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COMFORT DOG

# BOAZ

## *A Dog with a Special Calling to Comfort*

**B**oaz is a Christian name that was given to a local canine that is committed—along with his handlers—to compassionately serving people around the Lake of the Ozarks and within a 100-mile radius. “Boaz is the bridge that allows us to connect with those we meet,” shares Debbie Graf, Top Dog for LCC K-9 Comfort Dog Boaz. The two-year-old friendly Golden Retriever was trained by the Lutheran Church Charities’ K-9 Ministry near Chicago. He is dual-vested as a Comfort Dog and Police Ministry Dog (when serving with law-enforcement handlers).

Christ the King Lutheran Church in Lake Ozark, Missouri, was the fortunate recipient of Boaz last September. Boaz can be seen sharing snuggly hugs and encouragement at the Lake’s nursing homes, hospital and community businesses, and is sometimes requested by the police. He attends the church’s Sunday services as a greeter, participates in Zoom calls and helps community members to better cope with stress due to the current pandemic. He’s often read to by the students at the church’s King’s Academy school. “The dog listens really well and loves his special time with the students,” says Bob Tostenrud, one of Boaz’s handlers.

Graf first had the idea to create a Comfort Dog program at the Lake after the death of her son, and she hopes Boaz will be able to help anyone going through a difficult time. “If my son had had something like this in his life, maybe he wouldn’t have gone down the path he went down,” Graf says. “It gave me a way to do something in his honor and if it helps one other person like him then we did our job.”



CHRIST THE KING LUTHERAN CHURCH, KING’S ACADEMY WITH BOAZ.