

A (Messy) Blessing of the Animals



Athelstone Uniting Church

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Song: O God, Your Creatures Fill the Earth

Biblical References: Psalm 104; 148; Deuteronomy 5:14; Matthew 12:9-14; Luke 15:4-6; 12:6; Genesis 1-2.

Tune: *Gesangbuch der Herzogl, Wirtembergischen, Katholischen Hofkapelle*, 1784; alt. 1868

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Song: All things Bright and Beautiful

CCLI Song # 3812125

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Welcome and Acknowledgement of Country

Call to Worship

Gathering

Leader Shalom! Shalom! Shalom! May your blessing come!

People **Shalom! Shalom! Shalom! May your blessing come!**

Song: O God, Your Creatures Fill the Earth

ELLACOMBE CMD ("I Sing the Mighty Power of God")

O God, your creatures fill the earth with wonder and delight,
And every living thing has worth and beauty in your sight.
So playful dolphins dance and swim; your sheep bow down
and graze.

Your songbirds share a morning hymn to offer you their
praise.

You made the pets we welcome in— they're wondrous
blessings, too.

With paws and whiskers, wings and fins, they offer praise to
you.

O Lord, you call us to embrace these creatures in our care.
May we show kindness, love and grace to all pets
everywhere.

You made the creatures on each farm; you know the things
they need.

May they grow healthy, safe from harm, and safe from
human greed.

Just as a shepherd loves the sheep, you know their joy, their
pain.

Lord, bless the animals we keep; may all farms be humane.

Your creatures live in every land; they fill the sky and sea.
O Lord, you give us your command to love them tenderly.
We're called to have dominion here--to care for them
always.
By loving creatures you hold dear, we offer you our praise.

Circle of Praise – A Version of Psalm 148

Leader All dogs and cats, large and small:
All rabbits, hamsters and guinea pigs:
All goldfish, guppies and swimming creatures:
All kookaburras, budgies and singing birds:

People Praise the Lord!

Leader All wombats, koalas and wallabies:
All horses, cows and sheep:
All lizards, skinks and crawling creatures:
Every animal in the sky, the sea and the forest:

People Praise the Lord!

Thanks and Confession

*We hold the animal we love or a photo we have brought and place
our hand on its body as we give thanks.*

Leader Lord, for all the animals in the whole wide world,
Lord, for all the fun and friendship we have with animals,

People We thank you, God!

Leader Lord, for all the times we have hurt or neglected animals,
Lord, for all the times we have used poisons that have
killed animals,
Lord, for all the times we have destroyed the homes of
animals in the bushland, oceans or fields,

People We are sorry.

Words of Assurance

Leader We give thanks that in Christ our sins are forgiven.
May the animals of Earth be our companions in life and
lead us to celebrate our place in the circle of life.

People Amen!

Prayer for the Day

Today's Readings

Genesis 1:20-22; 24-25 (New Living Translation)

²⁰ Then God said, "Let the waters swarm with fish and other life. Let the skies be filled with birds of every kind." ²¹ So God created great sea creatures and every living thing that scurries and swarms in the water, and every sort of bird—each producing offspring of the same kind. And God saw that it was good. ²² Then God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply. Let the fish fill the seas, and let the birds multiply on the earth."

²⁴ Then God said, "Let the earth produce every sort of animal, each producing offspring of the same kind—livestock, small animals that scurry along the ground, and wild animals." And that is what happened. ²⁵ God made all sorts of wild animals, livestock, and small animals, each able to produce offspring of the same kind. And God saw that it was good.

Mark 16:15 (New Revised Standard Version)

¹⁵ And [Jesus] said to [the disciples], "Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation."

Colossians 1:19-20 (NRSV)

¹⁹ For in [Jesus] all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell,
²⁰ and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.

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.

In this is the word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Reflection – Rev. Linda Driver

Passing of the Peace

Minister Let us share the peace of the Lord with one another,
and to our animals.

The peace of the Lord be with you

People and also with you!

Special Offering – Trees for Life

Trees for Life restore and protect habitat for animals and plants in South Australia. Our donations can help grow trees to create habitat, collect bags of precious native seed, and train and support volunteers. The Offering Bowl is at the Peg Prayer Station.

Blessing of the Animals

Word of Blessing

Memorial

A time of silence and remembering the animals who have been part of our lives and are missed.

Individual Blessings

Linda will move amongst those present to individually bless the animals (present, photo or by Zoom).

Creative Stations are available during this time. See list below

Blessing Words: *"May you be blessed in the Name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. May you and your 'owner' enjoy life together and find joy with the God who created you."*

Messy Church Stations:

Creature Murals

Can you hear the voice of creation?

Prayerful Colouring

Celebrate creation and colour your own bookmark

Playdough Creations

What animals can you make?

Peg Prayers

Spend some time in prayers for the animals around you

Origami Animals

Fold and fold until an animal appears

Pet Blessing Certificates

Get a MESSY animal blessing certificate for your furry, feathered or scaly friend

Rock Painting

Can you create your own rock creature?

Prayers for Others

Blessing of St Francis

Offering Prayer

Leader Accept our offerings as an expression of our deep thanks for all the animals and other creatures that have enriched our lives.

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

Song: "All things Bright and Beautiful"

[Chorus] *All things bright and beautiful,
all creatures great and small,
all things wise and wonderful
the Lord God made them all.*

The wildflowers in their beauty,
the mountain ranges tall,
the billabongs and rivers,
and friendly birds that call, [chorus]

The coloured walls of gorges,
the gum trees green and tall,
the rocks, and pools, and palm trees,
the sparkling waterfall, [chorus]

The many-coloured corals,
the creatures of the sea,
of bushland, field or desert,
on farms, or roaming free, [chorus]

He gave us eyes to see them,
and lips that we might tell
how great is God Almighty
who has made all things well. [chorus]

Sending Out and Blessing

