

Christ Church  
Cathedral  
Ottawa

# The Feast of Saint Francis of Assisi

Sunday | October 4<sup>th</sup> | 2026

4 pm | Blessing of the Animals

---

## Welcome

For the safety of all God's creatures gathered this afternoon,  
and so that the animals will not be alarmed, please keep pets in their carriers or on their  
leashes, and refrain from applauding or using flashes for photographs.

If you require a headset for hearing assistance please speak with a Sidesperson.

Please turn off cell phones or set them to silent mode.

*Our diocese was founded on the homeland of the Anishinaabe Algonquins.*

*May we dwell on this land with respect and peace.*

---

---

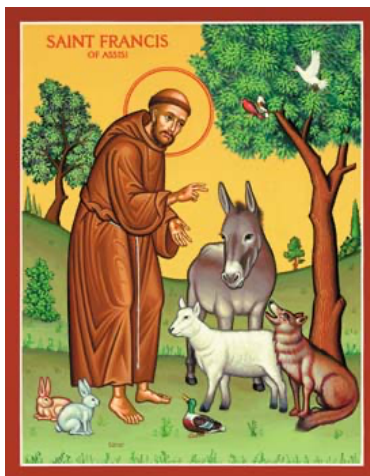
## Saint Francis of Assisi

October 4<sup>th</sup> is the Feast Day of Saint Francis of Assisi, the Patron Saint of animals. Francis preached to people and animals, saying that it is the natural duty of all living things to give praise to the Creator – and that it is the particular duty of human beings to cherish and protect nature, as stewards of creation and because we, too, are creatures. An old legend says that as Francis lay dying, he looked upon his donkey and thanked him for carrying him and accompanying him for so many miles.

And so, welcome to this liturgy that honours the place of animals in the grand sweep of God's creation. To bless animals is to acknowledge them as fellow creatures of God, and to express our thanks for the service, comfort and companionship they provide to us.

There are many images and symbols of animals in the windows, walls, carvings and hangings in the Cathedral. The Altar frontal today depicts the seven days of creation showing animals and plants from the Ottawa Valley (and note the loon in the pulpit!). Do take time to explore while you are here or come again another time. You are always welcome!

May you and the animals present in this service fully enjoy the space, colour and sounds of the Cathedral, and may the abundant blessing of God who made and holds every living thing in the pulse of God's creative power be upon you today and always.



---

# The Blessing of Animals

**Prelude** | *The Swan* | *Camille Saint-Saëns*

**Welcome**

**Hymn 425** | *Joyful, joyful we adore thee*

**Greeting**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.

**And also with you.**

Let us pray.

Grant us, Creator God, after the example of your holy servant Francis, to do what you would have us do, and always to desire what is pleasing in your sight, that cleansed by your love, enlightened by your truth, and kindled with the fire of your Holy Spirit, we may follow in the footsteps of your beloved Son and make our way to you, O God most High; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

**First Reading** | *Genesis 1:20-25*

A reading from the book of Genesis.

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.

Holy Word, Holy Wisdom.

**Thanks be to God.**

## **Canticle 15** | *A Song of Creation* | Rupert Lang

*Refrain: Praise him and highly exalt him forever. Glorify the Lord, all you works of the Lord.*

*Refrain. In the firmament of his power glorify the Lord. Refrain. Glorify the Lord, O mountains and hills. Refrain. O springs of water, seas, and streams. Refrain. O whales and all that move in the waters. Refrain. Let the earth glorify the Lord. Refrain.*

## **Second Reading** | *Matthew 6:25-34*

A reading from the gospel of Matthew.

‘Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you – you of little faith? Therefore do not worry, saying, “What will we eat?” or “What will we drink?” or “What will we wear?” For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today’s trouble is enough for today.’

Holy Word, Holy Wisdom.

**Thanks be to God.**

## **Motet** | *Badgers and Hedgehogs* | Andrew Carter

*O ye badgers and hedgehogs, bless the Lord, O ye badgers and squirrels and hedgehogs, bless the Lord, O ye badgers and squirrels and ferrets and foxes and hedgehogs, bless the Lord, O ye parakeets and pelicans and porcupines and penguins, and guillemots and guinea pigs and gallinules and godwits and badgers and hedgehogs, bless the Lord, O ye weasels and warthogs and wallabies and wombats, chipmunks and chuckawallas and kookaburras and caterpillars and badgers and hedgehogs, bless ye the Lord, O ye dromedaries and ye*

*dragonflies and diddy little daddy longlegs, budgerigars and bumblebees and bandicoots and bullfrogs and badgers and hedgehogs, bless the Lord.*

## Prayers

Let us pray.

Gracious God, we give thanks for the wonders of creation: for the sun, which reminds us of your constancy, for its brightness which energizes our world; for all the creatures who awake with the dawn and move through the day in light. We give thanks for the moon and the stars, and for nocturnal creatures. We give thanks and praise for the cycles of life and death, rest and work, planting and harvest, which form our days.

Creator of all,  
**hear our prayer.**

We give thanks for the variety and beauty of the animals you have placed in the world. We marvel at their diversity and give thanks that you are mindful of us and have made us a part of that diversity and asked us to help care for them. We pray for animals who are wild and tame, for those whose beauty opens our eyes more fully to your presence, and for those whose power causes us to tremble, giving us a fuller understanding of your power and care for us.

Creator of all,  
**hear our prayer.**

We give thanks for the gift of the animals who are our companions, whose presence adds purpose to our days, and whose affection we cherish. We pray that you will help us to care for your creation well, and in our caring for them, know that we are sharing in your love for all that you have created.

Creator of all,  
**hear our prayer.**

*Please pray using these words, or whichever version or language is closest to your heart.*

Our Father

**in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and for ever. Amen.**

## Offertory Anthem | *All things bright and beautiful* | John Rutter

*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. The purple-headed mountain, the river running by, the sunset and the morning, that brightens up the sky. The cold wind in the winter, the pleasant summer sun, the ripe fruits in the garden, He made them every one. He gave us eyes to see them, and lips that we might tell how great is God Almighty who has made all things well. All things bright and beautiful, all creatures great and small, all things wise and wonderful, the Lord God made them all.*

## Blessing of the Animals

Blessed be the name of the Lord,  
**The maker of heaven and earth.**

Blessed are you gracious God, giver of all things. You have made this living world our home and given the earth into our hands. You made animals as our companions, that in caring for them we might learn to love and care for all your creatures and find in them a sign of your grace. As we fulfil this calling and ask your blessing on that which you created, may we draw close to you, the giver of all life. **Amen.**

*Those who have brought animals are invited to bring them forward to one of the priests for a blessing.*

## Prayer of Saint 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 born to eternal life. Amen.**

## Blessing

May the grace of God free you, the Word of God uphold you, the needs of God's creation inspire you, and the blessing of God, Creator, Son and Spirit, be with you this day and every day. **Amen.**

Let us bless the Lord

**Thanks be to God.**

**Hymn 403** | *Let all things now living*

**Postlude** | *Scherzo "La chasse" | C.M. Widor*

*Following the service, there will be an opportunity for you to have a photo taken with your animal and the clergy in the Cathedral for a cost of \$20 per photo (cash or tap, no tax receipt). The digital photo will be emailed to you.*

---

Officiant | The Very Reverend Beth Bretzlaff  
Assisting | The Reverend Canon Doug Richards  
Duty Warden | Katherine Spencer-Ross

Organist | James Calkin  
Director | Andrew McAnerney  
Sung by | The Cathedral Girls and Boys Choirs

Liturgy: *Occasional Celebrations of the Anglican Church of Canada* ©1992 by the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada.  
Readings: *New Revised Standard Version Bible (NRSV)* Anglicized Edition, ©1989, 1995, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America.

---

## Christ Church Cathedral Ottawa

Anishinaabe aking ate awaso kikinawadjichigan | A place of prayer on Algonquin territory  
The Anglican Cathedral in the Nation's Capital  
Cathedral of the Canadian Forces Anglican Military Ordinariate

414 Sparks Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1R 0B2  
613.236.9149 | [info@ottawacathedral.ca](mailto:info@ottawacathedral.ca) | [www.ottawacathedral.ca](http://www.ottawacathedral.ca) | @ottawacathedral

---

