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Holy Cross, CLHS install comfort dog in special service

On Sunday, August 4, Holy Cross Lutheran Church and School, 3425 Crescent Ave., and Concordia Lutheran High School installed Jared, a comfort dog, in a special worship service that included the Lutheran Church Charities' "Passing of the Vest."

During worship, he received an LCC K-9 comfort dog vest and the LCC Kare-9 military ministry vest

from LCC representative Jenni Hoffmeyer. Jared, a 2-year-old golden retriever, joins a team of more than 100 comfort dogs in Lutheran churches nationwide. He received 2,000 hours of training at Lutheran Church Charities in Northbrook, Ill. LCC K-9 comfort dogs are a bridge for compassionate ministry, opening doors for conversation about faith and creating opportunities to share the mercy, compassion, presence and proclamation of Jesus Christ to those who are suffering and in need.

It is traditional for other comfort dogs in the region to attend each "Passing of the Vest" as a new dog begins ministry. They are Team Naomi, Holy Cross, Indianapolis; Team Caleb, Immanuel, Valparaiso; Team Rosie, Atonement, Columbus, Ohio; Team Anna, Trinity, Toledo, Ohio; Team Tobias, Lord of Glory, Grayslake, Ill.; Team Levi, Immanuel, East Dundee, Ill.; and Team Mercy, Our Savior, Louisville, Ky. Team Nigel, an LCC staff comfort dog and Kare-9 military ministry squad dog Brutus also attended.

The Rev. Dennis Goff spoke on Psalm 30 and explained that Jared is a tool we use to open a door to proclaim Jesus to our community. This ministry can be the beginning of turning mourning into dancing for those in our community who are experiencing difficulties in life.

Jared's ministry is to bring comfort and compassion to northeast Indiana; he may go wherever he is invited. A trained handler and a ministry partner accompany Jared on every visit. The partner will often conclude the interaction with the words, "May we pray with



Nine comfort dog teams from Lutheran churches attended the special service at Holy Cross Lutheran Church. It is traditional for other comfort dogs in the region to attend.

you?" that brings an opportunity to proclaim Jesus, our Lord. LCC K-9 comfort dogs can visit anywhere where there is a need for comfort and compassion. Jared has visited the Lutheran Foundation, places of employment, nursing-home residents, school events and attends Holy Cross worship services. There are veterans on the team that will take Jared to various events and programs for veterans and those currently serving.

Jared's Bible verse is Psalm 100:5: "For the Lord is good and His love endures forever; His faithfulness continues to all generations." He has a Facebook page and is on Instagram; simply search Jared Comfort Dog.

Both Holy Cross and CLHS share the responsibility for Jared's well-being and ministry. He is supported, in part, by Holy Cross, CLHS, The Lutheran Foundation and individual donations from many compassionate individuals. To donate or request a visit, contact comfortdog@holycrossfw.org.



Jenni Hoffmeyer, from Lutheran Church Charities, passes the vest to the Rev. Mark Neubacher for comfort dog Jared.