

The Feast of
ST. FRANCIS

Blessing of the Animals



Christ Episcopal Church
Holy Eucharist

October 7, 2026 | 5:30 pm | Courtyard

Celebration of St. Francis of Assisi

Welcome to this Eucharist with the Blessing of the Animals.

This is always a joyful occasion as we celebrate God's gifts to us in creation, and especially ask God's blessing on the animals with which we share our lives.

This service always falls on the Wednesday closest to October 4, the feast of St. Francis of Assisi. Francis is often remembered through his songs and poems, many of which express the praise of God in creation.

It is not just animals for which Francis thanks God, but all aspects of creation. Brother Sun, Sister Moon, wind, stars, water. The cosmic elements all gather as God's creatures in his Canticle of the Sun.

In these days of climate change, pollution, waste, and inequitable sharing of our global resources, we would do well to widen our focus.

Let's hold on to our love and care for our animals and include love and preservation of our planet. If we love God in all creation, we will, perhaps, learn to love each other, truly as sister and brother.

Francis of Assisi (Friar, 1226)

Francis, the son of a prosperous merchant of Assisi, was born in 1182. His early youth was spent in harmless revelry and fruitless attempts to win military glory. Various encounters with beggars and lepers pricked the young man's conscience, however, and he decided to embrace a life devoted to Lady Poverty. Despite his father's intense opposition, Francis totally renounced all material values and devoted himself to serve the poor. In 1210, Pope Innocent III confirmed the simple Rule for the Order of Friars Minor, a name Francis chose to emphasize his desire to be numbered among the "least" of God's servants.

The order grew rapidly all over Europe. But, by 1221, Francis had lost control of it, since his ideal of strict and absolute poverty, both for the individual friars and for the order as a whole, was found to be too difficult to maintain. His last years were spent in much suffering of body and spirit, but his unconquerable joy never failed. In his later years he was ordained as a deacon, but he resisted all efforts to persuade him to become a priest.

Not long before his death, during a retreat on Mount La Verna, Francis received, on September 14, Holy Cross Day, the marks of the Lord's wounds, the stigmata, in his own hands and feet and side. Pope Gregory IX, a former patron of the Franciscans, canonized Francis in 1228 and began the erection of the great basilica in Assisi where Francis is buried.

Of all the saints, Francis is perhaps the most popular and admired but probably the least imitated; few have attained to his total identification with the poverty and suffering of Christ. Francis left few writings; but, of these, his spirit of joyous faith comes through most truly in the "Canticle of the Sun," which he composed at Clare's convent of St. Damian's. The version in *The Hymnal* begins (*The Hymnal* 1982, #406; #407):

Most High, omnipotent, good Lord,
To thee be ceaseless praise outpoured,—
And blessing without measure.
Let creatures all give thanks to thee
And serve in great humility.

From: *Lesser Feasts and Fasts - 2024, Church Publishing*

*Welcome to Christ Church Ponte Vedra! We are delighted to have you worship with us.
In order to prepare for this service, we ask that you silence your phone. Thank you!*

THE WORD OF GOD

Welcome Words

Opening Hymn

All Creatures of Our God and King

All creatures of our God and King
Lift up your voices, let us sing: Alleluia, alleluia!
Bright burning sun with golden beams,
Pale silver moon hat gently gleams,

Refrain O praise Him, O praise Him
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Let all things their Creator bless
And worship Him in humbleness O praise Him, alleluia!
Praise God the Father, praise the Son,
And praise the Spirit, three in One: *Refrain*

Let all things their creator bless,
And worship him in humbleness,
O praise him, Alleluia!
Praise God, the Father, praise the Son,
And praise the Spirit, Three in One: *Refrain*

Opening Sentences

“O how happy and blessed are those who love the Lord and do as the Lord himself said in the gospel: You shall love the Lord your God with your whole heart and your whole soul, and your neighbor as yourself. Therefore, let us love God and adore him with pure heart and mind. This is his particular desire when he says: True worshippers adore the Father in spirit and truth”.

The Collect

Celebrant The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Celebrant Let us pray.

Most high, omnipotent, good Lord, grant your people grace to renounce gladly the vanities of this world; that, following the way of blessed Francis, we may, for love of you, delight in your whole creation with perfectness of joy; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Please stand as you are able.

Gospel Song

Prayer of St. Francis

Make me a channel of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me bring your love.
Where there is injury, your pardon, Lord,
And where there's doubt, true faith in you.

Make me a channel of your peace.
Where there's despair in life, let me bring hope.
Where there is darkness, only light,
And where there's sadness, ever joy.

O Master, grant that I may never seek
So much to be consoled as to console,
To be understood, as to understand, to be loved,
As to love, with all my soul.

Make me a channel of your peace.
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
In giving of ourselves that we receive,
And in dying that we're born to eternal life.

The Gospel

Gospeler

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke 12:13-21

People

Glory to you, Lord Christ.

Someone in the crowd said to Jesus, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me.” But he said to him, “Friend, who set me to be a judge or arbitrator over you?” And he said to them, “Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of possessions.” Then he told them a parable: “The land of a rich man produced abundantly. And he thought to himself, ‘What should I do, for I have no place to store my crops?’

Then he said, ‘I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, ‘Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.’ But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be?’ So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich toward God.”

Gospeler

The Gospel of the Lord.

People

Praise to you, Lord Christ.

Please be seated.

The Homily

Alex Cain

A Prayer for Animals

Let us pray.

O God, You created all living things on the face of the earth and gave us dominion over them; grant that we may be faithful to this trust in the way we treat animals, both wild and tame. Teach us to admire their beauty and to delight in their strength and to wonder at their intelligence. Grant that our use of them may be merciful and wise. So may we lend our voice to the praise of your goodness which endures forever. **Amen.**

Prayers of the People

Leader Let us pray to God the Almighty, the creator, and maker of all things.

God said, 'Let there be a firmament in the midst of the heavens.'

We praise you for creating a universe which proclaims your glory.

God of life:

People **Hear our prayer.**

God said, 'Let the waters be gathered together, and let dry land appear.'

We thank you for the diversity and resources of land and sea, for the resources they offer.

God said, 'Let there be lights in the sky to separate the day and the night.'

Save us from wasting the resources on which all life depends.

God of life:

Hear our prayer.

God said, 'Let the waters bring forth living creatures, let birds fly across the sky, Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind.

Grant us grace to treat all animals with respect and care; To protect, preserve, and honor their lives and habitat.

God of life:

Hear our prayer.

God said, 'Let us create human beings in our own image.'

We pray for the human family.

God of life:

Hear our prayer.

Then, when it was good, when the making and saying and doing were done, You rested.

Lord, teach us to rest, to wonder at the beauty of the world, and to see your gracious hand in all your works.

God of life:

Hear our prayer.

Celebrant Almighty and everlasting God, you made the universe with all its marvelous order, its atoms, worlds, and galaxies, and the infinite complexity of living creatures: Grant that, as we probe the mysteries of your creation, we may come to know you more truly, and more surely fulfill our role in your eternal purpose; in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Blessing of the Animals

Please remain in your place and the clergy will come to you for the pet blessing.

Please stand as you are able.

The Peace

Celebrant The peace of the Lord be always with you.

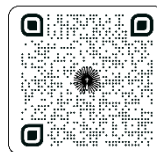
People **And also with you.**

Please be seated.

Announcements

*To make an offering online visit
ccpvb.org/give or scan this code.
Thank you for your support.*

SCAN HERE



THE HOLY COMMUNION

Offertory Song

We Thank You, God, for Animal Friends Aldredge-Clanton & Schultz
Children's Choir & Little's Choir

Chorus Come now and join in the celebration
Sing and give thanks for God's good creation
All living creatures, large and small
Are gifts from the Spirit, Maker of all!

We thank You, God, for animal friends
They cause us to marvel, laugh and grin
They cuddle close when we are sad
They jump for joy when we are glad. (*Chorus*)

We thank You, God, for animal friends
They guide and protect us and defend
They sense and warn when danger's near
They help us see, they help us hear. (*Chorus*)

Bless all animals everywhere
In our homes and flying through air
In the fields and rivers on earth
Thank You, God, for giving them birth

The kittens and puppies, the goldfish and guppies
The roosters and hens, the sparrows and wrens
The parrots and colts, hamsters and goats
The spaniels and beagles, penguins and eagles (*Chorus*)

We thank You, God, and promise to care
For animals, animals everywhere!

Please stand as you are able.

The Presentation

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise him, all creatures here below;
Praise him above, ye heavenly host:
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.**

Eucharistic Prayer

Celebrant The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Celebrant Lift up your hearts.

People **We lift them to the Lord.**

Celebrant Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People **It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

The Celebrant continues

O God of mystery and promise, you invite us to discover you in the intimate places of ourselves and our lives. You invite us to discover you within the complexities of our humanity, in passionate and tender loving, in struggle and pain, in confusion and unknowing, in flashes of insight and wisdom. You also call us beyond ourselves to places of imagination, beyond the silent stars, in the deep rhythms of the ocean, in the unending cycles of day and night, seasons of life and death. With saints and ancestors, with the seas and earth and sky, with animals and birds, with our friends and those unknown to us, with all creation we join in the song of your unending glory:

Celebrant and People

**Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

The Celebrant continues

We praise you that in Jesus you make known to us the wonder and richness of our humanity. We give thanks for his life-giving love, for his healing touch, for his vulnerability, and for his gentleness. Before he gave up his life, he shared his humanity, his flesh, and blood with his friends. He took bread, gave thanks for it, broke it, and gave it to them, saying: "This is my own body given for you. Do this to remember me."

So, too, after they had eaten, he took wine, gave thanks for it, and gave it to them, saying: "This is my blood, poured out in love for you. Do this to remember me."

Therefore we proclaim the mystery of faith:

Celebrant and People

**Christ has died,
Christ is risen,
Christ will come again**

The Celebrant continues

Come now, Spirit of God, and as we eat and drink these bodily things, make us one body, food for the world, one blood to be poured out for the life of all. Touch us with your gentle creativity and fire us with longing for the new age of justice and peace. We ask this through Jesus who gave his body that we might be one and his blood that we might find new life. With him, and through him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, be to you, O God, all honor and glory forever.

Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Celebrant And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

Celebrant and People

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name, 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, for ever and ever. Amen.**

The Breaking of the Bread

Celebrant Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.

People **Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia.**

Celebrant The Gifts of God for the people of God.

Please be seated.

Distribution of Communion

Please join us at God's table.

All people, including children, are invited to receive Communion. Gluten-free wafers are also available.

*If you would prefer not to take Communion but would like a blessing, please fold your arms across
your chest.*

Music During Communion

Come Thou Fount (Come Thou King)

Gateway Worship

Come Thou Fount of every blessing
Tune my heart to sing Your grace
Streams of mercy, never ceasing
Call for songs of loudest praise
Teach me some melodious sonnet
Sung by flaming tongues above
Praise His name, I'm fixed upon it
Name of God's redeeming love

I was lost in utter darkness
Till You came and rescued me
I was bound by all my sin when
Your love came and set me free
Now my soul can sing a new song
Now my heart has found a home
Now Your grace is always with me
And I'll never be alone

Chorus Come Thou Fount, come Thou King
 Come Thou precious Prince of Peace
 Hear Your bride, to You we sing
 Come Thou Fount of our blessing

O to grace how great a debtor
Daily I'm constrained to be
Let Your goodness flow around me
Bind my wand'ring heart to Thee
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it
Prone to leave the God I love
Here's my heart, Lord, take and seal it
Seal it for Your courts above

Ending Name of God's redeeming love and I'll never be alone
 Seal it for Your courts above

Creation sings the Father's song
He calls the sun to wake the dawn
And run the course of day
Till evening falls in crimson rays
His fingerprints in flakes of snow
His breath upon this spinning globe
He charts the eagle's flight
Commands the newborn baby's cry

Chorus Hallelujah. Let all creation stand and sing
 Hallelujah. Fill the earth with songs of worship
 Tell the wonders of creation's King

Creation gazed upon His face
The ageless One in time's embrace
Unveiled the Father's plan
Of reconciling God and man
A second Adam walked the earth
Whose blameless life would break the curse
Whose death would set us free
To live with Him eternally

Creation longs for His return
When Christ shall reign upon the earth
The bitter wars that rage
Are birth pains of a coming age
When He renews the land and sky
All heaven will sing and earth reply
With one resplendent theme
The glory of our God and King

Please stand as you are able.

Postcommunion Prayer

Let us pray

Eternal God, heavenly Father, you have graciously accepted us as living members of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ, and you have fed us with spiritual food in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood. Send us now into the world in peace, and grant us strength and courage to love and serve you with gladness and singleness of heart; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Blessing

May God our Creator,

Who clothes the lilies and feeds the birds of the air, bestow on you his care

And increase the harvest of your compassion;

And the blessing of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,

Be upon you and remain with you, today and always. **Amen.**

Dismissal

Go forth and tend the earth, care for God's good creation, and bear the fruits of righteousness. Alleluia! Alleluia!

People

Thanks be to God. Alleluia! Alleluia!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Are you a Member? Are you interested in becoming a Member? There are two upcoming opportunities to connect and learn more about Christ Church. Scan for details!

*Thurs Oct 8 –Dinner |

6:00pm -8:00 pm

*Sun Nov. 8 - Lunch |

12:30-2:30pm



Join a Choir! Contact Dr. Rachel Root at rroot@ccpvb.org

Women's Ensemble – Rehearse Wednesdays 6:30-7 pm, sings monthly at 9 & 11:15 am

Men's Ensemble - Rehearse Wednesdays 6:30-7 pm, sings monthly at 7:30, 9 & 11:15

Chancel Choir - Rehearse Wednesdays 7-8pm, sings weekly at 11:15 am

Handbell Choir - Rehearse Thursdays 6-7 pm, plays monthly at either 9 or 11:15

Childrens' Choirs | Wednesdays, Room 124

Littest Choir | 3 year olds – 1st grade

Rehearsal: Wednesdays from 4:30–5:00pm

Children's Choir | 2nd grade – 5th grade

Rehearsal: 5:15pm – 6:00pm

Contact: Stephanie Murray at

SMurray@ccpvb.org, Worship and Family Music Director

October 8 – Rachel and Friends present SOUL SOAKING SONGS: Lullabies from Evening Prayers | 7:00 pm | Choir Room
Cost: \$10 at the door.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Christ Church Hikers Group

10a-12n on 1st Friday & 3rd Monday

Next Hike: 10/12 - Alpine Grove Park

Appropriate for a variety of fitness levels, walks are led by avid hiker & parishioner Bob Campbell. Email Bobcampbell777@gmail.com to RSVP and for the exact meeting point.

Guided Forest Walk with Dr. Trey Wilson

October 18 at 10:00 am -12:00 noon

Jacksonville Arboretum and Gardens

Join us for a morning of reflection and renewal led by forest therapy guide, Dr Trey Wilson. This event is suitable for all levels of walkers. Register online or by emailing trey@treygardens.com.

October 21 – Trunk-or-Treat

Interested in hosting a Candy Car? Sign up here or email Amy at aschmitt@ccpvb.org



Young Adults Group

Oct 25-Dec 20 | 10:15-11am | Room 202

New Sunday offering for young adults (20s & 30s)! Contact: Alex Cain at acain@ccpvb.org

All Souls' Service

November 4 | 7:00 pm | Main Sanctuary

This service is to honor and remember those who have passed away.

November 5 - Young Adult Social

All young adults (20s & 30s) are invited as we gather for an evening of fun and festivities! Details to follow.

Contact: Alex Cain at acain@ccpvb.org

MINISTRY CONTACTS

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Youth

Parker Corey / pcorey@ccpvb.org

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Worship Services

7:30 a.m.	Church Sanctuary	Holy Eucharist, Rite I
9:00 a.m.	Church Sanctuary	Holy Eucharist, Rite II
9:00 a.m.	Cooper Chapel	Holy Eucharist, Rite II
9:00 a.m.	Parish Center, 2nd floor	Contemporary Service
9:00 a.m.	NSIA Community Center	Holy Eucharist, Rite II
11:15 a.m.	Church Sanctuary	Holy Eucharist, Rite II
11:15 a.m.	Parish Center, 2nd floor	Contemporary Service
12:45 p.m.	Parish Center, 2 nd floor	Spanish-language Service
5:00 p.m.	Church Sanctuary	Contemplative Service
5:30 p.m. (Wed)	Cooper Chapel	Holy Eucharist, Rite II

Vestry

Gretna Zerebny, Sr. Warden	Janet Burnside, Treasurer	Kathy Blackman, Jr. Warden
Maggie Bowers	Chris Brownlee	Gordon Deen
Katharine Loeb	Doug Long	Justin Udelhofen
Wendy Waller	Sarah Wefer	Trey Wilson

Staff Clergy

The Rev. Thomas P. Reeder, Rector
The Rev. Andreis Diaz, Vice Rector The Rev. Amy Slater, Vice Rector
The Rev. Laura Magevney, Associate Rector
The Rev. Wendy Billingslea
The Rev. Keith Oglesby, Vicar for Christ Church Among the Oaks

Deacons

The Rev. Deacon Leila Quinlan The Rev. Deacon Priscilla Wodehouse

Adjunct Clergy

The Rev. Dr. Jim Cooper, Rector Emeritus
The Rev. Michael Ellis The Rev. Louanne Loch
The Rev. Eric Kahl The Rev. Bob Morris
The Rev. Burt Shepherd The Rev. Rich Roos
The Rev. Joan Bryan, Emeritus
The Rev. Deacon Jo Hoskins, Deacon Emeritus

In Formation

Alex Cain, Curate
Pedro Figueroa Valerie Gambino



Coloring Page



The world has changed.

And at times we feel further apart than ever before.

But, two things haven't changed:

God's Unwavering Love, and our need for each other.

With that comes the love that Christ Church has for you—all of you.

Because no matter if you attend virtually or in-person.

If you're Episcopalian or Non-Denominational.

Young or Old. Lean Left or Right.

Through the love of Jesus Christ, we are one.

Christ Church is not just a place, it's a community.

It's not just what you do on Sunday, it's how you live every day.

With opportunities to grow, learn, create, worship, praise, connect, serve, and thrive.

We are a church centered around Christ.

We are a community centered around Christ

We are the community of Christ Church.



**CHRIST
CHURCH**

Sunday. Every Day.