



# **BLOXOM FIREFIGHTER FUNERAL: 'David left us in full flower'**

PARKSLEY — Hundreds of Eastern Shore of Virginia residents from all walks of life gathered Friday to mourn 30-year-old Bloxom Volunteer Fire Company Rescue Lieutenant David R. Chew Jr., who lost his life in the line of duty Monday when the fire truck in which he was a passenger crashed in Nelsonia as it was responding to an accident.

Members of fire and rescue departments from Accomack and Northampton counties as well as Virginia Beach, Maryland, Delaware and Connecticut came to pay their respects to Chew as scores of uniformed personnel lined the perimeter of the Metompink Elementary School auditorium where funeral services with full firefighter honors were conducted at 1 p. m.

Chew — known to his friends as “Chewy” — was a husband and the father of a 3-year-old son. He worked full-time as an EMT provider with Northampton County Department of Emergency Medical Services and also was a United Methodist pastor.

He formerly served the Greenbackville charge and had just become pastor of

Hallwood United Methodist Church. He also was active with Boy Scout Troop 300 of Parksley, had achieved the rank of Eagle Scout and was active in the Chrysalis and Emmaus communities and at Camp Occohannock on the Bay.

“David gave up his life for the sake of service of others...Thanks be to God for this big guy with a tender heart named Chewy,” said the Rev. Tammy Estep, District Supervisor of the United Methodist Church Eastern Shore District.

Estep said Chew, although young, often talked to his wife Becky about what he wanted included in his funeral service.

“He knew his work was risky business,” she said.

The Rev. Alex Joyner said like many in the community he struggled this week with Chew’s untimely death, but said Chew himself “was an EMT because things don’t happen the way they are supposed to happen.”

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“I saw him touch lives young and old,” said Joyner, who got to know Chew through the United Methodist licensing process for local pastors and through Emmaus.

“David left us in full flower — he was at the start of so many things — of fatherhood, of a new ministry...In the end, all we have is trust that God will pick up all the loose strands of our life and weave them into something glorious,” he said.

The Rev. Adam Cooke of Danville, who met Chew in pastor licensing school, said his friend talked constantly about his then-fiancee Becky and how much he loved her.

“I’ve never known somebody like Chewy. He holds a place in my heart that I can not explain,” he said.

Cooke recalled the last telephone conversation he had with Chew 10 days ago, in which his friend “fleetingly” mentioned that if he were to die Cooke “had better drive...up the Shore and tell some jokes.”

In the same conversation, they discussed a Bible passage, John 13:1-17, which describes Jesus washing his disciples’ feet just before the Last Supper.

“He knew that he would always be a footwisher — that was the last thing he said to me on the phone,” said Cooke, calling Chew “the best friend I never deserved to have.”

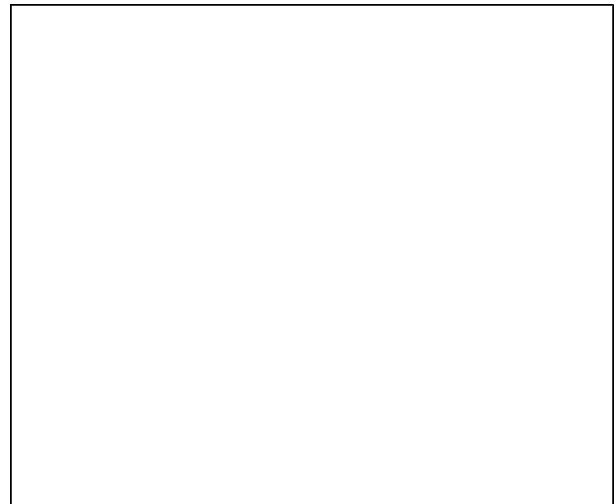
The final hymn, “Jesus Loves Me,” was

chosen for Chew’s young son, David Raymond Chew III, who on Monday, as family and friends gathered at their home in shock after hearing news of Chew’s death, climbed into his mother’s lap and said he wanted to sing a song, according to Joyner.

“He said, ‘I want to sing “Jesus Loves Me” — so little David sang a solo in that quiet house,” giving a message of hope to those present.

At 2 p.m., Eastern Shore of Virginia 911 Communications sounded the final alarm for Chew just before his colleagues from Bloxom Volunteer Fire Company and Northampton EMS made their way outside to a lone bagpiper’s tune, following on foot as the black-draped Bloxom fire engine bearing his flag-draped casket made the brief journey around the corner to the cemetery where Chew was interred with full firefighter honors.

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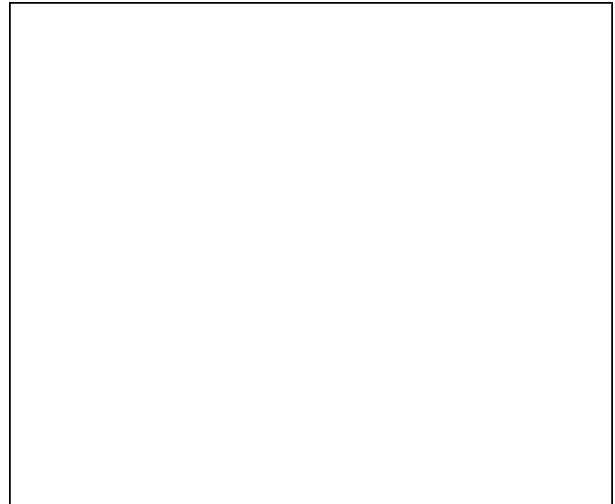


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Firefighters salute the flag-draped casket of David R. Chew Jr., who died in the line of duty on Monday. His funeral was Friday. / Jay Diem image

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