

FAITH | MINISTRY

Lutheran comfort dog ministers to young and old

By **RICK COUSINS**
Correspondent

There are a number of ancient jokes about misreading 'dog' for God, but local Lutheran Carol Lisk will explain this week how she has come to trust both when she's not sure what to do.

Lisk was flying home from Chicago with newly certified Lutheran Church Charities (LCC) comfort dog Joy when she came to this wisdom.

"Attempting to protect Joy from running, screeching children, rolling luggage, food all over the floor, feet and hands everywhere, and a big bushy tail that looks like a target for feet and suitcases more every moment was nerve racking," Lisk recalled. "There was also a lovely couple who were extremely interested in us, her, and the LCC ministry."

When Lisk tried to guide her new charge to the pair, Joy had received divine guidance to go elsewhere.

"To my surprise and amazement, she went straight to a young girl who had not shown one bit of interest in any of us," she said. "The girl said that the dog knew that she was needed."

The young girl proceeded to explain she had never flown on a plane before and that she was terrified. The newly-commissioned Joy sat with her for a few minutes, and then laid down across her feet and stayed there until it was time to board the plane."

Prayers were exchanged and the terrors driven off by both God and dog.

Since then Joy has taken a wide variety of active assignments. When the late President George H.W. Bush's coffin arrived at Ellington Field on the way to the train to College Station, Joy was there with the honor motorcycle escort from the Houston Police Department. She's been a regular comforter at Santa Fe High School. She shows up at everything from preschool sessions to active shooter drills. She's a favorite on stressful fire alarm tests at local elementary schools. And at nursing



Joy, a Lutheran Charities comfort dog, sits for her official portrait. Her ministry vest features a Christian fish icon and the tagline, Pet Me. **COURTESY**

Follow Joy the Comfort Dog on social media:

Facebook: JoyComfortDog

Email: Joy@K9Comfort.org

Twitter: @LCKK9Joy



Joy's ministry includes children, teens, elders, veterans, police and more. Here she explores the floor with a group of friendly pre-schoolers. **COURTESY**



Lutheran Charities comfort dog Joy on duty at Santa Fe High School. She has been one of several dogs from various ministries visiting the campus. **COURTESY**

homes where many miss their own beloved pets.

"When in doubt, trust the dog," Lisk concluded.

And she's just as effective

a minister with grownups, Jim Stoa, another of her handlers working out of Nassau Bay's Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, said.

"During the president's funeral procession, the police escorted the motorcade from Ellington to St. Martin Episcopal Church

in the Tanglewood area of Houston, driving into the setting sun during Houston's rush hour," Stoa said. "We believe Team Joy pro-

vided comfort at a time of need for those officers as they prepared to perform their duties."

Janie Arvey is another Gloria Dei member and she carries the high title of Top Dog, the designation for team leader. Joy can be "checked out" by any team member, dressed with the appropriate ministry vest for her activity (kids, military, police, and so on) and employed to minister to any in need. Arvey has overall responsibility.

"All LCC comfort dogs are assigned a Bible verse," Arvey said. Joy's is 1 Peter 1:8-9. "Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy."

Like other ministers, Joy is in church each and every Sunday where the congregation from different services has the opportunity to pass the peace, and pet her. When small children arrive, Joy lays on the floor so that more can access her silky fur.

This being Our Faith, we couldn't resist a theological conundrum. Do all dogs go to Heaven? Arvey offered this story in reply.

"Joy was asked to attend a funeral of a father of two children," she recalled. "His wife specifically asked for two dogs. Her little girl stayed with Joy throughout the funeral—hugging and whispering to her. She had some pictures of her dad and was showing them to Joy and my husband. Her mother was tending to her little brother. I feel that God sent Joy to the funeral to be a comfort to the little girl and put my husband with her during the funeral as additional comfort."

In my opinion, dogs go to heaven."

Gloria Dei welcomes both donations to the comfort dog ministry and requests to get on Joy's busy schedule can be made by calling the church at 281-333-4535.

Next week in Our Faith: A look behind the scenes of a new faith-based film.

Rick Cousins can be reached at rick.cousins@galvnews.com.

HONOR ROLL | STEWART ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

The principal of Stewart Elementary in Hitchcock recently announced the honor roll for the third nine-weeks of the 2018-19 school year.

ALL A'S

Third grade: Silas Jones.

Fourth grade: Patrick Brock, Zoila Brooks, Javon Burnett, Anjelica Garcia, Trenton Phillips, Tyrone Richard, and Cashman Urbaneck.

Fifth grade: Xavier Breitschopf, Kolten Cantrell, Melanie Davis, Jayvon Freeman, Julie Olvera, Dawn Petteway, Ke'Shon Richardson, Aaron Vanness, and Coralynn Walker.

A/B HONOR ROLL

Third grade: Jae'Shon Alexander, Kane Allen, Ayce Alvarado Perales, Aubree Baugh, Easton Cantrell, Kahla Cantrell, Cullen Carney, Ben'Niyah Creamer, Alexis Duschamp, Alahya Filer, Teralin Garner, Jacobe Hines, Jordan Jones, James Maroni, Jayden McIntyre, Wyatt Moore, McIntrye, Aaliyah Perez, Alexis Ramos, Isaiah Randle, Chloe Robinson, Connor Sparr, Natasha Stevens, Graciella Vanness, and Amber Williams.

Fourth grade: Princess Kylie Cayetano, Brandon Corea, Duane Crear, Kelvonn Cummings, Mercedes Fergusson, Wendy Garcia, Alaysha Harvey, Addison Harwell, Liliana Hernandez, Jimena Isidro Tabarez, Jody Jackson, Victoria Jackson, Der'eon Johnson, Moriah Jordan, Robert Martin, Kamri Mays, Nehemiah McAfee, Javion McChristian, David Morales, Jaelynn Olmsted, Marshaun Palomares, Urijah Pleasant, Saidey Rivera, Isabella Rodriguez, Yesenia Sanchez-Godoy, Kaleb Scott, Khalil Scott, Angelina Silva, Amarie Smith, Ka'Shayla Thomas, Scout Venegas, Carter Williams, and Tristan Wilson.

Fifth grade: Jaylin Beck, Cuyler Carney, Caden Clemons, Haven Cruz, Jazmine Evans, Javier Fuentes, Alexander Fuqua, Hana Galvan, Jamiya Gilford, Gabriela Guajardo, Caden Hillesheim, Tyler Jimenez, Damien Jones, Kyra Jones, Zoe Lewis, Mariah Martinez, Robert Perez, Argentin Picasso, Ranferi Pineda, Kylee Provis, Reid Ricard, Kimora Richardson, Cassandra Rodriguez, J'Kiyah Sanders, Shania Scott, Ganin Smith, and Lillian Wallace.

» GALVESTON

Rosenberg Library will offer its Paws to Read event from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. Thursdays through April 25 at 2310 Sealy St.

Beginning readers will get to practice their reading skills with Oliver, the book-loving dog.

To sign up, visit www.rosenberg-library.org or stop by the children's desk.

» TEXAS CITY

Moore Memorial Public Library will offer its free one-hour computer class (Basic Excel II) in the meeting room of the library, 1701 Ninth Ave. N.

Patrons must arrive between 9:30 a.m. to 10 a.m. to complete a pretest; and the class will be from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m.

To register, call 409-643-

5977.

» GALVESTON

Rosenberg Library will offer its Adult Board Game Night event for ages 18 and older from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Thursday in the Fox Room of the library at 2310 Sealy St.

For information, contact Ash Welborn at awelborn@rosenberg-library.org or 409-763-8854, Ext. 173.

» GALVESTON

Local authors, Joy Jones and Jim Nelson, will have a book talk and signing from 4 p.m. to 5:45 p.m. Friday in the Fox Room of Rosenberg Library at 2310 Sealy St.

For information, visit www.rosenberg-library.org or call 409-763-8854, Ext. 173.

LIBRARY | EVENTS

» GALVESTON

Rosenberg Library will offer a crafting workshop for ages 13-18 from 4:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. Friday in the Randall Room of the library at 2310 Sealy St.

Participants will make designs out of Perler beads. For information, visit www.rosenberg-library.org.

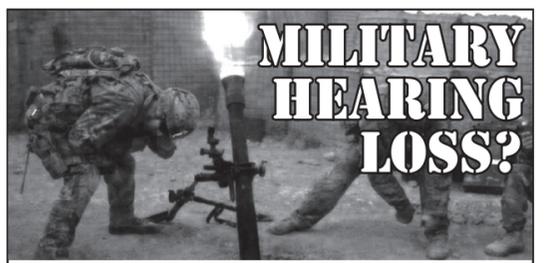
» GALVESTON

The Galveston County Genealogical Society

will conclude its free Beginning Genealogy course from 10 a.m. to noon Saturday in the Fox Room of Rosenberg Library at 2310 Sealy St.

Attendees are asked to register by contacting Lauren Martino at lmartino@rosenberg-library.org or 409-763-8854, Ext. 117.

Email library event information to Angela Wilson, angela.wilson@galvnews.com, or call 409-683-5239.



3M CAEv2 Combat Earplugs were standard issue to millions of military personnel between 2003 and 2015 for use during domestic training and foreign conflicts. 3M allegedly knew these dual-sided earplugs had a design defect but sold them to the United States government without providing that information.

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