

## We are Named and Claimed by God



Shirley Gangstad  
Synod Vice President

Greetings!

In Genesis 2, God brings all the animals to Adam to be named, to be brought into relationship with the one who names them. I have written about my dog Hildy in previous columns. I am also the adoptive housemother for two friends' dogs, Baci ("kisses" in Italian) and Gracie (an unexpected and free gift).

I certainly am in relationship with these three dogs that share my home and my heart. There is always a supply of food and treats available. They get good medical treatment. They receive my full attention many times a day: let dog out; let dog in. When I am away from home, I am aware of how long they have been left alone. Most of all, I wonder how many minutes of my waking day is spent making some physical contact with one or more of them!

I didn't name any of them, but we certainly are in relationship. I know them – their personalities, moods and quirks; and they know me – my voice, my habits, my touch. I love each of them and I don't think it is going too far to say that they love me. We are significant to each other.

Pets are an important and integral part of many of our lives. They make us happy, help us live longer, give us one reason to get up every day. They have much to teach us, especially about love – and loving unconditionally.

God says in Isaiah 43: "I have called you by name; you are mine" and thus announces to us unequivocally that we are in relationship with God. God takes that further and tells us that God has known and claimed us from the womb and before the womb. What immeasurable joy, contentment and security we have in this relationship with God! How important for us to be named and claimed!

---

**"I have called you  
by name;  
you are mine."  
-Isaiah 43**

---

Blessings in Christ,

*Shirley*