

# *Faith United Church of Christ*

*“An inclusive spiritual family shaping a better you for creating a better world.  
A place to make a difference.”*

September 23, 2018    **Blessing of the Animals Sunday**    Sacred Fellowship 10:45  
AM

*We are delighted that you are here today! We hope you will find us an affirming, uplifting, and committed family of faith. Here we work to make everyone, without any exceptions, to feel accepted, inspired, and encouraged in their spiritual journey. In dialogue, we seek to understand. In encouragement, we seek to heal. In all things we yearn to live by love, for peace, with joy. This is a place where your intellect will be challenged, your heart will be nurtured, and your spirit refreshed. Varying beliefs are expressed openly and freely, and your doubts will not be suppressed. We trust that we are all, every person and part of creation, continuing to be blessed by God’s grace; and that in community we can help each other to see this grace alive in our lives and relationships. We hope to share our gifts with you, even as we pray that you will want to share your gifts with us. Whoever you are and wherever you may be in your life’s journey, we invite you to be a part of our lives and our spiritual home. Welcome!*

Outdoor Service for the Blessing of Animals

## **CALLED TOGETHER AS SPIRITUAL FAMILY**

### **Welcome and Announcements**

*We ask that you please shut off cell phones and practice quietness during the service.*

*Please join us for fellowship and refreshments after the worship.*

*\* = You are invited to stand as you are able*

### **Gathering Music**

#### **The Water Which Gives Life** *(water poured into the Basin of Blessing)*

*We prepare ourselves for communing with the sacred remembering that water gives life to creatures throughout the earth. Whether drinking, bathing, or enjoying the sounds and sights of water, it connects us with all life. Water holes, rivers, lakes, streams, ponds, oceans, and wells all nourish us into life. As water flows into and through each of us, we remember its sanctity. We preserve, protect, and share our water so that life may be abundant upon this good earth.*

## Affirming God's Presence in Us All

"You Matter!"

### \*Hymn for All Creation "All Creatures of Our God and King"

*Tune: Lasst Uns Erfreuen L.M. w/ Alleluias*

*Words: St. Francis of Assisi (1182-1226); tr. William H. Draper, alt.; Music: Geistliche Kirchengesang, Cologne, 1623; arr. Ralph Vaughan Williams*

All creatures of our God and king, lift up your voice and with us sing;  
Alleluia, Alleluia!

O burning sun with golden beam, O silver moon with softer gleam,  
O praise God, O praise God, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

O rushing wind with voice so strong, you clouds that sail in heav'n along;  
O praise God, Alleluia!

O rising morn, in praise rejoice, you lights of evening find a voice,  
O praise God, O praise God, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

O flowing water, pure and clear, make music for your God to hear;  
Alleluia, Alleluia!

O blazing fire who lights the night, providing warmth, enhancing sight,  
O praise God, O praise God, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

### \*Centering Our Souls

O God, who created us to be stewards of all earthly creation, we give you thanks for our lives and for the task you have assigned to us in caring for all things you have made and entrusted to our responsibility.

**We give you thanks for all the animals and life upon the earth, in the skies, and in the waters. May we regard them as part of your family and ours.**

We are blessed to share this global biotic community with the rest of your creatures, and we have come to understand how interconnected we are with all life.

**We look to you as the parent of us all. We are interdependent with your sons and daughters of all species that exist on this good earth.**

Grant that we may receive the wisdom on how to fulfill our role as good stewards and caretakers of the earth and all its inhabitants.

**Remind us to extend the Golden Rule not just to our fellow human beings, but to all life you have created.**

Help us to remember that your impartiality and caring concern extends beyond humanity to all of creation.

**May our own love and compassion mimic yours, for your joy is as evident at the playfulness of your creatures as it is at your sadness in their sufferings.**

Nurture us in tenderness for not only the animals we call our pets, but those which remain wild and free in the places which we preserve as their homes.

**May we not unduly infringe upon the habitats of your blessed creatures, but establish a place for them that will allow them to flourish for all generations yet to come.**

Educate and inspire us to learn the countless lessons we can from our animal brothers and sisters.

**May our respect for them increase as we remember that the covenant you made with us was also made with them.**

Help us to promote justice for all, and let us preserve the dignity of each animal and specie throughout the world by our honorable efforts to be the stewards you have called us to be.

**Bless us in these endeavors, and may your blessings be upon all your creatures great and small wherever they may be, now and forever. May it be so.**

### **WE LISTEN FOR THE SACRED IN THE MIDST OF OUR LIVES**

**A Time for All God's Children** "Sharing Our Stories of Animals"

#### **Prayers**

***Sharing Our Joys and Concerns***

***Silent Meditation: The Prayers of the People***

***Pastoral Prayer***

***Unison Prayer: "Poetic Prayer in the Spirit of Christ"***

Loving Spirit, who is here and there,  
we're grateful for your tender care.

Your virtues rise, your values prized;  
near and far, and everywhere.

Feed our bodies, and feed our souls.

And by forgiveness make us whole.

And may we all evils deplore,

as we search and sail for mercy's shore.

May peace and love within us rule,  
and justice be your Spirit's tool;

Now and always, for us and others,  
and for all creation.

May we make it so, all as one,  
by your inspiration.

**\*Hymn of Siblinghood**      “O God, Your Creatures Fill the Earth”

*Tune: Ellacombe CMD*

*Words: Carolyn Winfrey Gillette, 2011 All Rights Reserved; Music: Gesangbuch der H.W. k. Hofkappelle, 1784, alt.*

O God, your creatures fill the earth with wonder and delight,  
And every living thing has worth and beauty in your sight.  
So playful dolphins dance and swim; Your sheep bow down and graze.  
Your songbirds share a morning hymn To offer you their praise.

You made the pets we welcome in— They're wondrous blessings, too.  
With paws and whiskers, wings and fins, They offer praise to you.  
O Lord, you call us to embrace These creatures in our care.  
May we show kindness, love and grace To all pets everywhere.

You made the creatures on each farm; You know the things they need.  
May they grow healthy, safe from harm, And safe from human greed.  
Just as a shepherd loves the sheep, You know their joy, their pain.  
Lord, bless the animals we keep; May all farms be humane.

Your creatures live in every land; They fill the sky and sea.  
O Lord, you give us your command To love them tenderly.  
We're called to have dominion here--To care for them always.  
By loving creatures you hold dear, We offer you our praise.

**Scripture Lesson**

Ezekiel 34

**Message**      “A Good Shepherd's Care for the Sheep”

**AFFIRMING OUR RELATIONSHIPS**

**Blessing of the Animals**

*(Please bring animals forward single file to be blessed. Please tell the pastor the specie and name of the animals in your care.)*

God of all creation, we ask for your blessing of a joyful spirit, good health, and a happy home upon this (*name of specie*), who has been given the name, \_\_\_\_\_ . Thank you, O God, for this life and the relationship it has to those who care for it. In the name of God -- Creator, Nurturer, and Sustainer of all life. Amen

**Carrying Forth the Blessing** (*in unison*)

We celebrate and affirm, O God, your circle of life and our interdependence with all creation. May we grow in love and appreciation for all your creatures so that we may live within an unbroken circle of respectfulness that lifts up the worth of every living thing you have made. May your blessing rest upon our beloved pets here today, and may that blessing transform them and us to live in shalom with one another and with all creatures great and small. Amen

### **Hymn for Harmony**

“We Live in the Fullness of God’s Whole Creation”

*Tune: Kremser; Music: 16<sup>th</sup> Cent. Dutch melody; arr. by Edward Kremser; Words: Rev. Bret Stuart Myers, 7/26/2007*

We live in the fullness of God’s whole creation  
proclaiming, exclaiming the beauty we see.  
We sing with elation; come join our celebration!  
Each creature was made good; we are all blessed to be.

We’re called to be stewards of all the earth’s blessings;  
Partaking, care-taking – God’s will to be done.  
With healing caressing, towards wholeness we are pressing;  
We work for harmony that all may be one.

We’re siblings together no matter our specie;  
All brothers, one Mother, we’re all family.  
Our love will come easy, respecting every specie,  
If greed is set aside, so that all may live free.

This planet we live on, our needs she is bearing;  
Maintaining, sustaining each life in her care.  
She’s proud of our sharing and grieves at our tearing.  
With motherly advice she tells us, “Be fair!”

Can we live together in peace with all creatures;  
Befriending, extending compassion to all?  
All animals, teachers; just look at their features!  
A place for every one...be they be big or small.

### **WE DEDICATE OURSELVES TO GOD’S SERVICE THROUGH FAITHFULNESS**

### **Giving of Our Tithes and Offerings**

*“Generosity arises from gratitude like heat arises from fire. Like fire, gratitude is lovely to see;  
but when it warms others with generosity, that is when it becomes a true blessing.”*

### **Musical Offertory**

"The Lone, Wild Bird"

Walker, arr. D.

Johnson

Marinda Jenkins, alto

**\*Song of Dedication**

*Tune: Old Hundredth*

O God of Creatures great and small:

May we as stewards hear your call!

Let us live with loving grace

With all life on this earthly space.

**\*Unison Prayer of Dedication**

O God of all Creatures, bless the monies we give in joy that they may benefit relationships between all peoples and all creation. We thank you for species other than our own that give us delight, friendship, and a sense of appreciation and respect for all life. Bless our pets and also all things wild that we may live in harmony together. May we always treat them well, and care for their well-being, one and all. Amen

**\*Encouragement for the Journey**

On your journey of life, take the time to welcome new relationships – not only with other humans, but with animals of all kinds. Take time to enjoy the splendors of nature. Imbibe the music of wildlife as they chirp, bark, meow, and speak to that which is common in us all. Remember that you are a sibling of all things. Treat your brothers and sisters of every specie with compassion and kindness. For it is in how you treat others that you become the person you are.

**Music for Going Forth**

"Sent Forth By God's Blessing"

**WE GO FORTH AS PEACEMAKERS**  
**TO CREATE JUSTICE FOR ALL CREATURES**

*Our worship is fulfilled, and our purpose is confirmed,  
through our service as God's stewards to the world and all creation.*

*Use the blessings God has given you as you share  
the joy in your heart, the wisdom in your mind,  
the love in your spirit, and the peace in your soul.*

*Thank you for sharing sacred fellowship with us.*

Faith UCC is an open and affirming church, embracing diversity in our congregation and community, and affirming the dignity and worth of every person. We are an inclusive community of faith that celebrates God's presence through worship and the sharing of God's word. We welcome all persons into the full life and ministry of

the church, regardless of race, ethnic background, gender identity, sexual orientation, capability, or circumstance of life.

### Our Ministry

Ministers — All the Congregation

Interim Pastor — Rev. Bret Myers

Trustee — Larry Bair

Ushers — Jean Lee Childs

Fellowship — Lois Bair

### Church Staff

Custodian — Scott Luzier

Church School Coordinator — Barbara Chellman

Organist—Mark Ferraguto

Choir Director — Marinda Jenkins

Administrative Assistant — Jeff Stormer

*The liturgies for this morning's worship, along with the Song of Dedication, were written by Rev. Bret S. Myers except where otherwise noted.*

### ***Prayers for healing and wholeness:***

K. Thompson, Cyndy (Marilyn's daughter-in-law), June Irvin, Ben and Louise Harris, Jane Sheckells, Dan and Eileen Pfaff, Susie Keck, Joann Edwards, Lisa V. (John Vincenti's daughter), Brandon G., Lisa Neidigh, Katelynn Wilson, Darlene Ripka, April S., Randy Brown (Aimee Dad), the Piggot's family, Robert Zupp (Eileen Pfaff's nephew), the Snook family.

*God Answers  
Knee Mail*

Please help us keep this list up to date. Notify the office of additions or removals.



***Welcome to all first-time (and returning) guests to Faith***

***UCC!*** We would like to get to know you and for you to get to know us. Join us after worship for coffee and **conversation**.

There is free parking on Sundays at the meters and at the McAllister & Pugh Street parking garages – so, we hope you'll worship with us again next Sunday!

**Electronic Giving Options:** During the offering time in the service, you may place your offerings on the plates the ushers will bring around. If you prefer to give electronically simply **scan the QR code** with your smartphone to be directed to our online donation page.



## September Special Offering

**Park Forest PreSchool** is dedicated to providing low income families with a comprehensive preschool program that includes education, social skills, and developmental motor skills taught by qualified teachers in a friendly, safe environment. The preschool continues their mission of assisting at-risk children to grow and thrive while preparing them for a successful start in public school. You can learn more about them on their website: <http://www.parkforestpreschool.org>



- **Sep 23**     **25<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time**  
                  **Blessing of the Animals**
- **Sep 29**     **Ohio State 7:30PM**
- **Sep 30**     **26<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time**

### Get In Touch with Us!

Faith United Church of Christ     300 E. College Avenue State College, PA 16801

Tel: (814) 237-3904     Websites: [www.faithucc.info](http://www.faithucc.info)

[facebook.com/SCFaithUCC](https://www.facebook.com/SCFaithUCC)

Church Office Email: [faithucc@comcast.net](mailto:faithucc@comcast.net)     Pastor's Email:  
[revbmyers@yahoo.com](mailto:revbmyers@yahoo.com)

Church Office Hours: 9:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.     Tuesdays, Thursdays, & Fridays

Pastor Bret's Office Hours: Tuesday 5-8 p.m., Wednesday 11 a.m.-2 p.m., Thursday 2-4 p.m.  
or other hours by appointment.

Appointments are recommended so as to give you the time you need without interruptions. You may call the church office, or his cell at 608-370-9472, or email him at [revbmyers@yahoo.com](mailto:revbmyers@yahoo.com).