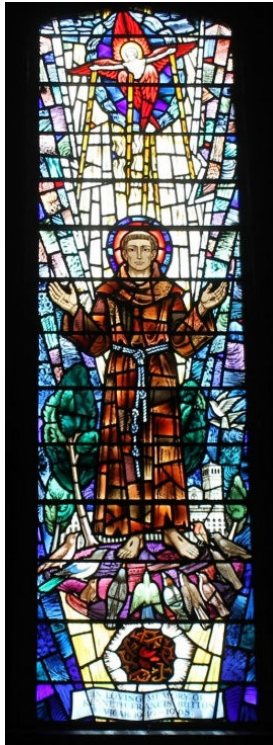




The Anglican Parish of Greater Hastings

encompassing
St Matthew's, Hastings & St Peter's, Riverslea



6th October 2024

Blessing of the Animals
***In partnership with the SPCA in Hastings &
Hato Hone St John Therapy Pets***

Gathering

Welcome from The Rev'd Alister Hendery

'Just ask the animals, and they will teach you.
Ask the birds of the sky, and they will tell you.
Let the fish in the sea speak to you.
For the life of every living thing is in God's hand,
and the breath of every human being.'
(Job 12: 7, 8b, 10a)

Hymn

**All creatures of our God and king,
lift up your voice and with us sing,
Alleluia, alleluia!**

**Bright burning sun with golden beam,
soft shining moon with silver gleam,
O praise him, O praise him,
alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.**

**Earth ever fertile, day by day
bring forth your blessings on our way,
Alleluia, alleluia!**

**All fruit and crops that richly grow,
all trees and flowers God's glory show;
O praise him, O praise him,
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!**

**People and nations, take your part,
love and forgive with all your heart;
Alleluia, alleluia!**

**All who long pain and sorrow bear,
trust God and cast on him your care;
O praise him, O praise him,
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!**

**Let all things their creator bless
and worship him in lowliness**

Alleluia, alleluia!

**Praise, praise the Father, praise the Son,
and praise the Spirit, Three-in-One,**

**O praise him, O praise him,
alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!**

Words: after Francis of Assisi

We sit

We gather in the name of God, who creates all life,
in the name of Jesus Christ, who redeems all life,
and in the name of the Spirit, who renews all life.

May your blessing come.

We come to praise God with all of creation
and to give thanks for the gift of all living creatures.
We come, to ask God's blessing on them,
especially those present here,
and all those that we love and care for.

Lord, for all your creatures,
for those here, those in our communities,
on our farms, and in the wild.

We give you thanks.

For the gift of our animal companions;
for the joy they bring us,
for their unconditional love and forgiveness,
for the confidant, the listener, the stress-releaser,
for the benefits they are to our health and to our spirit.

We give you thanks.

God of all, as you care for us,
so may we nurture the animals placed in our care,
and all living creatures.

Amen.

Readings and Reflections

From Genesis 1 - The Creation

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. 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.

Then God said, 'Let us make human beings in our image, to be like us. They will reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the wild animals on the earth, and the small animals that scurry along the ground.'

Then God looked over all he had made, and he saw that it was very good!

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church.

Thanks be to God.

Saint Francis Preaches to the Birds

One day, as Francis and some companions were travelling through a valley, he spotted a great number of birds of all varieties. He walked over to preach a sermon about God's love to them.

"My brother and sister birds, you should praise your Creator and always love him: He gave you feathers for clothes, wings to fly and all other things that you need. It is God who made you noble among all creatures, making your home in thin, pure air. Without sowing or reaping, you receive God's guidance and protection."

At this the birds began to spread their wings, stretch their necks and gaze at Francis, rejoicing and praising God in a wonderful way according to their nature. Francis then walked right through

the middle of them, turned around and came back, touching their heads and bodies with his tunic.

Then he gave them his blessing, making the sign of the cross over them. At that they flew off and Francis, rejoicing and giving thanks to God, went on his way.

Hymn

**Bless the creatures, great and small,
fish of sea and bird of air.
Lovingly you made them all,
placed them in our gentle care.
Lord of life, we come today;
bless these animals we pray.**

**You have called on us to be
stewards of the living earth.
May we serve you faithfully,
caring as would show our worth.
Lord of life, we come today;
bless these animals we pray.**

**For the gift each creature brings;
pet, companion, guardian, friend;
may your spirit lift on wings
this, our humble thanks, to send.
Lord of life, we come today;
bless these animals we pray.**

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Matthew 6:25-26 - Look at the birds of the air

Therefore, I say to you, don't worry about your life, what you'll eat or what you'll drink, or about your body, what you'll wear. Isn't life more than food and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds in the sky. They don't sow seed or harvest grain or gather crops into barns. Yet your heavenly Father feeds them.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church.

Thanks be to God.

The Address

Hymn – during which a collection will be taken up to support the SPCA in its ongoing animal welfare work in the Hastings area.

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

**Each little flower that opens,
each little bird that sings,
He made their glowing colours,
He made their tiny wings. [Refrain]**

**The purple-headed mountain,
the river running by,
the sunset and the morning
that brightens up the sky. [Refrain]**

**The cold wind in the winter,
the pleasant summer sun,
the ripe fruits in the garden:
He made them every one. [Refrain]**

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

We sit

The Prayers

God created us and gave to us the care of all living things,
and so we give thanks, saying:

O God, how wonderful are the works of your hands.

God of all, you create animals and give us the ability
to train them to help us in our work and our daily lives.

O God, how wonderful are the works of your hands.

For our comfort and support you give us domestic animals
as companions.

O God, how wonderful are the works of your hands.

Your loving care extends over all living creatures.

We pray for animals that are hurting, uncared for, or unwell.

O God, how wonderful are the works of your hands.

For the SPCA, their staff and volunteers, for vets and veterinary
nurses, and all who work with and care for animals:

O God, how wonderful are the works of your hands.

For therapy pets and the affection, comfort, companionship,
and support they bring to many.

O God, how wonderful are the works of your hands.

For pets and companion animals who have died
and for those nearing the end of their life.

Thank you for the many ways

in which they have enriched and blessed our lives.

O God, how wonderful are the works of your hands.

As Jesus taught us, we 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 Blessing of the Animals

Blessed are you, Lord God, creator of all living creatures.

You called forth fish in the sea,
birds in the air and animals on the land.

You inspired Saint Francis
to call all animals his brothers and sisters.

We ask you to bless these animals.

Embrace them in your love and care.

Blessed are you, Lord our God, in all your creatures. Amen

You are invited to bring your companion animals forward for a blessing; and you may wish to light a candle for a loved animal who has died.

Hymn

If I were a butterfly
I'd thank you Lord for giving me wings.
If I were a robin in a tree
I'd thank you Lord that I could sing.
If I were a fish in the sea,
I'd wiggle my tail and I'd giggle with glee,
But I just thank you, Father, for making me, 'me'.

For you gave me a heart and you gave me a smile.
You gave me Jesus and you made me your child.
And I just thank you Father for making me, 'me'.

If I were an elephant
I'd thank you Lord by raising my trunk.
And if I were a kangaroo,
you know I'd hop right up to you.
If I were an octopus
I'd thank you Lord for my fine looks.
But I just thank you Father for making me, 'me'.

For you gave me a heart and you gave me a smile.
You gave me Jesus and you made me your child.
And I just thank you Father for making me, 'me'.

If I were a wiggly worm
I'd thank You, Lord, that I could squirm.
And if I were a billy goat
I'd thank You, Lord, for my strong throat
And if I were a fuzzy-wuzzy bear
I'd thank You, Lord, for my fuzzy-wuzzy hair
But I just thank you Father for making me, 'me'.

For you gave me a heart and you gave me a smile.
You gave me Jesus and you made me your child.
And I just thank you Father for making me, 'me'.

As God has blessed you with these animals,
so may they be blessed by your love and care:
and the blessing of God
our Creator, Redeemer, and Giver of Life,
be with you always. **Amen**

Go in peace. **Amen.**

We go in peace, serving Christ and loving God's creation.

Feel free to take this order of service with you.

~



Francis of Assisi

