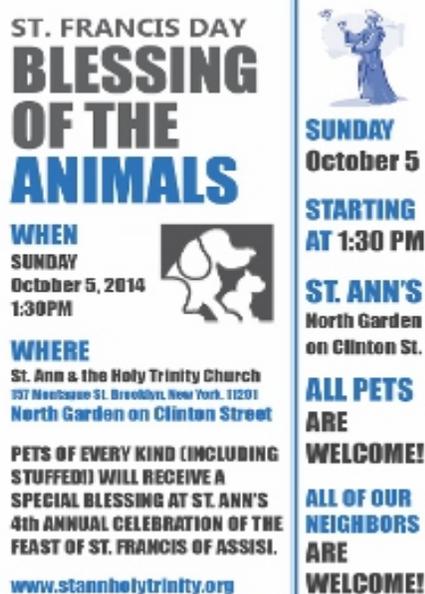


## In a Rare Upstairs Appearance...

**The Singing Correspondent** labored up two winding and creaking flights to the organ loft of St. Ann & the Holy Trinity Church on Sunday, October 5, pausing for breath on the landing before manfully pressing on to discover a clutch\* of Grace Chorale singers surrounding Jason Asbury seated at the Peabody Memorial Organ. Jason has been filling in for St. Ann's recently departed Music Director and had put out the call for volunteers to grace the church, which has very generously provided us with one of our chief venues, with music at a Sunday service. October 4, it turns out, is the Feast of St. Francis, the much-beloved patron saint of animals, and St. Ann's was celebrating it a day late but not a bit short. To wit:



**ST. FRANCIS DAY  
BLESSING  
OF THE  
ANIMALS**

**WHEN**  
SUNDAY  
October 5, 2014  
1:30PM



**WHERE**  
St. Ann & the Holy Trinity Church  
337 MacDougal St. Brooklyn, New York, 11201  
North Garden on Clinton Street

**PETS OF EVERY KIND (INCLUDING STUFFED!) WILL RECEIVE A SPECIAL BLESSING AT ST. ANN'S 4th ANNUAL CELEBRATION OF THE FEAST OF ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI.**

[www.stannholytrinity.org](http://www.stannholytrinity.org)

  
**SUNDAY  
October 5**

**STARTING  
AT 1:30 PM**

**ST. ANN'S  
North Garden  
on Clinton St.**

**ALL PETS  
ARE  
WELCOME!**

**ALL OF OUR  
NEIGHBORS  
ARE  
WELCOME!**

The poster didn't lie. There were indeed pets of all kinds, including stuffed ones, as well as some exotica ordinarily not seen this side of a zoo – that's Brooklyn Heights for you.

But back to the loft. The Grace volunteers had arrived about 10:30 (for an 11:15 service) to rehearse the pieces Jason had selected: John Rutter's melodious "For the Beauty of the Earth" and, from the hymnal, "Lord, Make Us Servants of Your Peace." The lyrics of the latter, of course, comprise the well-known "Prayer of St. Francis," attributed by some to the man himself. After a few work-throughs, with the congregation beginning to arrive in dribs and drabs, we settled in to await the start of the service.

Which provided an opportunity to view the familiar hulk of a place from a new and excellent perspective. While there's a sadly down-at-heels feeling to St. Ann's at ground level, the Correspondent can happily report that the impression is much improved from the loft, where the grandeur of the place is apparent. The windows, first of all, are stunning. Designed by the Bolton Boys, William and John, they predate Tiffany's work by some 40 years.

---

\*Clutch = say, 10 or 12.



But the vaulting is what really caught the eye from our vantage point. Built in the Gothic Revival heyday of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, the entire length of the nave is fan-vaulted (think the Henry VII chapel at Westminster Abbey, though not nearly so intricate); and the bosses where the vault groins meet, as well as the capitals of the columns, are ornamented with elaborate vinework. Worth a look up at an upcoming rehearsal.

And then the service commenced, and it dawned on some of us, whose arrival at rehearsal was less than prompt, that our talents would be called on for a little more than the tunes we had rehearsed. It was a Mass, after all (or Eucharist, as the Episcopalians term it), and there's a fair amount of singing involved. Fortunately, the music is simple, designed for easy congregation participation. But the Singing Correspondent,

lapsed Catholic through and through, marveled at the ability and readiness of his fellow Grace choristers, many of different, little or no faith, to adapt to the call-and-response structure of the event. And the whole motley gang of them reciting the Nicene Creed, with conviction? The Correspondent could only scratch his head.

But the communality of the service was persuasive. Like so many Brooklyn churches (Brooklyn at one time being known as the "City of Churches"), St. Ann's is woefully underattended. To say that the congregation numbered 50 would be generous; and they were all so darn happy and grateful to have us there, so they told us, that it was downright touching. Why, the Singing Correspondent even made it down the ancient steps and up the aisle to take communion, whereupon the celebrant, Fr. John Denaro, warmly thanked him for "coming to sing for us" as he gave the Correspondent the host!

The service concluded with the customary blessing and dismissal of the faithful, followed by a recessional hymn, which we sang with gusto. There remained only the "Postlude," the organ solo that accompanies the departure of the congregation from the church. Except that no one left. Jason sprang into a lively partita or something-or-other that kept people in the nave below in their seats and those of us in the loft transfixed. It was a piece by the delightfully named Buxtehude, and Jason pulled out, if not all, at least most of the stops. It was first-rate.

Post-show, some went to Theresa's to ponder Paul's Epistle to the Philippians over Bloody Marys and a couple of cheese blintzes; others repaired to the church garden to see the beasts blessed. But to judge from the satisfied chatter on the way down and out, the Grace troops got from the experience as much as they gave. And, of course, service of this sort always helps to further Grace Chorale's reputation as a Brooklyn musical community resource.

Gracefully,

The Singing Correspondent

