

Blessing of the Pets



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It wasn't at all what I expected to find at the Crestwood's Blessing of the Pets a few weeks ago. I thought I would get an overdose of cuteness of little children and puppies. Yes, it was cute and sweet, but it was also meaningful and adult. I'm still not over the surprise I found in this long-running Crestwood tradition.

There were far more adults than children and a number of adults with no pets at all – just members who enjoyed watching the unpredictable scene.

According to Kory, this Blessing of the Pets has been occurring since about 2014. It stopped during the COVID period but has been building again in the last few years. I left a slight bit early and had counted about thirty-five animals coming and going during that period. While I was there, there were mostly dogs of all shapes and sizes, a picture of a cat, and even a small snail in a plastic bag filled with water receiving blessings. In viewing the pictures of the event in the Crest afterwards, it appears a rather frightened cat was also brought to the end of the event. I strongly suspect the cat did not feel particularly blessed, but no doubt Kory said something loving and comforting to it, too.

During the blessing, while I was waiting for the first dog fight or possible chaos, Kory was amazing me with his warm calmness and focus. He sat in a chair in the middle of the outdoor chapel in the Lafferty Garden and talked with each beloved pet as it came forward with its owner. The dogs got happy ear scratches and rubs while he talked warmly and uniquely with each. "What a beautiful creation of God you are. You are such a good boy. And you are such a blessing to your family. I pray for you a long life with lots of hugs and kisses." Each blessing was different and meaningful to the family members. The dogs

seem to be quite pleased and proud, as well. The blessing was topped off with a doggy treat, compliments of Amy Treneff's "Follow Your Nose Dog Bakery".

The snail was taken just as seriously as any dog, although he didn't get a treat. "Jade, you are such a wonderful snail. You have beautiful stripes and you bring infinite value to our world..." There was evidence of a real respect for the value of animals in our lives during the entire time.

I enjoyed hearing owners talk about their beloved furry family members. My notes are not clear on which dog belonged to what family, but there are stories behind some of their names. Chip (a huge dog named after a small teacup) and Belle are both named from Disney characters. There were Murray, Gracie, Bruno, Leto, Hunter, and Jack. Lucky was true to his name, as he found his forever home within a fostering situation. There were Aussie Doodles and species I don't know how to pronounce or spell.

It seems dogs grow very large and friendly these days. I felt a bit sorry for the little ones who showed up and were greeted by creatures who could eat them in a bite. I waited for the angry chaos that never happened. Cautious owners kept leashes tight when needed, but everyone – animals and owners – seemed to know this was a caring, loving time.

Throughout the hour, the Crestwood Fellowship team served us all ice cream sundaes with a variety of colorful and tasty toppings. It really was a delightful and pleasant time in the garden.

Kory remembers that the Blessing of the Pets began years ago as a youth activity. The youth would gather with their pets in a circle and the ministers would go around and bless them. The activity gradually changed into today's form. Kory reflects on the purpose:

"While the Blessing of the Pets may seem frivolous to some, I see it as honoring all of God's creation, including the animals that bring us such joy. Pet owners know that their pets are a part of the family who offer love and joy beyond human capabilities. I particularly love the message it sends to the kids that their beloved pets are a blessing!"

The Blessing of the Pets serves children, adults, and animals alike. Except for the cat, the afternoon was enjoyed by all. And maybe the cat even enjoyed his quiet nap afterwards even more, having been blessed for its existence and companionship.

If there is anything at Crestwood you would like to know more about, contact [Gaye Holman](#). Let's explore together!











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