

BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS | AUGUST 23, 2026

WORSHIP AT WESTFIELD



WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Please take a moment to complete the care pad in your pew.

Peace be with you. And also with you.

We thank God for these opportunities for fellowship and service.
Thanks be to God!

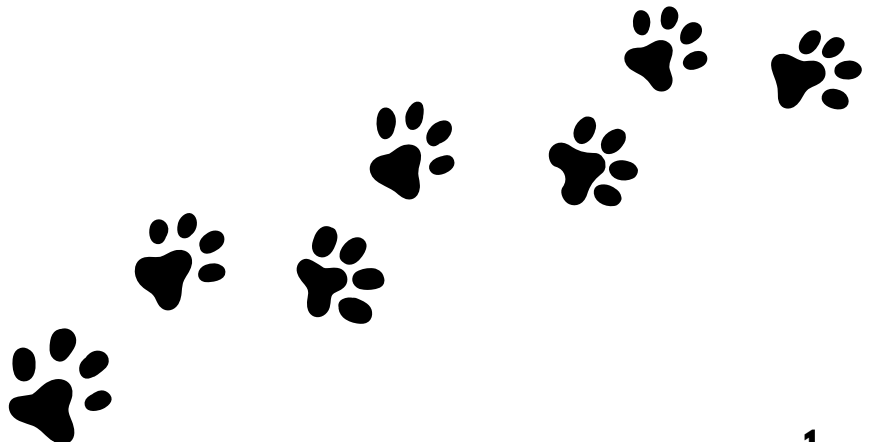
PRELUDE

INVOCATION

Gracious God,
we gather on this joyous occasion
to celebrate and honor
the animals in our lives.
In your wisdom, you created the universe
and blessed us with living creatures.
We are grateful
that you have entrusted their care to us.
May they continue to bring us
immense joy and comfort
in all our days together.

Help us to be good and faithful stewards
of your creation,
and may we always find joy and wonder
in your gifts.
Especially this day,
we remember those pets
who have passed on.

We hold the memories of them
deep within our hearts.
Give us a greater sense of responsibility
in the care and nurture of all your creation.
Amen.



THE HOLY SPIRIT GATHERS US IN UNITY
ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK,
THE DAY OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION.

GATHER

*PLEASE RISE
IN BODY OR SPIRIT

*OPENING HYMN

All Creatures of Our God and King

LASST UNS ERFREUEN

1. All crea- tures of our God and King, Lift up your voice and with us sing
2. Thou rush- ing wind that art so strong, Ye cloudsthat sail in heaven a - long,
 3. Thou flow - ing wa - ter, pure and clear, Make mu - sic for thy Lord to hear,
4. And all ye men of ten- der heart, For - giv - ing oth - ers, take your part,
 5. Let all thingstheir cre - a - tor bless, And wor-ship him in hum-ble - ness,

Al - le - lu - ia, Al - le - lu - ia!
 O ——— praise him, Al - le - lu - ia!
 Al - le - lu - ia, Al - le - lu - ia!
 O ——— sing ye, Al - le - lu - ia!
 O ——— praise him, Al - le - lu - ia!

Thou burn - ing sun with gold - en beam, Thou sil - ver moon with soft - er gleam,
Thou ris - ing morn, in praise re - joice, Ye lights of eve - ning, find a voice,
 Thou fire so mas - ter - ful and bright, That giv - est man bothwarmthand light,
Ye who long pain and sor - row bear, Praise God and on him cast your care.
 Praise, praise the Fa - ther, praise the Son, And praise the Spir - it, three in One.

O ——— praise him, O ——— praise him, Al - le - lu - ia, Al - le - lu - ia, Al - le - lu - ia!

HEBREW BIBLE LESSON

GENESIS 2:18-20A

Then the Lord God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner." So out of the ground the Lord God formed every animal of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every animal of the field;

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Let us confess our sin before God and one another.
 God, for all the times we have hurt or neglected animals,
We are sorry.

For all the times we have used poisons that have killed animals,
We are sorry.

For all the times we have destroyed the homes of animals in the forests,
 oceans, or fields, and left them without food and shelter,
We are sorry.

ASSURANCE OF GOD'S LOVE

For all our sins against the creatures of Earth, God forgives us.

I call upon you to honor and protect all the animals. May the animals of Earth be your companions in life and lead you to celebrate your place in the circle of life.
Amen! Amen!

***SUNG RESPONSE** **Glory to God**

Glo - ry to God, whose good - ness shines on me,
 3 and to the Son, whose grace has par - doned me,
 6 and to the Spir - it, whose love has set me free!
 9 As it was in the be - gin - ning, is now and ev - er shall be. A - men.

GOSPEL LESSON

Matthew 6:25-29

“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, 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.

RESPONSE TO READING

Through this scripture, God is still speaking. **And we are listening.**

SERMON

THE REV. DR. JONATHAN CHAPMAN

SHARING OF CONCERNS

For all these persons
 and all who are in need.
Hold your people near, O God.

SHARING OF JOYS

We give thanks to God
 for these blessings.
Thanks be to God.

WE BEGIN OUR LIFE OF
RESPONDING TO THE
GOSPEL THROUGH
PRAYER AND OFFERING.

RESPOND

*PLEASE RISE
IN BODY OR SPIRIT

CALL TO PRAYER Holy Ground

We are standing on holy ground,
and I know that there are angels all around.
Let us praise Jesus now,
We are standing in his presence on holy ground

PASTORAL PRAYER

THE LORD'S PRAYER

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 sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

*HYMN

O God, Your Creatures Fill the Earth FOREST GREEN

1. O God, your crea-tures fill the earth with won-der and de-light, And
2. You made the pets we wel-come in They're won-drous bless-ings, too. With
3. You made the crea-tures on each farm; You know the things they need. May
4. Your crea-tures live in ev-ery land; They fill the sky and sea. O

5 ev-ery liv-ing thing has worth and beau-ty in your sight. So
paws and whis-kers, wings and fins, They of-fer praise to you. O
they grow health-y, safe from harm, And safe from hu-man greed. Just
Lord, you give us your com-mand To love them ten-der-ly. We're

9 play-ful dol-phins dance and swim; Your sheep bow down and graze. Your
Lord, you call us to em-brace These crea-tures in our care. May
as a shep-herd loves the sheep, You know their joy, their pain. Lord,
called to have do-min-ion here To care for them al-ways. By

13 song-birds share a morn-ing hymn To of-fer you their praise.
we show kind-ness, love and grace To all pets ev-ery-where.
bless the an-i-mals we keep; May all farms be hu-mane.
lov-ing crea-tures you hold dear, We of-fer you our praise.

BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS

God looked upon all that God had made—
 creatures great and small,
 those who swim and crawl,
 those who fly and run,
 those who curl up beside us
 and those who would very much prefer that we leave them alone—
 and God called creation good.
And so do we.

Today we give thanks for the animals who share our lives:
 for wagging tails and gentle purrs,
 for wet noses and muddy paws,
 for feathers and scales and fur,
 for creatures who greet us at the door
 and creatures who knock things off the counter for absolutely no reason.
For all God's creatures, we give thanks.

We give thanks for the animals who teach us companionship,
 who make us laugh,
 who sit beside us when we are lonely,
 who somehow know when we need them near,
 and who remind us that love does not always need words.
For their companionship, we give thanks.

And we remember that they do not belong simply to us.
 They belong first to the God who made them.
 They are our fellow creatures,
 sharing with us this one beautiful and fragile earth.
 So may we care for them gently,
 protect them faithfully,
 and honor the life God has given them.
**God of all creation, bless every creature
 and teach us to be a blessing to them. Amen.**

BLESSING EACH ANIMAL

PRAYER OF REMEMBRANCE

And today we remember the animals
 who are no longer beside us.
 The empty bed.
 The unused leash.
 The quiet house.
 The familiar sound we still sometimes expect to hear.
 Their lives may have been shorter than ours,
 but the love they gave us was no smaller.
**For every creature we have loved and lost,
 we give thanks.**

God of resurrection,
 receive the creatures whose lives have ended
 and comfort those who still miss them.
 Thank you for every walk,
 every welcome home,
 every ridiculous habit,
 every quiet companionship,
 every ordinary day made better simply because they were there.
 For the time we had,
 for the love we shared,
 and for the memories we still carry:
Thanks be to God. Amen.

*CLOSING HYMN

This Is My Father's World

TERRA BEATA



1. This is my Fa-ther's world, and to my lis-tening ears all
 2. This is my Fa-ther's world, the birds their car-ols raise, the
 3. This is my Fa-ther's world. O let me ne'er for-get that

na-ture sings, and round me rings the mu-sic of the spheres. This
 morn-ing light, the lil-y white, de-clare their mak-er's praise. This
 though the wrong seems oft so strong, God is the rul-er yet. This

is my Fa-ther's world: I rest me in the thought of
 is my Fa-ther's world: he shines in all that's fair; in the
 is my Fa-ther's world: why should my heart be sad? The

rocks and trees, of skies and seas; his hand the won-ders wrought.
 rust-ling grass I hear him pass; he speaks to me ev-ery-where.
 Lord is King; let the heav-ens ring! God reigns; let the earth be glad!

*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

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What's Next? A Conversation Today at 2p

**SEASON OF
BLESSING**

8/30

**Blessing
of the Backpacks**

**TARPS
THRU
AUGUST**

One More Thing

**Rev. Jonathan's Final Six Sundays at Westfield
Starting Sunday, September 13 at 10am**

**SIT. STAY.
SNAP.**

**PET PHOTO
CONTEST
IS BACK!
LAUNCHING
AUG. 23**

**WOOD
STOCK
FAIR!**

THE ONE LINK
THAT RULES
THEM ALL!



[LINKTR.EE/WESTFIELDUCC](https://linktr.ee/WestfieldUCC)

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES:

We LOVE kids at Westfield. Children are welcome to stay through the whole service. If your child is more active, relax! We believe God put the wiggles and giggles in children. Don't feel you have to suppress it in God's house. All are welcome!

Sit toward the front where it is easier for your little ones to see and hear what's going on at the altar. They tire of seeing the backs of others' heads.

Quietly explain the parts of worship. Sing the hymns, pray, and voice the responses. Children learn liturgical behavior by copying you.

If you have to leave the service with your child, feel free to do so, but please come back. As Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me."

Remember that the way we welcome children in church directly affects the way they respond to the Church, to God, and to one another. Let them know that they are at home in this house of worship.

THE REV. DR. JONATHAN CHAPMAN



The Rev. Dr. Jonathan Chapman graduated from Candler School of Theology, Emory University, in May 2019 with his Doctor of Ministry in Biblical Witness and Proclamation. His capstone work, *The Year of Mark*, received the People's Choice Award among his cohort. While at Candler for his Master of Divinity (May, 2010), he was active with the Office of Worship, and was awarded the Hoyt Hickman Award for Outstanding Liturgical Scholarship. Jonathan is a 2007 Congregational Fellow and 2006 Undergraduate Fellow with The Fund for Theological Education. He graduated from Elon University in 2007 with a degree in Religious Studies. At Elon, he was selected as a Leadership Fellow and was awarded the W. L. Monroe Christian Education and Personality Award in the 2007. While at Elon he joined Elon Community Church, United Church of Christ, the congregation in which he was ordained.

Jonathan joined Westfield in October of 2012 and was officially installed as Pastor and Teacher in May of 2013, presiding over its revitalization. In October of 2022, he celebrated a decade with Westfield.

He was selected to be a part of the Next Generation Leadership Initiative, a program sponsored by the Pension Boards of the United Church of Christ that works with young clergy committed to parish ministry through a decade-long relationship. Dr. Chapman consults with congregations on a variety of topics ranging from revitalization to worship to marketing their churches. He married his husband, Greg (pastor of Enfield Congregational Church, United Church of Christ in Enfield, CT), in December of 2014 at Westfield. Jonathan is an award-winning stained glass artist.

Rev. Jonathan's Onsite Hours are Tuesday-Thursday, 9am-12pm. His additional work days are Sunday and Monday, when he is available by appointment. His days off are Friday and Saturday.

Find time with Rev. Jon by scanning the QR code or going to calendly.com/revjonchapman

Contact info for Rev. Jonathan:

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(e) jon@westfielducc.org



Ministers
Pastor
Director of Welcome
Director of Music
Director of Children
Church Administrator
Facilities Caretaker

All of the Congregation
The Rev. Dr. Jonathan Chapman
Kevin Williams
Sue Theroux
Donna Bartholomew
Jessica Payette
Michelle Plasse