

**WORSHIP BULLETIN**  
**Sunday October 4, 2020**

**Blessing of the Animals**

*St. Francis of Assisi is known as the patron saint of animals and environment. His devotion to God was expressed through love for all of God's creation. St. Francis cared for the poor and sick, he preached sermons to animals, and praised all creatures as siblings under God. Every year on or around October 4, Christians throughout the world celebrate the Feast of St. Francis with prayers for creation and a blessing of the animals*

**INVOCATION**

We gather in the name of God, who creates all life,  
in the name of + Jesus Christ, who redeems all life,  
and in the name of the Spirit, who renews all life,  
singing our praises in the circle of life:

**Thanks be to God!**

**PRAYER OF PRAISE AND CONFESSION**

Creator God, you have made a beautiful world filled with wonder and surprises.

**We praise you.**

Creator God, you have gifted us with the blessing of animals, those in the wild, those on farms, those in our own homes.

**We give you thanks.**

Creator God, you brought into being that which we could not imagine for ourselves, life we cannot see without the aid of microscopes, animals we can only see in pictures from remote regions of this planet earth.

**We are in awe of your creation.**

We thank you for abundant life; for the birds we hear in the morning, for the drone of the bees when we are outside, for the vast tapestry of life which is interwoven. We thank you for the gift of our own animal companions; for the joy they bring us, for the unconditional love and forgiveness which teaches us about you; for their roles as confidant, listener, stress-releaser, and for the benefits they are to our health and our spirits.

**We thank you, O God.**

And yet, we know that we have not always been faithful stewards of animals; you commanded us to be caretakers of all creation and we have failed at this task. **Forgive us when we have destroyed the environment, erased places of shelter for animals, polluted the waters, killed off food supplies or neglected to feed or tend animals in our own communities.**

God is love. Through Christ our sins are forgiven. Holy One, may we learn see your presence in all creation, and especially as you call us to care for animals and see them as companions in our pilgrimage on earth. **Amen.**

**READING**            Job 12:7-10

“But ask the animals, and they will teach you;  
the birds of the air, and they will tell you;  
ask the plants of the earth, and they will teach you;  
and the fish of the sea will declare to you.  
Who among all these does not know  
that the hand of the Lord has done this?  
In the Lord’s hand is the life of every living thing  
and the breath of every human being.

**PSALM 104**            verses 24-25, 27-28, 30-31

O Lord, how manifold are your works!  
In wisdom you have made them all;  
The earth is full of your creatures.  
Yonder is the sea, great and wide,  
Creeping things innumerable are there,  
Living things both small and great.  
These all look to you to give them their food in due season;  
When you open your hand, They are filled with good things.  
When you send forth your spirit, they are created;  
And you renew the face of the ground.  
May the glory of the Lord endure forever.

**READING**            by Meister Eckhart, 13<sup>th</sup> century Christian mystic

Apprehend God in all things, for God is in all things.  
Every single creature is full of God, and is a book about God.  
Every creature is a word of God.

If I spent enough time with the tiniest creature, even a caterpillar –  
I would never have to prepare a sermon  
so full of God is every creature.

## SERMON

Pastor Ali Ferin

## PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Drawn together in the compassion of God, we pray for the church, the world, and all of God's creation.

*Silence is held as we prepare for prayer.*

*Each petition ends with, "Lord in your mercy," and the response is, "hear our prayer."*

All these things and whatever else you see that we need, we entrust to your mercy;  
through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## PASSING OF THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you all.

**And also with you.**

## OFFERING PRAYER

All good gifts come from you, O God, and you reveal glimpses of your grace through them. Thank you for inviting us to be partners with you in caring for your creation. We offer our gifts today, knowing that they come first from you. Accept these gifts and our lives as we desire to be your partners in caring for this world. In Christ's name we pray, **Amen.**

## WORDS OF INSTITUTION

### THE LORD'S PRAYER

**Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name,  
thy kingdom come, thy will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread;  
forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us;**

**and lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory,  
forever and ever. Amen.**

*Text on Communion & Offering in bulletin.*

**CLOSING PRAYER** *Prayer of St. Francis*

**Lord, make me an instrument of your peace,  
where there is hatred, let me 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 God, grant that I 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. Amen.**

**BLESSING**

O Maker of all, we ask your blessing on every creature gathered here today, the large and the small, the feathered and the furry, and everything in between. May they live peacefully in praise of you. Bless us all to love your creation, and revere its sacredness. We ask this blessing in the name of the one who was, is, and will always be, our Creator, to whom every creature belongs. **Amen.**

**DISMISSAL**

Go in peace, love the creation God has made!  
**Thanks be to God!**