

“Energy,” William Blake says, “is eternal delight.” We see and experience in our pets’ elemental natures that energy is eternal delight. American poet Mark Doty in his memoir Dog Years writes of his two retrievers, and yes, it is largely their story, Beau and Arden, running together on the paths, near the ocean, vast energetic forces, whirlwinds of distraction (88). Doty writes, “Two profiles, one black and one golden, engraved upon my memory, where it is always a winter day, traces of snow marking the paths under a white sky”(88). Later Doty writes, “With the two of them, I’m joined to something else, perception expanded, not just stuck there in the world in my own bereft, perishable, limited body”(91). Doty concludes that chapter, “It isn’t that one wants to live for the sake of a dog, exactly, but that dogs show you why you might want to” (91).

I am, unabashedly, like many of you, a dog lover. Animal lovers feel a need—consider all the animal books—to explain in words and to tell their experiences, their feelings of intimacy with these wordless creatures who communicate with us, these wordless creatures who are alive—or who were alive—in God’s Creation and part of God’s Covenant. Genesis 6 reads that “living things of all flesh”, “every creeping thing of the earth” Noah shall bring to the ark, and Noah shall keep them alive. Noah shall keep them alive.

At the death of the black retriever Arden, Mark Doty quotes Robinson Jeffers’s elegy for his English bulldog named Haig who speaks from his grave, outside the widow of the house where he lived. Haig says, “I’ve changed my ways a little, I cannot now Run with you in the evenings along the shore Except in a kind of dream, and you, if you dream a moment, You see me there.” Pets are both a presence and an absence—for years to come. We tell stories of our pets—for years to come. I know how much of my life’s narration is woven in with my pets: I name and honor before you, Max, Teddy, Buffy, Random, Thor, Caesar, Bandit, Mr. Jiggs, Chaucer, Irving, Fritos, Araby, Zodiac, Bear, Tuki, Hank, Abbey, Missy.

And I will not forget a special tribute to our cats. The finest cat poem in English is part of a religious poem by Christopher Smart entitled Jubilate Agno (Rejoice in the Lamb). It was written in the mid-eighteenth century in a lunatic asylum, Bedlam, but the manuscript was not discovered and published until 1939. Christopher Smart’s cat Jeffry kept him in life during those years (probably wrongful years) in Bedlam. Smart knew the real things about cats all right. His title is “For I Will Consider My Cat Jeffery”: I’ll read excerpts.

For I will consider my Cat Jeffery.

For he is the servant of the Living God duly and daily serving him.

Pet Blessing: October 3, 2011 3

For at the first glance of the glory of God in the East he worships in his way.

For this is done by wreathing his body seven times round with elegant quickness.

For then he leaps up to catch the musk, which is the blessing of God upon his prayer.

.....

For in his morning orisons he loves the sun and the sun loves him.

For he is of the tribe of Tiger.

.....

For he is an instrument for the children to learn benevolence upon.

For every house is incomplete without him and a blessing is lacking in the spirit.

Today is the blessing of the animals, the tribute to God’s creatures.

This morning we consider our pets (Please name them aloud), whom we have named and undertaken care of FOR OUR GREAT BENEFIT.

Once again, let us responsively name aloud our pets.

For I will consider my pet _____

For he is the servant of the Living God duly and daily serving him, an instrument for us to learn benevolence, and a blessing to our spirit. Yes, it is rightly so.

Blessing of the Creatures

Thank you for being with us on the ark. God bless your life _____
(please name your pet aloud) and the love you give. In Jesus' name,
Amen.

Sending

Postlude *“All Creatures of Our God and King”* John Carter

Thanks for contributing to our campus-wide effort for the Humane Society. 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:

- * Sioux Falls Area Humane Society - 605-338-4441 - www.sfhumanesociety.com
- * Golden Retriever Rescue: (REGOM - retrieve a Golden of Minnesota) - hotline - 952-946-8070
- * 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
- * Pet Rescue of the Grant Plains - 605-929-3087 -
www.pitrescueofthegreatplains.org
- *SD Boxer Rescue - Donna: 605-624-9216 - www.sdboxerrescue.com

Bread for the Apple -Homecoming, SALT and campus ministry are joining forces in to serve the hungry of New York City—in memory of 9/11 and in honor of our homecoming theme. Organizations are encouraged to host fund raising efforts to provide meals at the Soup Kitchen of Trinity Lutheran Church on the Lower Eastside of Manhattan. We'll see how many meals we can provide between now and homecoming! There will be a bake sale after chapel on Wednesday and Sundays.

Outreach teams Check with Carol in the chapel office if you have questions about joining, or email Sydney Ipinia saipinia09@ole.augie.edu or Anna Bahnson abbahnson10@ole.augie.edu *There will be an all-member training event at Our Savior's Lutheran on Sunday, Oct. 2nd from 6:30 - 9:30 pm. Come and bring a friend who might like to join!*

CHAPEL SCHEDULE

- Tues.(4th) - Roman Catholic Mass, 10 am - Fr. David Krogman
- Wed. (5th) - Holy Communion, 10 am - Tamara Jerke, Banquet Dir.
- Fri. (7th) - Worship, 10 am - Lindsey Jacobsen, Sr. Spkr.
- Sun. (9th) - Worship, 11 am - Adam Streng, preacher; Ann Pederson
- Presider
- Mon. (10th) - Worship, 10 am - Stephen Minister, Reli