



*A ministry and community of prayer of
The Episcopal Diocese of Vermont*

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

***Saturday, September 23, 2023
Ordinary Time, Proper 19***

Thecla of Iconium, Proto-Martyr among Women, c.70

Opening Sentence

The Officiant says the following

The eyes of all wait upon you, O God, and you give them their food in due season. You open wide your hand and satisfy the needs of every living creature. *Psalm 145:16-17*

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's bounty fills the earth:

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's bounty fills the earth:

People Come let us worship.

Psalms Appointed

In Unison or responsively by whole or half verse

Psalms 75 and 76

Psalm 75 *Confitebimur tibi*

1 We give you thanks, O God, we give you thanks, *
calling upon your Name and declaring all your wonderful deeds.

2 "I will appoint a time," says God; *
"I will judge with equity.

3 Though the earth and all its inhabitants are quaking, *
I will make its pillars fast.

4 I will say to the boasters, 'Boast no more,' *
and to the wicked, 'Do not toss your horns;

5 Do not toss your horns so high, *
nor speak with a proud neck.

6 For judgment is neither from the east nor from the west, *
nor yet from the wilderness or the mountains."

7 You are judge, O God; *

you put down one and lift up another.

8 For in your hand there is a cup,
full of spiced and foaming wine, which you pour out, *
and all the wicked of the earth shall drink and drain the dregs.

9 But I will rejoice for ever; *
I will sing praises to you, O God of Jacob.

10 For you will break off all the horns of the wicked; *
but the horns of the righteous shall be exalted.

Psalm 76 *Notus in Judæa*

1 In Judah you are known, O God; *
your Name is great in Israel.

2 At Salem is your tabernacle, *
and your dwelling is in Zion.

3 There you broke the flashing arrows, *
the shield, the sword, and the weapons of battle.

4 How glorious you are, *
more splendid than the everlasting mountains!

5 The strong of heart have been despoiled;
they sink into sleep; *
none of the warriors can lift a hand.

6 At your rebuke, O God of Jacob, *
both horse and rider lie stunned.

7 What terror you inspire; *

who can stand before you when you are angry?

8 From heaven you pronounced judgment; *
the earth was afraid and was still,

9 When God rose up to judgment *
and to save all the oppressed of the earth.

10 Truly, wrathful Edom will give you thanks, *
and the remnant of Hamath will keep your feasts.

11 Make a vow to your God and keep it; *
let the nations bring gifts to the One who is worthy to be feared,

12 Who breaks the spirit of princes, *
and strikes terror in the rulers of the earth.

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 **Paul's First letter to the Corinthians 4:1-7**

Think of us in this way, as servants of Christ and stewards of God's mysteries. Moreover, it is required of stewards that they should be found trustworthy. But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. I do not even judge myself. I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me. Therefore do not pronounce judgement before the time, before the Lord

comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive commendation from God.

I have applied all this to Apollos and myself for your benefit, brothers and sisters, so that you may learn through us the meaning of the saying, 'Nothing beyond what is written', so that none of you will be puffed up in favor of one against another. For who sees anything different in you? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you received it, why do you boast as if it were not a gift?

Reader Here ends the reading.

read in unison **Canticle 12**

A Song of Creation *Benedicite, omnia opera Domini*

Song of the Three, 35–65

Invocation

Glorify the Lord, all you works of the Lord, *
sing praise and give honor for ever.

In the high vault of heaven, glorify the Lord, *
sing praise and give honor for ever.

I. The Cosmic Order

Glorify the Lord, you angels and all powers of the Lord, *
O heavens and all waters above the heavens.

Sun and moon and stars of the sky, glorify the Lord, *
sing praise and give honor for ever.

Glorify the Lord, every shower of rain and fall of dew, *
all winds and fire and heat.

Winter and summer, glorify the Lord, *

sing praise and give honor for ever.
Glorify the Lord, O chill and cold, *
 drops of dew and flakes of snow.
Frost and cold, ice and sleet, glorify the Lord, *
 sing praise and give honor for ever.
Glorify the Lord, O nights and days, *
 O shining light and enfolding dark.
Storm clouds and thunderbolts, glorify the Lord, *
 sing praise and give honor for ever.

Doxology

Let us glorify the Lord: Creator, Christ, and Holy Spirit; *
 sing praise and give honor for ever.
In the high vault of heaven, glorify the Lord, *
 sing praise and give honor for ever.

The Gospel

Reader A reading from the Gospel of **Matthew 5:17-20**

‘Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfil. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

Reader Here ends the reading.

A moment of silence is observed so that we may reflect on the teachings and ministry of Jesus.

A Season of Creation Affirmation of Faith

Together

We believe in God, who creates all things,
who embraces all things, who celebrates all things,
who is present in every part of the fabric of creation.

We believe in God as the source of all life,
who baptizes this planet with living water.
We believe in Jesus Christ, the suffering one, the poor one,
the malnourished one, the climate refugee,
who loves and cares for this world
and who suffers with it.

And we believe in Jesus Christ, the seed of life,
who came to reconcile and renew this world
and everything in it.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the breath of God,
who moves with God
and who moves among and with us today.

We believe in everlasting life in God.

And we believe in the hope that one day
God will put an end to death and all destructive forces.⁶

The Prayers

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

Together

An alternative Lord's Prayer

Our loving God in heaven,
holy is your Name,
may your reign 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 all creation, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and for ever. Amen.

Suffrages A

V. Show us your mercy, O Lord;
R. And grant us your salvation.
V. Clothe your ministers with righteousness;
R. Let your people sing with joy.
V. Give peace, O Lord, in all the world;
R. For only in you can we live in safety.
V. Lord, keep this nation under your care;

R. And guide us in the way of justice and truth.
V. Let your way be known upon earth;
R. Your saving health among all nations.
V. Let not the needy, O Lord, be forgotten;
R. Nor the hope of the poor be taken away.
V. Create in us clean hearts, O God;
R. And sustain us with your Holy Spirit.

The Collects

The Collect of the Day

Officiant

Proper 19

O God, because without you we are not able to please you, mercifully grant that your Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts; through Jesus Christ our Savior, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

God of liberating power, empower courageous evangelists among us, that men and women everywhere may know the freedom that 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

For the Presiding Bishop Election

Almighty God, source of all wisdom and understanding: Look graciously on your church, and so guide the hearts and minds of those who will choose our next presiding bishop, that we may receive a faithful pastor who will care for all of your people, equip us for our ministries, and proclaim your word to us and to the world, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *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.

Together

God of unchangeable power, when you fashioned the world the morning stars sang together and the host of heaven shouted for joy; open our eyes to the wonders of creation and teach us to use all things for good, to the honor of your glorious name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Together

A Collect for Dismantling Racism

O God, you created all peoples in your image, we thank you for the wonderful diversity of races and cultures in this world. Enrich our lives by ever-widening circles of fellowship, and show us your presence in those who differ most from us, until our knowledge of your love is made perfect in our love for all your children; through Jesus Christ our Savior. 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 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

Together

Almighty God, of boundless mercy,
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 Savior 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 best vision,
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

Go forth now to care for God's world. Use resources wisely. Share your knowledge. Sacrifice where necessary. Live in harmony with all creation. Go out into all the world as prophets of a new way of living and preach the good news to all. And the blessing of the Creator God, the Risen Son, and the Promised Holy Spirit bless you that you might be a blessing to others today and always. *Amen.*

May God light in us a holy fire: Light a fire that is worthy of our ancestors. Light a fire that is worthy of our children. Light a fire that is worthy of our fathers. Light a fire that is worthy of our mothers. Light a fire that is worthy of God. Now let us go in peace, lighting a holy fire wherever we go. *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, widely believed to have been 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, a strong belief that there was a historical Thecla behind all of those legends was very widespread in the early church, and devotion to her was very widespread, especially among women. According to Tertullian (writing in about 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 asks, oil lamps, stone reliefs,

textile curtains, and other media. In the Orthodox Church she is given the title “Proto-martyr Among Women”, because just as Stephen is believed to be the first male martyr, so Thecla is believed to be the first female martyr.

—Lesser Feasts and Fasts 2018 Church Publishing

Liturgy created with the following resources:

Book of Common Prayer, Enriching Our Worship, Saint Helena Breviary, A New Zealand Prayer Book and The Inclusive Bible, https://prayer.forwardmovement.org/prayers_and_thanksgivings.php#T7