



*Blessing of the Animals
First Lutheran Church
Akeley, MN
September 21, 2025*

Born in Italy in the 12th century, Saint Francis preached that all animals were as much God's creatures as humans, and as such should be cherished and protected. He is remembered for his love of animals and nature. Because of his benevolent attitude towards all of God's Creation, he became known as the Patron Saint of Animals and the Environment. His life is celebrated every year on October 4th, St. Francis' Day. Historically, many churches have held a special service of blessing of the animals on or near the Feast Day of St. Francis, honoring his love for all of creation and giving thanks to God for the earth and stars, fields and forests, lakes and rivers, and all living beings.

PRELUDE SONG: *"Run and Run"*

WELCOME/ANNOUNCEMENTS

GATHERING SONG: *"All Creatures of Our God and King"*

PSALM 148:1-5, 7-13

L: Hallelujah! Praise God from the heavens; praise God in the heights.

C: Praise God, all you holy angels; praise God, all the heavenly host.

L: Praise God, sun and moon; praise God, all you shining stars.

C: Praise God, heaven of heavens, and you waters above the heavens.

L: Let them praise God's name, who commanded, and they were created.

C: Praise God from the earth, you sea-monsters and all deeps;

L: Fire and hail, snow and fog, tempestuous wind, obeying God's will;

C: Mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars;

L: Wild beasts and all cattle, creeping things and winged birds;

C: Monarchs of the earth and all people, rulers and all judges of the world;

L: Young men and women, old and young together.

C: Let them praise God's name, for God's name only is exalted, and God's splendor is over earth and heaven. Hallelujah!

SECOND READING: Job 12:7-10

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

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, and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen.

COMMUNION DISTRIBUTION

Holy Communion is a grace-filled gift, for all people, offered to us by Jesus, the Son of God. As such, all are welcome and invited to receive this gift, regardless of age, religious background, or belief. The center ring of the tray contains grape juice, and the bread is gluten-free.

COMMUNION SONGS

"Miracle of Grace"

"Your Are My All in All"

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

P: We thank you, Lord, for the meal we have celebrated with you, and we pray that through this gift we may be healed and strengthened to be agents of healing for all the Earth.

C: Amen.

BLESSING

P: May you know God's peace, surrounded by the beauty of earth, sky, and every living creature.

May the Creator of all bless you with joy in your companions, both human and animal, and with care for all that lives.

May Christ, who treasures each sparrow, remind you that you too are beloved and held in his grace.

May the Spirit, who fills the world with life and song, stir in you compassion, delight, and gentleness.

May you be blessed by God the Creator, Christ the Savior, and the Spirit who gives life.

SENDING SONG: *"Chain Breaker"*

DISMISSAL

P: Go in peace. Serving God and loving all Creation.

C: Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE



THANK YOU for joining us for worship this morning. We are so blessed to gather in the beauty of God's Creation to worship God the Creator and give thanks for all the creatures of this earth.

A special thanks to the First Lutheran Church Resurrection Band for providing the music today.

Following the service, please stay for a time of fellowship, coffee, and goodies (for the humans and the pets!).

Our Mission/Outreach Focus for the month of September is Headwaters Animal Shelter in Park Rapids. We are collecting much needed items for the shelter as well as monetary donations. Pet supplies (toys, leashes, collars, treats) and dog and cat food can be placed in the collection boxes or dropped off at the church.

THANK YOU to Headwaters Animal Shelter for being with us for this special service!

If you are open to adding a companion animal to your home, please consider adopting from Headwaters Animal Shelter. There are many wonderful dogs, cats, puppies, and kittens awaiting a loving forever home. To learn more, take a look at their website: <https://headwatersanimalshelter.org/>