

St. James United Church
The Blessing of the Animals

In Honour of St. Francis' Day
October 5, 2014

Worship Leaders: Rev. Terrie Burry and Susan Sheppard
Music: Amy Dalziel

Please remain seated comfortably until invited to stand.
Please turn off your cell phone during the Service.

Gathering Music

Welcome



Introduction:

We gather to honour the feast of St. Francis of Assisi, and to honour the animals who share our lives. St. Francis is the patron saint of animals and of ecology. Brother Francis gloried in the beauty of the world God created, and we recall many tales of his affection for animals and their trust in him. Today we thank God for the gifts of companionship and beauty which animals and pets bring to our lives and homes, and ask God's blessing on them.

Song: *It's a Song of Praise to the Maker* MV 30

Call to Worship:

One: Creator God as we join in celebration with You and all creation,

All: We ask for Your blessing, Your *shalom*, on the creatures present here that we love, and all creatures celebrating in the wild.

One: In the name of our loving God, who creates all life, we cry with all in the circle of life:

All: Shalom! Shalom! Shalom! May your blessing come!

Prayer:

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 as voices of hope. Amen.

A Reading from our Biblical Tradition: *A Version of Psalm 148*

Circle of Praise:

All dogs and wolves, large and small: **Praise God!**
All rabbits, hamsters and guinea pigs: **Praise God!**
All goldfish, guppies and swimming creatures: **Praise God!**
All sea gulls, budgies and singing birds: **Praise God!**
All horses, cows and sheep: **Praise God!**
All lizards, snakes and crawling creatures: **Praise God!**
Every animal in the sky, the sea and the forest: **Praise God!**

Blessing of the Animals

You are welcome to bring your pet forward for an individual blessing.

Song: *All Creatures of Our God and King* VU 217

Blessing/Sending Forth:

You who created them and called them good:
bless again these creatures who come to us
as a blessing fashioned of fur or feather or fin,
formed of flesh that breathes with Your own breath,
that You have made from sheer delight,
that You have given in dazzling variety.

Bless them who curl themselves around our hearts,
who twine themselves through our days,
who companion us in our labor, who call us
to come and play.

Bless them who will never be entirely tamed,
and so remind us that You love what is wild,
that You rejoice in what lives close to the earth,
that Your heart beats in the heart of these creatures
You have entrusted to our care.