

A SERVICE OF BLESSING FOR ANIMALS
AND HUMANS
IN HONOR OF ST. FRANCIS' DAY



At 10:00 in the morning, outdoors

GREETING

We gather to acknowledge the gift of relationship. We remember Francis of Assisi among others who lead us in the way of caregiving. We are here to thank God for the beauty that animals bring to our lives and to bless them.

PRAYER

Good Lord, grant us grace to renounce *gladly* fool's gold; that following the way of Francis, we may delight in what is most truly precious. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING

And God said, "Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky." So God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, of every kind, with which the waters swarm, and every winged bird of every kind. And God saw that it was good. God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth." And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

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 the cattle of every kind, and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind. And God saw that it was good. —Genesis 1:20-25

A READING FROM THE CANTICLE OF THE SUN

Most High, Omnipotent, Good Lord,
yours is the praise, the glory, the honor, and all blessing.
To you alone, Most High, do they belong.

Be praised, my Lord, through all your creatures, especially for Brother Sun, through whom you give us light. He is beautiful and radiant with splendor and his light teaches us of your Light, O Most High.

Be praised, my Lord, for Sister Moon and all the stars who shine so clear, so precious and so lovely in the heavens you formed.

Be praised, my Lord, through Brother Wind, and through the air, the cloudy or clear and every kind of weather, by which you give sustenance to your creatures.

Be praised, my Lord, through Sister Water, who is so useful and precious and so pure.

Be praised, my Lord, in Brother Fire, by whom you light the night. He is beautiful and cheerful, full of power and strength.

Be praised, my Lord, through Sister Earth, our mother who sustains and nurtures us, and gives us all the fruits and flowers, and all the birds and beasts.

Be praised, my Lord, in all those who forgive others for your love's sake, and bear weakness and tribulation.

Blessed are those that live at peace with all for love of you, for by you, Most High, they will be crowned.

Praise and bless my Lord and give him thanks, and serve him with great humility.

—St. Francis of Assisi, c. 1225

PRAYER

God, we lift our eyes to the things we cannot produce; only receive. Soften our hearts. Order our steps in your good and gracious way. Continue to grow us in our enjoyment of creation and in our mindfulness of those for whom disease, disaster, or depletion makes such enjoyment so very difficult. **Amen.**

*Animals receive a blessing by standing (with parent) in one line.
People (with or without animals) may also receive a blessing.
The service concludes with a prayer.*

A PRAYER ATTRIBUTED TO ST. FRANCIS

**Lord, make us instruments of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let us sow love;
where there is injury, pardon; where there is discord, union;
where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy.
Grant that we may not so much seek to be consoled as to console;
to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
and it is in dying that we are reborn to eternal life. Amen.**

*Boulevard United Methodist Church invites you to enjoy the rest of the hour here,
and with one another. Thank you for blessing us with your presence!*