

**At the Loss of a Pet or other Animal:
A Service of Grieving and Thanksgiving**

Concerning the Service

All living creatures share the same source of life and are equally subject to death. The very love we have for each other in the risen Christ is extended as a ministry of stewardship and a gift of love to the pets and animals who abide with us as fellow creatures and companions. Therefore, it is appropriate for Christians to come together in worship at the loss, whether by death or disappearance, of a pet or other animal entrusted to their charge and care.

The family, household, or person(s) who have suffered the loss may make use of this service without the participation of ordained clergy, but it is appropriate that a priest be invited to preside or take part in order to give the absolution after the confession, if such is said, and to bless the people at the close.

The service is intended for celebration in a home or other suitable gathering place, including the chancel of a church or a small chapel or in the out of doors at a burial site. It is not intended for inclusion in a celebration of the Holy Eucharist.

If the animal is to be buried at the close of the service, the remains are to be suitably covered before the service begins. If the animal has been cremated, the ashes may be buried or scattered at the close of the service.

This service may be edited or adapted as needed for use in faith traditions other than Christianity.

At The Loss Of A Pet Or Other Animal

The Officiant begins by saying

Blessed be the one, holy, and living God.
People: Glory to God for ever and ever.
Officiant: The Lord be with you.
People: And also with you.
Officiant: Let us pray.

Silence may be kept, after which the Officiant says one of the following Collects

At the Burial of a Household Pet

O God, you created all that is, and you love all that you have made: we come to you this day in grief and with thanksgiving. We grieve the death of our beloved N., who has been our companion on the way, and we thank you for the gift of *his* presence among us as an effective sign of the richness of your creation and of the generosity of your love; through Jesus Christ our Savior, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

At the Disappearance of a Household Pet

All knowing God, the birds of the air, the fish of the sea, and all the animals of the earth are yours: be with our beloved N., who has disappeared from our view and from our care. Protect and defend this your creature from all harm in this world, and in the world to come preserve *her* in the heart of your love; for the sake of your Son our Lord, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

At the Burial of a Farm Animal

Most gracious, good Lord, we are the people of your pasture and the sheep of your hand: We thank you for placing us among the beasts of the field and allowing us to care for them and to receive from them food and clothing to meet our necessities. We grieve this day the death of N., and we return to you a creature of your own making, one who served as an effective sign of the generosity of your love for us; through Jesus Christ our Good Shepherd, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

At the Burial of a Wild Animal

Almighty God, who made the beasts of the wild to move in beauty and show forth the glory of your Name: we grieve the death of this creature, in whose living and dying the power of your Spirit was made manifest. We stand in grief and awe, and we reverence the loss of that which was ours never to claim but only to behold with joy; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

When appropriate, the following may be added

Most merciful God, comfort NN. in their grief. Surround them with your love, that they may not be overwhelmed by their loss, but have confidence in your goodness; through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

One or more of the following or other appropriate passages from Holy Scripture may be read. A reading from non-biblical Christian literature may follow the biblical Reading(s).

Genesis 1:1-3; 19-25(26-31) (God creates all living creatures)

Genesis 2:18-20a(20b-25) (Adam names the animals)

Genesis 7:1-5; 8:1-19 (Noah's ark and the great flood)

Genesis 9:1-17 (The Covenant with Noah)

Numbers 22:21-35 (Balaam's ass speaks)

Between the Readings, a Psalm or hymn may be sung or said.

Appropriate selections from the Psalter are 23, 42:1-7, 104, 121, 131, 145:16-20, and 148:7-14.

The Prayer of Azariah 52-65 (Let the earth bless the Lord)

also found in the Book of Common Prayer, pages 47 or 88, as Canticle 1 or 12 A Song of Creation (Invocation, II, III, and Doxology)

Revelation 4:(1-6a) 6b- 11 (The four living creatures)

Matthew 11:28-30 ("Come to me")

Matthew 18:10-14 (The lost sheep)

Mark 12:28-34 (The First Commandment)

After the Reading(s), the Officiant or other person appointed may give a brief homily. After or in place of the homily, those who are in attendance may be invited to speak words of remembrance or consolation.

The following form of the Prayers of the People may be used, or other

appropriate prayers may be said.

In peace, let us pray to God.

O God our Maker, from the beginning you have permitted us, the sons and daughters of Adam and Eve, to name our brother and sister creatures of earth, sea, and sky: We commend N. (or this n.) to the arms of your everlasting love. Amen.

O Christ our Savior, in your love you gave yourself to death that the whole world might have life: Console us who grieve, and by the sign of the rainbow help us to trust in your everlasting love. Amen.

O Spirit and Giver of Life, you abandon no creature that the flame of your presence has enlivened: Abide with us in this world and sustain in us the hope that we may yet again rejoice in the companionship of N. (or this n.) in the world to come. 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 traditional form of the Lord's Prayer may be used instead of the above.

If appropriate, the following form for Confession and Absolution may be added.

Officiant Let us confess our sins against God, our fellow creatures, and one another.

Silence may be kept.

Minister and People

O God of compassion, have mercy upon us; forgive us for our mistreatment and neglect of the creatures with whom we share this garden earth, for what we have done to harm them, and for what we have left undone to help them; we are truly sorry and fully repent, and we ask you to fill us with your Spirit, that we may care for one another, and for all your creatures, according to your will and in the fullness of your love; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

If a priest is present, the absolution is given as follows

Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through the grace of Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life. Amen.

If no priest is present, the Officiant uses the preceding form and substitutes "us" for "you" and "our" for "your".

Other prayers may be added in place of or in addition to the Confession and Absolution. Except in the event of a lost animal, the prayers conclude with the committal. In the event that the animal being buried is of the wild, the words "we thank you" through "our care." are usually omitted.

Most merciful God, we return to you N. (this n.), a creature of your own making and your gift into our lives. We praise you for *her* beauty and strength, for *her* grace and power; we thank you for *her* faithful companionship in our joys and sorrows; and we bless you for the time during which you entrusted *her* into our care. Receive now N. (this n.) back into the arms of your everlasting love, O Giver of life, through whose Son our Savior Jesus Christ all that is lost to death is restored to life, and in whose Name we pray. Amen.

Then may be said

**Let us bless the Lord.
Thanks be to God.**

The Officiant concludes with one of the following

The grace of our Savior Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore. Amen. [2 Corinthians 13:14]

May the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing through the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen. [Romans 15:13]

In place of the above, a priest may bless the people.

Note: the prayer of committal may be reserved for or repeated at the burial site, if the service is held elsewhere.