



Anglican Parish of Central Saanich

St. Mary's Church St. Stephen's Church

1. Name of Event: Blessing of the Animals

2. How did the Event help the parish advance our Strategy for Growth in one or more of the areas:

a) Advance our spiritual growth through worship, teaching and Bible study:

The Blessing of the Animals service is essentially a Franciscan service. Churches around the world celebrate what St. Francis of Assisi started, apparently, almost 800 years ago: blessing our animals. St. Francis taught that human beings are only one of a myriad of creations of God and all are blessed. Following the example of St. Francis, we give thanks to God and serve as examples to others as stewards of His gift to us of His creation.

The Blessing of the Animals service at St Stephen's, for over thirty years, continues the tradition of connecting to our community through a shared love and respect for all of God's creatures and His creation.

b) Strengthen our relationship with the community (local, national and international):

The Blessing of the Animals Service affords a tremendous opportunity to share in worship with our covenanted sisters and brothers from the Roman Catholic Parish of Our Lady of the Assumption as well as from the Anglican Parish of Holy Trinity. Furthermore many "unchurched" members of our community are attracted to the ethos of the service because of our commonly shared Human/Animal bond. Many animal related service groups attend: Canadian Guide Dogs, P.A.T.S, St. John's Animal Therapy and we are mutually blessed in worship with these members of our community. We were able to "showcase" the pastoral serene setting of St. Stephens to over 180 people at this service, most of whom were non parishioners.

c) Increase the number of engaged parishioners:

This service engages our parishioners both in the planning, producing and putting-on as well as in individual participation. All members attending become ambassadors of our (Christ's?) hospitality to the community

Post-Event Assessment: Blessing of the Animals

3. Impact of Event upon the Parish – Volunteers:

a) Were there enough volunteers?

Volunteers were few! The Wine Fest sponged up most of the committed volunteers. The number of volunteers was adequate to make it happen, particularly on the day of the event. These members were easily cajoled. The burden of planning coordination fell to the small number who stepped forward initially.

b) Was the experience challenging and rewarding for them?

Rewarding for sure....Challenging? for some, perhaps...especially the director.

c) Would the volunteers take part again?

I expect so. There is enough of a population who are passionate about their pets and about the service work of P.A.T.S, the beneficiary, that I am sure a team could be mustered.

d) Were some of the parish children and youth involved?

Parish children were involved in the Blessing and in the offertory.

4. Standard Success Criteria:

a) How many people attended the event? Of the total, how many were not from the Parish of Central Saanich? Of those not from our Parish, how many are not affiliated with another church?

More than 180 people attended, most were NOT of our parish. Three Priests... one Roman Catholic and two Anglican. Our Bishop Logan with his dog Morag attended.

Canadian Guide Dogs, P.A.T.S, St. John's Animal Therapy were service dogs and owners attending.

b) Is there a volunteer in place to invite unaffiliated people to attend a future event or Sunday worship?

Absolutely. This function is enthusiastically performed by the Greeters at the registration desk.

5. How much money was needed to fund the Event?

About \$150.00 was needed for printing- bulletins and certificates, and for refreshments. The offertory taken and the Pet photography raised approximately \$970.0 for P.A.T.S.

6. If you recommend this Event to be implemented again, what should be done differently? If not to be implemented again, explain why.

- This service is a Hallmark service of St. Stephen's and most certainly should be done again. It is traditionally held on the second Sunday in August. A director needs to be identified early in the year and it must be assured that no one function sucks up all the volunteers.

- Volunteers should be canvassed from P.A.T.S.

- The Pet Photo setup that Al Gerenser arranged and manned by Japan Camera, was genius and should be done again.

- A suggestion was made at the Wine Fest debriefing that more tents be purchased. This would really help since it is always a fuss to assure we have adequate tenting.

Post-Event Assessment: Blessing of the Animals

- If the Wine Fest precedes the Animal Blessing in 2016, perhaps the PATS and Canadian Guide Dogs could be invited to showcase themselves to leverage the event.

7. Additional comments?

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