

Service of Blessing for Animals - September 24 – 2pm.

We give thanks to be meeting here on the traditional territory of the Anishnabe, Neutral and Haudenosaunee first nations, for our service of blessing for Animals.

**We begin our service today with a prayer of thanksgiving:**

Creator of all life, we cherish all you have created. Water, earth and sky are yours and all their inhabitants, both wild and tame. We thank you for creatures that nourish and serve us, creatures who are our friends and family, our companions, our comforters, who entertain and protect us. Help us to care for them well while they are with us. Help us to care for all your creation, for all our relatives within creation, as you intended. Amen.

All religions and spiritual traditions have some kind of creation story ... today our service begins with the sharing of two of these creation stories ... the first one is from the Haudenosaunee tradition:

**For the Haudenosaunee, the earth was created through the interplay of elements from the sky and waters. The different Iroquoian-speaking peoples tell slightly different versions of the creation story, which begins with Sky Woman falling from the sky.**

Long before the world was created, there was an island in the sky inhabited by sky people. One day a pregnant sky woman drops through a hole created by an uprooted tree and begins to fall for what seems like eternity.

***Coming out of darkness, she eventually sees oceans. The animals from this world congregate, trying to understand what they see in the sky. A flock of birds is sent to help her. The birds catch her and gently guide her down onto the back of Great Turtle. The water animals like otter and beaver have prepared a place for her on turtle's back. They bring mud from the bottom of the ocean and place it on turtle's back until solid earth begins to form and***

***increase size.***

***Turtle's back becomes Sky Woman's home and the plants she's brought down with her from Skyworld, including tobacco and strawberries, are her medicine. She makes a life for herself and becomes the mother of Haudenosaunee life, as we know it today.***

Shelley Niro, Kanien'kehaka, 1999  
Keller George, Oneida Haudenosaunee, 2001  
Alan Brant, Tyendinaga, 2001

In this tradition people depend on the animals even for creation of the earth.

In the Christian Tradition, God makes creatures first, and then human beings – again we hear how creatures are necessary for our survival. We have the creation story from Genesis:

#### A READING FROM THE BOOK OF GENESIS 1:24-31

(NRSV) 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. {25} 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. {26} Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth." {27} So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. {28} God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth." {29} God said, "See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. {30} And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so. {31} God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

Word of God, Word of Life.

Thanks be to God.

Bearing in mind that all God's creatures are a blessing, we invite you forward now to share your pet's name with us, receive a blessing on your pet or the item you have brought for your pet, and receive a signed certificate of blessing. If you would also like photographs, we offer an opportunity for that after the service.

For the pet with owner:

[name of pet and name of owner], May you both be blessed by the Creator, with good health and long life, according to Creator's will. Amen.

For the pet in memoriam: [

name of pet], who is now one with Creator, we give thanks for your life with [name of owner], and pray you rest in eternal peace. Amen.

**Prayers of intercession in which we all respond:**

Let us give thanks to the Creator for all the good gifts of creation. Your response when I say “we are grateful” is to reply “we thank you, Creator of all”

Creator you so freely share with us the beauty and wonder of your creation, in earth and sky and sea; we are grateful.

**We thank you, Creator of all.**

For the richness of the mountains, plains and rivers; we are grateful.

**We thank you, Creator of all.**

For all that is gracious in the lives of human beings; we are grateful.

**We thank you, Creator of all.**

For all creatures that breathe, and move, and have life; for the creatures we have loved who are now gone: we are grateful.

**We thank you, Creator of all.**

For the songs of birds and the loveliness of flowers and trees; we are grateful.

**We thank you, Creator of all.**

For the trust you have shown in giving into our care these, our pets; we are grateful.

**We thank you, Creator of all.**

We pray that each pet here may be treasured with care;  
That we may love, honour and continue to grow in grateful enjoyment of all your Creation;  
We pray in the traditions from which we come. Amen.

May you go from here, in peace with your pet or the memory of your pet, knowing that you and your animal are a perfect part of Creator’s handiwork. Amen.