

## Faith Lift: Pets: Our Faithful Friends

A little over 12 years ago Jay arrived at Houston Intercontinental Airport. I went with my 15 year old daughter to pick up her first puppy. When he arrived I called Anne and said, "The beagle has landed." What a blessing Jay has been to our family.

On Saturday, October 1 at 9 a.m. we will hold our very first "Blessing of the Animals." The Rev. Dr. Richard Kleiman, our Pastor Emeritus, will lead a service of blessing and we invite you and invite you to invite your friends to bring their "faithful friends."

We chose October 1<sup>st</sup> because it is the Saturday closest to the feast day of St. Francis of Assisi. Francis is one of the most venerated religious figures in history. Pope Gregory IX canonized Francis on 16 July 1228. He founded the order of Franciscans. St. Francis later became associated with patronage of animals and the natural environment, and it has become customary for churches to hold ceremonies blessing animals on his feast day of October 4.

In addition to the "Blessing OF the Animals" service we will have an opportunity to BE a "Blessing TO the Animals." As you may know at Faith we are the home of the Baytown Animal Food Pantry. Linda Pratt and Angie Stanley regularly take food to our Meals on Wheels recipients that have pets. We ask that those who come to the event bring food for the animals.

Last Wednesday we gathered to give thanks for Jay and celebrate what a blessing he was to our family. While we won't be able to come on October 1<sup>st</sup>, I plan to send a bag of his favorite food in his honor. I hope you can be a part of celebrating the blessing of pets: our feathered, fleecy and furry, faithful friends.