



THE FEAST OF ST. FRANCIS

Saint Francis was born in 1182, the son of a wealthy merchant of Assisi, Italy. His early youth was a life of ease. As he grew, his encounters with beggars and lepers touched Francis' heart. Despite his father's intense opposition, Francis decided to give up all material goods and devote himself to serving people living in poverty. Today we remember Francis for his compassion for people who were sick, his generosity to those in need, and for his love for animals and nature. Francis is celebrated every year on October 4. In the few writings he left, the wonder and joy he found in his faith shines most brightly in the "Canticle of the Creatures" (also known as "Canticle of the Sun"). The hymn "All Creatures of Our God and King," still sung today*, was inspired by Francis' canticle. One reason we honor his life and ministry with pet blessings and creation care is because his love of animals and the natural world was expressed so deeply in this canticle.

Grace Lutheran Church + gracelutheranhatfield.org

Pastor Nancy M. Raabe

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A reading from Job 12:7-10

⁷But ask the animals, and they will teach you;
the birds of the air, and they will tell you;
⁸ask the plants of the earth, and they will teach you;
and the fish of the sea will declare to you.

⁹Who among all these does not know
that the hand of the LORD has done this?

¹⁰In his hand is the life of every living thing
and the breath of every human being.

Word of God, word of life. **C: Thanks be to God.**

HYMN: All Creatures, Worship God Most High (based on St. Francis)



1 All crea-tures, wor-ship God most high! Sound ev - 'ry voice in earth and
2 Sing, broth - er wind; with clouds and rain you grow the gifts of fruit and
3 Sing, broth - er fire, so mirth - ful, strong; drive far the shad - ows, join the
4 All who for love of God for - give, all who in pain or sor - row



sky: Al-le - lu - ia! Al-le - lu - ia! Sing, broth - er sun, in splen-dor
grain: Al-le - lu - ia! Al-le - lu - ia! Dear sis - ter wa - ter, use - ful,
throng: Al-le - lu - ia! Al-le - lu - ia! Dear moth - er earth, so rich in
grieve: Al-le - lu - ia! Al-le - lu - ia! Christ bears your bur-dens and your



bright; sing, sis - ter moon and stars of night:
clear, make mu - sic for your Lord to hear: Al-le - lu - ia, al-le -
care, praise God in col - ors bright and rare:
fears; still make your song a - mid the tears:



lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

A reading from Matthew

Jesus said, "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat [or drink], or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds in the sky; they do not sow or reap, they gather nothing into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are not you more important than they?" (Matthew 6:25-26)

Word of God, word of life. **C: Thanks be to God.**

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."

Offerings may be placed in the marked baskets. They will be directed to support the work of Dog Town Rescue in Hatfield.

During the song, photographs or other items of remembrance may be brought forward and placed on the table. You may take a rosemary spring to honor the fragrance of your pets' memory.

Song at the Offering: GoD and DoG, by Wendy Francisco

I look up and I see God, I look down and see my dog.
Simple spelling G O D, same word backwards, D O G.

They would stay with me all day. I'm the one who walks away.
But my dog just waits for me, and dances at my return with glee.

He loves me no matter what - divine God and canine mutt.
I take it hard each time I fail, but God forgives, dog wags his tail.

God thought up and made the dog, dog reflects a part of God.
I've seen love from both sides now, it's everywhere, amen, bow wow.

I look up and I see God, I look down and see my dog.
And in my human frailty...I can't match his love for me.

Offering Prayer

L: God, our Creator, through your love you have given us these gifts to share. Accept our offerings as an expression of our deep thanks for all the animals and other creatures that have enriched our lives.

CIRCLE OF BLESSING

The leader moves to each animal, saying its name, holding a hand over the animal, and blessing it in the name of the Christ who fills and heals creation.

We give thanks for all those creatures who brighten our lives, and we especially remember our animal companions who are no longer with us physically. Thank you, God, for the gifts they gave us and the variety of ways they enriched and blessed our lives. We are confident that our Creator continues to care for them.

C. Amen.

PRAYERS

L: Christ calls you to be his disciples, to serve him with love and compassion, and to serve our common home, the Earth, by caring for all creation. Will you, guided by the Holy Spirit, the Giver of Life, care for creation?

C: Guided by the Holy Spirit, we will care for creation and all the world's vulnerable people and creatures. We will nurture our pets and all animals, and celebrate the circle of life with them.

BLESSING

L: May the Holy Spirit fill you with the knowledge of God's presence on Earth and the presence of Christ within you. Go in peace, serving Christ and loving all creatures!

C. We go in peace, serving Christ, loving our brothers and sisters in all of creation. Amen.

