

Ten Reasons for Doing a Blessing of Animals Service at Your Church

Biblical: God blesses every creature and calls them good and very good ([Genesis 1](#)).

Pastoral: This simple service is a wonderful way to care for church members and their pets that are an important part of their lives. [10 Ways That Losing a Pet is Worse Than Losing a Human](#) is a helpful article, reminding us how precious pets can be.

Educational: Worship can be a time for teaching, and the Blessings of Animals Service can be a good time to help people make the connections between faith and pets. Check out this [free resource on Presbyterian teachings about animals](#).

Outreach: This service can be an excellent way to do evangelism. Publicize it in your local newspaper, on Facebook, on your church website and by email – asking your church members to share the online information with others who have pets. The Blessing of Animals Service is shorter than a Sunday morning worship service which can be appealing, especially for people who are bringing their pets. The outdoor service may be visible to those passing by; it can be a witness that the church is a place where things happen more than once a week. Have a flyer about the church to give visitors, along with an invitation to worship and other activities (we invited a local veterinarian to do a zoom program during the week following the service). Families with pets often come to this service, and they may be interested in getting information on other church events.

Safe: An outdoor service, with sun and open air, is a lower risk during the pandemic than being inside. It is still important for churches to practice love of neighbors (which includes not getting them sick); the [CDC recommends everyone masking in crowds outdoors](#), so have some extra masks for those who need them.

Celebrate Vocations: Invite everyone who works with animals to come to the service, recognize them and pray for them in the service. Animal-related professions include veterinarians, others who work in animal hospitals and shelters, animal rescue workers, animal trainers (including those who train service animals), zoo employees, groomers, researchers, and more.

Fun: Bringing animals to worship makes the service informal and fun.

Alternative worship time: The offering of the service at a different time (and day?) makes it attractive to those who might not be able to attend a regular Sunday morning service.

Connecting animals with the whole of creation: The recent record-breaking heat waves, massive forest fires and supersized storms with deadly flooding are clear warnings that we need to do better in caring for creation, including our beloved pets.

Prophetic: Share information on caring for farm animals. [Food, Inc.](#) is an excellent documentary. Humane Society in the United States has [helpful resources](#). The Union of Concerned Scientists is encouraging people [to advocate for more family farms, and for fewer factory farms](#) where animals are more likely to be mistreated.