



CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF  
ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI & COMMEMORATING  
WORLD ANIMAL DAY



# The Blessing of the Animals

Sunday  
29 September  
1pm



For the safety of animals and the comfort of others please ensure all dogs and larger animals are on a lead, smaller animals protected in a cage, with humans carrying paper towels and plastic bags in case of accidents.

As you entered you would have been invited to make a donation to or scan this QR code to donate to Auckland Cavy Care:



**Thank you for your generosity.**

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CLERGY

Rev Richard Bonifant, Rev Cate Thorn,  
Rev Linda Murphy, Rev Wilf Holt

ORGANIST

Nicholas Forbes

VERGER

Dmitry Rusakov

# WELCOME

*Rev Richard Bonifant*

## HYMN

**Bless the creatures great and small,  
fish of sea and bird of air.  
Lovingly you made them all,  
placed them in our gentle care  
God of life we come today,  
Bless these animals, we pray.**

**You have called on us to be  
stewards of the living earth.  
May we serve you faithfully,  
caring as would show our worth.  
God of life we come today  
Bless these animals, we pray.**

**For the gift each creature brings,  
pet, companion, guardian, friend.  
May thy spirit lift on wings this,  
Our humble thanks, to send.  
God of life, we come today.  
Bless these animals, we pray.**

## READING

*Janie and Disa Wetherell*

To Learn from Animal Being

John O'Donohue

*Nearer to the earth's heart,  
Deeper within its silence:  
Animals know this world in a way we never will.  
May we learn to return and rest in the beauty  
Of animal being,  
Learn to lean low, leave our locked minds,  
And with freed senses feel the earth breathing with us.  
May we enter into lightness of spirit,  
And slip frequently into the feel of the wild.  
May we learn to walk upon the earth  
With all their confidence and clear-eyed stillness  
So that our minds might be baptised  
In the name of the wind and the light and the rain.*

## CANDLE OF REMEMBRANCE

*Rev Wilf Holt*

*In thanksgiving for loved animals  
who have died in the past year.*

# MEDITATION

*Rev Wilf Holt*

**We Give Thanks for The Animals**

Gary Kowalski

*We give thanks for the animals  
Who live close to nature,  
Who remind us of the sanctities of birth and death,  
Who do not trouble their lives with foreboding or grief,  
Who let go each moment as it passes,  
And accept each new one as it comes  
With serenity and grace.  
Enable us to walk in beauty as they do  
At one with the turning seasons,  
Welcoming the sunrise and at peace with sunset.  
And as we remember our good friends now departed,  
Who loved abundantly and in their time were loved,  
Who freely gave us their affection and loyalty,  
Let us not be anxious for tomorrow  
But ask only that kindness and gratitude fill our hearts,  
Day by day, into the passing years.*

# ADDRESS

*Raylene Holder - Auckland Cavy Care*

*Pip Callinan - Fosterer for Auckland Cavy Care*

# SONG

*Eloise Page (Primo Gatto) and Alanah Jones (Secondo Gatto)*

**Duetto Buffo die due Gatti**

Gioachino Rossini (1792-1868)

# PRAYERS FOR OUR WORLD AND ALL GOD'S CREATURES

*Readers: Mika Bonifant, Arwen Bonifant,  
Tiffany Mann and Travis Mann*

*Creator God, for your creation, we give you thanks. We hear the hum of tiny insect wings, the skitter of skinks and geckos, and even the slither of snails and slugs – we admit that sometimes these things scare or repulse us, but we know they are part of our planet's delicate balance and we give thanks for creation's diversity and richness.*

*We hear the song and coos of the tui and ruru, the predatory cry of the falcon and the annoying screech of the mynah bird. We may find some creatures habits annoying, but we marvel at their ability to fly freely.*

*We hear the soft rustle of rabbits and guinea pigs as they move about their pens and hutches, or free range on our lawns. We may find their munching on our growing plants and vegetable patches annoying, but we know they are part of creation.*

*We listen for the animal sounds that have vanished, and ask forgiveness for our role in their demise. For all the times we have hurt or neglected animals, or used poisons that have harmed them, or destroyed their homes in the forests, oceans, and fields. We are sorry.*

*God, our Creator, we listen and hear your voice in the kereru's cry and the cat's purr, in the elephant's bellow and the donkey's bray. Help us to love all creatures as our kin, all animals as our partners on Earth, all birds as messengers of praise, all frogs as voices of hope, and all small beings as expressions of your marvellous design.  
Amen.*

# WHAT IS A BLESSING

*Rev Cate Thorn*

*In a few minutes, we will be blessing the animals.*

*But first let's think about a 'blessing.' We don't bring our companion animals to a service like this so much because we think they need a special blessing from God – we bring them because we have been blessed by them and we want to say a thanks to them and to God.*

*We know the blessing of a tail wagging when we return home, the blessing of whiskers twitching and ears turning to our voice. We know the blessing of bird song in the morning and our guinea pigs contented rustling at night.*

*We know the blessing of a rabbit's nose nudging our hand for a treat, or a cat's fur brushing our face. We know the blessing of company, of trust, of playfulness, and of responsibility to care and feed and love something that cannot speak words but daily speaks to our hearts.*

*So, we come to say thanks today. But we also come today because we know that we have blessing work to do. We come because we want to be a blessing.*

*We want to bring safe harbour to creatures losing their homes to our overdevelopment of the land and resources. We want to protect fragile ecosystems and gentle beaches that are home to rich bio-diversity and we want to ensure that no more creatures pass to extinction.*

*So, we come today to be a blessing. Let us share in the words of thanksgiving. I invite you to place your hand on the animal you love, or its photo, as we express our thanks.*

# BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS

*Blessed are you, Creator God, maker of all living creatures.*

*On the fifth and sixth days of creation you called forth fish in the sea, birds in the air and animals on the land.*

*You inspired St Francis to call all animals his brothers and sisters.*

*We ask you to bless these animals.*

*By the power of your love, may we always praise you for all your beauty in creation.*

*Blessed are you, Creator God, in all your creatures!*

*Amen.*

*All animals are now invited to come forward  
and bring their humans with them.*