

LUTHERAN LIFE

The Newsmagazine of the
Florida-Georgia District of the
Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod
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*Let Jesus Be Seen
In Twenty-Nineteen*

8 Lutheran Church Charities K-9 Ministries Share Mercy, Compassion and Comfort Throughout the District

Lutheran Church Charities (LCC) mission is to share the Mercy, Compassion, Presence and Proclamation of Jesus Christ to those who are suffering and in need. The LCC K-9 Ministries embrace the unique, calming nature and skills of AKC Purebred Golden Retrievers to interact with people of all ages and circumstances. The Comfort Dogs serve every day in the communities in which they are placed. When invited, they also deploy in times of disaster and crisis to bring comfort to all those affected, including first responders and the volunteers who serve them.

The LCC K-9 Ministries include the LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs, LCC Kare 9 Military Ministry, and the LCC K-9 Police Ministry.

Launched in 2008, the LCC K-9 Ministry began with four Golden Retrievers to bring comfort to devastated students, faculty, and staff following the shootings at Northern Illinois University. Seeing firsthand the calming effects of petting a comfort dog, LCC President & CEO Tim Hetzner felt God's calling to continue to grow this important ministry. Since then, LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs continue to be placed in Lutheran churches, schools, and universities to share comfort, love, and hugs to everyone they meet.

On March 6, 2016, LCC K-9 Comfort Dog Sasha was placed at Island Lutheran Church in Hilton Head Island, South Carolina. Sasha Comfort Dog and her team have served thousands of people through her ministry and has many social media followers. Whether serving locally,

or through deployment in times of crisis and disaster, Sasha and her team brought hope, love, and joy through their presence wherever the Lord led them.

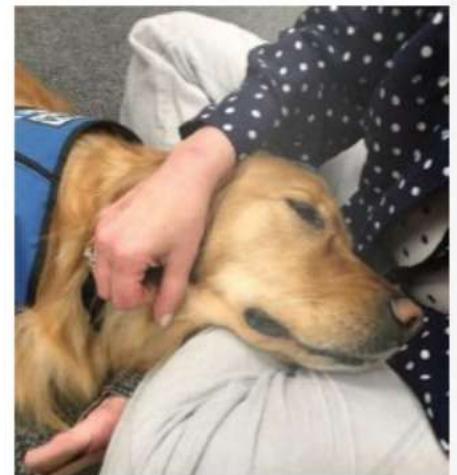
Sasha's first major deployment was following the Pulse Nightclub shooting in Orlando, Florida, shortly after her placement. Other deployments in the Florida-Georgia District include visiting communities following Hurricane Irma in 2017 and the Stoneman Douglas High School tragedy in 2018, both in Florida. Sasha frequently traveled throughout the Florida-Georgia District and looked forward to reconnecting with friends she met each time.

Sasha has recently retired and remains with her Top Dogs and caregivers, Phil and Brenda Burden. They continue to serve as the Regional Coordinators for the LCC K-9 Ministries Southeast Region. Other LCC K-9 Comfort Dog placements in the region include Hope (Faith Lutheran Church – Marietta, Georgia), Lizzie (Trinity Lutheran Church – Savannah, Georgia), Luke (Christ the Shepherd Lutheran Church – Alpharetta, Georgia), and Peace (Trinity Lutheran Church – Orlando, Florida) as well as churches who are currently in process to start their Comfort Dog Ministry. These teams continue to faithfully serve throughout the region.

Lutheran Church Charities currently has more than 130 LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs serving in more than 26 states and operates training facilities in Illinois and in Nebraska. LCC never charges those who are served. ■

For additional information:
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Sasha visits the Florida-Georgia District Office. With Greg Walton, Cindy Hammerstrom, Debbie Arrington and Laura Zirbel

Right and below — Sasha brings comfort following Marjorie Stoneman Douglas High School and Hurricane Michael Panama City school visits.

