

SHARED MINISTRY IN EXNING AND NORTH NEWMARKET

SERVICE FOR THE BLESSING OF PETS
AND OTHER COMPANION AND WORKING ANIMALS



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Opening Responses

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth,

**And God said, 'Let the earth
bring forth living creatures of every kind:**

Cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind.'

And it was so.

God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind.

And God saw that it was good.

cf. Genesis 1.1, 24-25

Greeting

Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father,
and the Lord Jesus Christ, be with you;
and also with you.

Collect

Let us pray.

Loving God, who delighted to fill the earth, the waters and the skies with
life, and set us in the Garden of Paradise to tend and enjoy it: as we
gather to celebrate today the goodness of that life, may we come to see true
reflections of your glory and learn more about your loving ways; through
Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Non-Scriptural Readings

Extracts are read from 'A Street Cat Named Bob' by James Bowen and 'It's All About Treo' by Dave Heyhoe. These are both real-life stories: Bowen was a recovering drug addict who was homeless; while Heyhoe served in the British Army in Afghanistan. Both stories contain material which some may find distressing.

Psalm

R: Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.

Alleluia. O praise God in his holiness;
praise him in the firmament of his power. *R*

Praise him for his mighty acts;
praise him according to his excellent greatness. *R*

Praise him with the blast of the trumpet;
praise him upon the harp and lyre. *R*

Praise him with timbrel and dances;
praise him upon the strings and pipe. *R*

Praise him with ringing cymbals;
praise him upon the clashing cymbals. *R*

Psalms 150

Scriptural Reading

A reading from the Book of Numbers:

Balaam got up in the morning, saddled his donkey, and went with the officials of Moab. God's anger was kindled because he was going, and the angel of the Lord took his stand in the road as his adversary. Now he was riding on the donkey, and his two servants were with him. The donkey saw the angel of the Lord standing in the road, with a drawn sword in his hand; so the donkey turned off the road, and went into the field; and Balaam struck the donkey, to turn it back on to the road. Then the angel of the Lord stood in a narrow path between the vineyards, with a wall on either side. When the donkey saw the angel of the Lord, it scraped against the wall, and scraped Balaam's foot against the wall; so he struck it again. Then the angel of the Lord went ahead, and stood in a narrow place, where there was no way to turn either to the right or to the left. When the donkey saw the angel of the Lord, it lay down under Balaam; and Balaam's anger was kindled, and he struck the donkey with his staff.

Then the Lord opened the mouth of the donkey, and it said to Balaam, 'What have I done to you, that you have struck me these three times?' Balaam said to the donkey, 'Because you have made a fool of me! I wish I had a sword in my hand! I would kill you right now!' But the donkey said to Balaam, 'Am I not your donkey, which you have ridden all your life to this day? Have I been in the habit of treating you in this way?' And he said, 'No.' Then the Lord opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the Lord standing in the road, with his drawn sword in his hand; and he bowed down, falling on his face. The angel of the Lord said to him, 'Why have you struck your donkey these three times? I have come out as an adversary, because your way is perverse before me. The donkey saw me, and turned away from me these

three times. If it had not turned away from me, surely I would by now have killed you and let it live.’ Then Balaam said to the angel of the Lord, ‘I have sinned, for I did not know that you were standing in the road to oppose me. Now therefore, if it is displeasing to you, I will return home.’ The angel of the Lord said to Balaam, ‘Go with the men; but speak only what I tell you to speak.’ So Balaam went on with the officials of Balak.

Numbers 22.21-35

This is the word of the Lord;
thanks be to God.

Address

A short address is given.

Confession and Absolution

The earth is the Lord’s and all that is in it,
the world, and those who live in it.

Psalm 24.1

We confess together our sin, and the sins of our society,
in the misuse of God’s creation.

When we enjoy the good things of life,
but forget that all good things come from you:
Father, in your mercy: **forgive us and help us.**

When we cause harm to other people, creatures or environments,
even though you taught us to be stewards of your creation:
Father, in your mercy: **forgive us and help us.**

When we stand by when we see injustice and abuse,
or are thoughtless in our actions:
Father, in your mercy: **forgive us and help us.**

When we are slow to learn from the world around us,
ignoring the signs of your love:
Father, in your mercy: **forgive us and help us.**

When we fail to confess our sin,
but boast in our own achievements:
Father, in your mercy: **forgive us and help us.**

May the God of love bring you back to himself, forgive you your sins, and assure you of his eternal love in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Canticle: Jubilate

R: Let everything that has breath be joyful in the Lord our God.

O be joyful in the Lord, all the earth;
serve the Lord with gladness and come before his presence with a song. *R*

Know that the Lord is God;
it is he that has made us and we are his;
we are his people and the sheep of his pasture. *R*

Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise;
give thanks to him and bless his name. *R*

For the Lord is gracious; his steadfast love is everlasting,
and his faithfulness endures from generation to generation. *R*

Psalm 100

Prayers of Intercession

For animals everywhere, especially those we share our homes with; for companion animals who comfort the lonely and for our own pets who bring us joy and peace: Lord, hear us. **Lord, graciously hear us.**

For working animals, including farm animals and those trained to assist human workforces; for guide animals and those who help make the world accessible to those in need of assistance: Lord, hear us. **Lord, graciously hear us.**

For sporting animals, and especially for racehorses and those retrained in other disciplines following retirement; for animals bred for their strength or beauty, that this may be done compassionately: Lord, hear us. **Lord, graciously hear us.**

For all animals suffering, whether naturally or because of harm or abuse, and for all created life that has passed away from the earth, that our home in Paradise may be revealed at the last: Lord, hear us. **Lord, graciously hear us.**

Gracious God, receive these prayers which we offer in the name of your Son, who came to give abundant life in its fullness, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

Let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us:

Our Father, ...

Blessing of Pets

Praise God who made heaven and earth,
who keeps his promise for ever.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God;
it is right to give thanks and praise.

Creator God, all things belong to you, and without you there is nothing that is made. To your creation you sent the Word which was in the beginning, through whom all things were made, Jesus Christ, your only Son, our Lord. Born of a woman, he took flesh, that he might live among your creatures, and share their ground, their water and their air. In the wilderness, he lived among the wild beasts; to his disciples he spoke of lilies, sparrows, foxes and camels; into Jerusalem he rode on a young colt; and in the garden he appeared, revealing it to be the life-giving Paradise.

Therefore we ask you to bless, with all creation, these animals that we have brought together today. Protect them from all thoughtlessness and cruelty, that they may be loved and happy all their lives, and that with all creation they may praise and worship you to the end of the age: who lives and reigns now and for ever. **Amen.**

Blessing of the People

The Lord be with you;
and also with you.

May God who clothed the lilies and feeds the birds of the sky, who leads the lambs to pasture and the deer to water, who multiplied loaves and fishes and changed water into wine: lead you, feed you, multiply you, and change you to reflect the glory of your Creator, now and through all eternity;

and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Closing Responses

God said, 'Let us make humankind in our image,
According to our likeness.'

So God created humankind in his image,

And God blessed them.

God said, 'Be fruitful and multiply,'

And it was so.

God saw everything that he had made,

And indeed, it was very good.

cf. Genesis 1.26-31



And while you have been praying, just remember that your companion animals may have had a different prayer in mind:

Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray this cushy life to keep.

I pray for toys that look like mice, and sofa cushions, soft and nice,

For grocery bags where I can hide, just like a tiger, crouched inside!

I pray for gourmet Kitty snacks, and someone nice to scratch my back,

For window sills all warm and bright, for shadows to explore at night.

I pray I'll always stay real cool, and keep the secret feline rule

To NEVER tell a human that the world is really ruled by CATS!

Your suggestions please as to what other animals may have been thinking!

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