Welcome to Morning Prayer with the people of the Green Mountain Online Abbey.

A few notes about today's service. Please *leave your microphone on mute* during the responsory portions of the service. You are welcome to unmute yourself when you are invited to offer your prayers, then remember to mute it again when you have completed your prayer.

We will always read the Gospel appointed for the day so that we can read and meditate on Jesus' words and teaching.

**MORNING PRAYER**

*September 23, 2020*

*Wednesday of Ordinary Time, Proper 20*

*Thecla Apostle and Proto-martyr among Women, c. 70*

Opening Sentence
The Officiant says the following

Send out your light and your truth, that they may lead me, and bring me to your holy hill and to your dwelling.
Psalm 43:3

Invitatory and Psalter

Officiant  O God, open our lips.
People    And our mouth shall proclaim your praise.

All       Praise to the holy and undivided Trinity, one God: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen. Alleluia.

Officiant  God is praised by all creation:
People    Come, let us worship.

Said in unison Jubilate  Psalm 100

May all lands be joyful before you, O God, * serve with gladness and come before your presence with a song.

For we know that you are God; * you yourself have made us, and we are yours; we are your people and the sheep of your pasture.
We shall enter your gates with thanksgiving,
go into your courts with praise, *
give thanks to you and call upon your Name.

For you are good; your mercy is everlasting; *
and your faithfulness endures from age to age.

_Officiant_  God is praised by all creation:
_People_  Come, let us worship.

Psalm Appointed

_read in unison Psalm 119:97-120_ Mem _Quomodo dilexi!_
97 Oh, how I love your law; *
all the day long it is in my mind.

98 Your commandment has made me wiser than my enemies,*
and it is always with me.

99 I have more understanding than all my teachers,*
for your decrees are my study.

100 I am wiser than the elders,*
because I observe your commandments.

101 I restrain my feet from every evil way,*
that I may keep your word.
102 I do not shrink from your judgments, * because you yourself have taught me.

103 How sweet are your words to my taste; * they are sweeter than honey to my mouth.

104 Through your commandments I gain understanding; * therefore I hate every lying way.

105 Your word is a lantern to my feet * and a light upon my path.

106 I have sworn and am determined * to keep your righteous judgments.

107 I am deeply troubled; * preserve my life, O God, according to your word.

108 Accept, O God, the willing tribute of my lips, * and teach me your judgments.

109 My life is always in my hand, * yet I do not forget your law.

110 The wicked have set a trap for me, * but I have not strayed from your commandments.

111 Your decrees are my inheritance for ever; * truly, they are the joy of my heart.
112 I have applied my heart to fulfill your statutes * for ever and to the end.

113 I hate those who have a divided heart, * but your law do I love.

114 You are my refuge and shield; * my hope is in your word.

115 Away from me, you wicked! * I will keep the commandments of my God.

116 Sustain me according to your promise, that I may live, * and let me not be disappointed in my hope.

117 Hold me up, and I shall be safe, * and my delight shall be ever in your statutes.

118 You spurn all who stray from your statutes; * their deceitfulness is in vain.

119 In your sight all the wicked of the earth are but dross; * therefore I love your decrees.

120 My flesh trembles with dread of you; * I am afraid of your judgments.

Praise to the holy and undivided Trinity, one God:
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

The Lessons

First Reading
Reader  A reading from Acts 19:1-10

19 While Apollos was in Corinth, Paul passed through the interior regions and came to Ephesus, where he found some disciples. 2 He said to them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you became believers?” They replied, “No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.” 3 Then he said, “Into what then were you baptized?” They answered, “Into John’s baptism.” 4 Paul said, “John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, in Jesus.” 5 On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 6 When Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied— 7 altogether there were about twelve of them.

8 He entered the synagogue and for three months spoke out boldly, and argued persuasively about the kingdom of God. 9 When some stubbornly refused to believe and spoke evil of the Way before the congregation, he left them, taking the disciples with him, and argued daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. 10 This continued for two years, so that all the residents of Asia, both Jews and Greeks, heard the word of the Lord.
Here ends the reading.

*read in unison* **Canticle C**

**The Song of Hannah 1 Samuel 2:1-8**

My heart exults in you, O God; *
    my triumph song is lifted in you.
My mouth derides my enemies, *
    for I rejoice in your salvation.
There is none holy like you, *
    nor any rock to be compared to you, our God.
Do not heap up prideful words or speak in arrogance; *
    Only God is knowing and weighs all actions.
The bows of the mighty are broken, *
    but the weak are clothed in strength.
Those once full now labor for bread, *
    those who hungered now are well fed.
The childless woman has borne sevenfold, *
    while the mother of many is forlorn.
God destroys and brings to life, casts down and raises up; *
    gives wealth or takes it away, humbles and dignifies.
God raises the poor from the dust; *
    and lifts the needy from the ash heap
To make them sit with the rulers *
    and inherit a place of honor.
For the pillars of the earth are God’s *
    on which the whole earth is founded.
The Gospel


4 Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, 2 where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing at all during those days, and when they were over, he was famished. 3 The devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread.” 4 Jesus answered him, “It is written, ‘One does not live by bread alone.’”

5 Then the devil led him up and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. 6 And the devil said to him, “To you I will give their glory and all this authority; for it has been given over to me, and I give it to anyone I please. 7 If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours.” 8 Jesus answered him, “It is written, ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.’”

9 Then the devil took him to Jerusalem, and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, 10 for it is written, ‘He will command his angels concerning you, to protect you,’

11 and ‘On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.’”

12 Jesus answered him, “It is said, ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’” 13 When the devil had finished every test, he departed from him until an opportune time.
Here ends the reading.

The Apostles' Creed

All say together

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
    creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.
    He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
    and born of the Virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
    was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again.
He ascended into heaven,
    and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
    the holy catholic Church,
    the communion of saints,
    the forgiveness of sins,
    the resurrection of the body,
    and the life everlasting. Amen.

The Prayers
Officiant  God be with you.
People    And also with you.
Officiant  Let us pray.

Our Father in heaven,
    hallowed be your Name,
    your kingdom come,
    your will be done,
    on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
    as we forgive those
    who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial,
    and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
    and the glory are yours,
    now and for ever. Amen.

Suffrages

V. Help us, O God our Savior;
R. Deliver us and forgive us our sins.
V. Look upon your congregation;
R. Give to your people the blessing of peace.
V. Declare your glory among the nations;
R. And your wonders among all peoples.
V. Do not let the oppressed be shamed and turned away;
R. Never forget the lives of your poor.
V. Continue your loving-kindness to those who know you;
R. And your favor to those who are true of heart.
V. Satisfy us by your loving-kindness in the morning;
R. So shall we rejoice and be glad all the days of our life.

The Collects

The Collect of the Day

Proper 20
Grant us, Lord, not to be anxious about earthly things, but to love things heavenly; and even now, while we are placed among things that are passing away, to hold fast to those that shall endure; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

God of liberating power, you raised up your apostle Thecla, who allowed no obstacle or peril to inhibit her from bearing witness to new life in Jesus Christ: Empower courageous evangelists among us, that men and women everywhere may experience the freedom you offer; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Together

A Collect for Guidance
O God, our Creator and Sustainer, in you we live and move and have our being: We humbly pray you so to guide and
govern us by your Holy Spirit, that in all the cares and occupations of our life we may not forget you, but may remember that we are ever walking in your sight; through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

For People Facing Uncertainty
God of the present moment, God who in Jesus stills the storm and soothes the frantic heart; bring hope and courage to us all as we wait in uncertainty. Bring hope that you will make us the equal of whatever lies ahead. Bring us courage to endure what cannot be avoided, for your will is health and wholeness; you are God, and we need you. Amen.
The Officiant says
I invite your prayers of thanksgiving and intercession at this time.

(During the silence people may add their own prayers. Please unmute yourself to share your prayer aloud. When you have completed your prayer, return the microphone to mute.)

The Officiant
O God, you made us in your own image and redeemed us through Jesus your Son: Look with compassion on the whole human family; take away the arrogance and hatred which infect our hearts and our nation; break down the walls that separate us; unite us in bonds of love; and work through our struggle and confusion to accomplish your purposes on earth; that in your good time, all nations and races may serve you in harmony
around your heavenly throne; through Jesus Christ our Savior, 
_Amen._

_The Officiant concludes with the Collect for Mission_

**A Collect for Mission**

Almighty and everlasting God, by whose Spirit the whole body of your faithful people is governed and sanctified: Receive our supplications and prayers which we offer before you for all members of your holy Church, that in their vocation and ministry they may truly and devoutly serve you; through our Savior Jesus Christ. _Amen._

_The General Thanksgiving_
_The Officiant and People say together_
Almighty God, Father of all mercies, we your unworthy servants give you humble thanks for all your goodness and loving-kindness to us and to all whom you have made. We bless you for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; but above all for your immeasurable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ; for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory. And, we pray, give us such an awareness of your mercies, that with truly thankful hearts we may show forth your praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives, by giving up our selves to your service, and by walking before you
in holiness and righteousness all our days;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit,
be honor and glory throughout all ages. Amen.

Together A Collect of Dedication
Beloved God: As we offer ourselves to you this day, guide
and stir us with your Holy Spirit, that we may become one
body, one spirit in Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

Dismissal

Deacon or Officiant Let us bless God.
People To God be thanks forever.

Concluding Sentences

The grace of our Savior Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and
the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore.
Amen.

May the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing
through the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Glory to God, whose power working in us can do infinitely
more than we can ask or imagine. Glory to God from
generation to generation in the church, and in Christ Jesus
for ever and ever. Amen.
Commemoration
Thecla, who according to tradition was a disciple of the apostle Paul, was one of the most popular female saints in the early church. Her story is told in the second-century Acts of Paul and Thecla. According to this narrative, upon hearing Paul preach the gospel, Thecla abandoned her plans for marriage and followed Paul. Condemned to burn at the stake, her life was saved by a miraculous thunderstorm. As her adventures continued, she was thrown to the beasts in the local arena. There she was protected by a fierce lioness. Finally, thinking this was her last chance to be baptized, she threw herself into a pool of ravenous seals and baptized herself in the water, while the seals were struck dead by lightning. The governor then released her, and she went on to travel and preach the gospel. Although the Acts of Paul and Thecla unabashedly incorporates many of the tropes and styles of ancient fiction, which makes it difficult to disentangle history from myth, Christians in late antiquity largely believed that there was indeed a historical Thecla behind all of the legends, and devotion to her was very widespread, especially among women. According to Tertullian (writing around the year 200), early Christian women appealed to Thecla’s example to defend women’s freedom to teach and to baptize. A shrine to Thecla in Seleucia (Asia Minor) became a popular pilgrimage site in the fourth and fifth centuries. Devotion to Thecla from Gaul to Palestine is also evident in literature, art, and in the practice of naming children after her. Her image appeared on wall paintings, clay flasks, oil lamps, stone reliefs, textile curtains, and other materials. In the
Orthodox Church she is given the title “Proto-Martyr Among Women” because, just as Stephen is believed to have been the first male martyr, so Thecla is believed to have been the first female martyr.

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