

Polly Bond Awards 2022

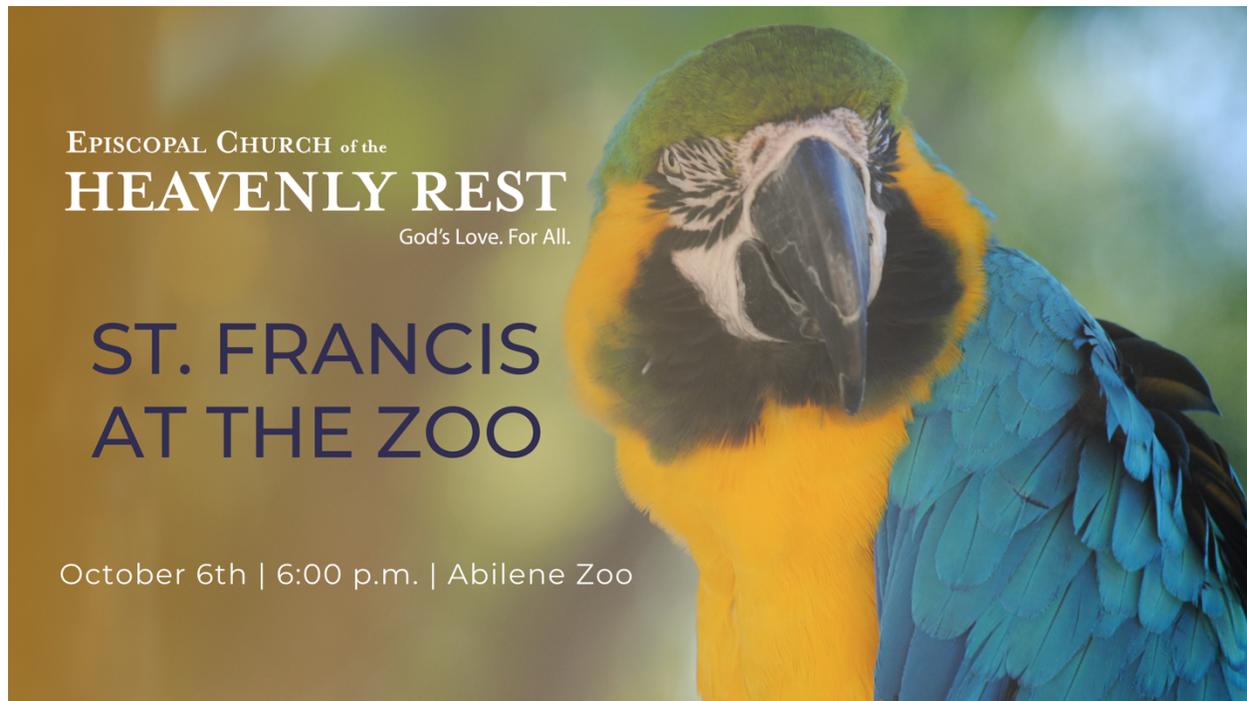
Best Campaign

Event - St. Francis at the Zoo

September-November 2021

Contributors: Blaine Beyer, Director of Communications; David Romanik, Rector; Corrie Cabes, Associate Rector; Jeff Goolsby, parishioner

Several materials are included in this submission. Most notable pieces are the Promo Video, Photography, Graphic Design, Special Bulletin/Liturgy, and News Articles. Digital content is accessible through the links provided below. Printed pieces are attached within this document.



(Photography and graphic design by Blaine Beyer, Director of Communications)

Event Details (October 6th, 2021):

During the first week of October, churches around the world hold "Blessing of the Animals" services to celebrate the life and ministry of Saint Francis of Assisi, who showed love to all of God's creation.

This year, the Episcopal Church of the Heavenly Rest will offer "Saint Francis at the Zoo," an event at which the clergy of Heavenly Rest will offer prayers and ask for God's blessing on the animals at the Abilene Zoo.

This family-friendly event will honor the example of Saint Francis and remind us of the ways we are connected to the natural world and to one another.

Please note that pets are not permitted at the Abilene Zoo. Pets may be blessed at Heavenly Rest's "Blessing of the Animals" service on Sunday, October 3 at 5:00 p.m. This event is free and open to the public.

Saint Francis at the Zoo will take place at the Abilene Zoo on Wednesday, October 6 at 6:00 p.m.

Please direct any questions to info@heavenlyrestabilene.org or (325) 677-2091.

Social Media engagement:

Promo video: <https://fb.watch/bbvXLV5ZwE/>

Event page: <https://fb.me/e/1LFmHhpVC>

Father David Romanik blessing the rhino at the Abilene Zoo: <https://fb.watch/bbvUkt8tZi/>

Published articles:

Building Faith: <https://buildfaith.org/blessing-animals-at-the-zoo/>

Heavenly Rest newsletter:

[Lay Reader Fall 2021](#)

[Lay Reader Winter 2021](#)

Online Article: <https://www.heavenlyrestabilene.org/post/st-francis-at-the-zoo>

Additional media/published content:

Abilene Reporter News:

<https://www.reporternews.com/story/life/faith/2021/09/17/abilene-church-news-blessings-zoo-animals/8353331002/>

<https://www.reporternews.com/story/news/2021/10/12/bless-zoo-church-heavenly-rest-invokes-monk-monkeys-abilene-texas-newspaper-francis-assisi/8421139002/>

Spirit of Abilene: <https://spiritofabilene.com/2021/09/23/st-francis-at-the-zoo/>

Print content included:

- Photography
- Printed Flyer
- Special Bulletin/Liturgy
- Excerpt from Fall Lay Reader newsletter
- Excerpt from Winter Lay Reader newsletter



(Photography by Blaine Beyer, Director of Communications)

EPISCOPAL CHURCH of the
HEAVENLY REST

God's Love. For All.

ST. FRANCIS AT THE ZOO

October 6th | 6:00 p.m. | Abilene Zoo



During the first week of October, churches around the world hold "Blessing of the Animals" services to celebrate the life and ministry of Saint Francis of Assisi, who showed love to all of God's creation.

This year, the Episcopal Church of the Heavenly Rest will offer "Saint Francis at the Zoo," an event at which the clergy of Heavenly Rest will offer prayers and ask for God's blessing on the animals at the Abilene Zoo.

This family-friendly event will honor the example of Saint Francis and remind us of the ways we are connected to the natural world and to one another.

**"Saint Francis at the Zoo" will take place at the Abilene Zoo
on Wednesday, October 6 at 6:00 p.m.**

Please note that pets are not permitted at the Abilene Zoo. Pets may be blessed at Heavenly Rest's "Blessing of the Animals" service on Sunday, October 3 at 5:00 p.m.

This event is free and open to the public.

Please direct any questions to info@heavenlyrestabilene.org or (325) 677-2091.

EPISCOPAL CHURCH of the
HEAVENLY REST

God's Love. For All.

ST. FRANCIS AT THE ZOO





**Welcome to Saint Francis at the Zoo!
We are glad you joined us this evening.**

Francis of Assisi was a 13th century Italian monk who committed his life and ministry to showing love to all of God's creatures, human and non-human alike. To celebrate his memory, churches around the world hold "Blessing of the Animals" services to remind us of our responsibility to care for those who cannot care for themselves. As we offer prayers and ask God's blessing on the animals at the Abilene Zoo this evening, we pray that you will take this opportunity to remember and reflect on the ways we are connected to the natural world and to one another.

Our service will begin near the Zoo entrance at 6:00. You are invited to join us as we process through the Zoo and offer prayers for specific animals. At the conclusion of the service, you are welcome to join members of the clergy as they bless those animals who have not already been visited.

EPISCOPAL CHURCH of the
HEAVENLY REST

God's Love. For All.

Blessing of the Zoo Animals
Wednesday, October 6th, 2021
6:00 in the evening

GREETING AND WELCOME

Officiant Blessed be the God of all creation.
People **And blessed be God's holy Name forever.**

A SONG OF CREATION (*adapted*)

Officiant Let the earth glorify the Lord,
People **Praise and exalt our Creator forever.**

Glorify the Lord, O mountains and hills, and all that grows upon the earth,
Praise and exalt our Creator forever.

Glorify the Lord, O springs of water, seas, and streams, O whales and all that move in the waters.
Praise and exalt our Creator forever.

All birds of the air, glorify the Lord,
Praise and exalt our Creator forever.

Glorify the Lord, O beasts of the wild, and all you flocks and herds.
Praise and exalt our Creator forever.

O men and women everywhere, glorify the Lord,
Praise and exalt our Creator forever.

The Officiant says to the people

The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Officiant Let us pray.

Most high, omnipotent, good Lord, grant your people grace to renounce gladly the vanities of this world; that, following the way of blessed Francis, we may for love of you delight in your whole creation with perfectness of joy; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

GOSPEL READING

Luke 12:22-32

Jesus said to his disciples, 'Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat, or about your body, what you will wear. For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds! And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? If then you are not able to do so small a thing as that, why do you worry about the rest? Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you— you of little faith! And do not keep striving for what you are to eat and what you are to drink, and do not keep worrying. For it is the nations of the world that strive after all these things, and your Father knows that you need them. Instead, strive for his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well. Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.'

Reader The Word of the Lord
People **Thanks be to God**

LITANY FOR CREATION

Officiant In peace, let us pray to the Lord

Leader Holy God, Creator of heaven and earth,
People **Have mercy upon us.**

Holy and Mighty, Redeemer of the world,
Have mercy upon us.

Holy Immortal One, Sanctifier of the faithful,
Have mercy upon us.

Grant that all your creatures may serve you with thanksgiving;
We beseech you to hear us, good Lord.

Grant favorable weather, temperate rain, and fruitful seasons, providing food and drink for all your creatures;
We beseech you to hear us, good Lord.

Open our eyes to the wonder of creation, that we may see you in all your works;
We beseech you to hear us, good Lord.

Stir in us the desire to care for your creation;
We beseech you to hear us, good Lord.

Make us wise and faithful stewards of creation, caring for the earth, the waters, the air, and all that live therein;
We beseech you to hear us, good Lord.

Forgive us when we waste and pollute your creation and strengthen us to restore what we have disregarded;
We beseech you to hear us, good Lord.

Look with compassion on those that are abused and mistreated, show us their dignity in your creation;
We beseech you to hear us, good Lord.

Remember those creatures that have died yet remain dear to us that, that they may rejoice in your new creation;
We beseech you to hear us, good Lord.

Officiant

Holy Immortal One: no sparrow falls without your knowing it; nothing dies but is remembered by you; nothing comes into being that you do not see. Give us courage and resolve to build up the common good, holding fast to the hope of a new creation in which all shall dwell eternally, through Jesus Christ, our Risen Savior. **Amen.**

CONFESSION OF SIN

Officiant
Let us confess to God our sins against creation.

Officiant and People
God of compassion, we confess that we have squandered your creation, and mistreated those you give into our care. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. Fill us with your Spirit, that we may care for all that you have made, according to your will and in the fullness of your love; through Jesus Christ our Redeemer. Amen.

Officiant
Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through the grace of Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life. **Amen.**

Officiant
God's animals inhabit the skies, the land, and the sea; we share the earth with them, and like them rely on God's blessing to sustain and preserve us. We gather today in communion and friendship with Francis of Assisi who preached to animals and moved throughout the known world sharing God's unconditional love for all beings. As we offer prayers for the animals of the Abilene Zoo, may Francis's love for all creatures strengthen our resolve to care for those who cannot care for themselves.

Officiant Let us go forth in peace.
People **In the name of Christ. Amen.**

Please follow the procession to the first exhibit.

V. O Lord, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all;

R. The earth is full of your creatures.

Almighty God, by gathering in flocks, flamingos provide one another mutual health and support. Grant that, as we gaze upon these flamingos, we may be reminded of the ways that we are connected to one another, and may recognize that we are stronger and more resilient when we work together in community, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Please follow the procession to the next exhibit.

V. O Lord, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all;

R. The earth is full of your creatures.

Everliving God, alligators have been on this planet for millions of years. Grant that, as we consider the life of this alligator, we might recognize the brevity of our time on earth, that we might apply our hearts to wisdom that leads to eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Please follow the procession to the next exhibit.

V. O Lord, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all;

R. The earth is full of your creatures.

God of justice and compassion, macaws call attention to themselves by the beauty of their plumage and the insistence of their call. Grant that we, who give our attention to this macaw, may also be attentive to those in need, and heed your call to care for those who cannot care for themselves, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Please follow the procession to the next exhibit.

V. O Lord, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all;

R. The earth is full of your creatures.

O God, giraffes lift their heads far above the ground, enjoying a broader perspective on the world. Grant that, as we give thanks for these giraffes, we may lift our hearts above our divisions and see the world as you see it, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Please follow the procession to the next exhibit.

V. O Lord, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all;

R. The earth is full of your creatures.

Almighty God, who holds all souls in life, lions prey on other animals, yet remain vital parts of their environments. Grant that, as we offer prayers for these predators, we may be aware of the impact that we have on our environment, and do what we can to allow other creatures to flourish, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Please follow the procession to the next exhibit.

V. O Lord, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all;

R. The earth is full of your creatures.

Gracious God, rhinoceroses are both powerful and vulnerable. Grant that, as we pray for this rhinoceros, we might acknowledge our own frailty, even as we gain confidence in our ability to protect the world in which we live, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Please follow the procession to the pavilion.

Officiant Let us pray.

God of all creation: we give you thanks and praise for the animals of the Abilene Zoo, and for all the animals with whom we share this life. Open our eyes to see your hand at work in all creation. May your bountiful blessing be upon us all, God our Redeemer, now and for ever. **Amen.**

The Officiant then says to the people

The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Officiant Let us pray.

Officiant and People

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

The Officiant may bless the People with these or similar words

Apprehend God in all things, for God is in all things. Every single creature is full of God, and is a book about God. Every creature is a word of God. The blessing of God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be with you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Officiant Let us bless the Lord
People **Thanks be to God**

Special thanks to those who helped make this event possible:

*Jennifer Nichols
Patti Jones
Judy and Larry Godfrey
Jesse Pottebaum and the Staff of the Abilene Zoo
The Toasted Traveler*

The Episcopal Church of the Heavenly Rest is dedicated to serving and creating community by proclaiming the good news of God's love for all.

Scan to learn more about becoming a part of our community



Follow us online! Search for @heavenlyrestabilene



602 Meander Street Phone: (325) 677-2091
Abilene, Texas 79602 Email: info@heavenlyrestabilene.org
Website: heavenlyrestabilene.org Social media: [@heavenlyrestabilene](https://www.facebook.com/heavenlyrestabilene)

CLERGY AND STAFF

The Reverend David F. Romanik, *Rector* Blaine Beyer, *Director of Communications*
The Reverend Corrie Cabes, *Assistant Rector* Steve Gibbs, *Parish Coordinator*
The Reverend Amanda Watson, *Assisting Priest* LeighAnna Morris, *Parish Accountant*
The Reverend Dr. Doug Thomas, *Priest in Residence* Nolan Kelley, *Vergar*
The Reverend Karen Boyd, *Deacon* Sharon Kelley, *Hospitality and Kitchen Coordinator*
The Reverend Dr. Russell Dickerson, *Deacon* Robert Becerra, *Sexton*
Bikole Mulanda, *Swahili Minister* Gage McGowen, *Assistant Sexton*
Jesse Ratcliffe, *Organist and Director of Music* Dorothy Guerra, *Housekeeper*
Shelly Reed, *Children's Music Assistant* Anne Jones, *Nursery Manager*
Carol Ann Weston, *Director of Family Ministries*

VESTRY AND APPOINTED OFFICERS

Judy Godfrey, *Senior Warden*; Rick Willis, *Junior Warden*; Terry Young, *Secretary*; Kathy Balch, Connie Collier, Sarah Ferguson, Annabel House, Harry Hurt, Mike Langford, Sue McWilliams, Darryl Tippens, JoÚ Walton
Steve Suttle, *Chancellor*; and Sam Cutbirth, *Treasurer*

themselves who they were as the people of God. Our ancestors in the faith did not forget or celebrate their pain. Rather, they reflected on how their faith had led them through the exile and, crucially, how it could guide them in the future.

As we continue to navigate an uncertain season in our common life, we have a responsibility to acknowledge what we have lost and learned over these challenging months. Doing so allows us to remember and trust that the God who has been with us will guide us in the days ahead.



EPISCOPAL CHURCH of the
HEAVENLY REST
God's Love. For All.

**ST. FRANCIS
AT THE ZOO**

October 6th | 6:00 p.m. | Abilene Zoo

New Book Study



In his Wednesday night presentation about the books of Ezra and Nehemiah a few weeks ago, Dr. Mark Hamilton noted that when God's people returned to Jerusalem, they reflected on the ways their ancestors had both honored God and failed to abide by the commandments God had set before them. They understood that the only way they could make progress as a people is if they reckoned with their collective failure to honor the image of God in themselves and others. Dr. Hamilton noted that people of this country are engaged in a similar task as we wrestle with the legacy of slavery.

In his recent book, *How the Word is Passed: A Reckoning with the History of Slavery Across America*, Clint Smith writes, "the history of slavery is the history of the United States. It was not peripheral to our founding; it was central to it. It is not irrelevant to our contemporary society; it created it. This history is in our soil, it is in our policies, and it must, too, be in our memories". Smith's book chronicles his visits to a number of sites throughout this country that are associated with slavery or the slave trade, and considers the way people have reckoned with this history. It is a beautiful, challenging, and fascinating book. At a profound level, it is also deeply hopeful.

David Romanik will be leading a study of *How the Word is Passed* beginning in October. The study will meet on first and third Tuesday evenings at 6:30 via Zoom. The first meeting will take place on October 5. Please contact David Romanik at dromanik@heavenlyrestabilene.org if you are interested in participating, have any questions, or would like to order a copy of the book.



Welcome, Carol Ann!

Carol Ann Weston joined the staff of the Church of the Heavenly Rest as our Director of Family Ministries in September.

Carol Ann has worked as a Christian educator for many years in churches throughout Texas. Most recently, she served as the Director of Family Ministries at First United Methodist Church in Mason.

As Director of Family Ministries, Carol Ann is responsible for administering and coordinating ministry opportunities for young parishioners and their families. In particular, she will help the parish create sustainable structures for Christian formation for children and youth, and equip parishioners of all ages to develop meaningful cross-generational relationships.

Please keep Carol Ann in your prayers as she becomes part of this community.



St. Francis at the Zoo - Jeff Goolsby

I was intrigued when I first heard about “St. Francis at the Zoo.” For many of us, the Abilene Zoo is a familiar and well-loved destination for our families, though I will admit as my children have gotten older we have visited the zoo less frequently. I was pleasantly surprised to see new and expanded habitats, fresh landscaping, and of course our itinerant and uncageable guests, the migrating monarch butterflies.

The sight of clergy and acolytes in white vestments, stoles, gloves, much of the liturgical finery you would expect in a Sunday morning service, even a processional cross—juxtaposed with flamingos and food trucks. Did you see the zookeepers throwing hunks of meat to the hyenas? We witnessed the carnal and the clerical joining hands.

When Fr. David asked me to write a parishioner’s reflection on “St. Francis at the Zoo,” my mind, unsurprisingly, went to a piece of choral music. Benjamin Britten’s fantastic and challenging “Rejoice in the Lamb” partially sets a much longer text by 18th-century English poet Christopher Smart.

“Rejoice in the Lamb” begins with a remarkable call to worship, inviting all nations and every creature that has breath to join together in magnifying the Lord. Various Old Testament figures (many of them quite obscure) are assembled—Nimrod, Ishmael, Balaam, Daniel, Ithamar, Jakim, and David. Along with a menagerie of animals—a leopard, tiger, donkey, lion, chamois (a type of goat), a bear, and even the mythological satyr. The scene shifts then to a domestic setting, where the housecat Jeoffry has just woken up from a nap:

For I will consider my Cat Jeoffry.
For he is the servant of the Living God, duly and daily serving him.

Wait a minute! In what way does a cat serve the Deity? Our own cat Fanny sleeps most of the day, occasionally making her presence known when it’s time to eat or to be a nuisance as she wiggles between our legs as we prepare dinner. Jeoffry and Fanny (and your own dearest pet) serve God in their very nature as creatures; that is, they are created and God called him “good.”

Cats are cats as lions are lions, and Jeoffry the housecat, as he shows forth his cat-ness, plainly embodies that purpose for which he was created:

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 he knows that God is his Saviour.

I have no problem imagining the Abilene Zoo’s lion Jabulani, far from his natural habitat, waking up to a West Texas sunrise, bowing his magnificent head to the east, acknowledging as all creatures do his dependence on Almighty God.

Seeing Jabulani proudly perched receiving the clergy’s blessing and our prayers, I thought of Jeoffry the cat, our own Fanny-cat, and blessed St. Francis—who preached to the birds, extolled Brother Sun and Sister Moon, and taught us humans to be instruments of peace. “St. Francis at the Zoo” was for me a poignant invitation to worship, a call to all that have life and breath to rejoice in the Love that moves the sun and other stars.