

About The Church of St. Mary Magdalene

SMM is known for its excellence in worship and music. We emphasize beauty in worship and music, and we try to embrace the whole person and all the senses in worship. Incense, colour, movement, music, bells, symbol, ritual. We place an emphasis on the health and vitality of our parish community, which is a diverse group of people of different ages, life histories and backgrounds, who come from the local neighbourhood and beyond.

Spiritual Development for Children & Young People

Childhood years are a prime time for encouraging curiosity, wonder, creativity and thankfulness for God's creation. We have an enthusiastic group of adults – artists, musicians, storytellers – and a creative and happy group of young children who meet on Sundays at 9.30 for a program of storytelling and artistic activities. Young people also participate in the Orff Ensemble, by serving at the altar, as readers, and in dramatic presentations and pageants.

Spiritual Development for Adults

At SMM, adults nurture their spiritual development through participating in our worship, and in other events, including speakers on prayer and spirituality, a weekly Bible/book study on Wednesday mornings and retreats.

Outreach and Social Justice

A vital and integral part of our Christian witness is to reach out beyond our walls to those in need *and* to advocate for social justice. A team from SMM provides a meal each month at a local Out of the Cold/Out of the Heat community meal. A group from the parish recently participated in the Rotary Trump AIDS walk to raise awareness and funds to combat HIV/AIDS. And we are currently looking for new ways to engage in outreach to our local community and beyond, such as sponsoring an Iraqi Christian refugee family.

Sunday Services

8 a.m. Said Mass

9:30 a.m. Sung Mass with diverse and eclectic music. Sunday School for young children and Orff Ensemble for young people

11 a.m. Solemn Mass with Gregorian chant and choral music by a range of composers.



THE CHURCH OF ST. MARY MAGDALENE BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS SUNDAY 2 OCTOBER, 2011



BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS
We worship with the animals we love

Introduction: Father David Harrison

Prayers:

Leader: Let us give thanks to God for all the gifts so freely bestowed upon us, for the beauty and wonder of your creation, in earth and sky and sea;

All: We thank you, Lord.

Leader: For the richness of the mountains, plains and rivers;

All: We thank you, Lord.

Leader: For all that is gracious in the lives of men and women;

All: We thank you, Lord.

Leader: For all creatures that breathe, and move, and have life;

All: We thank you, Lord.

Leader: For the songs of birds and the loveliness of flowers and trees;

All: We thank you, Lord.

Leader: For the trust you have shown in giving into our care these, our pets;

All: We thank you, Lord.

Leader: That each pet here may be treasured with care;

All: We pray to you, Lord.

Leader: That we may love and honour all your works, O God;

All: We pray to you, Lord.

Leader: That we may continue to grow in our grateful enjoyment of your abundant creation;

All: To the honour and glory of your name, now and forever, we pray to you, Lord.

Blessing of individual pets:

"N., may you be blessed in the Name of God who created you, and may you and N. (*the owner*) enjoy life together with our God.

About St. Francis of Assisi

Today we give thanks for the beauty and diversity of God's creation as it shines forth through the eyes of our beloved pets. Our churchyard and our world are full of God's creatures.

Legend has it that animals, and indeed all nature, were dear to the heart of St. Francis of Assisi, and so the blessing of the animals is held near his feast day of October 4. Apparently "beasts and birds alike susceptible to the charm of Francis's gentle ways, entered into loving companionship with him; the half-frozen bees crawled towards him in the winter to be fed; the wild falcon fluttered around him; the nightingale sang with him in sweetest content in the ilex grove at the Carceri, and his 'little brethren the birds' listened so devoutly to his sermon by the roadside near Bevagna that Francis chided himself for not having thought of preaching to them before" (Catholic Encyclopedia).

St. Francis was born in Umbria around 1181 and died in 1226. His father was a wealthy merchant and young Francis revelled in luxury until he heard God call him to a life of poverty. He traded his fine garments for a coarse woollen tunic of "beast colour" which he wore in solidarity with the poorest Umbrian peasants. He founded the Franciscan religious order whose ministry continues today. The first official casualty of 9/11 was a member of the Franciscan order; Fr. Mychal Judge, chaplain to the Fire Department of New York.