



Press Release
**Hudson Valley
Humane Society**

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For immediate release

-- Blessing of the Animals Scheduled --
Pearl River Interfaith Council to Administer

Pomona, NY – September 26, 2005: In a joint effort between the Pearl River Interfaith Council and the Hudson Valley Humane Society, the first annual “Blessing of the Animals” will take place at 2pm on Sunday, October 2, 2005. The service will take place on the great lawn at St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church in Pearl River where Pierce Parkway meets Ehrhardt Road. The date coincides with the celebration of the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi, a day that honors this 13th century saint and his love of all animals. Tradition has it that the animals listened to his sermons and responded to his kindness and hospitality towards all creatures.

Although it began as a Christian tradition, this spiritual reverence for animals has been embraced by all. Clergy from various faiths within the Pearl River Interfaith Council taking part in this touching event includes the Reverend Susan Fortunato (St. Stephens Episcopal Church), Pastor Jill Russell (Nauraushaun Presbyterian Church), Rabbi Daniel Pernick (Beth Am Temple) and Father Angelo Palermo (St. Margaret’s Church) as well as other clergy from the Council. This is a free event open to the public. The service will begin with a few readings and a secular homily followed by leading the animals thru a procession to receive their blessing.

“Pets provide such a source of companionship and comfort for their owners, we believe that offering God’s blessing on these wonderful animals is a sacred and shared ministry of all of our churches and synagogues. We are especially proud to be working with the Hudson Valley Humane Society, as they have historically protected the rights and responsibilities of pets and their owners,” commented the Reverend Susan Fortunato of St. Stephens Episcopal Church.

All pets must be accompanied by adults; dogs should be on a leash and be current with all necessary vaccines. Small animals such as birds, rabbits, cats, ferrets, etc. must be maintained in portable safety crates. Water, treats and free ID tags will be available courtesy of the Hudson Valley Humane Society. Coffee, tea and snacks will be offered.

For further information, please call Ann Marie Gaudio at 845-942-1382 or 845-354-3124.



The HVHS is a private, tax-exempt organization, chartered as a society for prevention of cruelty to animals in New York State and has cared for abandoned, unwanted and abused animals in Rockland County since 1891.