

The heavens declare the glory of God,
and the firmament shows his handiwork.

Psalm 19:1

Episcopal Church of the Epiphany
Feast of St Francis
Blessing of the Animals
October 4, 2020, 9:30 am

We worship today using liturgy adapted from a model provided by the Alabama Diocese.
Congregational responses are in **boldface type**.

The Word of God

We will observe silence together to prepare for worship, which begins with the ringing of the bell. We stand.

May God be with you.
And also with you.
Let us pray.

The Collect of the Day

Gracious God, Creator of the land, water, and the sky: come and renew the face of the whole earth. Give us new purpose to care in love for the world of your making, and turn our hearts and the hearts of the whole human family to care in thanksgiving and reverence for the world you have given; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Collect for St. Francis of Assisi

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.**

The Lessons (*we sit*)

First Lesson – Isaiah 45:5-8

I am the LORD, and there is no other;
besides me there is no god.
I arm you, though you do not know me,

so that they may know, from the rising of the sun
and from the west, that there is no one besides me;
I am the LORD, and there is no other.

I form light and create darkness,
I make weal and create woe;
I the LORD do all these things.

Shower, O heavens, from above,
and let the skies rain down righteousness;

let the earth open, that salvation may spring up,
and let it cause righteousness to sprout up also;
I the LORD have created it.

Psalm 19

The heavens declare the glory of God,
and the firmament shows his handiwork.
**One day tells its tale to another,
and one night imparts knowledge to another.**

Although they have no words or language,
and their voices are not heard,
**Their sound has gone out into all lands,
and their message to the ends of the world.**

In the deep has he set a pavilion for the sun;
it comes forth like a bridegroom out of his chamber;
it rejoices like a champion to run its course.
**It goes forth from the uttermost edge of the heavens
and runs about to the end of it again;
nothing is hidden from its burning heat.**

The law of the Lord is perfect
and revives the soul;
the testimony of the Lord is sure
and gives wisdom to the innocent.
**The statutes of the Lord are just
and rejoice the heart;
the commandment of the Lord is clear
and gives light to the eyes.**

The fear of the Lord is clean
and endures for ever;
the judgments of the Lord are true
and righteous altogether.
**More to be desired are they than gold,
more than much fine gold,
sweeter far than honey,
than honey in the comb.**

By them also is your servant enlightened,
and in keeping them there is great reward.
**Who can tell how often he offends?
cleanse me from my secret faults.**

Above all, keep your servant from presumptuous sins;
let them not get dominion over me;
then shall I be whole and sound,
and innocent of a great offense.
**Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my
heart be acceptable in your sight,
O Lord, my strength and my redeemer.**

The Epistle Lesson - Galatians 6:14-18

May I never boast of anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. For neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is anything; but a new creation is everything! As for those who will follow this rule—peace be upon them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God. From now on, let no one make trouble for me; for I carry the marks of Jesus branded on my body. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers and sisters. **Amen.**

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Canticle S – A Song of Our True Nature

Christ revealed our frailty and our falling,
our trespasses and our humiliations.

**Christ also revealed his blessed power,
his blessed wisdom and love.**

He protects us as tenderly and as sweetly when we are in
greatest need;

he raises us in spirit

and turns everything to glory and joy without ending.

**God is the ground and the substance, the very essence
of nature;**

God is the true father and mother of natures.

We are all bound to God by nature,
and we are all bound to God by grace.

**And this grace is for all the world,
because it is our precious mother, Christ.**

For this fair nature was prepared by Christ
for the honor and nobility of all,
and for the joy and bliss of salvation.

Hymn – *The Stars Declare His Glory*

The stars declare his glory; the vault of heaven springs mute
witness of the Master's hand in all created things, and
through the silences of space their soundless music sings.

The dawn returns in splendor, the heavens burn and blaze,
the rising sun renews the race that measures all our days, and
writes in fire across the skies God's majesty and praise.

Gospel Lesson – Matthew 11:25-30 (*we stand*)

The Holy Gospel of our Savior Jesus Christ according to
Matthew.

Glory to you, Lord Christ.

Jesus said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth,
because you have hidden these things from the wise and the
intelligent and have revealed them to infants; yes, Father, for
such was your gracious will. All things have been handed
over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except
the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and
anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. "Come to

me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens,
and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn
from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will
find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden
is light."

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Christ.

We sit

Sermon

The Rev. Lee Lowery

The Prayers of the People

Caring God, we thank you for your gifts in creation:
for our world,
the heavens tell of your glory;
**for our land, its beauty, and its resources,
for the rich heritage we enjoy.**

We pray for those who make decisions about our natural
resources,
that we may use your gifts responsibly;
**For those who work on the land and sea, in city and
in industry,
that all may enjoy the fruits of their labors
and marvel at your creation;**

For artists, scientists, and visionaries,
that through their work we may see creation anew.

Silence

We thank you for giving us life;
for all who enrich our experience.
**We pray for those who, through their own or others'
actions,
are deprived of fullness of life,
for prisoners, refugees, and the handicapped;**
For those in politics, medical science, and social and relief
work,
for all who seek to bring life and help to others.

Silence

We thank you that you have called us to celebrate your
creation;
Give us a reverence for life in your world.
**We thank you for your redeeming love;
May your word and sacrament strengthen us to love
as you love us.**

We ask your blessing, O God, on President Trump, the first lady, and all those who are sick ...

Those with special concerns ...

And those who have died ...

We give thanks, O God, for all the blessings of this life.

Silence

God, Creator, bring us new life.

Jesus, Redeemer, renew us.

Holy Spirit, strengthen and guide us.

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

We each bring our pet forward in a carrier or on a leash for a blessing

Offertory

If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!

Hymn – *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's there's doubt true faith in you. Oh 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 Holy Communion

Blessed are you, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have this bread to offer, which earth has given and human hands have made. It will become for us the bread of life.

Blessed are you, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have this wine to offer, fruit of the vine and work of human hands. It will become our spiritual drink.

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

We praise you and we bless you, holy and gracious God, source of life abundant. From before time you made ready the creation. Your Spirit moved over the deep and brought all things into being: sun, moon, and stars; earth, wind, and waters; and every living thing.

You made us in your image and taught us to walk in your ways. But we rebelled against you, and wandered far away. And yet, as a mother cares for her children, you would not forget us. Time and again you called us to live in the fullness of your love.

And so this day we join with saints and angels in the chorus of praise that rings through eternity, lifting our voices to magnify you as we say:

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

Hosanna in the highest.

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

Hosanna in the highest.

Glory and honor and praise to you, holy and living God. To deliver us from the power of sin and death and to reveal the riches of your grace, you looked with favor upon Mary, your willing servant, that she might conceive and bear a son, Jesus, the holy child of God.

Living among us, Jesus loved us. He broke bread with outcasts and sinners, healed the sick, and proclaimed good news to the poor. He yearned to draw all the world to himself, yet we were heedless of his call to walk in love. Then, the time came for him to complete upon the cross the sacrifice of his life, and to be glorified by you.

On the night before he died for us, Jesus was at table with his friends. He took bread, gave thanks to you, broke it, and gave it to them, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

As supper was ending, Jesus took the cup of wine. Again, he gave thanks to you, gave it to them, and said: "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is poured out for you and for all for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Now gathered at your table, God of all creation, and remembering Christ, crucified and risen, who was and is and is to come, we offer to you our gifts of bread and wine, and ourselves, a living sacrifice. Pour out your Spirit upon these gifts that they may be the Body and Blood of Christ. Breathe your Spirit over the whole earth and make us your new creation, the Body of Christ given for the world you have made.

In the fullness of time bring us, with Blessed Mary and all your saints, from every tribe and language and people and nation, to feast at the banquet prepared from the foundation of the world.

Through Christ and with Christ and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, to you be honor, glory, and praise, for ever and ever. **AMEN.**

As our Savior Christ has taught us, we now pray:

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your Name,
your kingdom come, your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin
against us.
Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,
now and for ever. Amen.**

The Breaking of the Bread

Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;
Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia.
The Gifts of God for the People of God.

Being careful to maintain social distance and keeping our faces covered, we approach the table. Each of us takes a plate and returns to his or her seat. We consume the wafer when we are back in our seats.

Postcommunion Prayer

Let us pray.

God of abundance, you have fed us with the bread of life and cup of salvation; you have united us with Christ and one another; and you have made us one with all your people in heaven and on earth. Now send us forth in the power of your Spirit, that we may proclaim your redeeming love to the world and continue forever in the risen life of Christ our Savior. Amen.

The Blessing

May the blessing of the God of Abraham and Sarah, and of Jesus Christ born of our sister Mary, and of the Holy Spirit, who broods over the world as a mother over her children, be upon you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

The Peace

The peace of the Lord be always with you.
And also with you.

Joys and Concerns of the Congregation

Following the service, please place your plate in the receptacle provided.

Serving at Epiphany this week: Altar Guild: Lee Borden Lay Reader: Suzy Wilson Grounds: Jimmy and Betty Weldon	And next: Altar Guild: Suzy Wilson Lay Reader: Amanda Borden
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