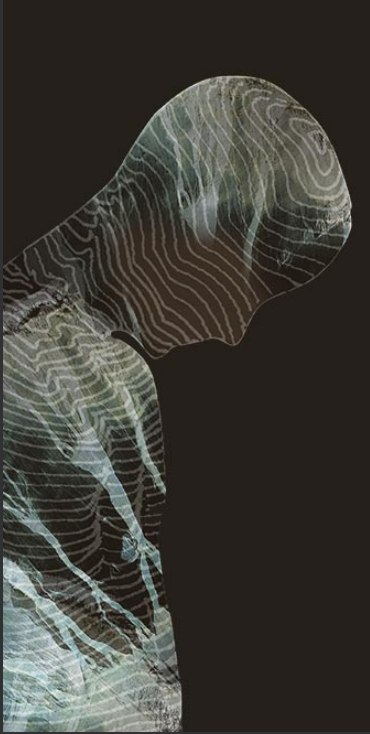


## WHY THE HOPE PROJECT?



Hope is rebellion. It defies the pain of today and refuses to give it the the last word.

Hope pulls the future into the present, it changes today with tomorrow.

Augustine made an insightful observation about the family of hope. He said, "hope has two beautiful daughters; they are named Anger and Courage. Anger at the way things are, and Courage to see that things do not remain as they are" (*The Enchiridion on Faith, Hope and Love*, 1996).

Hopelessness walks into my office every day. Over the past 20 years, I have served in some challenging places.

My work has taken me behind bars in the prison system, on the stand in the court-room, by the bed-side of the sick, in the homes of sexual abuse victims, at the grave-side of the dead, and on the front-lines with our uniformed military men and women.

Despair is a fixture in these contexts; trauma is sadly normative and darkness can be pervasive. Walking in these spaces leaves no one unscathed.

Hopelessness leaves residue on the soul. Seeing pain, hearing suffering, and knowing trauma in fellow human-beings changes you.

I can still hear Sarah's blood curdling cry at the news of her husband's murder.

The black bruises around Logan's neck from his father's strangle attempt is etched in my memory.

I can still see the terror in Sheila's eyes after learning of her husband's suicide.

I will never forget the father who asked me to help him with his tie before he buried his twenty-year old son.

I recall the young Airman so overcome by emotion that he asked for a pen and paper to write out his thoughts. He

etched these words onto a notepad and handed it to me: "I am a disappointment to everyone, because I have no ability or future." I can't shake the sight of his quivering hands as he gave his despair to me.

I know the absence of hope and I know it well, not only in others but in my own soul. There is a common strand in those who know despair, they have moved hope from the category of want to need. We need hope, like air we can't live without it.

In life's wreckage, we need to know where God can be found. We need to know what to do with despair and we need to know if hope is possible in such spaces.

I am deeply invested in waging war on hopelessness in my own soul and fostering hope in yours. I don't know of a better way to do that than to explore what God says about it.

To my reader, no matter where you are or what you have been through, it is my prayer that hope will penetrate into your life with staying power.

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope" (Romans 15:13)

**Kory M. Capps**  
CHAPLAIN

\*For confidentiality, real names from stories and clients have been replaced.