writes about the people and personalities that make Berks County special. Contact him 610-371-5040 or [dkelly@ readingeagle.com](mailto:dkelly@readingeagle.com).