

**St Francis Sunday**  
**Blessing of the Animals**  
*We worship with the creatures we love*



***Greeting***

***Song: "All things Bright and Beautiful"***

***Circle of Praise – A Version of Psalm 148***

All dogs and cats, large and small:

**Praise the Lord!**

All rabbits, hamsters and guinea pigs:

**Praise the Lord!**

All goldfish, guppies and swimming creatures:

**Praise the Lord!**

All cardinals, robins and singing birds:

**Praise the Lord!**

All llamas, gorillas and lions:

**Praise the Lord!**

All horses, cows and sheep:

**Praise the Lord!**

All lizards, snakes, and crawling creatures:

**Praise the Lord!**

Every animal in the sky, the sea and the forest:

**Praise the Lord!**

### ***Thanks and Confession***

***We hold the animal we love and place our hand on its body as we give thanks.***

Lord, for all the animals in the whole wide world,

**We thank you, God!**

Lord, for all the fun and friendship we have with animals,

**We thank you, God!**

Lord, for the joy and comfort that our pets offer us

**We thank you, God!**

Lord, for all the animals that are hurt or neglected,

**Lord, have mercy**

Lord, for all the animals whose homes in the forests, oceans or fields, have been destroyed

**Lord, have mercy**

Lord, for all those animals who are in the shelters or have been abandoned

**Lord, have mercy**

*Other words of thanks or concern may be offered here*

For all our sins against the creatures of Earth, we are forgiven in the name of Christ. We are called upon to honor and protect all animals. May the animals of Earth be our companions in life and lead us to celebrate our place in the circle of life. **Amen! Amen**

***Prayer for the Day***

God, our Creator, **help us to love all creatures as kin, all animals as partners on Earth, all birds as messengers of praise, all minute beings as expressions of your mysterious design and all frogs and crickets as voices of hope. Amen.**

***Old Testament: Genesis 218-25 ‘Animals created as partners’***

God creates the animals and birds from the same ground that the first human is created. Animals and humans are kin and partners. Like children, the first human names the animals as part of a living family in Eden.

***Gospel: Matthew 6 25-29 ‘How God has made creation beautiful’***

Solomon in all his royal splendor cannot match the brilliance of the creatures of land and sky that God creates and feeds.

***Reading from a Sermon of St Francis: ‘Peace, birds, peace!’***

*My brother and sister birds, you should greatly praise your Creator and love him always. He gave you feathers to wear, and wings to fly, and whatever you need. God made you noble among his creatures and gave you a home in the purity of the air, so that, though you do not sow nor reap, he nevertheless protects and governs you without your least care.*

***Reflection***

***Song: “All God’s Critters”***

***Offering Prayer*** (you are invited to share an offering which will be given to the ELCA World Hunger program)

God, our Creator, through your love you have given us these gifts to share. Accept our offerings as an expression of our deep thanks for all the animals and other creatures that have enriched our lives.

**With all animals around the throne, we bless the Lamb of God.**

***Circle of Blessing***

*Each person is invited to place a hand on the animal being held. The leader then moves to each animal, saying its name, holding a hand over the animal, and blessing it in the name of the Christ who fills and heals creation.*

**Blessing:** *‘(N), the power of this blessing from Christ fill you with life, bind you to your human partners and lead you to praise your Creator. Amen.*

***Sending Out***

Christ calls you to be his disciples, to serve him with love and compassion, to serve Earth by caring for her creatures.

Will you care for creation?

**We will care for creation!**

**We will nurture our animals!**

**We will celebrate the circle of life with them!**

***Blessing***

May the Spirit of God, who is above all and in all and through all, fill you with the knowledge of God’s presence on Earth and the life of Christ within you. Go in peace! Serving Christ and loving all creatures!

**We go in peace, serving Christ and loving all of God’s good creation**

## **A Liturgy for Welcoming a New Pet** *(from Every Moment holy, pg. 131)*

Lord and Give of all Good things

**You created the world and all creatures, each wonderfully unique**

And endowed with attributes that illuminate the poetries of your mind, your power, your beauty, your loyalty, your sense of humor, your playfulness, your delight.

**You also created people, fashioning us in your own image,**

And calling us to live every after in right relationship to the rest of your creation, serving as benevolent regents of your redemptive purposes.

With that honor you have offered us the pleasant responsibility of living as companions and caretakers of our fellow creatures

**And so it with glad hearts that we welcome into our homes and lives this animal which you have created**

We now bestow upon this pet the name of \_\_\_\_\_

**Bless, O Lord, the time we are given to share with this unique creations**

May we find joy in these joys of companionship with fellow creature

**Bless this your creature, O Lord, as it enters our home**

Among us may it find nurturing care and a sense of security that its needs will be met, and that it will be well-treated and ever cruelly harmed. May it never be will-used or neglected or have need to be anxious or in fear

**May our love for this your creature tender our own hearts for your purposes**

May our attachment to this animal never be a thing turned inward, diminishing our love for and interaction with people in our lives, but may it work upon us to further open our hearts to love all of your creation more deeply and to embody that love more diligently in our words and actions towards others.

**Shape our lives, O Lord, through our sheltering of this new pet**

Through our caretaking, cultivate in each of us a heart more like that of a good shepherd, who would always meet the needs of his or her creatures, and in so doing, grant us fresh

insight into the nature of your own shepherd's heart towards us, your own great delight in our companionship, your own lavish affection for all you have made.