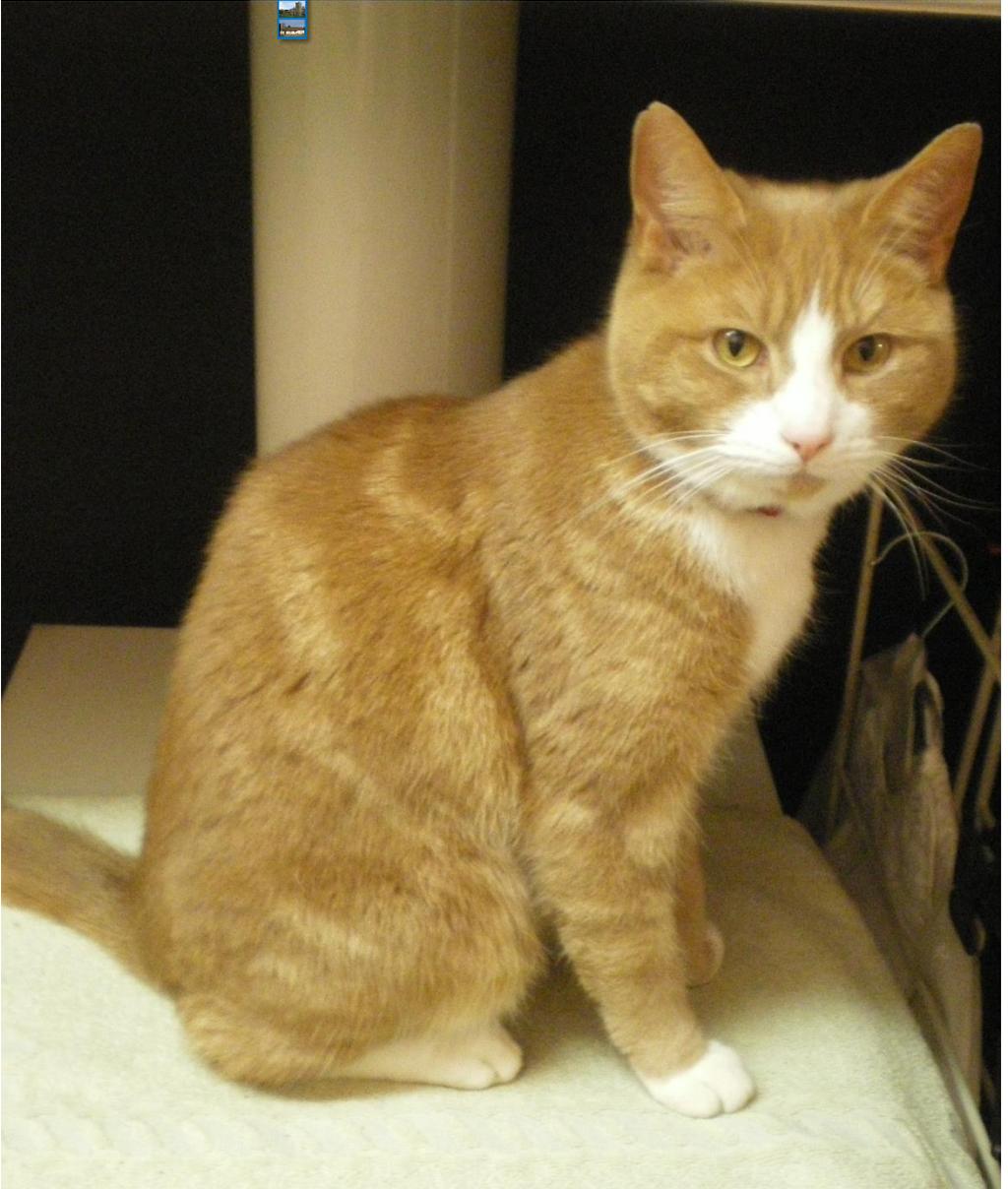




Chet Valley Churches



All Together Worship

Pet Service

21st August 2022

We Prepare for Worship

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

🎵 Hymn: *All Things Bright and Beautiful*

***All things bright and beautiful, all creatures great and small,
All things wise and wonderful, the Lord God made them all.***

**Each little flower that opens, each little bird that sings,
He made their glowing colours, he made their tiny wings.**

All things bright and beautiful...

**The purple-headed mountain, the river running by,
The sunset and the morning, that brightens up the sky;**

All things bright and beautiful...

**The cold wind in the winter, the pleasant summer sun,
The ripe fruits in the garden, he made them every one;**

All things bright and beautiful...

**He gave us eyes to see them, and lips that we might tell
How great is God Almighty, who has made all things well.**

All things bright and beautiful...

🙏 Collect—A Special Prayer for Today

Creator God, who made the world and blessed us with living creatures to be our friends: your care for us is unfailing. May our care for our pets be unfailing also, and in taking care of them, may we share in your love for all your creatures in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

📖 Readings

God formed out of the ground all the wild animals and all the birds of heaven. God brought them to the man to see what he could call them, and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. (Genesis 2:19)

I will remember my covenant which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh. (Genesis 9:15)

We have just heard that God will remember his covenant but what is a covenant? It is a kind of promise or agreement. God has promised to take care of us and all living creatures. Within that promise is the agreement that we will take care of the creatures that we live alongside. But because we so often fail to keep this agreement we need to say sorry for our faults:

Confession: We Say Sorry to God

Holy God, you made a covenant with us;
despite all our faults you have bound yourself to us;
despite our violence you have promised a covenant of peace;
despite our infidelity you have remained faithful to us.

Truly, you are a remarkable God whose graciousness knows no limits
and before whom no creature is left desolate.

Not only have you created the great Earth but also you are to each and
every creature their kind and loving God;
everything living looks to you for their sustenance and care;
without you, all the creatures of the earth would perish.

**All these living creatures you have put under our protection
and we are to care for them as you care for us;
but we know that we have often treated them
selfishly and thoughtlessly;
we have thought of them only as objects
for our amusement and pleasure;
we have neglected their true needs; we have betrayed your trust.**

Pause for reflection

**For these sins, gracious God we are truly sorry;
we ask your pardon and forgiveness.**



Absolution

May the God of love and power forgive us and free us from our sins,
heal and strengthen us by his Spirit, and raise us to new life in Christ our
Lord. **Amen.**

 **Hymn: Think of a World Without any Flowers**

**Think of a world without any flowers,
Think of a world without any trees.**

**Think of a sky without any sunshine,
Think of the air without any breeze.**

***We thank you, Lord, for flowers and trees and sunshine.
We thank you, Lord, and praise your holy name.***

**Think of a world without any animals,
Think of a field without any herd.
Think of a stream without any fishes,
Think of a dawn without any bird.**



***We thank you, Lord, for all your living creatures.
We thank you, Lord, and praise your holy name.***

**Think of a world without any people,
Think of a street with no-one living there.
Think of a town without any houses,
No-one to love and nobody to care.**

***We thank you, Lord, for families and friendships.
We thank you, Lord, and praise your holy name.***

📖 Story: Benno and the Frogs

Benno was a very holy man and several stories were told about him. He was so holy that he prayed nearly all day long. He would go into the woods and pray for hour after hour.

One day in late spring or early summer, he went out as usual. He saw that everything was very beautiful—the blossom on the trees; the swallows skimming through the blue sky; the warmth of the air... He knew that his main prayer today would be to thank God for all of these beautiful things. So, Benno raised his arms to heaven, opened his mouth and... **BAAAA!** It was the sheep in a nearby field. ‘Stop that!’ shouted Benno, ‘I can’t think with that row going on, let alone pray!’ So the sheep, who knew that they had to obey such a holy person, stopped bleating.

Benno raised his arms again and opened his mouth to pray... **MOO! MOO! MOO!** This time it was the cows in the pasture over there. And what was worse, the sheep started bleating as well. ‘Oh for goodness sake!’ said Benno. ‘I’m trying to pray!’ So the sheep and the cows stopped their noise.

Benno raised his arms for a third time. ‘O Lord...’ **TWEET! TWEET! TWEET!** ‘I can’t believe it’, Benno grumbled. He looked up. There was a blackbird’s nest in one of the trees. Some eggs had just hatched and the

fledglings were making a racket. And, this started the sheep and the cows as well. ‘Excuse me, you lot, someone’s trying to pray down here. Could you please, Mrs Blackbird, stop your babies from making such a din!’ So Mrs Blackbird, who knew she had to obey such a holy person, chopped up a worm and popped it into her young ones’ mouths and told them that they had to stay quiet. And the sheep and the cows stopped as well.

Benno raised his arms yet again and started to pray... **CROAK! CROAK! CROAK!** And when the frogs croaked, the birds started twittering and the cows started mooing and the sheep started bleating. ‘I can’t believe it! I just can’t believe it!’ shouted Benno. ‘You lot in that pond, pipe down! I’m trying to pray!’ **CROAK! CROAK! CROAK! TWEET! TWEET! TWEET! MOO! MOO! MOO! BAAAA!**

Benno still couldn’t pray. ‘It’s just not good enough! Turn it off completely!’ But it was no good. The animals were enjoying themselves so much that they just couldn’t stop. Benno was really cross by now. ‘That’s it, I have had enough! Right. I want every animal in this wood to listen to me. I am a very holy person and it’s my job to pray, but I can’t pray with all this racket going on, so you’re all going to have to shut up. Stop making such a din!’

As soon as he said this, the wood fell silent. Benno was really pleased. He raised his arms and opened his mouth to pray—but nothing happened. He tried to make his tongue make some sounds but words just wouldn’t come out. He put his fingers in his mouth and gave his tongue a twiddle, but it was no use. The words still wouldn’t happen.

Then suddenly God sent him a memory. He remembered a story from the Bible. It was the story of three Jewish men called Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego who had been captured by Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon and ordered to bow down and worship a golden statue that he had made. They refused and said that they would only worship the true god, the God of Israel who made heaven and earth.

The king of Babylon got so angry that he ordered them to be thrown into a burning fiery furnace. But when they were thrown in an angel came to them and they were not burned or harmed in any way. While they were in the burning fiery furnace they sang a great song of thankfulness to God. Benno remembered some of the lines from their song:

Give thanks to the Lord you whales and all that swim in the waters:

Give him thanks and praise him for ever.

Give thanks to the Lord all birds of the air:

Give him thanks and praise him for ever.

Give thanks to the Lord all people on earth:
Give him thanks and praise him for ever.

Benno suddenly realized that the bleating of the sheep and the mooing of the cows and the singing of the birds and the croaking of the frogs might be pleasing to God. In fact, it might be even more pleasing than his own prayers. So, he said sorry to all the animals and told them that they could make as much noise as they liked. From that moment his tongue was loosened and he could pray again.

Pause

If our pets could speak so we could understand them now... If we could hear them pray, I wonder what they would say. I came across this prayer, the Prayer of the Cat:

*Lord, I am the cat, It is not, exactly, that I have something to ask of you!
No—I ask nothing of anyone—but, if you have by some chance, in some celestial barn, a little white mouse, or a saucer of milk,
I know someone who would relish them.
Wouldn't you like some day to put a curse on the whole race of dogs?
If so I should say, **Amen.***

I wonder what a dog would pray for? A rug by the fire, a bone to gnaw and plenty of walks?

♪ **Hymn: O Give Thanks to the Lord**

- give thanks to the Lord, all ye people.
- give thanks to the Lord for he is good.
- give thanks to the King, let us celebrate and sing.
- give thanks to the Lord for he is good.



 **We Pray Together**

Father God, mindful of the great responsibility you have placed upon us, we now renew our covenant with these creatures in our care, and pray that we may be faithful to them as you are faithful to us.

May our calling to care for all your creatures never be broken by our neglect and cruelty of them. And may our lives reflect that generosity of spirit shown in your Son, Jesus Christ.

God of unity and peace send us now your Holy Spirit that we may feel a deeper kinship with all living creatures

and by this act of renewal reaffirm the bond of covenant with these animals in our care.

If you have a pet, perhaps you would like to name them out loud now.

Pause

Will you care for your pet as God's own creature?

I will with God's grace.

Will you love and protect your pet so long as it lives?

I will with God's grace.

Will you be faithful and kind in good times and bad?

I promise to be so faithful.

You might like to touch/pat/stroke your pet as a sign of the covenant reaffirmed between you.

May the God of the new covenant of Jesus Christ grant you grace to fulfil your promise and to show mercy to other creatures as God has shown mercy to you. **Amen.**

Pause

Eternal Father,

we thank you for these creatures who live alongside us as our companions and friends; for their loyalty, love and trust which enrich our lives and give us joy; teach us the value of kindness, the power of mercy, and the strength of gentleness.

We ask this through your Son, Jesus Christ, whose new covenant of love gives life to us all. Amen.

We draw all our prayers together in the words that Jesus taught us

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come, your will be done, on Earth as it is in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, now and for ever. Amen.



Blessing

May the creator God, whose mercy embraces all the earth; bless you and all these creatures and help you to delight in all the works of his hands. and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

The Dismissal

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
In the name of Christ. Amen.

♪ Final Hymn: *All Creatures of our God and King*

**All creatures of our God and King,
Lift up your voice and with us sing
O praise him, alleluia!
O burning sun with golden beam,
And silver moon with softer gleam,
O praise him, O praise him, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!**

**Swift-rushing winds that art so strong,
And clouds that sail in heaven along,
O praise him, alleluia!
Fresh-rising morn, in praise rejoice,
And lights of evening, find a voice,
O praise him, O praise him, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!**

**O flowing water, pure and clear,
Make music for thy Lord to hear,
O praise him, alleluia!
O fire, so masterful and bright,
Providing us with warmth and light,
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, praise the Father, praise the Son,
And praise the Spirit, Three in One:
O praise him, O praise him,
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!**



