



**"Ask the beasts and they will teach you the beauty of this earth." — St. Francis of Assisi**

October 2, 2022  
St. Francis Day  
Blessing of the Animals

ASCENSION MEMORIAL CHURCH  
A Parish of the  
Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts

**Flourishing - Family - Community**

*To bear witness to the Spirit of God  
we see in Jesus as an Episcopal community open to all,  
centered in worship, Christian education, table fellowship,  
care for the environment, and compassion for neighbors local and global.*

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*Acolytes - Ushers - Readers*  
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Vicki Hughes, Paul Philpy, Paula Jones

## **Prelude**

## **The Singing Bowl**

*Take a moment listen to the sound of the bowl  
as it echoes and reverberates through the church and slowly fades away.*

## **Opening Invocation**

*As we gather here in this harbor of safety, we give thanks for fellowship and family.*

*We ask for strength in all adversity and the inspiration to love and care for one another.*

*Let our hearts be filled with peace and understanding  
so that as we journey onwards, we pour out love and grace to others.*

*We ask that our souls catch the wind of the Spirit  
so that we may carry the promise of peace and joy to all the earth.*

## **Welcome**

## **Prayer Cards**

*You are invited to write on your card all the animals you'd like to pray for, both domestic and in the wild.*

*The ushers will collect the cards and they will be read aloud during the Prayers  
unless you indicate that you wish them to remain private.*

## **Canticle 12 - A Song of Creation - The Earth and Its Creatures**

Let the earth glorify the Lord,  
*praise him and highly exalt him for ever.*

Glorify the Lord, O mountains and hills,  
and all that grows upon the earth,  
*praise him and highly exalt him for ever.*

Glorify the Lord, O springs of water, seas, and streams,  
*O whales and all that move in the waters.*

All birds of the air, glorify the Lord,  
*praise him and highly exalt him for ever.*

Glorify the Lord, O beasts of the wild,  
*and all you flocks and herds.*

O men and women everywhere, glorify the Lord,  
*praise him and highly exalt him for ever.*

## The Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi

*Lord, make us instruments of your peace. where there is hatred, let us sow love;  
where there is injury, pardon; where there is discord, union;  
where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope;  
where there is darkness, light; and where there is sadness, joy.*

*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.*

## St. Francis and the Wolf

**Narrator:** In a town in Italy called Gubbio, the citizens were scared of a fierce wolf. It was so hungry that it started killing farm animals and then started attacking the people. They were so afraid of the wolf that they wouldn't even go out of their houses at night.

When they saw the gentle monk approaching the village, they ran out crying:

**All:** Please help us, the wolf wants to eat us all.

**Saint Francis:** I will go and speak to this wolf.

**All:** Aren't you afraid?

**St Francis:** A little, but we are all God's children.

**Narrator:** That night as the townsfolk watched from the safety of the city wall, Francis ventured beyond the gates and into the surrounding forest. Almost immediately the wolf came charging out of the forest, its teeth bared.

**Wolf:** *GRRRRRRRRRR*

**St. Francis:** Peace brother wolf, I know you are hungry but you cannot terrorize these poor people... we are all God's children.

**Narrator:** At this, the wolf stopped in its tracks and closed its mouth. Invited to come closer, the wolf approached Francis and lay down at his feet and howled gently.

**Wolf:** *Woor, woor*

**Narrator:** Francis convinced the people to feed the wolf every day. In exchange, the wolf would never hurt anyone.

From that day forward, the wolf appeared in town every afternoon, stopping at a different house to be fed. The wolf was gentle and the humans courteous.

**All:** Here dear wolf, come get your lunch.

**Wolf:** *Woor, woor, woor*

**Narrator:** When the wolf finally died of old age, the people of Gubbio grieved. But thanks to the love and concern of St. Francis they learned to try and live in peace with nature and one another... something we can do in our own way every day.

## Reflection

## Blessing of the Animals

**Song:** *Make Me a Channel of Your Peace*

Verses 1, 2, 4



1. Make me a chan-nel of your peace. Where  
 2. Make me a chan-nel of your peace. Where  
 4. Make me a chan-nel of your peace. It



there is ha-tred, let me bring your love. Where  
 there's de-spair in life, let me bring hope. Where  
 is in par-don-ing that we are par-doned, in



there is in-ju-ry, your par-don, Lord, And  
 there is dark-ness, on-ly light, And  
 giv-ing of our-selves that we re-ceive, and in



where there's doubt, true faith in you.  
 where there's sad-ness, ev-er joy.  
 dy-ing that we're born to e-ter-nal life.

Verse 3



3. Oh, Mas-ter, grant that I may nev-er seek So much to be con-



soled as to con-sole. To be un-der-stood as to un-der-



stand. To be loved as to love with all my soul.

## The Prayers

### The Blessing Over the Bread

*Just as rain and snow fall from the heavens and return not again, but water the earth,  
bringing forth life and giving growth, seed for sowing and bread for eating;*

*So is the love that flows through us, bringing us life and giving us growth;*

*It will not return empty, but will break open your life as a gift for feeding others,  
just as we now break open this loaf of bread as a gift for feeding one another.*

### Blessing & Dismissal

*Life is short, and we do not have too much time  
to gladden the hearts of those who walk the way with us;  
so be swift to love, make haste to be kind,  
and may the Blessing of the One who created us,  
redeemed us, and who walks always with us,  
be with us and all those we love, this day and always. Amen.*

**Please join us following today's service for Pizza in the Parlor!**

### **Food Collection for the Four-Footed**

As we celebrate the Feast of St. Francis with the blessing of our furred, feathered, and finned companions, and as the diocese designates October as a month to honour creation, we remember that those in our community experiencing food insecurity may also have cats and dogs in their families. To help and share our bounty and affection, we will be collecting donations of pet food at all liturgies today and taking them to the food pantry.