

PET BLESSING

Thanks Rev'd Samuel Dow for taking Sunday's services at Christ Church.

My BAD – Rev'd Samuel's name is precisely that – not abbreviated.

As someone who struggles to be known as Valerie

I should have known better.

Please respect his preference when you see him.

Last Sunday I was at another Parish, presiding at their Pet Blessing service. With 5 minutes before we were due to begin one of the wardens came to me and said: *Has - insert name of parishioner here – time to go home and get her pets? She lives nearby.*

Sure, I said. And just as well.

Hers were the only 2 pets at church. No cats, no goats, no fish, no snakes, lizards or spiders. No other dogs either.



And remember if you're not completely confident that your pet won't behave nicely with the other worshippers – then bring along a photo.

NOTE: soft cuddly *pets* are also welcome – particularly those you've had since childhood. They're all deserving of bringing to God for blessing.

Praying God's blessing requires a recognition of a certain kind of relationship in which those involved remember and acknowledge their true nature and worth – strengthening what is whole in themselves and in the other.

We are asking God to recreate each of us, asking us to be formed more closely into God's own image. We seek God's protection and ask God to grant us good things in our life and our relationship.

Jan Richardson (USA artist / poet / liturgist) wrote this prayer for St Francis Day:

*Holy God, you who created them and called them good:
bless again these creatures who come to us as a blessing
fashioned of fur or feather or fin,
formed of flesh that breathes with your own breath,
that you have made from sheer delight,
that you have given in dazzling variety.
Bless them who curl themselves around our hearts
who twine themselves through our days,
who companion us in our labour,
who call us to come and play.
Bless them who will never be entirely tamed
and so remind us that you love what is wild,
that you rejoice in what lives close to the earth,
that your heart beats in the heart of these creatures
you have entrusted to our care.*

Today we're remembering St Francis of Assisi. He offers us an example of genuine and deep respect for the integrity of creation.

On the whole our culture cares for pets superbly – but how is the rest of creation faring? It's been our focus for the last 5 weeks as we've looked at Creation through the varied lenses of biodiversity, land, water, climate change, need not greed, and today finally we look at God's creation through our responsibility to be stewards of God's gifts.

Indeed the 5th mark of Mission formulated at the 1998 Lambeth Conference calls upon us to:

**Strive to safeguard the integrity of creation;
to sustain and renew the life of the earth.**

To live sustainably we need to nurture and respect creation, the natural world which supplies all our needs, to look after people and strive to achieve economic justice and welfare for all people.

We are to be earth keepers, safeguarding diverse ecosystems.

In the lead up to the COP26 U. N. climate conference in Glasgow at the start of November major religious leaders met and on St Francis Day, 4th of October, released a call for 'urgent, radical and responsible action' to drastically curb greenhouse gas emissions and for the world's wealthiest countries to lead in healing the planet.

"We are currently at a moment of opportunity and truth. We pray that our human family may unite to save our common home before it is too late," the declaration read. "Future generations will never forgive us if we squander this precious opportunity."

"We have inherited a garden: we must not leave a desert to our children,"

"We plead with the international community, gathered at COP26, to take speedy, responsible and shared action to safeguard, restore and heal our wounded humanity and the home entrusted to our stewardship," the faith declaration said.

"We appeal to everyone on this planet to join us on this common journey, knowing well that what we can achieve depends not only on opportunities and resources, but also on hope, courage, solidarity and good will."

Collect for this Week

Almighty God, Creator and lord of all things, you have provided the vast resources of earth and sea, and the hidden forces of nature: teach us to recognise your hand in all your words and to use your gifts responsibly for the benefit of all people that we may rejoice in your goodness with reverence and thanksgiving; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

Shalom

Valerie

0487 117 662

