



The Anglican Parish of Greater Hastings



Morning Prayer
with the
Blessing of Pets
5th October 2025

Today as we gather to worship God, offering our thanks and praise for all the wonders of creation, especially the animals that are (or have been) our pets, we remember a man who lived in Italy over 800 years ago - **Francis of Assisi**, whose Feast Day is celebrated annually on the 4th October. Francis was born in 1181. After a relatively frivolous life, he rejected everything he had received from his father and embraced poverty totally. Gradually others gathered round him, and he began preaching tours around Italy. He prepared a simple rule of life for his followers, and the Order of Friars Minor was born. The order grew rapidly and spread all over Europe and beyond. Francis combined in his life many strands: mission preacher, lover of animals, ascetic, mystic, dramatic fool for Christ, happy singer, troubadour of God. He died in 1226 and was canonised two years later.

During this morning's service, there will be an opportunity for your pet to receive a blessing; until then, for everyone's health and safety, please ensure your pet is suitably and safely restrained or contained, and if your pet becomes agitated or uncomfortable, please feel free to move around or take them for a walk outside.

Presider: All your creation shall praise you O Lord:
and your servants will bless your name. Psalm 145: 10

Hymn: **Sing Praise to God You Heavens!**

Glory to God: the Presbyterian Hymnal (2013) #17

Words: Herman G Stuempfle Jr 1996 © 2006 GIA Publications - From Psalm 148

Alt. Tune: **WEBB** [Stand up, stand up for Jesus]

1 Sing praise to God, you heavens!
Sing praise, each shining light!
Sing, planets in your orbits;
sing, stars all burning bright!
Sing praise, you winds and tempests,
you driving rain and snow!
Sing, clouds that race and billow
and shadow earth below!

2 Sing praise, O earth, sing praises!
Sing praises, hill and plain,
You mountains thrusting skyward,
you valleys ripe with grain!
Sing praise, each fragrant flower;
your fairest hues display.
Sing praise, you trees of autumn
in glowing, glad array!

3 Sing praises, all you creatures
in whom God takes delight:
you whales that roam the oceans,
you eagles in your flight!
Sing praise, you sheep on hill-sides,
you cattle in the stall!
Though wordless, sing your praises
to God who made you all!

4 Sing praises now, God's people;
your gift of speech employ
to praise the Lord, your Maker,
with thankfulness and joy!
Sing with the whole creation;
a cosmic chorus raise:
"To God alone be glory
and everlasting praise!"

The Gathering of the People

The people may be greeted informally before the Presider continues

In the name of God:
Creator, Redeemer and Giver of life.
Amen.

Great is the Lord and worthy of all praise.
**Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom,
thanksgiving and honour, power and might,
be to our God for ever and ever! Amen.**

A Song of Creation

selected verses from the Song of the Three Young Men

- ¹ Let the whole creation bless the Lord:
praise and exalt our God for ever.
- ⁵ Bless the Lord sun and moon:
bless the Lord you stars of heaven;
- ⁶ bless the Lord all rain and dew:
praise and exalt our God for ever.
- ⁷ Bless the Lord all winds that blow:
bless the Lord you fire and heat;
- ⁸ bless the Lord scorching wind and bitter cold:
praise and exalt our God for ever.
- ¹³ O let the earth bless the Lord:
bless the Lord you mountains and hills;
- ¹⁴ bless the Lord all that grows in the soil:
praise and exalt our God for ever.
- ¹⁵ Bless the Lord you springs of water:
bless the Lord you seas and rivers;
- ¹⁶ bless the Lord you whales
and all that swim in the waters:
praise and exalt our God for ever.
- ¹⁷ Bless the Lord all birds of the air:
bless the Lord you beasts and cattle;
- ¹⁸ bless the Lord all you dwellers on earth:
praise and exalt our God for ever.

- ¹⁹ Bless the Lord you people of God:
bless the Lord you priests of the Lord;
- ²² Let us bless the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit:
praise and exalt our God for ever.

We sit or kneel

In a moment of silence, let us remember our need
for God's forgiveness.

Silence

Creator, all you have made is good,
but too often we fail to care for
the wonders of your creation.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Redeemer, you are generous beyond all measure,
but too often we are wasteful and ignore the needs
of our neighbours and all creatures.

Christ, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Giver of life, you bless us with abundant gifts,
but too often we choose death and destruction.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Silence

Loving God:

**We confess that too often
we act without thinking
of our impact on your creation.**

We are truly sorry.

Forgive us, heal us.

**Grant us thankful hearts,
a loving concern for all people,
and for all your creation;
through Jesus Christ, our Saviour.**

Amen.

Presider: God the Creator brings you new life,
forgives and redeems you.
Take hold of this forgiveness
and live your life in the Spirit of Jesus.
Amen.

Collect for St Francis Day:

Gracious and merciful God:
**you kindled in the heart of Francis
such a flame of love
that he became wholly yours;
increase in us a wholehearted trust in you
and a humble love of all your creatures,
that we may know the joy the gospel brings;
through Jesus Christ our Redeemer.
Amen.**

Reading: **Isaiah 11: 1-2a, 6-9 - The Peaceful Kingdom**

- 1 A shoot shall come out from the stock of Jesse,
and a branch shall grow out of his roots.
- 2 The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him.
- 6 The wolf shall live with the lamb,
the leopard shall lie down with the kid,
the calf and the lion and the fatling together,
and a little child shall lead them.
- 7 The cow and the bear shall graze,
their young shall lie down together;
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.
- 8 The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp,
and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den.
- 9 They will not hurt or destroy
on all my holy mountain;
for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord
as the waters cover the sea.

After the reading: Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church.
Thanks be to God.

Hymn:

Morning has broken

TiS156 – Words: Eleanor Farjeon - Tune: BUNESSAN

- 1 Morning has broken like the first morning,
blackbird has spoken like the first bird.
Praise for the singing! Praise for the morning!
Praise for them, springing fresh from the Word!**
- 2 Sweet the rain's new fall sunlit from heaven,
like the first dewfall on the first grass.
Praise for the sweetness of the wet garden,
sprung in completeness where God's feet pass.**
- 3 Mine is the sunlight! Mine is the morning
born of the one light Eden saw play!
Praise with elation, praise every morning,
God's recreation of the new day!**

We sit

Reading:

Matthew 6: 25-30

- ²⁵ Jesus said: 'Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life,
what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear.
Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?
- ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns,
and yet your heavenly Father feeds them.
Are you not of more value than they?
- ²⁷ And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life?
- ²⁸ And why do you worry about clothing?
Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin,
²⁹ yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these.
- ³⁰ But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is
thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you - you of little faith?

After the reading: **Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church.
Thanks be to God.**

The Sermon

*We hear from a representative of the Hastings Branch of the
Society for the Protection from Cruelty to Animals (SPCA)*

The Prayers

Let us pray ...

Creator God, for all the wonders of your creation,
for its beauty, richness and diversity:
we give you thanks and praise.

We see the beauty of delicate spider-webs
and butterfly wings;
we hear the buzz of bumble-bees in the flower garden;
we also notice the slugs and snails, and other creatures
that frighten us or we regard as a nuisance ...
but we know they are part of earth's delicate eco-system.

All things bright and beautiful:
Lord God, you made them one and all.

Creator God, for all the wonders of your creation,
for its shapes, colours, and variety:
we give you thanks and praise.

We look with awe and wonder to see amazing animals
from Aardvark to Zebra;
we delight to hear the dawn-chorus of birdsong
in the forest;
we also notice rabbits and wilding pine and other
introduced species that destroy the natural environment,
but they too have a place in your plan.

All creatures great and small:
Lord God, you made them one and all.

Creator God, for all the wonders of your creation,
for sea, sky, wind, fire, and all peoples:
we give you thanks and praise.

We see the beauty of the forests and plains;
we hear the roaring seas and the tinkle of gentle streams;
we feel the force of wind and the heat of fire;
help us to appreciate and support those who work
for the best in animal welfare;

may we follow the example of St Francis to care,
protect and love all creatures;
may we be at peace with one another and all creation.

All things wise and wonderful:
Lord God, you made them one and all.

The Lord's Prayer

As Christ teaches us, we pray, saying:
**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.**

*As we sing the next hymn, our offerings to support the mission and ministry of the Parish,
and the work of the local branch of the SPCA, are collected and presented*

Offertory Hymn: Lord, make us servants of your peace

Words: James Quinn [from the Prayer of St Francis] - Catholic Book of Worship III #630

Tune: O WALY WALY

- 1 Lord, make us servants of your peace:
where there is hate, may we sow love;
where there is hurt, may we forgive;
where there is strife, may we make one.**
- 2 Where all is doubt, may we sow faith;
where all is gloom, may we sow hope;
where all is night, may we sow light;
where all is tears, may we sow joy.**

- 3 Jesus, our Lord, may we not seek
to be consoled, but to console,
nor look to understanding hearts,
but look for hearts to understand.
- 4 May we not look for love's return,
but seek to love unselfishly,
for in our giving we receive,
and in forgiving are forgiven.
- 5 Dying, we live, and are reborn
through death's dark night to endless day;
Lord, make us servants of your peace,
to wake at last in heaven's light.

The Presentation of the Gifts

To you, Lord, belongs the greatness, and the power,
and the glory, and the victory and the majesty.
**All that is in the heavens and the earth is yours,
and of your own we give you.**

The Blessing of the Animals

Blessed are you, Lord God, maker of all living creatures.
On the fifth and sixth days of creation,
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,
our pets and companions.
By the power of your love,
enable us to live according to your plan.
May we always praise you for all your beauty in creation.
Blessed are you, Lord our God, in all your creatures.
Amen.

Remembrance

O Lord, we pause and give thanks
for the memories of our pets that have died.
We remember with thanksgiving
the ways in which they enriched our lives.
We pray for all who continue to mourn
the loss of their companions.
Amen.

*You are invited to bring forward your animal companions for a blessing;
you may wish to light a candle in memory of a loved animal that has died.*

For the Blessing of each named pet:

(name) ... May God bless you and those who care for you.
Amen

At the conclusion of the pet blessing, we pray:

God of every living thing,
**as we look into the eyes of our pets
we see their trust, their natural instincts
and their deep wisdom.**
**Let us rejoice in our partnership with them
and honour them by our care and respect;
in the name of Jesus, friend of all.**
Amen.

The Blessing

May you be a new creation,
Christ for those to whom Christ shall send you;
and the blessing of God our Creator,
Redeemer and Giver of life
be with you always.
Amen.

We share any notices, news, or celebrations; then stand to sing the following hymn

Hymn:

This is God's wondrous world

Words: Maltbie D Babcock - Voices United #296 - Alt.tune: **DIADEMATA**

- 1 **This is God's wondrous world,
and to my listening ears
all nature sings, and round me rings
the music of the spheres.
This is God's wondrous world;
I rest me in the thought
of rocks and trees, of skies and seas,
God's hand the wonders wrought.**

- 2 **This is God's wondrous world:
the birds their carols raise,
the morning light, the lily white,
declare their Maker's praise.
This is God's wondrous world:
God shines in all that's fair;
in the rustling grass or mountain pass,
God's voice speaks everywhere.**

- 3 **This is God's wondrous world:
O let me ne'er forget
that though the wrong seems oft so strong,
God is the Ruler yet.
This is God's wondrous world:
why should my heart be sad?
Let voices sing, let the heavens ring:
God reigns, let earth be glad!**

The Dismissal of the Community

O Lord how manifold are your works:
in wisdom you have made them all,
the earth is full of your creatures. *Psalms 104: 25*

Go now to love and serve the Lord. Go in peace.
Amen. We go in the name of Christ.

The Royal New Zealand Society for the Protection of Cruelty to Animals

<https://www.sPCA.nz> - [SPCA New Zealand](#) • [Let's give them a better life](#)

The SPCA is New Zealand's oldest and largest animal welfare charity, with 28 centres and 6 vet partnerships across the country and over 30,000 animals going through their Centres each year. SPCA is the only charity with the power to protect all animals including prosecuting people under the Animal Welfare Act 1999.

The SPCA needs \$66m to operate and receive a 10% contribution from the government each year, which is earmarked for the Inspectorate. With 90% of funding needed to be donated each year, it is only with the support of animal lovers across New Zealand that SPCA has been able to be here for 150 years, and can continue to be here into the future.

The organisation's founding ethos is

'to speak for those who cannot speak for themselves'.

With public support, the SPCA delivers this every day through their vision, values and policies.

Hastings SPCA Centre - Animal Shelter in Hastings
8 Heathcote Road, Hastings, phone 06 878-8733

Acknowledgements:

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and

[Seasons of the Land](#) - Bill Bennett

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