

A SERVICE OF BLESSING FOR



OUR ANIMAL COMPANIONS

I care not for a man's religion whose dog and cat are not the better for it.
Abraham Lincoln

September 17, 2017
2:00 p.m.

SERVICE OF BLESSING FOR OUR ANIMAL COMPANIONS

WELCOME

THE CALL TO WORSHIP

Based on Job 12:7, 8b, 10a

Let all God's creatures bless the Lord.

And remember God's love for each one of us.

"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 God's hand is the life of every living thing."

Thanks Be to God. Amen

FIRST SCRIPTURE LESSON

Genesis 1:20-31

PRAYER OF APPROACH

Creating God, You have made a beautiful world filled with wonder and surprises.

We are grateful.

Companioning God, you have blessed us with animals to share your world—those in the wild, those on farms and ranches, those in our own homes and yards.

We thank you for them.

Surprising God, you brought life into being that we can hardly imagine—creatures we cannot see without the aid of microscopes and animals we can only see on screens and in pictures from remote regions of the earth.

We are in awe of your creative love for us.

We thank you for abundant life all around us—for the birds we hear in the morning; for the drone of the bees when we are outside; for the vast tapestry of life you have entrusted to us.

We will not take any of it or them for granted.

We thank you for the gift of our own animal companions—for the joy they bring us; for their unconditional love and forgiveness which teaches us about you; for the confidant, the listener, the stress-releaser, the lickers, the snugglers, for the blessings they are to us—body, mind and 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 fouled their environment, eliminated their habitats and places of shelter, polluted the waters they live in, killed off their food supplies or allowed cruelty against them to go unchallenged.

Forgive us, O God.

Forgive us when we have neglected our own animal companions—when we have said we are too busy to make time for them; when we have shooed them away; when we have made excuses, saying we are too tired—ignoring their need for physical activity, companionship and loving touch.

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

Forgive us when we neglect to see all animals as part of your creation.

Forgive us when we forget that your love beats in all hearts and that you give breath to all creation and call it good. In your grace, Amen.

SECOND SCRIPTURE LESSON

Selections from Psalm 140

A PRAYER OF BLESSING FROM ALL FOR ALL

Let us join in prayer inspired by the ancient wisdom of mystic Meister Eckart:
O Maker of All, we would...

***“Experience 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.”***

Grant us the wisdom to see all creatures in this world as gifts from you, and the grace to treat them with respect as fellow beings of your making. Bless all of the animals who work for our benefit, who are companions for those who are alone, and who assist those with special needs. Bless too the animals that suffer as a result of our neglect or cruelty.

This day we remember with thanksgiving and grief those beloved companions who have died who we name now...(names may be shared).

We thank you for the chance to love them and for inspiring us to love them in return.

Bless too those pets and animals who are in particular need this day who we name now...(names may be shared).

Especially, O God, we seek your special presence and protection for the animal companions who have been impacted by fires and floods across our land this year and for those who accompany us through life today. Give them years of care and love in our presence; give them health and contentment.

For the blessing they are to us, to our community, and our way of life, we lift praise and thanksgiving. Amen.

THE BLESSING OF EACH ANIMAL

All are invited to bring their animal companions forward for a prayer of blessing. To preserve the peaceable kingdom of the yard, if you need a minister to come to you, let us know. The leaders will pray for each animal and human companion saying:

“(Name of animal companion), may you be blessed in the Name of God who created you, and may you and (name of human companion) enjoy life together and in the company of our loving God.”

CLOSING PRAYER

Lynn L. Caruso

(adapted)

Almighty God, Creator of heaven and earth.
With your breath you gave life to all creatures,
and declared them good.

***Remind us always that we were created in your image—
The image of a loving and compassionate God.
And in this image, we are called to care for your creation.***

Open our hearts and minds to the lessons we may learn
from our companions—to love unconditionally, to face each day expecting joy.

***Help us always to do your will on earth,
So that you may look upon our work
And declare it good. Amen.***

THE CHARGE TO THE HUMANS

BENEDICTION

*All creatures (no matter how many legs) are invited
to stay for treats and fellowship following the service.*

*The service today was made possible by the Worship, Music and the Arts
Committee of Northminster Presbyterian Church. Our worship leaders are
Pastors Michael D. Kirby and Jessica C. Gregory.*

**Northminster Presbyterian Church
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