



The Blessing of the Bikes

Welcome to Grace Episcopal Church and the Brainerd Farmer's Market! Urban biking is not without peril. Many in our community rely exclusively on human-powered transportation and do so while competing for road space with motorized vehicles. As a way of acknowledging the inherent goodness of God's gifts of life and health and the humble but elegant bicycle, we have decided to conduct a Blessing of the Bicycles for the entire Chattanooga cycling community (we're hoping it will be our First Annual!)

This event is open to all regardless of religious affiliation, race, creed, color, sexual orientation, fat or thin tires, and brand of bike. We even welcome unicyclists and Unitarians. ☺ As we swing our holy water and incense over the Schwinn and Cannondales we do so as a human community seeking God's blessing and protection for all who brave our city streets on two wheels. It is also worth noting, that Grace Church is a GreenFaith congregation, committed to practicing ethical stewardship of creation and the environment. In light of the current contention surrounding our nation's participation in global climate change, we give thanks for those who use cycling as a way of intentionally reducing carbon emissions and hope that this event will be a way of affirming our commitment to caring for the environment.

OPENING PRAYER

Remember Lord, that many of our bicycles have risen from the dead, much like yourself. Bless these our bikes, let not our hubs spew forth their gears, protect and shield our tyres from flats, let our cotter pins remain without blemish, save our thighs from unquenchable fire on the hills of Chattanooga, and though we are not worthy, in thy mercy protect us from undue headwinds.
Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING (Ezekiel 1:1, 15b-22)

In the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, on the fifth day of the month, as I was among the exiles by the river Chebar, the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God. As I looked at the living creatures, I saw a wheel on the earth beside the living creatures, one for each of the four of them. As for the appearance of the wheels and their construction: their appearance was like the gleaming of beryl; and the four had the same form, their construction being something like a wheel within a wheel. When they moved, they moved in any of the four directions without veering as they moved. Their rims were tall and awesome, for the rims of all four were full of eyes all round. When the living creatures moved, the wheels moved beside them; and when the living creatures rose from the earth, the wheels rose. Wherever the spirit would go, they went, and the wheels rose along with them; for the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels. When they moved, the others moved; when they stopped, the others stopped; and when they rose from the earth, the wheels rose along with them; for the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels. Over the heads of the living creatures there was something like a dome, shining like crystal, spread out above their heads.

Holy Wisdom, Holy Words. **ALL: Thanks be to God.**

PRAYERS

One: Present in a world groaning under the excesses of consumption we acknowledge the inherent goodness of non-motorized human powered transportation and give thanks for the simple beauty of the bicycle.
God of life, **Hear our prayer .**

One: Present in a community filled with children we pray for those learning to ride. Keep them smart, safe and visible on their neighborhood roads.
God of life, **Hear our prayer.**

One: Present in a community filled with strife we pray for the victims of road rage, and bike theft. And we ask for the strength to forgive mean people, and to be set free from the prisons of our own anger.
God of life, **Hear our prayer.**

One: Present in a world of work we pray for those who build, repair and clean our bikes and those who rely on bicycles to earn their living. Bless those who choose to not drive to work and those for whom driving isn't even an option.
God of life, **Hear our prayer.**

One: Present in a community of beautiful diversity we ask your protection and blessing on all who ride; Pedi cabbies, weekend warriors, athletes, homeless folks, students, children, eco-warriors, bike co-op anarchists, messengers and all the others who take to the streets, bike paths, parks and mountains of our communities. Keep us safe as we ride.
God of life, **Hear our prayer.**

Priest: We now observe a moment of silence for all who have died while riding.
God of life, **Hear our prayer. AMEN**

God, bless these our bikes. Let all who ride be like flashes of lightening. Pour out your protection on our helmets. Take our handlebars and steer us ever true. Bless our wheels that move upon your good Creation. Anoint our brakes that we may know our limits. Fix our seat that whenever we roam, we might always return safely. Send down your Spirit with a blessing upon these bikes, that fortified by the might of your heavenly protection, these bikes may be help and aid to all who make use of them. May our wheels rise. We send up glory, both now and ever, and to the ages of ages! Amen.

The priest then blesses each rider and bike.

May God bless you and keep you safe on this bike. May you encounter the risen Lord in your travels, in the freedom of the open road, in the fellowship of other bikers and in each person you meet. May the Lord be with you at home and on the road, and with you on your journeys. May God's mercy, grace and love shine upon you, now and forever. Amen.

Let us pray together:

May the sun rise up in front of me, may the rain fall behind me, and the wind follow beside me. May the God guard my travels, for the Lord knows the road ahead of me. Keep me safe, Lord, through swirling turns and rolling hills. Let the eagle guide me to the mountaintops, let the moonlight guide me through the night, let the air of spring breathe life into my soul, to begin a new journey and adventure, out on the open road. Amen.

Bicycle bells are rung together to signify the end of the liturgy..

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Prayers adapted from various sources, including House for All Saints and Sinners in Denver, CO, the Rev. Nadia Bolz-Weber, the Rev. Colin Maltbie, and the Rev. Matthew Cole.