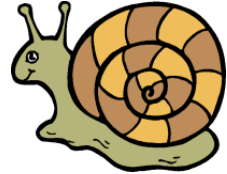


Ashburton and Moorland Team

3rd July 2022

Pet Service



with Blessing of the Animals



Welcome

Whether at home or at church, inside or outside, today we are celebrating the role that pets and other animals have in our lives.

If you have no animal(s) with you, maybe you can see some outside like birds or sheep? At the appropriate point, do ask for God's blessing on them!

Enjoy yourself....

Geoffrey



Preparation

The Opening

God said “I will remember my covenant which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh.”

Hymn – All things bright and beautiful

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IPMA5I3-0Jw>

*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 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)

Confession

Holy Creator, we come together to thank you for the fellowship of other creatures, to celebrate their God-given lives, and to pray for compassionate hearts so we may care for them and for all your creation.

But, first of all, we pray for your forgiveness because of our part in thoughtlessness and lack of care towards animals.

Almighty God, you have given us temporary lordship of your beautiful creation.

But we have misused our power and marred your image in us.

Forgive us, Lord, for any callousness toward animals, and enable us, by your Spirit, to walk in newness of life, avoiding wrong and making peace with all your creatures.

God of everlasting love who is eternally forgiving, pardon and restore us, and make all of us one with You in Your new creation. **Amen.**

Hymn – There are hundreds of sparrows

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n8KEPISqwE>

There are hundreds of sparrows, thousands, millions,
They're two a penny, far too many
there must be;

There are hundreds and thousands, millions of sparrows,
But God knows every one and God knows me.

There are hundreds of flowers, thousands, millions,
And flowers fair the meadows wear
for all to see;

There are hundreds and thousands, millions of flowers,
But God knows every one and God knows me.

There are hundreds of planets, thousands, millions,
Way out in space each has a place
by God's decree;
There are hundreds and thousands, millions of planets,
But God knows every one and God knows me.

There are hundreds of children, thousands, millions,
And yet their names are written on
God's memory;
There are hundreds and thousands, millions of children,
But God knows every one and God knows me.

Hearing God's Word

Bible Reading

Luke 10.1-11,16-20

The Lord appointed seventy others and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go. He said to them, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest. Go on your way. See, I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves.

'Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals; and greet no one on the road. Whatever house you enter, first say, "Peace to this house!" And if anyone is there who shares in peace, your peace will rest on that person; but if not, it will return to you. Remain in the same house, eating and drinking whatever they provide, for the labourer deserves to be paid. Do not move about from house to house. Whenever you enter a town and its people welcome you, eat what is set before you; cure the sick who are there, and say to them, "The kingdom of God has come near to you." But whenever you enter a town and they do not welcome you, go out into its streets and say, "Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet, we wipe off in protest against you. Yet know this: the kingdom of God has come near."

‘Whoever listens to you listens to me, and whoever rejects you rejects me, and whoever rejects me rejects the one who sent me.’

The seventy returned with joy, saying, ‘Lord, in your name even the demons submit to us!’ He said to them, ‘I watched Satan fall from heaven like a flash of lightning. See, I have given you authority to tread on snakes and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing will hurt you. Nevertheless, do not rejoice at this, that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.’

This is the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Talk

It’s clear from our reading that people travelling around the countryside in Jesus’ time could well be encountering a number of dangerous animals – Jesus mentions wolves, snakes and scorpions. Scary!

I don’t think that wolves normally attack people, but if I were a shepherd looking after a flock of sheep and a wolf started attacking the sheep, I’d be really scared.

And I’ve never felt safe with snakes – I know that most of them are harmless, but when I come across an adder sunning itself on a summer day I always back off gently, and hope our dog Bridey doesn’t notice it.

And I’m very pleased that there are no scorpions in Britain – I can’t imagine living in a country where they might be hiding in a shoe, or under a stone. The idea of a scorpion whipping its tail over its head and stabbing me with its poison is really scary...

But living here, I guess we are normally pretty safe from being attacked by animals?

Well, up to a point. But what about horse-flies, mosquitos, midges, ants, wasps, bees, ticks, not to mention bacteria and viruses infecting us!

There are still plenty of animals that will have a go at us, given half a

chance. It's in their nature, and we just accept that – it's what they do!

So we keep away from them as far as possible, and put up with itches and irritations.

Some people I know enjoy keeping dangerous pets, but that's not for me – and I think most people want their pets to be friendly and safe to be with. More than that, most pet owners treat their pet as a friend, valuing the opportunity to build a mutual relationship and mutual support.

Building that relationship can take a lot of time and effort, and it nearly always has challenges.

Say you've just got a new ten-week old puppy – what happens? They start chewing the furniture, your shoes and slippers, your favourite gloves, anything that they can get their teeth into. They wee all over the floor.

They whine or bark the moment you leave them alone. They jump up on visitors. They'll run onto the road given half a chance. Generally it's a challenging time!

But then you sit down with them and they clamber over you, wagging like mad. They gaze at you with their appealing eyes, demanding attention. They pounce on leaves blowing across the lawn, they make you laugh.

They're happy, and they make you happy....

And when training starts, they (in theory at any rate) take great pleasure in getting it right and pleasing you. They do what they're told, and they get their reward.

Like any good relationship that grows better, there is a mutuality about it – they give you pleasure, and you give them pleasure.

Perhaps the best thing (at least about dogs and ponies – I'm not so sure about cats?) is that they will always greet you with positive, unconditional enthusiasm.

When I've been out for a while and I drive over the cattle grid at home, Bridey will hear, and will jump up onto the stool by the window over the drive, put her feet on the windowsill, and wag furiously, smearing the glass with her nose.

As I head for the front door, she'll dash to it and be there when I open the door. On the way she will have picked up one of her soft toys – Bob, Foxy, Donkey or Freddo. When I go in, she'll rush around the hall in a little dance of welcome, and be patted in return.

But if I leave the door open and she dashes out, then Bob, Foxy, Donkey or Freddo might well spend a night or two in a comfortable flower-bed, covered by a loose layer of soil to keep them cosy – I guess that's a sign of affection?

In the morning, or when I come home, the welcome is always the same. Wagging tail, big grin, friend in mouth. What she demonstrates, and what all our pets normally demonstrate, is unconditional love.

Which is what the seventy disciples that Jesus sent out were bringing to the towns and villages that Jesus sent them to. They went out in pairs, and were warned that they might receive a hostile reception. But it turns out that they all returned with joy, saying, 'Lord, in your name even the demons submit to us!'

Jesus had sent them to bring peace to the communities – perhaps to help solve family disputes and long-running arguments – to 'cure the sick who are there, and say to them, "The kingdom of God has come near to you."'

They were bringing a message of love, and in turn they were loved and appreciated. It was a great success – everyone was happy.

What we can learn from our pets is the importance of a warm, unconditional welcome – if we welcome someone in the way that our dogs (or cats, or rabbits, ponies, etc) do, whoever they are, then we will be bringing in God's Kingdom too....

Thank you pets!

Hymn - Who put the Colours in the Rainbow?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pjFdhv8vGG0>

Who put the colours in the rainbow?
Who put the salt into the sea?
Who put the cold into the snowflake?
Who made you and me?
Who put the hump upon the camel?
Who put the neck on the giraffe?
Who put the tail upon the monkey?
Who made hyenas laugh?
Who made whales and snails and quails?
Who made hogs and dogs and frogs?
Who made cats and rats and bats?
Who made everything?

Who put the gold into the sunshine?
Who put the sparkle in the stars?
Who put the silver in the moonlight?
Who made Earth and Mars?
Who put the scent into the roses?
Who taught the honey bee to dance?
Who put the tree inside the acorn?
It surely can't be chance!
Who made seas and leaves and trees?
Who made snow and winds that blow?
Who made streams and rivers flow?
God made all of these!

Prayers

Let us pray.

Lord God, we praise you for the creation of the world and all the living creatures in the earth, sky and sea, saying:

Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

We thank you for the comfort that pets bring to the lonely and distressed, and we pray for those who are seeking comfort at this time.

Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

We pray for all those who care for animals, that they may take their responsibilities seriously and look after their animals properly.

Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

We pray for leaders across the world. Leaders of countries, regions, towns and villages, that they might work for peace, justice and fairness.

Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

We pray for all those in our society struggling with issues brought on by Covid – loneliness, mental health difficulties, Long Covid, delayed operations; and we pray for all those treating them.

Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

In a moment of silence, let us bring before God those known to us in need at this time.....

Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

And we pray for all who have lost loved ones and are in mourning.

Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

**Merciful Father,
accept these prayers
for the sake of your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

As we seek God's coming kingdom, we pray together:

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.**

Blessing of the Animals

Those who have brought animals for a blessing may bring them forward, one at a time, keeping them in cages or on a lead.

May God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, bless (N),
protect *him/her* and grant *him/her*
a share in the redemption of the world.

Blessed are you, Lord God, ruler of the universe: we praise you for the wonderful works you have made. We give you special thanks for all the animals which you have given to us as companions and pets in our homes. Bless these animals, and guide us in the proper care of all your creatures. We ask this in Jesus' name.

Almighty God, your Son, Jesus Christ, taught us to love even the least among us. Give us the courage to care for all living creatures and the strength to defend even the weakest of all. **Amen.**

Hymn - Now thank we all our God

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UFN9hxne2_o

Now thank we all our God,
With heart and hands and voices,
Who wondrous things hath done,
In whom his world rejoices;
Who from our mother's arms
Hath blessed us on our way
With countless gifts of love,
And still is ours to-day.

O may this bounteous God
Through all our life be near us,
With ever joyful hearts
And blessed peace to cheer us;
And keep us in his grace,
And guide us when perplexed,
And free us from all ills
In this world and the next.

All praise and thanks to God
The Father now be given,
The Son, and Him who reigns,
With them in highest heaven,
The one eternal God,
Whom earth and heaven adore;
For thus it was, is now,
And shall be evermore.

Conclusion

Blessing

Lord God,
who gives strength to those who struggle and to those who endure,
bless us with compassionate hearts
that feel with you the injustices of the world.
Help us to strive towards that peaceable kingdom
in which all your creatures shall live with you for all eternity.
May the blessing of God almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be with us
and those we love, both now and forever more.

Amen.

Dismissal

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
In the name of Christ. Amen.

