

# A Blessing of Animals

## inspired by Francis of Assisi

2020

Green

*Opening Hymn: All things bright and beautiful (TIS 135)*

### PREPARATION

Blessed be God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

**Blessed be God's kingdom, now and forever.**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

'But ask the animals, and they will teach you; the birds of the air, and they will tell you; ...and the fish of the sea will declare to you. In his hand is the life of every living thing...' (Job 12: 7, 8b, 10a)

Come, let us gather together.

**Let us join the gathering: we bring fins and feathers.**

Come, all is ready for all of creation.

**Let us join the gathering: we bring scales and fur.**

Come let us praise our Creator.

**We are loved: we bring skin.**

Creator God, You have made a beautiful world filled with wonder and surprises!

**We adore 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 adore you.**

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 adore you.**

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 give you thanks.**

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 the confidant, the listener, the stress-releaser.

For the benefits they are to our health-and to our Spirit.

**We give you thanks.**

And yet, we know that we have not always been faithful caretakers of our animals;

Forgive us when we have dirtied their environment, erased places of shelter, polluted the waters, killed off their food supplies.

Forgive us when we have neglected our own animal companions;  
when we have said we are too busy to play with them,  
when we have made excuses, so that we do not walk them, cuddle them and spend time with them.

**Forgive us when we have not loved them as they have loved us.**

Forgive us when we have not considered the wider picture; when we have neglected the animals in the wild, the cruelty inflicted in the name of 'sport', or in the name of food production, as each year, more animals are becoming extinct, even more are endangered.

**Forgive us when we forget to see all animals as part of your creation, forgive us when we fail to acknowledge that your love beats in all hearts, and that you give breath to all creation.**

God is love. Through Christ your sins are forgiven.

Take hold of this forgiveness, and live your life, knowing that you are forgiven, and deeply loved.

Know that the Holy Spirit will enable you to live fully, richly, and deeply.

**Amen**

*Let us pray*

Most High Lord,

grant your people grace to renounce gladly the vanities of this world; that, following the way of blessed Francis, we may for love of you delight in your whole creation with perfectness of joy.

O God, you have made us and all living things.

We thank you for giving us these pets who bring us joy.

As you take care of us,

so also we ask your help that we might take care of those who trust us to look after them.

By doing this, we share in your own love for all creation.

We ask this in Jesus' name.

**Amen.**

## MINISTRY OF THE WORD

A reading from the Book of Genesis

*Chapter 1 beginning at verse 20*

<sup>20</sup> 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." <sup>21</sup> 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. <sup>22</sup> God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth." <sup>23</sup> And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

<sup>24</sup> 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. <sup>25</sup> 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.

[NRSV Genesis 1:20-25]

Hear the word of the Lord,

**thanks be to God.**

Psalm 148:1-5; 7-13

- <sup>1</sup> Praise the Lord, praise the Lord from heaven:  
**O praise him in the heights.**
- <sup>2</sup> Praise him, all his angels:  
**O praise him, all his host.**
- <sup>3</sup> Praise him, sun and moon:  
**praise him, all you stars of light.**
- <sup>4</sup> Praise him, you highest heaven:  
**and you waters that are above the heavens.**
- <sup>5</sup> Let them praise the name of the Lord:  
**for he commanded and they were made.**
- <sup>7</sup> O praise the Lord from the earth:  
**praise him, you sea monsters and all deeps.**
- <sup>8</sup> Fire and hail, mist and snow:  
**and storm-wind fulfilling his command;**
- <sup>9</sup> Mountains and all hills:  
**fruit trees and all cedars;**
- <sup>10</sup> Beasts of the wild, and all cattle:  
**creeping things and winged birds;**
- <sup>11</sup> Kings of the earth, and all peoples:  
**princes, and all rulers of the world;**
- <sup>12</sup> Young men and maidens:  
**old folk and children together.**
- <sup>13</sup> Let them praise the name of the Lord:  
**for his name alone is exalted.**

*Hymn: All creatures of our God and King (TIS 100) (First 5 verses)*

The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew,  
*Chapter 11 beginning at Verse 25*

**Glory to you Lord Jesus Christ**

<sup>25</sup> At that time Jesus said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; <sup>26</sup> yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. <sup>27</sup> All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

<sup>28</sup> "Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup> For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." [NRSV Matthew 11:25-30]

This is the Gospel of the Lord, **praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.**

*Address*

*Hymn: Make me a channel of your peace (TIS 607)*

## EUCCHARIST PREPARATION

Blessed are you, Lord of all creation. Through your goodness we have this bread to offer, which Earth has given, and human hands have made. It will become for us the bread of life.

**Blessed be God for ever.**

Blessed are you, Lord of all creation. Through your goodness we have this wine to offer, fruit of the vine and work of human hands. It will become for us our spiritual drink.

**Blessed be God for ever.**

## THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

All glory and honour be yours always and everywhere, mighty Creator, everliving God.

We give you thanks and praise for your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, who by the power of your Spirit was born of Mary and lived as one of us.

By his death on the cross, he offered the one true sacrifice for sin, and obtained an eternal deliverance for his people.

Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven We proclaim your great and glorious name for ever praising you and saying:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,  
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.  
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest.**

Merciful God, we thank you for these gifts of your creation, this bread and wine, and we pray that by your Word and Holy Spirit, we who eat and drink them may be partakers of Christ's body and blood.

On the night he was betrayed Jesus took bread; and when he had given you thanks he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, 'Take, eat. This is my body given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.'

After supper, he took the cup, and again giving you thanks he gave it to his disciples, saying, 'Drink from this, all of you. This is my blood of the new covenant shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.

Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.'

Therefore we do as our Saviour has commanded: proclaiming his offering of himself made once for all upon the cross, his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension, and looking for his coming again, we celebrate, with this bread and this cup, his one perfect and sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the whole world.

**Christ has died.  
Christ is risen.  
Christ will come again.**

Renew us by your Holy Spirit, unite us in the body of your Son, and bring us with all your people into the joy of your eternal kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord, with whom and in whom in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, we worship you in songs of never-ending praise:

**Blessing and honour and glory and power are yours for ever and ever. Amen.**

As our Saviour Jesus Christ has taught us, we are confident to pray,

Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come, your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.

## THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD AND THE COMMUNION

We who are many are one body in Christ

for we all share in the one bread.  
Jesus, Lamb of God, have mercy on us.  
Jesus, bearer of our sins, have mercy on us.  
Jesus, redeemer of the world, grant us your peace

*Communion is distributed.*

## PRAYERS OF PEOPLE AND CREATURES

Let us pray. The response [R] is **We thank you Lord.**

Living God, in this holy meal you fill us with new hope.

May the power of your love, which we have known in word and sacrament, continue your saving work among us, give us courage for our pilgrimage, and bring us to the joys you promise. [R]

Let us give thanks to God our Creator for all the gifts so freely bestowed upon us for the beauty and wonder of the Earth, the sky and the sea; [R]

For the richness of the mountains, plains and rivers;

For all that is gracious in the lives of people; [R]

For all creatures that breathe and move, celebrating life;

For all the songs of birds and the charm of flowers, bark and leaves; [R]

For the trust you have shown in giving into our care, our pets;

That each pet here is carefully treasured; [R]

That we may love and honour all your works O God;

That we may continue to grow in our gratefulness and enjoyment of your abundant creation; [R]

To the honour and glory of your name, now and forever, we pray to you Lord;

**Amen**

## BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS

*During the blessing of the animals*

Hymn: For the beauty of the earth (TIS 137)

*Each animal and owner are together blessed with these words.*

[Name of pet or animal], you were created by God, and you are loved by God. May you and your human family experience joy and companionship together and continue to be a blessing to each other.

In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Amen.

*After the blessings a remembrance of those who have died.*

We remember our animal companions who are no longer with us physically.

We give thanks for the gifts they gave us and the variety of ways they enriched and blessed our lives.

We are confident that our Creator continues to care for them.

**Amen**

## DISMISSAL AND BLESSING

Almighty God, our Great Creator, yours are the praise, the glory, the honour and all blessings!

To you alone do all things belong. Be praised for giving us the animals, birds and fish which fill your world.

May we think of you and thank you when we play with and care for our pets. Be praised for making us so happy to have our pets and to have them as our companions.

We ask you Lord, that we may be always responsible for our pets for their own well-being, so they to may praise you in whatever way delights you.

**Amen**

May the Lord bless you and keep you; may the Lord show his face to you and have compassion on you! May God turn his face to you and give you peace!

And the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always.

**Amen**

*©Eco-spirituality and Creation Care, Diocese of Willochra 2019*

*Structure of service partly adapted from Rev Barbara Allen, Chaplain, Lort Smith Animal Hospital, North Melbourne, August 2007.*

*Thanksgiving 4 from An Australian Prayer, Book Broughton Publishers.*

*Collect and Prayers, adapted from the Episcopal Church ([episcopalchurch.org/](http://episcopalchurch.org/) blessing of the animals.)*