The Joplin Police Chaplain Program has been serving the Police Department and citizens of Joplin on a volunteer basis since 1988. Currently the program has four volunteer chaplains: David Schepper, Chaplain Coordinator; Tim Sumners; Robert Heath; and Gene Hutchcraft.

The chaplains provide spiritual, emotional, and/or physical assistance to those citizens involved in traffic or traumatic incidents. Being familiar with Department Policy and Procedures, the chaplains can clarify and explain to those individuals the actions of the officers. As a member of the clergy, their presence gives a calming and comforting assurance to those individuals with unfortunate circumstances which surround them.

The Police Chaplains are also a great asset to the officers and their families and provide a great ministry to the employees of the Police Department by providing counsel and emotional support in times of personal or professional crisis.

The Police Chaplains are members of the International Conference of Police Chaplains and also the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation. Chaplain Schepper is Region 7 Director of the International Conference of Police Chaplains. Directors serve a two-year term in the region and serve on the ICPC Board of Directors. Region 7 includes Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Louisiana and Texas. Chaplain Heath is the Region Secretary/Treasurer which is also a two-year term.

JPD Chaplains were actively involved with the department and community after the May 22nd tornado, dedicating approximately 425 hours of service ministering to first responders, city employees, and citizens during the response and recovery efforts that followed.