Last spring, on the last day of the Sioux Falls school district’s calendar, my daughter texted me—within two hours of the end of the school year—with a message, sent from her location: Second Chance Rescue. Her text: I have found the perfect dog! That message was followed by a picture of the perfect dog.

Abbie was right: This dog was the perfect dog, according to the criteria she, her father, and I had set:

Ross wanted a golden retriever/black lab mix. This dog was that.

I wanted a dog that at least looked like a flat-coated retriever. This dog was that.

Abbie wanted to name our next dog Lily. This dog, unbelievably, was named Lily.

She now goes by Lily-pad, Lilly-pop, Lilly-goat, and Lillykins. She can leap like a deer and walk across the top of the couch like a billy-goat. She is a Pegasus. She is an imp. When she naps in our large black chair, she can scarce be seen, for she is a shadow, her details lost in the depth of her velvet black fur.

She was and is the perfect dog.

And, thankfully, our other two dogs agreed.

Malcolm, our Westie, whom Abbie and a friend found online (you see how this works), and Lily are the proverbial match made in heaven. They will chew on the same bone at the same time before deciding that the bone become a toy—incentive for a chase. Malcolm and Lily chew and chase all day long. Jesi, our elderly Labrador, has bad hips but a puppy’s attitude. The youngsters often prod her into playing for a few minutes each day. Lily will lie on her back next to Jesi and flail her legs at her until Jesi gives her her due.

These dogs are in the business of creating for themselves the most joyful life possible. They give their attention to that goal each and every day. Thus, into our lives these dogs bring joy and love. They are sensitive, extraordinary, four-legged creatures bound to each other and to us.
This I have learned and this I believe: Animals live lives that are emotionally charged, emotionally rich. I have learned this from many animals, not just the three I live with now.

Once upon a time, we had two dogs named Mahtoh and Nugget. Mahtoh I found in the mountains near Missoula, Montana, where I then lived. She was a small black dog with a very prominent black nose, probably a Scottish terrier, schnauzer mix. She was incredibly cute. Nugget was a handsome golden retriever my husband purchased through a breeder. They became housemates when each was roughly one year old. Theirs became a love affair: years of playing, years of the small dog mercilessly tricking the large dog out of his bones, his chairs, his treats (it was sometimes hard to watch him being outsmarted again and again), years of Mahtoh curling next to and often on top of Nugget for long winter’s naps. Years of dog love.

Nugget went to the rainbow bridge first, at about the age of 14. After his death, Mahtoh refused for many, many weeks to eat her treats. She refused also to howl, something she had enjoyed doing from her early puppy days. (She was three months old when I found her). She and Nugget had howled many a song together. One would start, a revving of the motor--aror, aror, aror--and the other would join in. They weren’t barking at anything. They were singing. We often called friends on their birthdays, and the dogs would sing along with us. Some of you will recall such calls. Mahtoh lived to the age of 18. She never sang again, no matter how much we encouraged her. She was a four-legged sprite of a creature, and she knew deep, deep grief. There was no telling her that time would mend her broken heart; in her heart she felt her loss, and through her choices she signified its importance.

I know that you all have similar stories about your animals—your cats, your birds, your horses, dogs, ferrets, mice, guinea pigs. I myself have lived with dogs, cats, guinea pigs, birds and rabbits. You’re probably wishing now that you were giving this talk. Who among us doesn’t love to talk about our animals? They transform our lives. They teach how to love better, how to play joyfully, how to show compassion—fill the water dish, open the door, scratch the belly.

More than anything, though, they teach us about who they are. They show us that it is not so very difficult to cross the boundaries that exist between us and their species; once we cross those boundaries our world expands, and in this place to which our animals lead us we know better the potential of our humanity.
MORNING WORSHIP
PET BLESSING FOR THE FEAST OF ST. FRANCIS
Friday, October 8, 2010

Prelude
Invocation
Prayer of St. Francis
ALL: Lord, make us instruments of your peace. Where there is hatred, let us sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is discord, union, where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy. Grant that we may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

Scripture
Genesis 1:20-28
Matthew 6:25-33

Reflections
Janet Blank-Libra

Hymn
“All Creatures of Our God and King”
ELW #835, vv. 1, 3

Pet Blessing
Pr. Paul

Prayer
Cong. responds “We thank you, Lord” to each petition

Special Slide Show and Song
“God and Dog”
Mark Braun

Blessing of the Creatures
God, we give you thanks for creating_______(please say the name of your pet aloud) and for the gifts of life and love they bring. Bless these creatures to bring glory to You by being what you made them.

Sending

Postlude
Mark Braun

You are welcome to stay for animal and people treats and pictures after the service!

Animal Rescue Sites:
* Almost Home Canine Rescue - PO Box 88002, Sioux Falls, SD 57109 Member of www.petfinder.com - almosthome@yahoo.com
* Dakota Dachshund Rescue - 605-332-5774 - PO Box 2771, Sioux Falls www.dakotadachshundrescue.org
* Pet Pals for Life - 605-331-4673 (331 HOPE) - www.petpalsforlife.org
* Second Chance Rescue - 605-362-1722 - www.secondchancesiouxfalls.com or www.scrsd.org
* Sioux Falls Area Humane Society - 605-338-4441 - www.sfhumanesociety.com
* SD Boxer Rescue - Donna: 605-624-9216 - www.sdboxerrescue.com
* Golden Retriever Rescue: (REGOM - retrieve a Golden of Minnesota) - hotline - 952-946-8070

SERVICE TRIP (Fall Break) - Campus ministry is offering a service learning trip to Pine Ridge over Fall Break, Oct. 22-25. Cost is approximately $100; registration with $50 deposit is due in the chapel office is due by October 8. There is also a survey of j-term and spring break possibilities in the narthex...let us know your preferences.

BANQUET – Campus Ministry is serving the Banquet, the local downtown soup kitchen, on Fri., Oct. 15th. There is a sign-up sheet on the Narthex table. The food prep shift is from 2-4 pm, and the serving shift starts at 5:15 pm. We will be doing some car pooling if you need a ride to the Banquet, which is on 8th St. and Weber Ave.

OUTREACH – Groups of students lead worship and youth retreats across the region. A great way to get acquainted with a smaller group of students of all ages with a modest time commitment. Applications on the table in the chapel Narthex. Sign up soon!!!

CHAPEL SCHEDULE
Sunday (10th) Homecoming Worship, 10:30 - Elmen Center
Monday (11th) Walking Worship, 10 am - Janet Blank-Libra
Tuesday (12th) Koinonia, 10 am (pre-sem group)
Wednesday (13th) Holy Communion, 10 am - Kirsten Mebust, Reli.
Friday (15th) Worship, 10 am - Jon Ask, Sr. Spkr.

Feel free to sign the banner in the Narthex with the names of your beloved pets, present and past.

Thanks for contributing to our campus-wide effort for Second chance Rescue Center. Pet food and equipment will be received until next week.
MORNING WORSHIP
PET BLESSING FOR THE FEAST OF ST. FRANCIS
Friday, October 8, 2010

Prelude Mark Braun
Invocation
Prayer of St. Francis
ALL: Lord, make us instruments of your peace. Where there is hatred, let us sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is discord, union, where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy. Grant that we may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

Scripture Genesis 1:20-28 Sandra Looney
Matthew 6:25-33

Reflections Janet Blank-Libra

Hymn “All Creatures of Our God and King” ELW #835, vv. 1, 3

Pet Blessing Pr. Paul

Prayer Cong. responds “We thank you, Lord” to each petition

Special Slide Show and Song “God and Dog” Mark Braun

Blessing of the Creatures
God, we give you thanks for creating_______(please say the name of your pet aloud) and for the gifts of life and love they bring. Bless these creatures to bring glory to You by being what you made them.

Sending

Postlude Mark Braun

Feel free to sign the banner in the Narthex with the names of your beloved pets, present and past.

Thanks for contributing to our campus-wide effort for Second chance Rescue Center. Pet food and equipment will be received until next week.

You are welcome to stay for animal and people treats and pictures after the service!

Animal Rescue Sites:
* Almost Home Canine Rescue - PO Box 88002, Sioux Falls, SD 57109
  Member of www.petfinder.com - almosthome@yahoo.com
* Dakota Dachshund Rescue - 605-332-5774 - PO Box 2771, Sioux Falls
  www.dakotadachshundrescue.org
* Pet Pals for Life - 605-331-4673 (331-HOPE) - www.petpalsforlife.org
* Second Chance Rescue - 605-362-1722 - www.secondchancesiouxfalls.com or www.scrsdsd.org
* Sioux Falls Area Humane Society - 605-338-4441 - www.sfhumanesociety.com
* SD Boxer Rescue - Donna: 605-624-9216 - www.sdboxerrescue.com
* Golden Retriever Rescue: (REGOM - retrieve a Golden of Minnesota) - hotline - 952-946-8070

SERVICE TRIP (Fall Break) - Campus ministry is offering a service learning trip to Pine Ridge over Fall Break, Oct. 22-25. Cost is approximately $100; registration with $50 deposit is due in the chapel office is due by October 8. There is also a survey of j-term and spring break possibilities in the narthex. . .let us know your preferences.

BANQUET – Campus Ministry is serving the Banquet, the local downtown soup kitchen, on Fri., Oct. 15th. There is a sign-up sheet on the Narthex table. The food prep shift is from 2-4 pm, and the serving shift starts at 5:15 pm. We will be doing some car pooling if you need a ride to the Banquet, which is on 8th St. and Weber Ave.

OUTREACH – Groups of students lead worship and youth retreats across the region. A great way to get acquainted with a smaller group of students of all ages with a modest time commitment. Applications on the table in the chapel Narthex. Sign up soon!!!

CHAPEL SCHEDULE
   Sunday (10th) Homecoming Worship, 10:30 - Elmen Center
   Monday (11th) Walking Worship, 10 am - Janet Blank-Libra
   Tuesday (12th) Koinonia, 10 am (pre-sem group)
   Wednesday (13th) Holy Communion, 10 am - Kirsten Mebust, Reli.
   Friday (15th) Worship, 10 am - Jon Ask, Sr. Spkr.