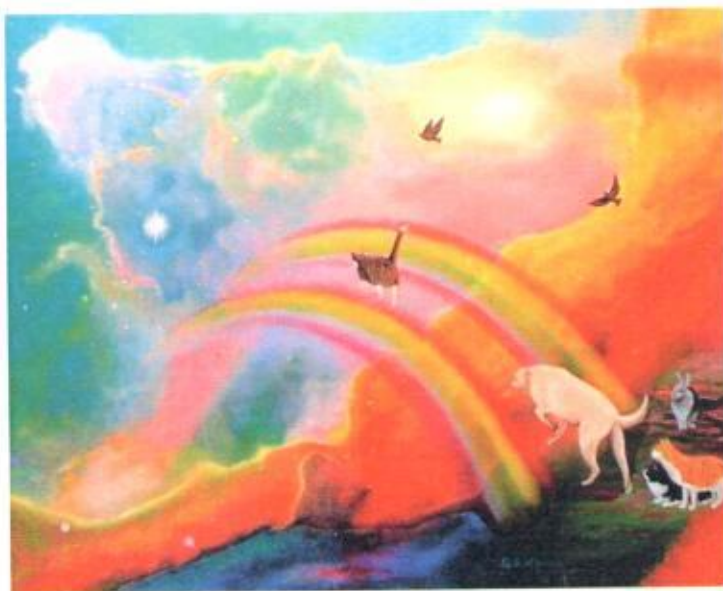


The Blessing of Animals
St. Francis in the Valley Episcopal Church



Did you know?

As a service to the community we provide a final resting place for the cremated remains of your beloved pet at our Pet Ossuary located next to our Labyrinth.

We can provide a short burial service led by one of our clergy or you may simply choose to spend this time alone.

We always appreciate a photo of your pet for our records as well as your pet's name and dates of birth and death if possible.

Call the church office for more information: 520-625-1370

This is our gift to the community. There is no charge.

Introduction: We do not bless animals to make them holy. We bless them because they are holy and worthy of blessing. St. Francis believed that all nature reflected God, that you could see the beauty of God in all creation. He called the sun, moon, wind and earth his brothers and sisters. He loved all creatures great and small and treated them like family, just as we do our own pets. That is why we bring our brother and sister animals here today.

Officiant: The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it.

People: *Thanks be to God.*

Officiant: The Lord be with you.

People: *And also with you.*

Officiant: Let us pray.

O God, we thank you for making the animals to brighten our lives. Help us to save them from danger as Noah did. Help us to love them and care for them as St. Francis did. And when we see the animals that you have made, help us to remember that you are holy and worthy of praise. In the name of the Father who thought up the giraffe and the zebra and of the Son who was named after the beautiful white Lamb and the Holy Spirit who came to us as in the form of a Dove. *Amen.*

Scripture: Genesis 1:20-25 and Job 12:7

Lector: A reading from the Books of Genesis and Job

And God said, "Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky." So God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, of every kind, with which the waters swarm, and every winged bird of every kind. And God saw

that it was good. God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth." And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day. And God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind." And it was so. God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind, and the cattle of every kind, and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind. And God saw that it was good.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

People: *Thanks be to God.*

Psalm 148: 1-10, 13

Responsively by half verse

- 1 Hallelujah! Praise the Lord from the heavens; *
praise him in the heights.
- 2 Praise him, all you angels of his; *
praise him, all his host.
- 3 Praise him, sun and moon; *
praise him, all you shining stars.
- 4 Praise him, heaven of heavens, *
and you waters above the heavens.
- 5 Let them praise the Name of the Lord; *
for he commanded, and they were created.
- 6 He made them stand fast for ever and ever; *
he gave them a law which shall not pass away.
- 7 Praise the Lord from the earth, *
you sea-monsters and all deeps;
- 8 Fire and hail, snow and fog, *
tempestuous wind, doing his will;
- 9 Mountains and all hills, *

- fruit trees and all cedars;
10 Wild beasts and all cattle, *
creeping things and winged birds;
13 Let them praise the Name of the Lord, * for his Name only is
exalted, his splendor is over earth and heaven.

Prayers of Thankfulness

Deacon: With grateful hearts we thank God, the Father of all creation, for the wonders of the world about us and the gift of life we share with all living creatures - especially thankful for the pets who share our lives and homes. Let us respond to each petition saying, "We thank you, Lord."

Lector

- For all dogs and dingoes, large and small: *we thank you, Lord.*
- For all cats, wild and tame, cheetahs, jaguars, leopards and lions: *we thank you, Lord.*
- For all rabbits, hamsters and guinea pigs: *we thank you, Lord.*
- For all guppies, dolphins and swimming creatures: *we thank you, Lord.*
- For all kookaburras, budgies and singing birds: *we thank you, Lord.*
- For all wombats, koalas and wallabies: *we thank you, Lord.*
- For all horses, cows and sheep: *we thank you, Lord.*
- For all lizards, snakes and crawling creatures: *we thank you, Lord.*
- For every animal in the sky, the sea and the forest: *we thank you, Lord.*
- For every pet that shares our homes, our love and our lives: *we thank you, Lord.*
- For all the animals in the whole wide world: *we thank you, Lord.*

Deacon: God, our Creator, help us to love all creatures as our kin, all animals as our partners on Earth, and all pets as special members in the household of our lives. We ask this through your son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

The Blessing of Pets

Attendees may approach clergy with their animals for individual blessings.

Minister: "N., may you be blessed in the Name of God who created you, and may you and your family enjoy life together with our God."

Officiant: Most caring and loving God our Creator, we praise you and thank you for all the blessings we receive through your creation. We thank you for giving us the animals of the world and, especially those who are special in our lives. May we think of you and thank you when we play with and care for our pets. We ask you, Lord, that we may be good to them always, so that they may be happy in our care. Pour your blessings upon them and upon us who are responsible for them. This we ask to your eternal praise, and to our blessing. Amen.

The following prayer is led by the Deacon but said by all.

Prayer of St. Francis

Lord, make us instruments of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let us sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
and where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that we may not so much seek to be
consoled as to console;
to be understood as to understand;
to be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive;

it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

Benediction: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, now and forever. Amen.

Dismissal

Officiant: Go in peace to love and to serve the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Hymn 400

All creatures of our God and King , verses 1-4