



**LCC K-9 MINISTRIES**  
**MAJOR**  
**CRISIS RESPONSE**  
**DEPLOYMENTS**

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*Sharing the Mercy, Compassion, Presence and Proclamation of Jesus Christ to those suffering and in need*

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## About LCC K-9 Comfort Dog Ministry

Launched in August 2008, the **Lutheran Church Charities K-9 Comfort Dog Ministry** is a national human-care ministry embracing the unique, calming nature and skills of purebred Golden Retrievers.

The **LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs** and handlers, **Kare 9 Military Ministry Dogs** and veteran handlers, and **LCC K-9 Police Ministry Dogs** and law enforcement officer handlers 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.



# 2023

## December 2023 – Las Vegas, Nevada: University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) Shooting

Photos: <https://lccphotos.smugmug.com/University-of-Nevada-Las-Vegas-K9HMC-Deployment/i-GhXJxwR>

### When/Where

LCC responded within 24 hours of an invite to Las Vegas, Nevada, following a shooting at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) campus that occurred on December 6, 2023; three people were killed, and three additional people were wounded.

### What

The LCC K-9 Ministry teams were a physical presence of love, comfort, and peace to those who were in shock and grieving.

LCC Hearts of Mercy & Compassion affiliate **First Lutheran, Yuba City, California**, provided Hearts of Mercy & Compassion to be placed at UNLV to provide a place for comfort and hope to the students, faculty, and the surrounding community in this difficult time.

LCC K-9 Ministry teams were present at the following locations:

- University Nevada Las Vegas campus
- UNLV School of Dental Medicine
- Sunrise Hospital
- Las Vegas 911 operators and coroner's office

### Who

Lutheran Church Charities has been invited by **Rev. Dr. Mike Gibson, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) Pacific Southwest District President**, and **Pastor Brad Beckman of First Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Las Vegas, Nevada**, to bring additional LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs, as well as LCC Hearts of Mercy & Compassion to the shocked and hurting community that this horrific event has greatly impacted.

**Bonnie Fear, LCC K-9 Crisis Response Coordinator, James Casner, Assistant K-9 Crisis Response Coordinator**, and **LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs** and their handlers deployed to Las Vegas to be present, and to listen to those who are grieving, bringing them comfort, love, friendship, hope, and prayer.

### LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs Deployed (December 8 – 14, 2023)

Lois (First Good Shepherd - Las Vegas, Nevada)  
Micah (Light of the Valley - Elk Grove, California)  
Phinehas (Trinity - Fremont, Nebraska)  
Reuben (First Lutheran - Yuba City, California)  
Salome (Faith Lutheran - Las Vegas, Nevada)

### How

LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs are working animals, trained to interact with people of all ages and circumstances who are suffering and in need. The dogs participate in scheduled and special events. Dogs are permanently placed with churches, schools and other ministries involved in Christian human care by LCC. Permanent placement includes

full training for handlers and caregivers along with ongoing support, coaching and training. LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs live in the homes of assigned caregivers.

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### **Why**

#### **LCC K-9 Ministry is a Compassionate Ministry that Listens**

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## **October 2023 – Lewiston, Maine: Multi-Site Mass Shooting**

**Photos:** <https://lccphotos.smugmug.com/Lewiston-Maine-K9-HMC-Deployment/>

### **When/Where**

LCC responded within 24 hours of an invite to Lewiston, Maine, following a multi-site mass shooting that occurred on October 25, 2023; 18 people were killed and 13 injured

### **What**

The LCC K-9 Ministry teams were a physical presence of love, comfort, and peace to those who were in shock and grieving.

**LCC Hearts of Mercy & Compassion from Suburban Bethlehem (Fort Wayne, Indiana); Trinity (Toledo, Ohio); Cornerstone Lutheran (Carmel, Indiana); and LCC (Northbrook, Illinois)** have joined hands to send Hearts of Mercy & Compassion to Lewiston along with K-9 Ministries Coloring Books and Mini Stuffed LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs.

LCC K-9 Ministry teams were present at the following locations:

- One Lewiston community vigil
- Schools, hospitals, local businesses
- Lewiston Police Department, 911 Call Center, and Lewiston Fire Department

### **Remembering a Dear Friend**

As the teams were putting up the crosses, a gentleman drove by, saw them, and pulled over. He walked up to the group and asked if the name of Peyton Brewer-Ross was written on one of the Hearts. Peyton was a good friend of his, and he wanted to say goodbye. When the gentleman saw Peyton's name and cross, his grief was evident in his tears. The crosses and Hearts of Mercy & Compassion give people a place to grieve and write messages of love.

### **HMCs for First Responders**

The LCC K-9 Comfort Dog teams also delivered Hearts of Mercy & Compassion, signed with prayers and love, to the **Lewiston Police Department, 911 Call Center, and Lewiston Fire Department.**

## **Helping the Community Heal**

Lutheran Church Charities held a **Community Healing Event** on Thursday in downtown Lewiston. LCC President/CEO Rev. Chris Singer was joined by The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) New England District President Rev. Robert D Beinke and Rev. Timothy Sandeno (Redeemer - Gorham, Maine) at the event to offer spiritual support to the grieving community. The event also provided people with the opportunity to spend time with LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs and sign the LCC Hearts of Mercy & Compassion (HMC).

LCC K-9 Comfort Dog teams were special guests at the **Maine Nordiques hockey game** and asked to do the puck drop to start the game. It was a blessing for the teams to be recognized by the Lewiston community in this special way.

## **Who**

The LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs and the Hearts of Mercy & Compassion Ministries were invited by **The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod New England District President Rev. Robert D Beinke and Rev. Timothy Sandeno, Redeemer Lutheran Church, Gorham, Maine**, to bring the LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs and Hearts of Mercy & Compassion to the shocked and hurting community that has been greatly impacted by this horrific event.

**LCC President/CEO Rev. Chris Singer, Bonnie Fear, LCC K-9 Crisis Response Coordinator, Jody Lockwood, HMC Representative** and the following LCC K-9 Comfort Dog Ministry teams deployed to be with the families, survivors, and all of the first responders who serve them.

## **LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs Deployed** (October 29 – November 4, 2023)

Caleb (Immanuel – Valparaiso, Indiana)  
Claudia (Trinity – Toledo, Ohio)  
Gideon (St. Michael's – Bloomington, Minnesota)  
Jared (Holy Cross – Fort Wayne, Indiana)  
Kezia (Emmanuel – Baltimore, Maryland)  
Lily (Good Shepherd – Old Bridge, New Jersey)  
Lydia (Messiah – Lynnfield, Massachusetts)  
Magdalene (Cornerstone – Carmel, Indiana),

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## May 2023 – Uvalde, Texas: Robb Elementary School Shooting 1st Anniversary

Photos: <https://lccphotos.smugmug.com/Robb-Elementary-School-Shooting-1st-Anniversary-Uvalde-TX-/>

### When/Where

In May 2023, LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs and their teams were invited by **Rev. Michael W. Newman, President, Texas District Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS)**, and **Rev. Mark W. Tews of Trinity Lutheran Church in Uvalde** to return to Uvalde to be present for the one-year anniversary of the Robb Elementary School mass shooting that occurred on May 24, 2022. From May 21 to May 26 they were a calming and comforting presence for the community as they remembered the 21 lives lost one year ago.

In August, the LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs and their teams were invited by the **Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District (UCISD)** to return to Uvalde to be present at each of the District's eight schools for three weeks. From September 6 to September 23, they were a calming and comforting presence for the students, teachers, and staff as they returned to school. They were also available to the parents to be present with them during their healing process.

In May 2022, LCC responded within 24 hours of an invite to Uvalde, Texas, following a mass shooting that occurred on May 24, 2022, at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas. An 18-year-old fatally shot nineteen students and two teachers, and wounded seventeen other people. Thirteen LCC K-9 Ministry teams served Uvalde from May 25 – June 5.

### What

LCC K-9 Ministry teams were present at the following locations:

- Uvalde Town Square Memorial Site
- Community Vigils
- Uvalde Memorial Hospital
- Uvalde Schools
- Uvalde High School Graduation
- Walmart

Here are a few Facebook comments on our presence in Uvalde:

*“Thank you for coming. You are always welcome here.”*

*“Each dog and their team was a real blessing. Thank you to all for providing the love and compassion so desperately needed.”*

*“Thank you for being there and supporting this community with love and kindness!”*

**Rev. Chris Singer, LCC President & CEO**, presented LCC Hearts of Mercy & Compassion to the school bus drivers who, on the day of the Uvalde shooting, transported children who were wounded inside Robb Elementary School to the hospital.

### Who

**Rev. Chris Singer, LCC President & CEO, Bonnie Fear, LCC K-9 Crisis Response Coordinator**, and eleven LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs and their handlers from across the country deployed to Uvalde, Texas, for a week of remembrance and healing.



## **LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs Deployed (May 21 – 26)**

Abner (Bethany – Austin, Texas)  
Damaris (Memorial – Katy, Texas)  
Gabriel (Messiah – Houston, Texas)  
Gideon (St. Michael – Bloomington, Minnesota)  
Jael (Trinity – Hobart, Indiana)  
Joanna (Christ – Lincoln, Nebraska)  
Joy (Gloria Dei – Houston, Texas)  
Martha (Bethany – Austin, Texas)  
Peace (Trinity – Orlando, Florida)  
Persis (King of Kings – Glenpool, Oklahoma)  
Triton (Messiah – Plano, Texas)

### **How**

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### **Why**

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## **May 2023 – Allen, Texas: Allen Premium Outlets Mass Shooting**

**Photos:** <https://lccphotos.smugmug.com/Allen-Texas-K9-HMC-Deployment/>

### **When/Where**

LCC responded within 24 hours of an invite to Allen, Texas, following a mass shooting that occurred on May 6, 2023, at Allen Premium Outlets in Allen, Texas. Nine people, including the perpetrator, were killed during the shooting, the youngest of whom was a three-year-old boy, and seven others were injured.

On Wednesday, May 31, LCC K-9 Comfort Dog Ministry was invited back to Allen Premium Outlets in Allen, Texas, to be present as the mall reopened nearly one month after the shooting.

### **What**

LCC K-9 and Hearts of Mercy & Compassion (HMC) Ministry teams served with open hearts to listen to the hurting, bringing them hope, comfort, and prayer. Nine Hearts of Mercy & Compassion were placed at the designated memorial site for people to sign and leave condolence message.

LCC K-9 Ministry teams were present at the following locations:

- Vigil at Cottonwood Baptist Church

- Memorial Site at Allen Premium Outlets
- Mary Evans Elementary School, Cheri Cox Elementary School, The Learning Experience, Allen High School, McKinney Boyd High School, Lowery Freshman Center, and staff at the Allen Independent School District office
- Allen Police Department, Allen Central Fire Station, Allen 911 Dispatch, Collin County Medical Examiner's Office
- Allen Premium Outlets

Here are a few stories:

LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs Pax's & Phoebe's team shared: *"Emotions ran high for some. But we soon discovered they had a lot in common. We noticed their desire to be around us and talk with our team members. Inside the stores, by the flagpole, and under the tent, we found many who wanted to just take a little time and be with us. We are so glad they did!"*

The teams received a very special card. The front was made from the artwork of one of the students who was a victim, Daniela. The card was signed by the teachers and staff of Cox Elementary. The note inside read:

*"The front of this card is the beautiful artwork of Daniela. The unfinished artwork reminds us that this is not the end and that there is still work to do. It inspires us to continue to teach, love, and guide every student in our care. Love is stronger."*

### Who

**Bonnie Fear, LCC K-9 Crisis Response Coordinator, James Casner, Assistant LCC K-9 Crisis Response Coordinator**, and the LCC Hearts of Mercy & Compassion Ministry following an invitation by **Rev. Michael Newman, President, The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod Texas District**, to comfort the shocked and hurting community that has been greatly impacted by this horrific event.

### **LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs Deployed (May 7 – 11)**

Elijah (Our Redeemer – Wichita Falls, Texas)  
 Martha (Bethany – Austin, Texas)  
 Miriam (Emmanuel - Kingfisher, Oklahoma)  
 Pax and Phoebe (St. Paul – Fort Worth, Texas)  
 Persis (King of Kings – Glenpool, Oklahoma)  
 Triton (Messiah – Plano, Texas)

### **LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs Deployed (Wednesday, May 31)**

Elijah (Our Redeemer – Wichita Fall, Texas)  
 Miriam (Emmanuel – Kingfisher, Oklahoma)  
 Pax and Phoebe (St. Paul – Fort Worth, Texas)  
 Persis (King of Kings – Glenpool, Oklahoma)  
 Triton (Messiah – Plano, Texas)

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## **April 2023 – Louisville, Kentucky: Old National Bank Mass Shooting**

**Photos:** <https://lccphotos.smugmug.com/Louisville-Kentucky-K9-HMC-Deployment/i-Z92cSFs>

## When/Where

LCC responded within 24 hours of an invite to Louisville, Kentucky, following a mass shooting that occurred on April 10, 2023, at the Old National Bank. Five people were killed, and eight others were injured, including two responding police officers. The shooter, 25-year-old former employee Connor James Sturgeon, was fatally shot by police.

## What

LCC K-9 and Hearts of Mercy & Compassion (HMC) Ministry teams served with open hearts to listen to the hurting, bringing them hope, comfort, and prayer. Five Hearts of Mercy & Compassion were placed at the designated memorial site for people to sign and leave condolence message.

LCC K-9 Ministry teams were present at the following locations:

- Memorial Site at Old National Bank
- Our Savior Lutheran Church & School
- 911 Dispatch Center
- Louisville Metropolitan Police Department District 4
- Community-wide prayer vigil at the Muhammad Ali Center

## Who

LCC K-9 Comfort Dog Ministry teams and the LCC Hearts of Mercy & Compassion Ministry following an invitation by **Our Savior Lutheran Church & School in Louisville, Kentucky, home of LCC K-9 Comfort Dog Mercy** to comfort the shocked and hurting community that has been greatly impacted by this horrific event.

### **LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs Deployed (April 11 – 13)**

Caleb (Immanuel – Valparaiso, Indiana)

Magdalene (Cornerstone – Carmel, Indiana)

Mercy (Our Savior – Louisville, Kentucky)

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## **March 2023 – Nashville, Tennessee: The Covenant School Mass Shooting**

**Photos:** <https://lccphotos.smugmug.com/The-Covenant-School-Nashville-TN-K9-HMC-Deployment>

## When/Where

LCC responded within 24 hours of an invite to Nashville, Tennessee, following a mass shooting that occurred on March 27, 2023, at The Covenant School. A twenty-eight year old former student entered The Covenant School, an elementary school ministry of Covenant Presbyterian Church, fatally shooting three nine-year-old students and three adults, including the Head of School, prior to being killed by the Metro Nashville Police.

## What

LCC K-9 and Hearts of Mercy & Compassion (HMC) Ministry teams served with open hearts to listen to the hurting, bringing them hope, comfort, and prayer. Six Hearts of Mercy & Compassion (HMC) and crosses were placed at the memorial site, one for each of the victims of this tragedy. Each Heart of Mercy & Compassion bears the name of a child or adult killed and a bible verse. Visitors to the memorial site could sign and leave condolence messages.

LCC K-9 Ministry teams were present at the following locations:

- Memorial Site at Covenant Presbyterian Church & School
- The Covenant School Families
- Citywide Candlelight Vigil at Public Square Park
- Julia Green Elementary School
- Saint Paul's Academy
- Our Savior Early Childhood Academy
- Metropolitan Nashville Police Department, West Precinct
- Brass Band of Nashville Community Concert

## Who

Bonnie Fear, LCC K-9 Crisis Response Coordinator, for the LCC K-9 Comfort Dog Ministry and the LCC Hearts of Mercy & Compassion Ministry following an invitation by **Pastor Lane Reuter, senior pastor of Our Savior Lutheran Church & Academy in Nashville** to comfort the shocked and hurting community that has been greatly impacted by this horrific event.

### **LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs Deployed (March 28 – April 1)**

Hope (Faith – Marietta, Georgia)

Job (Christ the King – Memphis, Tennessee)  
Magdalene (Cornerstone – Carmel, Indiana)  
Mercy (Our Savior – Louisville, Kentucky)  
Naomi (Holy Cross – Indianapolis, Indiana)  
Zillah (Immanuel – St. Charles, Missouri)

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## **February 2023 – East Lansing, Michigan: Michigan State University Mass Shooting**

**Photos:** <https://lccphotos.smugmug.com/Michigan-State-University-East-Lansing-MI-K9-HMC-Deployment/i-BdDkLfr>

### **When/Where**

LCC responded within 24 hours of an invite to East Lansing, Michigan, following a mass shooting that occurred on February 13, 2023, in two buildings on the campus of Michigan State University in East Lansing. Three students were killed and five others injured.

### **What**

The LCC K-9 Ministry teams were a physical presence of love, comfort, and peace to those who were in shock and grieving.

LCC Hearts of Mercy & Compassion Ministry provided three hearts and crosses, one cross for each of the young students killed, and placed them at the memorial site.

LCC K-9 Ministry teams were present at the following locations:

- Vigil
- MSU faculty and students
- East Lansing community
- Sparrow Hospital

After the K-9s visit, LCC received the following note from Dan Winter, Executive Director, of Friendship House MSU:

*You may not even be home yet but wanted to express my thanks to you, the team, and especially the "pups" for coming to East Lansing this past week and specifically to the Friendship House on Friday.*

*The visit meant so much to our international student community, and I only wish more of them would have felt comfortable to come here. I can see now that the healing process for our entire community, and especially our international community, is going to be a long process.*

*God Bless all that you do!*

*Dan Winter,  
Executive Director  
Friendship House MSU*

### **Who**

The LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs and the Hearts of Mercy & Compassion Ministries were invited by **Rev. Dr. Jamison Hardy, Bishop & President, English District of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, Rev. David A. Davis, The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod Michigan District President, Rev. Curt Dwyer, Lead Pastor, and Rev. James Robinson, Campus Ministry Pastor, at Martin Lutheran Chapel in East Lansing, Michigan, and Pastor Trevor Sutton at St. Luke's Lutheran Church, Haslet, Michigan, to be present last week throughout the community.**

### **LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs Deployed (February 14 – February 19, 2023)**

Anna (Trinity – Toledo, Ohio)  
Caleb (Immanuel - Valparaiso, Indiana)  
Claudia (Trinity – Toledo, Ohio)  
Dove (Peace – Fremont, Indiana)  
Jared (Holy Cross – Fort Wayne, Indiana)  
Jude (St. Peter – Three Rivers, Michigan)

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## January 2023 – Monterey Park, California: Star Ballroom Dance Studio Mass Shooting

Photos: <https://lccphotos.smugmug.com/Monterey-Park-California-K9-HMC-Deployment/>

### When/Where

LCC responded within 24 hours of an invite to Monterey Park, California, following a mass shooting that occurred on January 21, 2023, at Star Ballroom Dance Studio in Monterey Park, California, killing eleven people and injuring nine others.

### What

The LCC K-9 Ministry teams brought hearts/markers through our Hearts of Mercy & Compassion (HMC), Crosses for Losses Ministry, to be present and help people who were shocked and trying to process this horrific event.

The hearts/markers were placed at the memorial site for people to sign and leave condolence messages, pray, and pay their respects to the 11 lives lost.

LCC K-9 Ministry teams were present at the following locations:

- Monterey Park City Hall memorial site
- Vigil at Monterey Park City Hall
- Monterey Park Police Department, 911 Call Center, Los Angeles County Medical Examiner-Coroner Office, Monterey Park Fire Station #61
- Emmaus Lutheran School and Preschool, San Gabriel Mission Elementary School

### Who

The LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs and the Hearts of Mercy & Compassion Ministries were invited by **Rev. Dr. Michael Gibson, The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS) Pacific Southwest District President, and Pastor Carl Kaye and Pastor Patrick Jow from Emmaus Lutheran Church and School in Alhambra, California**, to be present throughout the community.

### LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs Deployed (January 22 – January 29, 2023)

Lois (First Good Shepherd – Las Vegas, Nevada)  
Micah (Light of the Valley – Elk Grove, California)  
Rahab (St. Andrew – Stockton, California)  
Reuben (First Lutheran – Yuba City, California)  
Salome (Faith Community – Las Vegas, Nevada)

### How

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## Why

### **LCC K-9 Ministry is a Compassionate Ministry that Listens**

The 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 suffering and in need.

## 2022

### **November 2022 – Chesapeake, Virginia: Walmart Supercenter Mass Shooting**

Photos: <https://lccphotos.smugmug.com/Chesapeake-Virginia-K9-HMC-Deployment/>

## When/Where

LCC responded within 24 hours of an invite to Chesapeake, Virginia, following a mass shooting that occurred on November 22, 2022, at a Walmart Supercenter in Chesapeake, Virginia. Seven people were killed, including the gunman, and four others were injured.

## What

LCC K-9 and Hearts of Mercy & Compassion (HMC) Ministry teams served with open hearts to listen to the hurting, bringing them hope, comfort, and prayer.

The LCC K-9 Comfort Dog teams and Chesapeake Community of Hope Lutheran Church worked together to put together LCC Hearts of Mercy & Compassion, Crosses for Losses for the six victims, and placed them at the memorial site near Walmart.

LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs and their handlers spent time with Chesapeake Fire Station 4 that arrived first on the scene. The teams also visited Chesapeake Fire Station 3, which responded to the shooting.

## Who

Following an invite from **Pastor Nate Speerbrecker from Community of Hope Lutheran Church in Chesapeake, Virginia**, LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs responded with a loving and comforting presence, bringing hope to yet another devastated community affected by a mass shooting.

### **LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs Deployed**

Amos (Our Savior's Way - Ashburn, Virginia)

Claudia (Trinity - Toledo, Ohio)

Kezia (Emmanuel - Baltimore, Maryland)

Solomon (King of Glory - Williamsburg, Virginia)

## How

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### **Why**

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## **November 2022 – Colorado Springs, Colorado: Club Q Mass Shooting**

**Photos:** <https://lccphotos.smugmug.com/Colorado-Springs-Colorado-K9-Deployment/>

### **When/Where**

In November 2022, LCC responded following a mass shooting that occurred on November 19-20, 2022, at Club Q, an LGBTQ nightclub in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Five people were killed, and 25 others were injured

### **What/Who**

LCC Hearts of Mercy & Compassion and crosses were placed for each person killed, providing a place for people to remember, grieve and pray.

LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs Cubby and Devorah (**Redeemer - Fort Collins, Colorado**) and their handlers responded to this hurting community to share the gentleness, love, and comfort that Jesus gives each of us. When we are fearful and grieving, God shelters us with His peace, presence, love, and protection.

### **How**

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## October 2022 – St. Louis, Missouri: Central Visual and Performing Arts High School

**Photos:** <https://lccphotos.smugmug.com/St-Louis-Missouri-K9-Deployment/>

### When/Where

In October 2022, LCC responded within 24 hours of an invite to St. Louis, Missouri, following a mass shooting that occurred on October 24, 2022 at Central Visual and Performing Arts High School in St. Louis, Missouri. Three people were killed, including the perpetrator, and an additional seven were injured.

### What

LCC K-9 and Hearts of Mercy & Compassion (HMC) Ministry teams served with open hearts to listen to the hurting, bringing them hope, comfort, and prayer. Two Hearts of Mercy & Compassion and crosses were placed at the memorial site at the school campus.

The LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs teams were invited to three St. Louis Police Departments and their Communications Center to comfort 911 operators, police officers, and support staff. Everyone enjoyed taking a few moments to relax and decompress with the K-9 teams.

### Who

**LCC K-9 Comfort Dog Ministry teams**, following an invitation from **the Wellness Coordinator at the St. Louis Police Department & Communications/911 Call Center** to bring the LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs to the shocked and hurting community that is greatly impacted by this tragic event.

### LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs Deployed (October 26 – 29)

Boaz (Christ the King - Lake Ozark, Missouri)

Esther (Holy Cross - Collinsville, Illinois)

Noah (Timothy - St. Louis, Missouri)

Sheba (Immanuel - Washington, Missouri)

Tabby (St. Paul's - Des Peres, Missouri)

Zillah (Immanuel - St. Charles, Missouri)

### How

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## September 2022 – Uvalde, Texas: Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District

Photos: <https://lccphotos.smugmug.com/Uvalde-Texas-Schools-K9-Deployment/>

### When/Where

In May 2022, LCC responded within 24 hours of an invite to Uvalde, Texas, following a mass shooting that occurred on May 24, 2022, at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas. An 18-year-old fatally shot nineteen students and two teachers, and wounded seventeen other people. Thirteen LCC K-9 Ministry teams served Uvalde from May 25 – June 5.

In August, the LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs and their teams were invited by the **Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District (UCISD)** to return to Uvalde to be present at each of the District’s eight schools for three weeks. From September 6 to September 23, they were a calming and comforting presence for the students, teachers, and staff as they returned to school. They were also available to the parents to be present with them during their healing process.

### What

**LCC K-9 Crisis Response Coordinator Bonnie Fear** presented **nine Uvalde School District Counselors, Uvalde, Texas**, with a Heart of Mercy & Compassion (HMC). Each HMC has messages from the twenty-six LCC K-9 Comfort Dog teams who served in the Uvalde schools during September 2022. The HMCs will be displayed in each school as a physical reminder of the love and hope found in the midst of tragedy.

Here are just a few stories:

- *“Dear comfort dogs, we are writing to you to thank all the comfort dogs for coming to our school, and having Katie and all the other dogs come in the classroom to comfort us and all of the school. We are very grateful that you and the dogs came here to our school.” Dianissa*
- *“On behalf of Moms for Liberty-Bexar County chapter members, thank you so much for all that you have done for our neighbors in Uvalde. We just sent a donation your way to help alleviate some of the travel expenditures for these sweet dogs and their humans. I know you bring much comfort.” Polly*
- *“We are so thankful for you all! The kids will miss you, and always remember how y’all have been here. Thank you!” Summerlynn*

Watch the video below with touching scenes from our treasured time in Uvalde and hear from a few of the many handlers who served this incredible community.

Video: <https://vimeo.com/754464975>

### Who

Twenty-six LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs and their handlers from across the country deployed to Uvalde, Texas, over the course of three weeks to walk with the students, teachers, counselors, bus drivers, and office staff as they returned to school.

### LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs & Handlers Deployment Team – WAVE #1

**Monday, September 5 – Friday, September 9 (TX, CO, NE)**

**Deployment Lead: Bonnie Fear, LCC K-9 Crisis Response Coordinator**

Abner (Bethany – Austin, Texas)  
Cubby (Redeemer – Fort Collins, Colorado)  
Damaris (Memorial – Katy, Texas)  
Devorah (Redeemer – Fort Collins, Colorado)  
Elijah (Our Redeemer – Wichita Falls, Texas)  
Joy (Gloria Dei – Houston, Texas)  
Katie (Trinity – Fremont, Nebraska)  
Martha (Bethany – Austin, Texas)  
Priscilla (Trinity – Lincoln, Nebraska)  
Triton (Messiah – Plano, Texas)

**LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs & Handlers Deployment Team – WAVE #2**

**Monday, September 12 – Friday, September 16 (TX, TN, NE, OH, IN, OK, KS)**

**Deployment Lead: Janice Marut, LCC Southwest Regional Director**

Caleb (Immanuel – Valparaiso, Indiana)  
Claudia (Trinity – Toledo, Ohio)  
Eden (Peace – Columbus, Nebraska)  
Gabriel (Messiah – Houston, Texas)  
Joanna (Christ Lutheran – Lincoln, Nebraska)  
Job (Christ the King – Memphis, Tennessee)  
Keren (Immanuel – Ellsworth, Kansas)  
Persis (King of Kings – Glenpool, Oklahoma)  
Pax (St. Paul – Fort Worth, Texas)  
Phoebe (St. Paul – Fort Worth, Texas)

**LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs & Handlers Deployment Team – WAVE #3**

**Monday, September 19 – Friday, September 23 (TX, FL, WI, OK, MN, IN)**

**Deployment Lead: Bonnie Fear, LCC K-9 Crisis Response Coordinator**

**Designated Point Person: Paul Soost**

Abner (Bethany – Austin, Texas)  
Charity (Brookfield Lutheran – Brookfield, Wisconsin)  
Gideon (St. Michael's – Bloomington, Minnesota)  
Jael (Trinity – Hobart, Indiana)  
Martha (Bethany – Austin, Texas)  
Mary (St. Paul – Janesville, Wisconsin)  
Miriam (Emmanuel – Kingfisher, Oklahoma)  
Peace (Trinity – Orlando, Florida)  
Triton (Messiah – Plano, Texas)

**How**

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## Why

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## July 2022 – Highland Park, Illinois: Independence Day Parade Mass Shooting

**Photos:** <https://lccphotos.smugmug.com/Highland-Park-Illinois-K9-HMC-Deployment/>

## When/Where

LCC responded within 24 hours of an invite to Highland Park, Illinois, following a mass shooting that occurred on July 4, 2022, during the Independence Day Parade in Highland Park, Illinois. Seven people were killed, and 48 others were wounded.

## What

LCC K-9 and Hearts of Mercy & Compassion (HMC) Ministry teams served with open hearts to listen to the hurting, bringing them hope, comfort, and prayer.

The K-9 Ministry teams brought with them seven Hearts of Mercy & Compassion (HMC) and markers for those whose lives were taken too soon in this horrific tragedy. People stopped by the blue, wooden hearts to grieve and to sign them with heartfelt messages. They served an important purpose for those grieving - comfort and reassurance.

LCC K-9 Ministry teams were present at the following locations:

- Prayer Vigil at Highland Park Presbyterian Church on July 5
- Candlelight Vigil on July 13
- Several Meet and Greet events throughout the week at the Highland Park Veteran's Memorial
- Family Assistance Center at Highland Park High School and Highland Park Montessori Preschool
- Throughout the community providing comfort to parents, children, friends, neighbors, and first responders

Here are just a few stories:

- *"I realized last night, while watching the news, that your blue hearts with the fish have become a regular visual in the news coverage. It gives me comfort to see them because I know you are where you're needed, but I'm beyond sad that you're needed so often. Thank you for what you do."* Ann, Facebook
- The LCC K-9 Ministry teams brought with them Mini Stuffed LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs. Many children and adults smiled upon receiving a stuffie and cuddled it tightly. A stuffie is one way LCC can offer lasting comfort.

## Who

Lutheran Church Charities was invited by **Rev. Jim Buckman, Senior Pastor of Faith Lutheran Church in Lake Forest, Illinois**, to bring the LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs and Hearts of Mercy & Compassion, Crosses for Losses, to the shocked and hurting community that has been greatly impacted by this tragic event.

## LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs Deployed (July 5 – July 13)

Asher (Faith Lutheran - Lake Forest, Illinois)  
Bekah & Kye (Immanuel - Belvidere, Illinois)  
Benjamin (LCC Staff)  
Caleb (Immanuel - Valparaiso, Indiana)  
Charity (Brookfield Lutheran - Brookfield, Wisconsin)  
Emma (LCC Staff)  
Eunice (LCC Staff)  
Hannah (LCC Staff)  
Isaiah & Jael (Trinity - Hobart, Indiana)  
Jacob (LCC Staff)  
Julia (King of Glory - Elgin, Illinois)  
Levi (Immanuel - East Dundee, Illinois)  
Malachi (St. Matthew - Hawthorn Woods, Illinois)  
Mary (St. Paul's - Janesville, Wisconsin)  
Myra (St. Andrews - Park Ridge, Illinois)  
Ruthie (LCC Staff)  
Sage (Concordia University Wisconsin - Mequon, Wisconsin)  
Samson (Zion – Marengo, Illinois)  
Tobias (Lord of Glory – Grayslake, Illinois)

## How

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## Why

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## May 2022 – Uvalde, Texas: Robb Elementary School Mass Shooting

**Photos:** <https://lccphotos.smugmug.com/Uvalde-Texas-K9-HMC-Deployment/>

## When/Where

LCC responded within 24 hours of an invite to Uvalde, Texas, following a mass shooting that occurred on May 24, 2022, at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas. An 18-year-old fatally shot nineteen students and two teachers and wounded seventeen other people.

## What

LCC K-9 and Hearts of Mercy & Compassion (HMC) Ministry teams served with open hearts to listen to the hurting, bringing them hope, comfort, and prayer.

The K-9 Ministry teams brought with them twenty-one Hearts of Mercy & Compassion (HMC) and crosses, one for each of the victims of this tragedy. Each Heart of Mercy & Compassion bears the name of a child or teacher killed and the bible verse Matthew 5:4 “Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.”

LCC K-9 Ministry teams were present at the following locations:

- School Memorial Site
- Town Square where people gathered to grieve
- Local store where families gathered to get away from the media attention
- Visitations for the victims
- Uvalde Memorial Hospital
- Throughout the community providing comfort to parents, children, friends, neighbors, and first responders

Here are just a few stories:

- At the Town Square, some of the handlers helped parents, grandparents, aunts, and uncles whose tears quietly flowed as they tried to find their child’s cross. To be with the grieving was what was needed at that moment. The Comfort Dogs brought comfort and distraction from the thoughts and emotions that flooded the grieving.
- As people touched and looked at Abner, Cubby, Devorah, Elijah, Gabriel, Joy, Miriam, or Triton, it soothed them even if it was just for a while. The LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs and their handlers sat with the people and heard their stories, or sat with them in their silence. The handlers offered prayers that were readily accepted.

## Who

**Bonnie Fear, LCC K-9 Crisis Response Coordinator**, following an invitation by **Rev. Mark Tews of Trinity Lutheran Church in Uvalde, Texas, LCMS Texas District President Michael Newman, and Dr. Bill Hinz, Education Executive on the Texas District staff** to bring the LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs and Hearts of Mercy & Compassion, Crosses for Losses, to the shocked and hurting community that has been greatly impacted by this tragic event.

### **LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs Deployed (May 25 – June 5)**

Cubby and Devorah (Redeemer – Fort Collins, Colorado)

Gabriel (Messiah – Houston, Texas)

Job (Christ the King - Memphis, Tennessee)

Joy (Gloria Dei – Houston, Texas)

Keren (Immanuel - Ellsworth, Kansas)

Pax and Phoebe (St. Paul - Fort Worth, Texas)

Persis (King of Kings - Glenpool, Oklahoma)

Triton (Messiah – Plano, Texas)

LCC Kare 9 Military Ministry Dog Abner (Bethany – Austin, Texas),  
LCC Kare 9 Military Ministry Dog Miriam (Emmanuel – Kingfisher, Oklahoma)  
LCC K-9 Police Ministry Dog Elijah (Our Redeemer – Wichita Falls, Texas)

## **How**

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## **Why**

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# **2021**

## **November 2021 – Oxford, Michigan: Oxford High School Mass Shooting**

**Photos:** <https://lccphotos.smugmug.com/Oxford-High-School-Mass-Shooting-Michigan-K9-HMC-Deployment/i-d7BBFwc>

## **When/Where**

LCC responded within 24 hours of an invite to Oxford, Michigan, following a mass shooting that occurred on November 30, 2021, at Oxford High School in the Detroit exurb of Oxford Township, Michigan. Four students were killed and seven people were injured, including a teacher. Authorities arrested and charged 15-year-old sophomore.

## **What**

LCC K-9 and Hearts of Mercy & Compassion (HMC) Ministry teams served with open hearts to listen to the hurting, bringing them hope, comfort, and prayer.

The hearts/crosses were placed at the memorial at Oxford High School for people to sign and leave condolence messages, pray, and pay their respects to the four lives lost.

LCC K-9 Ministry teams were present at the following locations:

- Candlelight Vigil at the Downtown Oxford Memorial
- Memorial at Oxford High School
- Journey Lutheran Church and Early Childhood Center
- Good Shepherd Lutheran Church
- Rochester Adams High School



- Oxford Bridges High School
- Divine Child Catholic Schools, Deerfield, Michigan.
- Meijer, which was the reunification center for the High School
- Common Denominator Coffee and Company
- Oxford Fire Departments and the Oakland County 911 Dispatch Center

Here are just a few stories:

- A family came up to the Comfort Dogs and their handlers during the memorial service. The son sat on the planters by the team. Anna and Claudia got closer and closer to him, sensing he was in need of comfort and unconditional love. The handlers found out the son was having a hard time after the shooting. Claudia and Anna would not leave his side.
- After the visit at Journey Lutheran Church and Early Childhood Center, we received a heartwarming thank you note from a dad:

*I'm just a dad who has seen the heartbreaking effect the tragedy in Oxford has had on my 23-year-old daughter. The tragedy that happened at Oxford High School has a ripple effect throughout our small community.*

*I just wanted to thank you for being here today at Journey Lutheran in Oxford. My daughter is a preschool teacher at Journey. The unconditional love that you brought with your comfort dogs was a much-needed jolt of compassion. I know it truly was the medicine my daughter needed today. I know my daughter wasn't your sole audience this morning at Journey. But I know by her texts, she was definitely a beneficiary of your goodwill and love.*

*Again, thank you for being in our community at this troubling time.*

*With great respect and gratitude,*

*Joe*

- During the teams' visit at Meijer, which served as a reunification center, a mom met us with her three kids. Here is a testimony she shared with us:

*My heart is absolutely hurting. I can't think straight. When I am alone with my thoughts the world feels so incredibly broken. I have spent nearly the entire day on the verge of tears thinking about humans and how their choices hurt others. Typically during times like this, I am driven to help in some way. Not this time. I am frozen and can hardly move.*

*I took the kids today to Meijers and we were greeted at the door by beautiful dogs. I learned that these dogs traveled with their handlers from other states to bring comfort to our community. Not only did they bring us sweet, goofy, lovable, dogs to love up, but the idea that these people took time out of their lives to travel to us brought me hope.*

*I have been reminded to "look for the helpers". The helpers do so much more than their task, they truly do bring peace, hope, and love to our world. Thank you to all the helpers. You remind me of all that is good in the world.*

## Who

The LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs were invited by **Pastor Matt Schuler and Mike Felten, Director of Family Life, from Journey Lutheran Church in Oxford, Michigan.**

## LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs Deployed (December 3 - 17)

Anna & Claudia (Trinity - Toledo, Ohio)  
Beloved (Comfort Dog in training)  
Caleb (Immanuel - Valparaiso, Indiana)  
Dove (Peace - Fremont, Indiana)  
Isaiah & Jael (Trinity - Hobart, Indiana)  
Jared (Holy Cross - Fort Wayne, Indiana)  
Gideon (St. Michael's - Bloomington, Minnesota)  
Malachi (St. Matthew - Hawthorn Woods, Illinois)  
Mary (St. Paul's - Janesville, Wisconsin)  
Tobias (Lord of Glory - Grayslake, Illinois)

## How

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## Why

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## November 2021 – Waukesha, Wisconsin: Christmas Parade Attack

**Photos:** <https://lccphotos.smugmug.com/Waukesha-Wisconsin-K9-HMC-Deployment/>

## When/Where

LCC responded within 24 hours of an invite to Waukesha, Wisconsin, following a Christmas parade attack. On November 21, 2021, the driver of a sport utility vehicle (SUV) killed six people and injured sixty-two others by hitting participants and observers at the annual Christmas parade in Waukesha, Wisconsin.

## What

LCC K-9 Ministry teams served the families, students, community, and the first responders who serve them.

LCC Hearts of Mercy & Compassion, Crosses for Losses were placed at the Veterans Park memorial site for people to sign and leave condolence messages, pray, and pay their respects to the six lives lost. A Heart of Mercy & Compassion was presented to the City of Waukesha 911 Dispatch and Waukesha Police Department

in appreciation of their dedication and service.

LCC K-9 Ministry teams were present at the following locations:

- Waukesha Candlelight Vigil
- Veterans Park Memorial Site
- Peawaukee School District
- Beautiful Savior Lutheran School
- Hales Corner Lutheran Church
- Carroll University Campus Center (served as “Friends and Family Resource Center”)
- Clarendon Elementary, Mukwonago, Wisconsin
- Waukesha Emergency Service Group
- City of Waukesha Police Department & Dispatch

Here are just a few stories:

- When the school counselor saw the LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs arrive Monday morning, she breathed a sigh of relief. *"People have dogs, but these dogs bring another level of comfort I have never seen. Your dogs helped in so many ways. Your teams are amazing."*
- LCC received this heartfelt thank you note for the support provided to the Waukesha community:

*We sincerely appreciate your participation in Waukesha's Friends and Family Resource Center that was established to provide support to Waukesha Community after the Christmas Parade tragedy. Please pass along our thanks to all of the handlers that responded.*

*Thank you!*

*Waukesha County Emergency Management  
Waukesha County Health & Human Services*

## **Who**

**Tim Hetzner, LCC President/CEO**, LCC K-9 Ministry teams, and Hearts of Mercy & Compassion, Crosses for Losses Ministry following an invitation by **Pastor Peter Schmidt, from Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church in Waukesha, Wisconsin**

## **LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs Deployed** (November 22 – December 3)

Bekah & Kye (Immanuel – Belvidere, Illinois)  
Candace (LCC Staff based in Wisconsin)  
Charity (Brookfield Lutheran – Brookfield, Wisconsin)  
Eve (St. John's – Lombard, Illinois)  
Hagar (Faith Lutheran – Appleton, Wisconsin)  
Julia (King of Glory – Elgin, Illinois)  
Mary (St. Paul – Janesville, Wisconsin)  
Rhoda (Prince of Peace – Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin)  
Sage & Zoey (Concordia University Wisconsin – Mequon, Wisconsin)  
Samson (Zion – Marengo, Illinois)  
Tobias (Lord of Glory – Grayslake, Illinois)

## **How**

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## **Why**

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## **July 2021 – Surfside, Florida: Champlain Towers South Condominium Collapse**

**Photos:** <https://lccphotos.smugmug.com/LCC-K-9-Comfort-Dogs-Deploy-to-Surfside-Florida/i-BT7mkJR>

## **When/Where**

LCC responded within 24 hours of an invite to Surfside, Florida, to a partial collapse of Champlain Towers South, a 12-story beachfront condominium in the Miami suburb of Surfside, Florida that occurred on June 24, 2021. Ninety-eight people died. Four people were rescued from the rubble, but one died of injuries shortly after arriving at the hospital. Eleven others were injured. Approximately 35 were rescued the same day from the uncollapsed portion of the building, which was demolished 10 days later.

## **What**

LCC K-9 Ministry teams served first responders and their families working around the clock doing search and rescue, as well as family members who have lost loved ones, and all those affected by this tragic event.

LCC Hearts of Mercy & Compassion sent hearts and markers for the memorial site in Surfside, Florida. One was placed for everyone who has not survived this horrific tragedy. Visitors to the memorial site could sign and leave condolence messages.

LCC K-9 Ministry teams were present at the following locations:

- Memorial Wall
- Family Assistance Center
- Holy Cross Lutheran Church in North Miami
- Trinity Christian Academy in Miami Gardens

Here are just a few stories:

- One of the firefighters placed the Comfort Dog stuffie he was saving to give to his daughter in his boot, as his hands were filled with his personal protective equipment at the end of his shift.

- Seth Comfort Dog sensed a firefighter needed some comfort and attention and gently leaned into the firefighter letting him know he was loved.
- Video - LCC's Hearts of Mercy & Compassion serving Surfside, Florida:  
<https://vimeo.com/574461347>
- LCC received the following note of appreciation from a Lieutenant from Palm Beach Gardens Fire Rescue A-Shift, Station 64:

*Hello,*

*I am a Lieutenant Firefighter/paramedic with PBG Fire Rescue with the assignment on 7/7-7/8 throughout the night of finding victims in this horrible tragedy.*

*I met Peace, golden retriever, at Surfside, right after recovering victims from the pile approximately around noon on 7/8 and prior to leaving the site, awaiting the bus for transport. I felt a sense of happiness overwhelm me with meeting Peace as well as the other comfort dogs that were there. All the people that were associated with the dogs were very kind, and a warm feeling came over me. After searching on that pile and recovering victims, it leaves a sense of sadness, fear, and somberness in your heart. It makes me wonder about the families that were directly affected by the losses of their loved ones.*

*You are a group of kind people, and dogs were definitely a good thing to see right afterwards and gave me a happy feeling that, believe it or not, is all I needed to elevate my mood and sad feeling at that time. I want you to know that your job is not unnoticed, and your mission is definitely worth it. Me and my crew of 3 all feel the same. Thank you for giving me the stuffed little brown dog. The woman that was holding the dog left a good memory in my heart.*

*Please keep it up. ♥*

*Thank you kindly,  
Lieutenant, Palm Beach Gardens Fire Rescue A-Shift, Station 64*

## **Who**

Bonnie Fear, LCC K-9 Crisis Response Coordinator, and Hearts of Mercy & Compassion Ministry following an invitation by **Rev. Dr. Gregory Walton, LCMS District President for the Florida-Georgia District, and Rev. Dennis Bartels, Pastor of Holy Cross Lutheran Church & School in North Miami.**

## **LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs Deployed (July 6 – 11)**

Charity (Brookfield – Brookfield, Wisconsin)  
 Hope (Faith – Marietta, Georgia)  
 Jewel (Christ Our Savior – Loudon, Tennessee)  
 Lizzie (Trinity – Savannah, Georgia)  
 Mary (St. Paul – Janesville, Wisconsin)  
 Peace (Trinity – Orlando, Florida)  
 Seth (Eternal Shepherd – Seneca, South Carolina)  
 Tobias (Lord of Glory – Grayslake, Illinois)  
 Zoara (Island Lutheran – Hilton Head, South Carolina)

## How

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## **May 2021 – San Jose, California: Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) Rail Yard Mass Shooting**

**Photos:** <https://lccphotos.smugmug.com/LCC-K-9-Comfort-Dogs-Deploy-to-San-Jose/>

## When/Where

LCC responded within 24 hours of an invite to San Jose, California, to a mass shooting at a Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) rail yard that occurred on May 26, 2021. Ten people were killed during the shooting, including the gunman, identified as 57-year-old VTA employee Samuel James Cassidy, who committed suicide. It is the deadliest mass shooting in the history of the San Francisco Bay Area.

## What

LCC K-9 Ministry teams were present at the following locations:

- Vigil in memory of the victims at Sikh Gurdwara San Jose
- Yerba Buena High School
- San Jose 911 Call Center
- Jose Police & Fire Departments
- Holy Cross Lutheran Church in Los Gatos, Vasona Park

Here are just a few stories:

- On Friday, May 28, Micah and Rahab Comfort Dogs, with their ministry teams, were present at the vigil at Sikh Gurdwara San Jose. The teams were there to honor the victims of the VTA shooting and support the hurting community.
- Rahab's Comfort Dog handler shared this reflection, "Saturday was my first time deploying and the entire day gave clarity to the word "Presence" that I have heard over and over since joining the LCC K-9 Comfort Dog Ministry. I think being present at the vigil was very much appreciated by those who attended. It opened doors and gave some much-needed comfort."

- Several families with young kids, as well as young adults, spent time with Micah and Rahab during the vigil.
- On Saturday, May 29, Micah, Rahab, and Reuben Comfort Dogs spent time with the San Jose 911 Call Center dispatchers. One of them said this was the first time she has seen smiles in days. The Comfort Dogs were certainly mood changers for the staff.
- There was a lady who was afraid of dogs. She observed for quite some time, then eventually stood behind the dogs for a photo and finally got brave enough to pet Reuben. Talk about a smile!

### **Who**

Bonnie Fear, LCC K-9 Crisis Response Coordinator, and Hearts of Mercy & Compassion, Crosses for Losses Ministry following an invitation by **Pastor Andy Koschmann** from **Holy Cross Lutheran Church in Los Gatos, California**, and **Rev. Michael Lange, LCMS District President for California, Nevada, and Hawaii District**.

### **LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs Deployed (May 27 – June 1)**

Aaron (St. John – Napa Valley, California)  
 Micah (Light of the Valley – Elk Grove, California)  
 Rahab (St. Andrew – Stockton, California)  
 Reuben (First Lutheran – Yuba City, California)

### **How**

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## April 2021 – Indianapolis, Indiana: FedEx Facility Mass Shooting

**Photos:** <https://lccphotos.smugmug.com/LCC-K-9-Comfort-Dogs-Deploy-to-Indianapolis-2021/>

### When/Where

LCC responded within 24 hours of an invite to Indianapolis, Indiana, to a mass shooting at FedEx Ground facility that occurred on April 15, 2021. Nine people were killed, including the gunman, 19-year-old former employee Brandon Scott Hole, who committed suicide. Seven others were injured, including four by gunfire.

### What

LCC K-9 Ministry teams were present at the following locations:

- Marion County Coroner's Office
- Marion County 911 Call Center
- Multiple Fire Stations
- Eskenazi Hospital
- Indy Island Aquatic Center (where one of the victims worked)
- Vigils held by the community for the victims

Here are just a few stories:

- On Friday night, the Comfort Dogs and their handlers were at Krannert Park, where community members gathered to support the families whose loved ones died during the shooting. It was at this vigil that the Hearts of Mercy and Compassion markers were first brought out for the community to sign, one marker for each of the eight victims. The teams were there with prayer, mercy, compassion and the presence of Jesus Christ for this hurting community.
- The Sunday night vigil was hosted by the City of Beech Grove and the Mayor's Faith-Based Roundtable. Mayor Dennis Buckley of Beech Grove knew one of the victims, 19-year-old Samaria Blackwell. The loss of Samaria was difficult on the Beech Grove community as they knew her and her family well. The vigil was attended by 150 or more people from all different backgrounds: Christians, non-Christians, Sikhs, and Mennonites gathered in unity.

Attendees lined up to sign each of the eight Hearts of Mercy and Compassion markers for the victims to express their grief and share their support. The K-9 Comfort Dogs were there to bring comfort and unconditional love, and the handlers listened and prayed with the community members. There were no walls of hatred but instead unity, healing, and love. People of all backgrounds listened to one another and shared their grief, and most importantly, they shared hope of what could be. Each person left the vigil that night with hope and the beginning process of healing.

### Who

Tim Hetzner, LCC President/CEO, LCC K-9 Ministry and Hearts of Mercy & Compassion, Crosses for Losses Ministry following an invitation by **Pastor Dan Hauser of Holy Cross Lutheran Church in Indianapolis, Indiana**, home of **LCC K-9 Comfort Dog Naomi**.

### LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs Deployed (April 16 - 23)

Benjamin (LCC Staff)

Emma (LCC Staff)

Hannah (LCC Staff)



Isaiah (Trinity – Hobart, Indiana)  
Jared (Holy Cross – Fort Wayne, Indiana)  
Mercy (Our Savior – Louisville, Kentucky)  
Naomi (Holy Cross – Indianapolis)  
Rosie (Atonement – Columbus, Ohio)

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## **March 2021 – Boulder, Colorado: King Soopers Store Mass Shooting**

**Photos:** <https://lccphotos.smugmug.com/Boulder-Colorado-Deployment/>

### **When/Where**

LCC responded within 24 hours of an invite to Boulder, Colorado, to a mass shooting at King Soopers store that occurred on March 22, 2021. Ten people were killed, including a local on-duty police officer.

### **What**

LCC K-9 Ministry teams were present at the following locations:

- King Soopers Memorial Site
- Boulder Police Department
- University of Colorado Boulder Campus
- Visits with first responders, including law enforcement officers, firefighters, and the FBI team
- Officer Eric Talley's public funeral

### **Stories**

Bonnie Fear, LCC K-9 Crisis Response Coordinator, and Officer James Enters, K-9 Police Ministry Handler for LCC K-9 Police Ministry Dog Charity (Brookfield – Brookfield, Wisconsin) share in a video how the LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs, handlers, and ministry partners were in Boulder, Colorado with open hearts to listen and be present with a hurting community and bring them hope and comfort through prayer.

<https://vimeo.com/533202137>

### **Who**

Tim Hetzner, LCC President/CEO, and LCC Director of K-9 Ministries, Anastasia, worked with Bonnie Fear, LCC K-9 Director of Crisis Deployment.

LCC Hearts of Mercy & Compassion and Crosses for Losses Ministry affiliate, Redeemer Lutheran Church in Fort Collins, responded to the mass shooting at Kings Soopers by delivering 10 Hearts of Mercy & Compassion, Crosses for Losses. These were placed in front of the King Soopers memorial site outside of the grocery store to honor the individuals who lost their lives in the shooting. Visitors were able to write personal messages of mercy, compassion, love, and hope on each of the hearts and crosses. Hearts of Mercy & Compassion have also been presented to the Boulder Police Department.

### **LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs Deployed**

#### Deployment Team #1 (March 23 - 29)

Cubby and Devorah (Redeemer – Fort Collins, Colorado)

Eddie (Peace – Grand Island, Nebraska)

Joanna (Christ – Lincoln, Nebraska)

Katie (Trinity – Fremont, Nebraska)

Priscilla (Trinity – Lincoln, Nebraska)

#### Deployment Team #2 (March 29-April 3)

Candace (LCC Staff – Wisconsin)

Charity (Brookfield – Brookfield, Wisconsin)

Cubby and Devorah (Redeemer – Fort Collins, Colorado)

Katie (Trinity – Fremont, Nebraska)

Priscilla (Trinity – Lincoln, Nebraska)

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## 2020

### September 2020 - Medford, Oregon: Wildfires

**Photos:** <https://lccphotos.smugmug.com/2020-Photos/2020-October-Wildfires-in-Medford-Oregon/n-jvrhsz/>

#### When/Where

LCC responded within 24 hours of an invite to Medford, Oregon, to serve victims of the Alameda Fire, which destroyed over 2,300 structures in 24 hours. The fire impacted the towns of Ashland, Phoenix, Talent, and South Medford. At one period of time in September in Oregon, over 200 wildfires burning.

The 2020 Oregon wildfire season has been one of the most destructive on record in the state of Oregon. The fires killed at least 11 people, burned more than 1,000,000 acres (400,000 ha) of land, and destroyed thousands of homes.

#### What

LCC K-9 Ministry teams were present at the following locations:

- Jackson County Fairgrounds & Expo
- Churches and shelters
- The towns of Talent and Ashland

#### Who

LCC K-9 Ministry teams following an invitation by **Pastor Gary Clark of St. John, Eagle Point, Oregon.**

#### LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs Deployed (September 21-25)

Cubby (Redeemer - Fort Collins, Colorado)

Isaac (Redeemer - Spokane Valley, Washington)

Ruthie (LCC Staff)

#### How

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## August 2020 – California: Wildfires

**Photos:** <https://lccphotos.smugmug.com/2020-Photos/2020-August-California-Wildfires/n-dgjkn9/>

## When/Where

LCC responded within 24 hours of an invite to Pleasanton, California, to comfort the firefighters and their leadership teams at Cal Fire Base Camp who helped battle the California wildfires.

The 2020 California wildfire season was a record-setting year of wildfires in California.

## What

LCC K-9 Ministry teams were present at the following locations during their three-week deployment:

- Fire Base Camps
  - Alameda Fairgrounds, Pleasanton
  - Napa Valley Fairgrounds, Calistoga
  - Santa Clara Unit (SCU)
  - Santa Cruz Unit (CZU) Fire Command Center
  - Sequoia Complex Fire (SCQ), Porterville
  - Sonoma County, Santa Rosa
- Hotels where evacuees were being housed
- Evacuation Centers at Napa Valley College & Crosswalk Church

The K-9 Ministry teams were recognized by the **Incident Commander Jeff Veik** a morning briefing.

## Who

LCC K-9 Ministry teams following an invitation by **Jeremy Sanders, Battalion Chief, Cal Fire, Employee Support Services.**

### **LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs Deployed** (deployment began on August 24)

Aaron (St. John's - Napa, California)

Lois (First Good Shepherd - Las Vegas, California)

Micah (Light of the Valley - Elk Grove, California)

Reuben (First Lutheran – Yuba City, California)

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## **February 2020 – Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Molson Coors Beverage Company Mass Shooting**

**Photos:** <https://lccphotos.smugmug.com/2020-Photos/2020-February-Molson-Coors-Shooting-Milwaukee-Wisconsin/n-F5n32G/>

## **When/Where**

LCC responded within 24 hours of an invite to a mass shooting at Molson Coors Beverage Company in Milwaukee, Wisconsin that occurred on February 27, 2020. The shooting claimed the lives of six people, including the gunman.

## **What**

LCC K-9 Ministry teams were present at the following locations:

- Story Elementary School, Milwaukee Public Schools
- The Medical Examiner's office in Milwaukee
- Vigils at Ridge Community Church and Milwaukee City Hall
- Workers from Molson Coors and Harley Davidson who were on lockdown the day of the shooting.
- Private visits to families and workers from the Machinists Union

## **Who**

Twenty-two (22) LCC K-9 Ministry teams following an invitation by **Pastor Rob Mrosko of Brookfield Lutheran Church in Brookfield, Wisconsin.**

LCC's new ministry Hearts of Mercy & Compassion, Crosses for Losses also responded to the deaths of the six workers from Molson Coors through Brookfield Lutheran Church in Brookfield, Wisconsin. On Sunday evening, March 1, the Hearts of Mercy & Compassion and Crosses were brought to the vigil at Milwaukee City Hall where hundreds came to pray, sign hearts and be comforted.

### **LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs Deployed (February 26 - March 8)**

Kare 9 Asher (Faith Lutheran – Lake Forest, Illinois)

Barnabas & Isaiah (Trinity – Hobart, Indiana)  
Kare 9 Blitz (LCC Squad)  
Kare 9 Brandy (LCC Squad)  
Charity (Brookfield Lutheran – Brookfield, Wisconsin)  
Dora (LHSA of Greater Milwaukee)  
Emma (LCC Staff)  
Police Ministry Dog Eve (St. John’s – Lombard, Illinois)  
Kare 9 Flex (LCC Squad)  
JoJo (Living Christ – Arlington Heights, Illinois)  
Julia (King of Glory – Elgin, Illinois)  
Lila (Beautiful Savior – Mequon, Wisconsin)  
Malachi (St. Matthew – Hawthorne Woods, Illinois)  
Mary (St. Paul’s – Janesville, Wisconsin)  
Myra (St. Andrews – Park Ridge, Illinois)  
Rhoda (Prince of Peace – Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin)  
Sage & Zoey (Concordia University Wisconsin – Mequon, Wisconsin)  
Susie (St. Peter – Arlington Heights, Illinois)  
Tobias (Lord of Glory – Grayslake, Illinois)  
Ruthie (LCC Staff)  
LCC Comfort Dog-in-Training Rahab (Placed at St. Andrews – Stockton, California)  
Faith Lutheran – Appleton, Wisconsin (Church in Process)

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# 2019

## November 2019 – Santa Clarita, California: Saugus High School Shooting

**Photos:** <https://lccphotos.smugmug.com/2019-Photos/2019-November-Santa-Clarita-CA/n-B7n4W3/>

### When/ Where

LCC responded within 24 hours of an invite to a shooting at Saugus High School, Santa Clarita, California that occurred on November 14, 2019 and which claimed the lives of two students.

### What

LCC K-9 Ministry teams assisted by two churches in the process of starting a K-9 Ministry were present at the following locations:

- A vigil in Central Park that became a gathering place and was also used as the reunification center for students and their families
- Ray of Hope Children's Crisis and Resource Services
- Mountain View Elementary School Park
- Visited with first responders

### Who

LCC K-9 Ministry teams assisted by two churches in the process of starting a K-9 Ministry, **St. Andrews Lutheran Church in Stockton, California** and **Faith Community Church in Las Vegas, Nevada** following and invitation by **Pastor Joseph Beran of Bethlehem Lutheran SCV (Santa Clarita Valley) Church in Santa Clarita, California.**

### LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs Deployed (November 14 – 17)

Aaron (St. John's – Napa, California)

Lois (First Good Shepherd – Las Vegas, Nevada),

Micah (Light of the Valley – Elk Grove, California)

Ruthie (LCC Staff)

St. Andrews - Stockton, California (Church in Process)

Faith Community - Las Vegas, Nevada (Church in Process)

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## **August 2019 – Odessa-Midland, Texas: Mass Shooting Spree**

**Photos:** <https://lccphotos.smugmug.com/2019-Photos/2019-September-Odessa-and-Midland-Texas/n-L8QWHg/i-dLQxBbK>

## When/Where

LCC responded within 24 hours of an invite to a spree shooting that occurred in the West Texas cities of Midland and Odessa on August 31, 2019 when a gunman shot multiple people from a vehicle. Eight people were killed including the perpetrator, and 25 people were injured including three police officers.

## What

LCC K-9 Ministry teams were present at the following locations:

- A prayer service at Grace Lutheran Church in Midland and a City of Odessa Prayer Vigil
- Music City Mall in Odessa where many ran for cover during the shooting spree
- Elementary schools and a high school, University of Texas Permian Basin, Ector College
- LCC K-9 Comfort Dog Ministry teams were invited by the school district to work alongside counselors at the Permian High – El Paso Franklin football game. During the game, the double tragedies in El Paso and Midland - Odessa were recognized with banners and observing a moment of silence.
- PrepMedical Center Hospital in Midland and Medical Center Hospital in Odessa
- Midland Texas Police Department
- Rays of Hope Children's Grief Center

## Who

LCC K-9 Ministry teams following an invitation by the **Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod (LCMS) Texas District and Rev. Robert J. Pase of Grace Lutheran Church in Midland, Texas**. Janice Marut, Regional Coordinator for the LCC K-9 Ministry Southwest Region led the deployment efforts.

## **LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs Deployed** (September 1 – 6)

Abner (Bethany – Austin, Texas)

Elijah (Our Redeemer – Wichita Falls, Texas)

Gabriel (Messiah – Houston, Texas)

Joy (Gloria Dei – Houston, Texas)

Martha (Bethany – Austin, Texas)

Phoebe (St. Paul – Fort Worth, Texas)

## How

LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs are working animals, trained to interact with people of all ages and circumstances who are suffering and in need. The dogs participate in scheduled and special events. Dogs are permanently placed



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## **Why**

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## **August 2019 – Dayton, Ohio: Ned Peppers Bar Mass Shooting**

**Photos:** <https://lccphotos.smugmug.com/2019-Photos/2019-August-Dayton-Ohio/n-Lt7jJw/i-86RwphF>

## **When/Where**

LCC responded within 24 hours of an invite to a mass shooting near the entrance of the Ned Peppers Bar in the Oregon District of Dayton, Ohio that occurred on August 4, 2019. Nine people were fatally shot and 17 wounded. An additional ten persons were injured by other causes, bringing the total number of wounded to 27.

## **What**

LCC K-9 Ministry teams were present at the following locations:

- Community Vigil on 5<sup>th</sup> Street (near shooting)
- FEMA Disaster Recovery Center – Dayton Children’s Hospital Health Pavilion and Trotwood-Madison High School
- Dayton Convention Center
- Miami Valley Community Action Partnership
- St. Vincent De Paul Gateway Shelter for Women & Families
- Miami Valley Hospital Premier Health
  - LCC K-9 Ministry teams spent time with doctors, nurses, patients and visitors at where victims were transported following the incident.
- Montgomery County Regional 9-1-1 Dispatch Center who fielded the emergency calls that poured in on that fateful night
- Oregon District - business owners, community members, and visitors
- Services with Rev. Mark Carlson at Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Kettering, Ohio

Here are just a few stories:

- In the Oregon District, the mother of a one-year-old toddler approached the Comfort Dog teams in front of the storefront riddled with bullet holes. She expressed her gratitude for the presence of the LCC K-9

Comfort Dogs and their showing of love and support. She went on to explain that her little girl's father had been killed by the shooter that night. Her toddler was the apple of her father's eye, and her little one would never grow to know him but for that first year of her life. This mother was truly touched and felt blessed to know that someone cared enough to simply be there.

- While comforting individuals in the Oregon District where the shooting occurred, a young woman who was there that night shared this with our handlers while petting Anna Comfort Dog:

*"I could sit here all afternoon with the dogs. I live close and come here all the time. I was here that night and don't want to remember the terrible incident that occurred in this neighborhood that I love so much. Now when I come here, I'll remember being with the comfort dogs."*

## **Who**

Ten (10) LCC K-9 Ministry teams invited by **Rev. Kevin Wilson, Ohio District President, Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod (LCMS), Rev. Mark Carlson from Immanuel in Kettering, Ohio and John Pyron, Manager for Disaster Services with Lutheran Social Services. Rev. Phil Esala, former pastor at Immanuel** also assisted with deployment arrangements. Nancy Borders, Top Dog for Anna Comfort Dog at Trinity – Toledo, Ohio led the deployment efforts.

## **LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs Deployed**

### Deployment Team #1 (August 4 -7)

Anna (Trinity – Toledo, Ohio)  
Jared (Holy Cross – Fort Wayne, Indiana)  
Mercy (Our Savior – Louisville, Kentucky)  
Rosie (Atonement – Columbus, Ohio)

### Deployment Team #2 (August 7 - 11)

Anna (Trinity – Toledo, Ohio)  
Barnabas (Trinity – Hobart, Indiana)  
Bekah (Immanuel – Belvidere, Illinois)  
Bethany (Trinity – Danville, Illinois)  
Mercy (Our Savior – Louisville, Kentucky)  
Tobias (Lord of Glory – Grayslake, Illinois)

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## August 2019 – El Paso, Texas: Walmart Store Mass Shooting

**Photos:** <https://lccphotos.smugmug.com/2019-Photos/2019-August-El-Paso-Texas/n-RB6VMJ/i-qWgmM5G>

### When/Where

LCC responded within 24 hours of an invite to a mass shooting at a Walmart store in El Paso, Texas that occurred on August 3, 2019. A gunman shot and killed 23 people and injured 23 others.

### What

LCC K-9 Ministry teams were present at the following locations during their two-week deployment:

- Zion Lutheran Church
- Vigil for 15-year-old Javier Amir Rodriguez at Horizon High School Stadium
- Multiple visits to Del Sol Medical Center, where the victims were transported
- First Responders event
- 9-1-1 Dispatch Center that fielded the emergency calls that poured in the day of the shooting
- Emergency Operations Center
- El Paso City Hall & Mayor's Office
- Court houses, coroner's office and police departments
- Walmart store
- Schools
- Family Assistance Center

Here are just a few stories:

- While at the Del Sol Medical Center, the LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs showed love to Rosa, who was injured during the Walmart shooting. Her sister, who was with her, didn't survive and her daughter was injured and recovering at a different hospital. They also spent time with Rosa before she attended her sister's visitation.
- Nine-year-old Kaitlyn was with her grandfather at Walmart when the gunman opened fire. The grandfather protected her and her grandmother from the shots by shielding them with his body. He did not survive. Kaitlyn shut down following the horrific incident. However, after meeting LCC K-9 Comfort Dog Ruthie (LCC Staff), she began to open up and talk about her feelings.

### Who

Thirteen (13) LCC K-9 Ministry Teams following an invitation by **Rev. Roger Schlechte, Rocky Mountain District President, Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod (LCMS), Rev. Dr. Karl Heimer, Pastor & CEO of Ysleta Lutheran Mission Human Care and Pastor Stephen Heimer from Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church both in the heart of El Paso, Texas. Luz Soto, Director of Christian Education (DCE) at Ysleta Lutheran Mission** served as interpreter. Rev. Martin Danner from Bethany Lutheran Church in Austin, Texas, and Janice Marut, Regional Coordinator for the LCC K-9 Ministry Southwest Region assisted with deployment arrangements. LCC President / CEO, Tim Hetzner, and LCC Director of K-9 Ministries, Rich Martin were also present during the deployment.

## **LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs Deployed**

### Deployment Team #1 (August 5 – 9)

Abner (Bethany – Austin, Texas)  
Damaris (Memorial – Katy, Texas)  
Gabriel (Messiah – Houston, Texas)  
Joy (Gloria Dei – Houston, Texas)  
Martha (Bethany – Austin, Texas)  
Phoebe (St. Paul – Fort Worth, Texas)  
Ruthie (LCC Staff)

### Deployment Team #2 (August 11 –16)

Cubby (Redeemer – Fort Collins, Colorado)  
Eddie (Peace Lutheran – Grand Island, Nebraska)  
Elijah (Our Redeemer – Wichita Falls, Texas)  
Joanna (Christ Lincoln – Lincoln, Nebraska)  
Nicodemus (The Rock – Seward, Nebraska)  
Triton (Messiah – Plano, Texas)

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## **May 2019 - Highlands Ranch, Colorado: STEM School Shooting**

**Photos:** <https://lccphotos.smugmug.com/2019-Photos/2019-May-Highlands-Ranch-Colorado/>

## **When/Where**

LCC responded within 24 hours of an invite to a school shooting at STEM School Highlands Ranch, a charter school located in Douglas County, Colorado in the Denver suburb of Highlands Ranch that occurred on May 7, 2019. One student was killed and eight others were injured.

## **What**

LCC K-9 Ministry teams were present at the following locations:

- Vigils
- Cherry Hills Community Church – Celebration of Life for student Kendrick Castillo
- Recreation Center at Northridge (where students were transported after the shooting)
- STEM School
- Douglas County Sheriff's Office
- Local businesses (where students had fled to after the shooting)

## **Who**

LCC K-9 Ministry following an invitation by **Executive Pastor, Nathan Peregoy, from Our Father Lutheran Church in Centennial, Colorado.**

## **LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs Deployed** (deployment began on May 7)

Cubby (Redeemer – Fort Collins, Colorado)

Joanna (Christ Lincoln – Lincoln, Nebraska)

Katie (Trinity – Fremont, Nebraska)

Moses (Christ Lutheran – Cairo, Nebraska)

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# 2018

## November 2018: Thousand Oaks, California - Borderline Bar & Grill Mass Shooting

**Photos:** <https://lccphotos.smugmug.com/2018-Photos/November-2018-Thousand-Oaks-California/>

## Butte County, California – California Wildfires

**Photos:** <https://lccphotos.smugmug.com/2018-Photos/2018-November-California-Wildfires/>

### When/Where

LCC responded within 24 hours of an invite to a shooting at the Borderline Bar & Grill, a country-western bar frequented by college students, in Thousand Oaks, California that occurred on November 7, 2018. Thirteen people were killed, including the perpetrator, who died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound, and a police officer who was shot multiple times. Ten to twelve others were injured.

While deployed for the shooting in Thousand Oaks, California, the LCC K-9 Comfort Dog Ministry found themselves in the middle of wildfires. The Camp Fire destroyed the town of Paradise and killed at least 85 people. It destroyed more than 18,000 structures, becoming both California's deadliest and most destructive wildfire on record.

### What

The LCC K-9 Comfort Dog Ministry worked with the victims of the shootings and others affected at Borderline Bar & Grill. They were also in the middle of the wildfires taking place, and worked with individuals and families that had to evacuate their homes in the widely devastated communities in Butte County, California.

LCC K-9 Ministry teams were present at the following locations:

- Vigils at Borderline Bar & Grill
- California Lutheran Town Hall Meeting
- Christ the King Lutheran Church
- La Quinta Hotel
- Red Cross Evacuation Center

They served hundreds of people at:

- California Lutheran University
- Pepperdine University
- A reunification center for the victims' families that served as a shelter for those evacuated due to the fires

They comforted thousands of victims of the Camp Fire and the first responders protecting life and property at locations such as:

- Base Camp in Chico: first responders
- Oroville Police & Fire
- Neighborhood Community Church in Chico: worship & shelter site
- Evacuation Shelter in Yuba City

Pastor Tim Barkett of Christ the King Lutheran Church in Newbury Park, California, who had to evacuate his home, shared the following story:

*“God had our morning planned before we started. Our devotions did not start on time - no, they did not start at all. From the moment teams gathered in the breakfast areas they came. One by one, family by family. The worried, the tired, and the weary. Sad and teary eyed, their faces brightened as they saw them: LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs Ruthie, Emma, Cubby, Jacob, Hannah, Lois, and Aaron.*

*It was just what the doctor ordered. A spiritual triage from the wounds of life and recent day's events. Evacuees, Red Cross workers, families from near and far. The LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs were there to listen to their harrowing stories and pray with each one. Sometimes once, sometimes twice, and often as a group with everyone.”*

- LCC K-9 Ministry handler Bonnie Fear shares how their presence made a difference.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tZWFiFqgKs&feature=youtu.be>

- Red Cross Volunteer shares how the Comfort Dogs helped families cope with the widespread devastation.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NhGWOm8EFQU>

## **Who**

LCC K-9 Ministry teams following an invitation by **Pastor Tim Barkett of Christ the King Lutheran Church in Newbury Park, California.**

## **LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs Deployed** (deployment began on November 8)

Aaron (St. John's – Napa, California)

Cubby (Redeemer – Fort Collins, Colorado)

Emma (LCC Staff)

Hannah (LCC Staff)

Jacob (LCC Staff)

Lois (First Good Shepherd – Las Vegas, Nevada)

Reuben (First Lutheran – Yuba City, California)

Ruthie (LCC Staff)

St. Andrews - Stockton, California (Church in Process)

## **How**

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## **May 2018 – Santa Fe, Texas: Santa Fe High School Mass Shooting**

**Photos:** <https://lccphotos.smugmug.com/2018-Photos/2018-May-Santa-Fe-Texas/>

## When/Where

LCC responded within 24 hours of an invite to a mass shooting at Santa Fe High School in Santa Fe, Texas that occurred on May 18, 2018. Ten people – eight students and two teachers – were fatally shot, and thirteen others were wounded. The shooter was taken into custody and later identified by police as Dimitrios Pagourtzis, a 17-year-old student at the school.

## What

LCC K-9 Ministry teams were present at the following locations during their two-week deployment:

- Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) teams from Galveston County Texas
- The Red Cross stationed in the Family Assistance Center
- Santa Fe Independent School District teachers
- Private event for over a thousand students of Santa Fe schools
- A hospital visit to an injured student
- Days at the high school vigil
- Visits with first responders
- Santa Fe High School helping students re-entering the school

## Who

Sixteen LCC K-9 Ministry teams following an invitation by **Pastor Dan Schumann of Gloria Dei Lutheran Church in Houston, Texas.**

### **LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs Deployed** (deployment began on May 19)

Abner (Bethany Lutheran - Austin, Texas)  
Barnabas (Trinity - Hobart, Indiana)  
Bekah (Immanuel - Belvidere, Illinois)  
Cubby (Redeemer - Fort Collins, Colorado)  
Damaris (Memorial Lutheran - Katy, Texas)  
Eddie (Peace - Grand Island, Nebraska)  
Elijah (Our Redeemer - Wichita Falls, Texas)  
Gabriel (Messiah - Houston, Texas)  
Joy Comfort Dog-in-Training  
Lydia (Messiah - Lynnfield, Massachusetts)  
Mahlah (Our Savior - Milford, Illinois)  
Martha (Bethany Lutheran - Austin, Texas)



Moses (Christ Lutheran - Cairo, Nebraska)  
Pax (St. Paul - Fort Worth, Texas)  
Rufus (St. Mark - Edmond, Oklahoma)  
Ruthie (LCC Staff)

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## **February 2018 - Parkland, Florida: Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Mass Shooting**

**Photos:** <https://lccphotos.smugmug.com/2018-Photos/2018-February-Parkland-FL-Photo-Options/>

## **When/Where**

LCC responded within 24 hours of an invite to a mass shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida that occurred on February 14, 2018. A gunman opened fire with a semi-automatic rifle killing 17 people and injuring 17 others.

## **What**

LCC K-9 Ministry teams were present at the following locations during their two-week deployment:

- Vigil in Parkland, Florida, where many officials and clergy spoke, as well as alumni Anthony Rizzo of the Chicago Cubs
- Memorials for those who lost their lives (including Pine Trails Park which is less than a mile from the high school)
- Multiple public schools in and around Parkland
- Counseling centers that were arranged for those who had to carry on in the aftermath

Here are just a few highlights/stories:

- The K-9 teams spent a great deal of time with students, staff, and faculty during this inconceivable time. They sat with children, sometimes still bandaged or on crutches, while they explained what happened to

them or their friends. The teams grieved with family members who have lost a loved one or those who were simply hurting or confused.

- During the first week on-site, along with being at the park, the LCC K-9 Ministry teams were assigned to visit over 20 elementary and middle schools in the surrounding communities to be with children who were afraid to come to or be in school. The teams visited the children and then worked with counselors to help specific children who were still having difficulty understanding what happened. The teams also visited schools where family members had lost loved ones and a school where a first grader had died in a fire. The teachers and staff at each of the schools are doing their very best to help the children feel safe and loved.
- The LCC K-9 Comfort Dog teams and law enforcement handlers from the LCC K-9 Police Ministry were on-site by the memorial that was building at Pine Trails Park, which is less than a mile from the high school. Each day, the number of people stopping by increased, and the students would return to visit the crosses and stars that marked the memory of their friends and family members. The LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs and their handlers did what they were trained to do - be present, listen, and pray.
- Within days of being in Parkland, the LCC K-9 Comfort Dog Ministry teams received an invitation to work with the counselors of Broward County Schools. The Broward County School District is the sixth largest school district in the United States, with over 300 schools and approximately 300,000 students. The district had just finished their recovery from Hurricane Irma and had also assimilated thousands of children from Puerto Rico into the schools as a result of Hurricane Maria. It was an amazing accomplishment. The shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School would present another challenge that no school district would ever want to face.
- During the second week of deployment, the teams were assigned by Broward schools to work with teachers, staff, and students at Marjory Stoneman Douglas. Students shared with the handler teams that the LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs made them feel safe and were the reason they had come back to school. Parents thanked the handlers and told them how very much they appreciated the teams being there with their children. Many home visits with those directly impacted were also made.

## **Who**

The LCC K-9 Ministry teams following an invitation by **Rev. Stephen Carretto of St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church of Boca Raton, Florida.**

## **LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs Deployed**

Week 1: (deployment began on February 15)

Anna (Trinity - Toledo, Ohio)

Barnabas (Trinity – Hobart, Indiana)

Chloe (Lord of Life – LaFox, Illinois)

Damaris (Memorial - Katy, Texas)

Hannah (LCC Staff)

Isaiah (Trinity – Hobart, Indiana)

Jacob (LCC Staff)

Jewel (Christ Our Savior – Loudon, Tennessee)

Lily (Good Shepherd – Old Bridge, New Jersey)

Lizzie (Trinity - Savannah, Georgia)

Luke (Christ the Shepherd - Alpharetta, Georgia)

Mahlah (Our Savior - Milford, Illinois)

Mercy (Our Savior - Louisville, Kentucky)

Ruthie (LCC Staff)

Sasha (Island Lutheran - Hilton Head, South Carolina)  
Sheba (Immanuel – Washington, Missouri)  
Shiloh (Christ Our Savior – Dixon, Illinois)  
Tabby (St. Paul - De Peres, Missouri)  
Tobias (Lord of Glory - Grayslake, Illinois)

Week 2: (deployment began on February 26)

Abner (Bethany - Austin, Texas)  
Addie (Immanuel - Danbury, Connecticut)  
Cubby (Redeemer - Fort Collins, Colorado)  
Gabriel (Messiah - Houston, Texas)  
Jacob (LCC Staff)  
Job (Christ the King - Memphis, Tennessee)  
Katie (Trinity - Fremont, Nebraska)  
Leah (Immanuel - Danbury, Connecticut)  
Lizzie (Trinity - Savannah, Georgia)  
Luke (Christ the Shepherd - Alpharetta, Georgia)  
Lydia (Messiah - Lynnfield, Massachusetts)  
Sasha (Island Lutheran - Hilton Head, South Carolina)

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## January 2018 - Benton, Kentucky: Marshall County High School Shooting

Photos: <https://lccphotos.smugmug.com/2018-Photos/2018-Janaury-Benton-Kentucky/>

### When/Where

LCC responded within 24 hours of an invite to a mass shooting at Marshall County High School in Benton, Kentucky that occurred on January 23, 2018. A 15-year-old student, Gabriel Ross Parker, opened fire, killing two 15 year olds at the scene and injuring 18.

### What

LCC K-9 Ministry teams were present at the following locations during their two-week deployment:

- Marshall County High School
- Visits with First Responders

Here are just a few highlights/stories:

- A week after the shooting, the school of about 1,200 students were let out in shifts from class to greet the dogs. Some students, traumatized by the event, were accompanied by counselors and the presence of the LCC K-9 Ministry teams was part of these students' first steps of coping with what happened. Among the students was one girl who was wounded in the shooting, while many simply expressed their emotions of shock, grief, and disbelief.
- LCC K-9 Ministry teams also visited classrooms, the auditorium, and the band room where students who needed more time with the Comfort Dogs had the opportunity to spend time with them. Time was also spent with faculty, staff, and first responders who greatly appreciated the LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs and their handlers.

### Testimonials

- *"Thank you so much for allowing us to have comfort dogs. They are very comforting and make it a lot easier to be in the school. Petting the dogs makes me feel safe being in the school."*
- *"Thank you so much for coming. It has already helped a lot of us there so much. People are laughing and smiling all around the school. They are all talking about the dogs being there."*

### Who

Twelve (12) LCC K-9 Ministry teams following an invitation by **Marshall County High School in Benton, Kentucky** and working through **Immanuel Lutheran Church - Murray, Kentucky**.

### LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs Deployed (deployment began January 29)

Anna (Trinity - Toledo, Ohio)

Kare 9 Bethany (Trinity - Danville, Illinois)

Kare 9 Dinah (Trinity - Auburn, Illinois)

Kare 9 Flex (LCC Squad)

Hannah (LCC Staff)

Job (Christ the King - Memphis, Tennessee)

Mercy (Our Savior - Louisville, Kentucky)

Noah (Timothy - St. Louis, Missouri)

Rosie (Atonement - Columbus, Ohio)

Ruthie (LCC Staff)  
Tabby (St. Paul - De Peres, Missouri)  
Tobias (Lord of Glory - Grayslake, Illinois)

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## **2017**

### **November 2017 - Sutherland Springs, Texas: First Baptist Church Mass Shooting**

**Photos:** <https://lccphotos.smugmug.com/2017-Photos/n-fFqWms/2017-November-Sutherland-Springs-Texas/>

### **When/Where**

LCC responded within 24 hours of an invite to a mass shooting during morning worship services at First Baptist Church in the small town of Sutherland Springs, Texas that occurred on November 5, 2017.

### **What**

LCC K-9 Ministry teams were present at the following locations:

- Floresville High School – Prayer Service for two students killed in the shooting
- Visiting with First Responders
- Visiting with families of victims

Here are just a few stories:

- The mother of a first responder shared her appreciation for the presence of the LCC K-9 Comfort Dog teams.

<https://www.lutheranchurchcharities.org/articles/lcc-k-9-ministry-teams-bring-comfort-and-compassion-to-sutherland-springs-texas>

- **Constable Wayne Thompson from Fort Bend County, Texas**, joined LCC K-9 Comfort Dog Damaris (Memorial - Katy, Texas) and her handlers in comforting a family who lived directly across from the First Baptist Church where the shootings occurred. He shares how they joined together to minister to this family struggling from what they saw and how they had to respond that day.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qUZa-MdzecU&feature=emb\\_logo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qUZa-MdzecU&feature=emb_logo)

## **Who**

Tim Hetzner, LCC President / CEO, and LCC K-9 Ministry teams following an invitation by **Rev. Michael Newman, Mission & Ministry Facilitator, Texas District Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS) and Rev. Dr. Chris Kennedy, Shepherd of the Hills, San Antonio, Texas.**

## **LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs Deployed** (deployment began on November 6)

Abner (Bethany - Austin, Texas)

Barnabas (Holy Cross - Hobart, Indiana)

Damaris (Memorial - Katy, Texas)

Police Ministry Dog Elijah (Our Redeemer - Wichita Falls, Texas)

Pax and Phoebe (St. Paul – Fort Worth, Texas)

Rufus (St. Mark - Edmond, Oklahoma)

Gabriel (Messiah - Houston, Texas)

## **How**

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## **Why**

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## October 2017 – Las Vegas, Nevada: Route 91 Harvest Music Festival Mass Shooting

**Photos:** <https://lccphotos.smugmug.com/2017-Photos/n-fFqWms/2017-October-Las-Vegas-Nevada/>

### When/Where

LCC responded within 24 hours of an invite to a mass shooting during the Route 91 Harvest music festival on the Las Vegas Strip in Nevada that occurred on October 1, 2017. 64-year-old Stephen Paddock opened fire on the crowd attending the Route 91 Harvest music festival on the Las Vegas Strip in Nevada from his 32nd-floor suites in the Mandalay Bay hotel. He fired more than 1,000 rounds, killing 60 people and wounding at least 413. The ensuing panic brought the total number of injured to approximately 867.

### What

LCC K-9 Ministry teams were present at the following locations:

- Sunrise Hospital & Medical Center
- Vigil on the Strip Rt. 91
- Churches: Lamb of God Lutheran Church (prayer vigil) & First Good Shepherd Lutheran Church
- Schools: Faith Lutheran Middle & High School, Faith Lutheran Academy, Lutheran Preschool
  - Many students of Faith Lutheran were in attendance at the concert during the shooting.
- Visiting with First Responders

Here are just a few highlights:

- The LCC K-9 Ministry teams heard countless stories of sacrifice for total strangers, of people using their bodies as human shields to save lives or carrying the wounded to cars, trucks, and even using wheelbarrows as transport for help.
- The LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs, LCC K-9 Police Ministry Dogs, handlers and ministry teams were well received everywhere they went. Smiles, hugs, and tears abounded and prayers for comfort, peace and understanding were shared. Comments such as *“This has been my best day since the shooting or this has been my best day ever”* were heard often.

### Who

Seventeen (17) LCC K-9 Ministry teams from seven states working through **First Good Shepherd Lutheran Church located in downtown Las Vegas, Nevada.** The LCC K-9 Ministry teams supported LCC K-9 Comfort Dog Lois (First Good Shepherd - Las Vegas, Nevada) and her team who has been serving Las Vegas since her placement in February of 2016.

Fourteen (14) LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs and three (3) LCC K-9 Police Ministry Dogs and 31 handlers from across the country were in Las Vegas to bring the Mercy, Compassion, Presence and Proclamation of Jesus Christ to victims, survivors, and families of those who have lost loved ones.

On behalf of the LCC K-9 Police Ministry, three law enforcement officer handlers, Ken Arnold (St. John's Lutheran - Napa, CA), James Casner (First Lutheran - Yuba City, CA) and Mike Millet (St. John's Lutheran - Lombard, IL) present Courtney, a counselor at Faith Lutheran Middle School, Las Vegas, with an LCC K-9

Police Ministry patch for her husband, a lieutenant with the Las Vegas Police Department, who has served tirelessly since the shooting occurred.

**LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs Deployed** (deployment began on October 2)

### **LCC K-9 Police Ministry Dogs & Law Enforcement Handlers**

LCC K-9 Police Ministry Dog Aaron (St. John's - Napa, California) & Ken Arnold

LCC K-9 Police Ministry Dog Eve (St. John's - Lombard, Illinois) & Mike Millet

LCC K-9 Police Ministry Dog Reuben (First Lutheran - Yuba City, California) & James Casner

### **LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs**

Angel (St. John's - La Grange, Illinois)

Cubby (Redeemer - Ft. Collins, Colorado)

Eddie (Peace Lutheran - Grand Island, Nebraska)

Hannah (LCC Staff)

Jacob (LCC Staff)

Jeremiah (LCC Staff)

Katie (Trinity - Fremont, Nebraska)

Kye (Immanuel - Belvidere, Illinois)

Lois (First Good Shepherd - Las Vegas, Nevada)

Mahlah (Our Savior - Milford, Illinois)

Moses (Christ Lutheran - Cairo, Nebraska)

Nicodemus (The Rock - Seward, Nebraska)

Ruthie (LCC Staff)

Titus (Trinity - Prescott Valley, Arizona)

### **How**

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## **2016**



## June 2016 - Orlando, Florida: Pulse Nightclub Mass Shooting

Photos: <https://lccphotos.smugmug.com/2016-Photos/2016-June-Orlando-Florida/>

### When/Where

LCC responded within 24 hours of an invite to a mass shooting inside Pulse, a gay nightclub in Orlando, Florida that occurred on June 12, 2016. Omar Mateen, a 29-year-old security guard, killed 49 people and wounded 53 others.

### What

LCC K-9 Ministry teams were present at the following locations:

- Memorial vigils
- Hospitals
- First responders
- 911 Communication Center

Here are just a few highlights:

- The LCC K-9 Ministry teams stopped by several of the fire stations in Orlando. The men and women of each fire station were thankful to receive the comfort and love these furry new friends gave as they shared their stories and hurts with the handlers.
- The teams also visited the shifts of 911 Communication Center that were on duty the night of the Pulse Club shooting. This shift really needed the gentleness, patience, and comfort that is freely offered by the Comfort Dogs. They needed to share their stories with the handlers, who listened and offered prayer. The LCC K-9 Comfort Dog teams must have heard the words "thank you" at least 200 times that night from the supervisors, dispatchers, and police.
- The LCC K-9 Ministry teams were blessed with opportunities to visit patients at the hospital in Orlando. They brought great comfort to many people - everyone from patients and parents, nurses, doctors, and administrators.

### Who

Twelve (12) LCC K-9 Ministry teams from seven states following an invitation by **Rev. Gregory S. Walton, President of the Florida-Georgia District of the LCMS, and working through Trinity Lutheran Church in downtown Orlando, Florida and Pastor Billy Brath.** Trinity has a ministry of outreach to the LGBT community that surrounds their congregation.

### LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs Deployed (deployment began on June 13)

Barnabas (Trinity – Hobart, Indiana)

Gracie (Trinity – Davenport, Iowa)

Hannah (LCC Staff)

Jacob (LCC Staff)

Jewel (Christ Our Savior – Loudon, Tennessee)

Katie (Trinity – Fremont, Nebraska)

Kye (Immanuel - Belvidere, Illinois)

Mahlah Comfort Dog-in-Training (Placed at Our Savior – Milford, Illinois)

Phoebe (St. Paul - Ft. Worth, Texas)

Ruthie (LCC Staff)

Sasha (Island Lutheran - Hilton Head, South Carolina)  
Susie (St. Peter – Arlington Heights, Illinois)

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## **2015**

### **October 2015 - Roseburg, Oregon: Umpqua Community College Mass Shooting**

**Photos:** <https://lccphotos.smugmug.com/2015-Photos/2015-10-11-to-16-K-9-Roseburg/n-8xqvD9/>

#### **When/Where**

LCC responded within 24 hours of an invite to a mass shooting on the Umpqua Community College campus in Roseburg, Oregon that occurred on October 1, 2015.

Chris Harper-Mercer, a 26-year-old student who was enrolled at the school, fatally shot an assistant professor and eight students in a classroom. Eight others were injured. Roseburg police detectives responding to the incident engaged Harper-Mercer in a brief shootout. After being wounded, he killed himself by shooting himself in the head. The mass shooting was the deadliest in Oregon's modern history.

#### **What**

LCC K-9 Ministry teams were present at the following locations:

- Umpqua Community College
  - The LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs were the only outside group allowed on the closed campus.

- At the request of the Umpqua Community College President, LCC K-9 Ministry teams were present on campus as classes resumed. Eight K-9 Comfort Dogs and 15 handlers offered comfort and prayer to UCC students, faculty, and staff throughout the week.
  - The teams stayed on the campus each day for 12-15 hours. Often times, teams and dogs accompanied students to and from classes, sat with them and helped in assisting counselors to speak with those struggling in grief. Many parents of students and alumni came to the campus and found calm and relief from the teams' presence and offerings of prayer. The week concluded with memorial services in which the LCC K-9s were asked to participate.
- Roseburg High School
  - St. Paul Lutheran, Roseburg, Oregon
  - Memorial Services
  - Roseburg Fire Station 2
  - 911 Dispatchers
  - Local homeless shelter, a house of refuge for victims of domestic violence

Here are just a few stories:

- The LCC K-9 Ministry teams were present with the faculty, staff, and students at Umpqua Community College as they came back to retrieve lost articles from the day of the shootings. Words cannot describe how strong the emotions were. One by one people recalled the accounts of the day while they petted the comfort dogs. Remembering each minute, where they were and what they heard or saw.

*"We heard many accounts of the gunman's question to his targets: "Are you a Christian?" The first person who asked and answered "yes" was shot and killed within seconds. The second person the gunman asked, "Are you a Christian?" knew what would happen if they answered "yes," said "yes" and was executed."*

- The teams visited Roseburg High School and Roseburg Fire Station 2. The students shared their stories of the day, as well as the stories of their friends and family who were directly impacted. The first responders were grateful that the K-9 teams came to visit.

*"What a difference 10 minutes can make" was a comment we heard over and over again. To calm their fears, to know someone was there to pray for them, to have a "wet nose" of a Golden - helped the students have the strength emotionally to go from one class to the other."*

## Who

LCC K-9 Ministry teams following an invitation by the **LCMS Northwest District Disaster Response Coordinator**, the **Rev. Ron Norris**, and the **LCMS President of the Northwest District, Rev. Paul A. Linnemann**.

## LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs Deployed (deployment began on October 2)

Aaron (St. John's Lutheran - Napa, California)

Angel (St. John's - La Grange, Illinois)

Bekah (Immanuel - Belvidere, Illinois)

Claudia Comfort Dog-in-Training

Hannah (LCC Staff)

Jacob Comfort Dog-in-Training (LCC Staff)

Moses (Christ Lutheran - Cairo, Nebraska)

Shami (LCC Staff)

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## **2013**

### **June 2013 – Prescott Valley, Arizona: Loss of 19 Granite Mountain Hotshots Firefighters in Arizona Blaze**

**Photos:** <https://lccphotos.smugmug.com/2013Photos/2013-June-Prescott-Valley-Arizona/>

#### **When/Where**

LCC responded within 24 hours of an invite to a loss of 19 Granite Mountain Hotshots Firefighters in Arizona Blaze on June 30, 2012 in Prescott Valley, Arizona. The entire crew was lost. It was the deadliest day for firefighters since the 9/11 attacks.

#### **What**

LCC K-9 Ministry teams were present at the following locations:

- Visited with many of the family, friends and community members of Prescott and Prescott Valley, Arizona.
- Attended the honor guard ceremony with three honor guard firefighters at the church where they rang the bell 19 times in remembrance of the 19 firefighters that died while fighting the wildfire.

Here are just a few highlights:

- While visiting with the Prescott, Arizona Fire Station, where the Granite Mountain Hotshots were based and a memorial wall was constructed, LCC President/CEO, Tim Hetzner, presented patches from various fire departments that were collected before the LCC K-9 Ministry teams deployed to Prescott

Valley. It was an emotional exchange and the Prescott Fire Department greatly appreciated the love and support from their extended fraternity of firefighters.

- Video of the fire departments and the presentation of patches to Firefighter Jackson - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tbe54War06U>

### **Who**

Tim Hetzner, LCC President / CEO, and LCC K-9 Ministry teams following an invitation by **Trinity Lutheran Church in Prescott Valley, Arizona.**

### **LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs Deployed** (deployment began on July 1)

Bekah (Immanuel - Belvidere, Illinois)

Gracie (Trinity – Davenport, Iowa)

Kye (Immanuel – Belvidere, Illinois)

Luther (LCC Staff)

Moses (Christ Lutheran - Cairo, Nebraska)

Susie Comfort Dog-in-Training (Placed at St. Peter – Arlington Heights, Illinois)

### **How**

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## April 2013 – Boston, Massachusetts: Boston Marathon Bombings

Photos: <https://lccphotos.smugmug.com/2013Photos/2013-04-K9-Comfort-Dogs-in/>

### When/Where

LCC responded within 24 hours of an invite to bombings during the annual Boston Marathon, on April 15, 2013, Massachusetts.

Two homemade pressure cooker bombs detonated 14 seconds and 210 yards apart at 2:49 p.m., near the finish line of the race, killing three people and injuring several hundred others, including 17 who lost limbs.

### What

LCC K-9 Ministry teams were present at the following locations:

- First Lutheran Church of Boston - the staff and Pastor Ingo Dutzmann played an instrumental role in the work God did through the K-9 Comfort Dog Ministry
- Visits at every hospital and multiple rehabilitation centers
- Fire and police departments
- Memorials

Here are just a few highlights/stories:

- The LCC K-9 Ministry teams played a significant role in beginning the healing process for many in Boston. Many people were brought comfort and peace in the presence of God. From survivors to running clubs, nearby college students and members of the community, all were appreciative to have the K-9 Comfort Dogs there when they needed them most.

- Jaimie, one of the Boston Marathon runners, opened up that the dogs helped her get out of her house following the traumatic experience, speaking about LCC K-9 Comfort Dog Ruthie:

*"She's so sweet... This is the first time I've been out of my house. You know when you just need comfort and you hear that someone is here, people have just been so kind."*

- Logan, a local Bostonian after spending time with the LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs shared:

*"It's been very tough for the people that were intimately affected by it [Boston Marathon bombings] and I think for anyone that lives by here, works near here, maybe it's a different level of being affected but it feels like someone violated your home. And so I think we are all eager to get back to feeling safe."*

- Three marathon volunteers who were working the first aid tent for injured marathon runners experienced much more than they had expected when victims of the bombing were brought to their tent. They came to First Lutheran Church of Boston to spend time with the Comfort Dogs, returning again later that night for more comfort.
- A group of students, who were emotionally worked up after the bombings, could not get themselves to go to the memorial. Members of the LCC team offered to go with them and bring the Comfort Dogs. The students were able to approach the memorial to pay their respects with the emotional support of the Comfort Dogs and their handlers.

## Who

LCC K-9 Ministry teams following an invitation by **Pastor Ingo Dutzmann of First Lutheran Church of Boston, Massachusetts**, and joined by **Rev. Tim Yeadon, District President of the New England District LCMS**.

## LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs Deployed (deployment began on April 16)

Addie (Immanuel - Danbury, Connecticut)

Isaiah Comfort Dog-in-Training (Placed at Trinity – Hobart, Indiana)

Kye (Immanuel – Belvidere, Illinois)

Luther (LCC Staff)

Maggie (Christ the King – Newtown, Connecticut)

Ruthie (LCC Staff)

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## 2012

### December 2012 – Newtown, Connecticut: Sandy Hook Elementary School Mass Shooting

**Photos:** <https://lccphotos.smugmug.com/2012Photos/2012-December-Newtown-Connecticut/>

### When/Where

LCC responded within 24 hours of an invite to a mass shooting that occurred on December 14, 2012, at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut when 20-year-old Adam Lanza shot and killed 26 people, including 20 children between six and seven years old, and six adult staff members.

Before driving to the school, he shot and killed his mother at their Newtown home. As first responders arrived at the school, Lanza committed suicide by shooting himself in the head. The incident remains the deadliest mass

shooting at either a primary or secondary school in U.S. history, the second-deadliest U.S. school shooting overall, and the fourth-deadliest mass shooting in U.S. history

## What

- Ten (10) LCC K-9 Ministry teams were working in the community within 48 hours of shooting.
- Working closely with the Connecticut State Crisis Response Coordinator, over 30 LCC K-9 Ministry teams from K-9 affiliates across the country rotated through Sandy Hook Elementary School for five weeks.
- The Comfort Dogs also attended memorials, visited survivors, and were at Newtown High School when the students and staff returned to the school. The dogs' presence meant a lot to the children.
- LCC K-9 Comfort Dog Addie was placed at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Danbury, Connecticut. In addition to Addie, there are two more LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs serving the community to this day: LCC K-9 Comfort Dog Leah (Immanuel Lutheran - Danbury, Connecticut) and LCC K-9 Comfort Dog Maggie (Christ the King Lutheran Church - Newtown, Connecticut).
- Maggie Comfort Dog, with the help of her team of handlers and other volunteers at Christ the King, has faithfully carried out her mission of spreading love, hope, and joy throughout the community, especially at Sandy Hook Elementary School where she continues to serve regularly.
- Maggie has helped students and staff after unexpected student deaths, on December 14 anniversaries, on the first days of the new school years, during moments of feeling anxious or uncertain, after the disturbing news of other school shootings, and during regularly scheduled classroom or individual visits.
- 2016: LCC K-9 Comfort Dog Ruthie was named the ASPCA "Dog of the Year" for her work with her handlers in Newtown, Connecticut in 2012. Ruthie and more than 20 other LCC comfort dogs provided exemplary affection to traumatized children and adults in the months following the awful shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School.

*"Animals like Ruthie go into all these situations where the pain is so great – people just stand over these dogs and pour out their sadness – and they take it all in and carry it with such grace,"* Jenny Hubbard, the mother of victim Catherine Violet Hubbard, told the NBC Today show. *"They take it and take it and take it, and they give back love."*

## Who

Twenty two (22) LCC K-9 Ministry teams across the country worked closely with the **Connecticut State Crisis Response Coordinator**.

### **LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs Deployed** (deployment began on December 16 and lasted 5 weeks)

Abbi (ELIM Christian School – Palos Heights, Illinois)

Addie (Immanuel - Danbury, Connecticut)

Adeena (St. John – Burlington, Illinois)

Barnabas (Trinity – Hobart, Indiana)

Bekah (Immanuel – Belvidere, Illinois)

Chewie (LCC Staff)

Chloe (Lord of Life – LaFox, Illinois)

Hannah (LCC Staff)

Isaiah Comfort Dog-in-Training (Placed at Trinity – Hobart, Indiana)



Jackson (Immanuel – Joplin, Missouri)  
JoJo (Living Christ – Arlington Heights, Illinois)  
Kye (Immanuel - Belvidere, Illinois)  
Ladel (St. Matthew – Hawthorne Woods, Illinois)  
Louie (Immanuel – Joplin, Missouri)  
Luther (LCC Staff)  
Maggie (Christ the King – Newtown, Connecticut)  
Moses (Christ Lutheran – Cairo, Nebraska)  
Prince (Trinity – Hobart, Indiana)  
Ruthie (LCC Staff)  
Shami (LCC Staff)  
Wave (LCC Staff)  
Zeke (LCC Staff)

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