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**THE CATHEDRAL OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE CELEBRATES
THE MAJESTY OF CREATION
WITH ANNUAL FEAST OF ST. FRANCIS AND BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS**



Beloved service on October 1 welcomes back Procession of Animals for 2023

The Cathedral of St. John the Divine's annual Feast of St. Francis and Blessing of the Animals, honoring St. Francis of Assisi, patron saint of animals and the environment, returns in celebration of the natural world and recognition of its fragility on **Sunday, October 1, 2023 at 10:30 am at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine at 1047 Amsterdam Avenue (at 112th Street).**

Held on the first Sunday of October for more than 30 years, the Feast of St. Francis is a beloved gathering that touches the hearts of congregants young and old and of many different species. Following a fire in the Cathedral in 2019 and pandemic-era changes to many large gatherings, the service's Procession of Animals was removed from the liturgy while the Cathedral leadership weighed how best to safeguard animals and people indoors. Now, for 2023, the beloved procession returns, and attendees will once more find themselves awestruck at the sight of creatures including tortoises, camels, crowned cranes, sloths, and more, proceeding down the length of the Cathedral's nave.

“The years without the procession gave us an opportunity to consider the ethics of bringing those great animals into the Cathedral and surrounding them with literally thousands of people and domestic pets,” The Very Reverend Patrick Malloy, Dean, said in a message to the Cathedral community. “We have concluded that it is indeed possible to bring animals into the Cathedral in a way that does not harm them. We have also concluded that, while the animals do bring us great pleasure, the real purpose of the procession is to recognize and give glory to God, the source of all life, for the wonders of animals great and small and in the spirit of Saint Francis, to let our hearts be moved by their grandeur.”

As the United States and the world continue to experience the effects of a warming climate, the urgency of environmental action is abundantly clear at the Cathedral. A longtime champion of ecological harmony and animal causes, the Cathedral is dedicated to raising awareness for climate justice initiatives through St. Francis’ message of respect and love for all creation.

Following the service, attendees are invited to stay for an afternoon fair on the Cathedral grounds, including info about community environmental programs and resources. Those with pets are also welcome to receive a special prayer for their four-legged friends from Cathedral and Diocesan clergy and immortalize their day out with pet portrait photography.

For more information on the 2023 Feast of St. Francis and Blessing of the Animals and to reserve a free pass to the service, [visit the Cathedral’s website](#).

About the Cathedral

Over one hundred years ago, the trustees of the Cathedral Church of Saint John the Divine conceived its mission to be a house of prayer for all people, an instrument of church unity, and a center of intellectual light and leading in the spirit of Jesus Christ.

Today, as the mother church of the Episcopal Diocese of New York and the seat of its bishop, the Cathedral Church of Saint John the Divine serves the many diverse people of our diocese, city, nation, and world through the worship of God; pastoral, educational and community outreach activities; cultural and civic events; international ecumenical initiatives; and the preservation of the great architectural and historic site that is its legacy.

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