The Story of Holly, Ivy, And Nick

Several people sent me stories of their pets, but it turns out we only have time for one, and that is the story of Holly, Ivy, and Nick. It's Charlene Baker's story, and she gave me permission to tell it for her since she can't be here this morning.

Last Fall, Bob Baker died. He'd been married to Charlene for 58 and a half years, and they loved each other very much, and she missed him. Also, he had been ill and then disabled for several years, and she had taken care of him. When Bob died, Charlene was sad and exhausted and miserable. And also…suddenly it seemed like the days were very long and there was nothing very interesting to do. It was a really hard time. (That's how it is when love ends.)

When Christmas came, she didn't feel like celebrating. Her grown kids were coming back to Albuquerque to keep her company for the holiday, and she was glad to see them, but there was no tree or decorations…she just hadn't had the heart.
When they arrived on Christmas Eve, they decided to run to Albertsons to get a few things to decorate. And when they got home they had decorations…and a puppy.

A really young puppy. There had been a family with a litter of puppies in the parking lot, trying to get rid of them and Charlene's daughter Janine felt like she should take the last one because she was afraid it might come to a bad end if she didn't. She'd see that it got a good home, she thought.

By the time she got back to Charlene's house, she'd decided that She would give that puppy a good home. (That's how love works)
It looked like a little pit bull mix. And that little puppy gave that sad family a much nicer Christmas. They named her Holly.

The day after Christmas, they took Holly to the vet. He pronounced her healthy, but way too young to have been taken away from her litter. He told Janine that if she wanted a well-socialized dog, she should get a second puppy…or even a third puppy. Oh, yes, and by the way, to take a dog on an airplane, that dog has to be at least 8 weeks old. But of course, Janine herself had to go home soon after Christmas.
So Charlene agreed that she would not only take care of Holly for weeks but she would get another puppy or two so they would all be socialized together.
Now…that's mother love for you!

That's how Holly became Holly, Ivy, and Nick. And you know what? It turns out that its hard to be sad when you have three puppies rolling around your house, and its' even harder to be lethargic when there's so much cleaning up to do! And also…it's hard to have a hurting heart when you've got three puppies helping it heal.
On Valentine's Day, Charlene took Holly to Janine, and turned right around and came home to Ivy and Nick. Of course she still misses Bob a lot, but

Of course she still misses Bob, every day…but she had started to move forward on the long path of grief. She thinks of Ivy and Nick as an Integral part of her mental health. Ivy and Nick are healer mixes and they are great big dogs now. They have brought joy and love and meaning into Charlene's house and that's something that animals are really good at, and we are grateful!

Now we are going to bless the animals who are with us this morning. The blessing will be a back and forth between me and you.

(when it comes your time to respond to my words, please respond, " Creatures of the Earth, we bless you and thank you!" Let's give that try. Ready?)

Minister: We give thanks for the animals who are a part of our lives; who give us food and clothing, who play their part in the great web of life, who delight us with the wonder of their being:
" Creatures of the Earth, we bless you and thank you"

Minister: We give thanks for all those animals who help us: worker animals who guard us and find our lost and companion the disabled, who serve in war and work alongside us, and for animals who give their lives to help us learn.
" Creatures of the Earth, we bless you and thank you"

We give thanks for the special animals we call pets: for our childhood pets, who taught us to love and to cry. For our children's pets, who help us to teach them responsibility and relationship, and for the pets who brighten our days and comfort our nights.
"Creatures of the Earth, we thank you and bless you"

And now we continue to bless the pets we have brought with us, or the pets we are thinking of this morning. I invite you to picture your pet in your mind's eye, or to place a hand on them now, and bless them like this: Put your hand on them, or near them, or think of them, call them by name, and say, I bless you, I will take care of you, I love you. So Since I will be blessing my dog who isn't here this morning, I will say, "Mosby, I bless you, I will take care of you, I love you. Are you ready to do this all together now?

Let’s sing…..