

Companion Animal Ministry Workshop 1

Attendance: Viki, Dr Julie, Jeremy, Barry, Julie, Rev'd Jamee

What?

- Recognizing our companion animal/family members - The role they play.
- Sharing the love and peace pets can bring with everyone, not limited by physical space - including the whole family.
- Safe space for pets to come to church and enjoy worship, they can be on their best behaviour without the pressure of feeling shy or aggressive.
- Bringing joy in the stories they inspire.
- Caring for our companions as fellow creatures of God's creation. Communicating this to outside world - theological component to animal justice.
- A theology of all creatures - They are all are under our care - They have a life & being that belongs solely to themselves - They are not ours to abuse / manipulate or destroy - We are obligated, recognising the one indivisible creator, to love & care for all.
- Spiritual well-being of animals themselves.
- Nurture of all animals including service animals - relationship with social justice for people living with disability.
- Something for rescue animals, and (ex-racing) animals such as ex race horses and greyhounds would be nice too. Industries of animal sport.
- This project can be a way of evangelising - Welcoming new members and establishing non-threatening relationships grounded in a love of animals.
- Ministry to vets, vet techs and nurses and all who work with animals - Perhaps individual vets may be something.
- Ministry to Primary producers.
- Ministry to working animals – police, armed forces, guide dogs, care dogs, department of home affairs sniffer dogs, dogs working livestock, Horses, working cats, and other working animals.
- Bereavement ministry – on loss of pets, passing of pets, remembering of pets, honouring of working animals/service animals who have given their lives in the course of protecting humans.
- Advising other parishes in diocese about ministry to companion animals, their carers and service animals.
- Wildlife – justice for wildlife, wildlife carers (including the ones who are not best loved – dingoes, sharks etc.).
- Role animals played in gospel and other parts of bible. Jesus used animals quite a lot in parables etc. God used animals in OT e.g. Noah and dove.
- Holy Hermits companion animals and their messages to and about them.
- Animal justice e.g. hermits and Jesus and others - fasting from animals, being vegetarian. Speaking up for humane treatment, ethical food production, against testing on animals.
- Animals' stories told from our Christian history to inspire us to greater stewardship and love.

Why? (Theology)

- Celebrating the animals in the O.T and N.T as part of our teaching ministry.

- Atonement theology – in the O.T animal sacrifice was used – Jesus became the paschal lamb, the sacrifice of all sacrifices and so he made the new way of salvation through the Gospel and N.T.
- Redemption was for all creatures not just the human ones.
- Jesus as sacrificial lamb is kin with animals sacrificed in the past.
- Donkeys were in the nativity and Passiontide events as working animals.
- Genesis 1 and creation, where we as humans are tasked to be carers, responsible for creation, rather than dominating, and destroying it for our individual needs/ greed. This also comes to how we treat all creation, animals included.
- In Noah's Arc, he took pairs of animals in and saved from the floods - Celebrating creation, and preserving and encouraging all life.
- Jesus commandments: Love God, neighbour and self. In several parables and stories it could be obvious that animals are our neighbour also. Jesus used animals a lot in his parables to show how we should treat one another with love and mercy.
- Revelation theology involving animals in the end times and the role of animals in the heavenly host.
- Consider the birds of the air... We can experience God through animals, community care of God's creatures also enables us to experience God. Animals are an integral part of God's plan, and how God's love is revealed to us.
- There is continuous witness of animals to God's love through our Christian history. Animals have an active participation in the unfolding of God's story.
- The Body of Christ – we are Jesus' hands and feet, animals can be his paws and voice.

How? What's next?

- Prayerfully considering our next steps.
- Recording the things that the Spirit gifts to us between now and the next Ministry-Task group space.
- We may begin by creating a ministry mission statement.