

St Francis Episcopal Church, San Jose, CA
Morning Prayer, Thursday, Nov. 19, 2020[†]
Commemoration of Mechthilde of Hackeborn and Gertrude the Great,
Mystics and Theologians, 1298 and 1302

When 2 people are reading: **READER 1: Plain Text** *Reader 2: Italics* **Both: Bold**
If there are 2 lessons, a reading and subsequent canticle may be omitted.

I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the Lord."

O Lord, open our lips

And our mouth shall proclaim your praise.

**Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning,
is now, and will be for ever. Amen.**

**Jesus, as a mother you gather your people to you; you are gentle with us as a mother with
her children.**

**Often you weep over our sins and our pride, tenderly you draw us from hatred and
judgment.**

**You comfort us in sorrow and bind up our wounds, in sickness you nurse us and with
pure milk you feed us.**

**Jesus, by your dying, we are born to new life; by your anguish and labor we come forth in
joy.**

**Despair turns to hope through your sweet goodness; through your gentleness, we find
comfort in fear.**

Your warmth gives life to the dead, your touch makes sinners righteous.

Lord Jesus, in your mercy, heal us; in your love and tenderness, remake us.

**In your compassion, bring grace and forgiveness, for the beauty of heaven, may your love
prepare us.**

(Anselm of Canterbury)

**Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning is
now and shall be for ever. Amen.**

The night has passed, and the day lies open before us; let us pray with one heart and mind.

As we rejoice in the gift of this new day, so may the light of your presence, O God, set our
hearts on fire with love for you; now and forever.

Amen.

Psalm 119

41 Let your loving-kindness come to me, O Lord, and your salvation, according to your
promise.

42 *Then shall I have a word for those who taunt me, because I trust in your words.*

43 Do not take the word of truth out of my mouth, for my hope is in your judgments.

44 *I shall continue to keep your law; I shall keep it for ever and ever.*

45 I will walk at liberty, because I study your commandments.

46 *I will tell of your decrees before kings and will not be ashamed.*

47 I delight in your commandments, which I have always loved.

48 I will lift up my hands to your commandments, and I will meditate on your statutes.

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning is now and shall be forever. Amen.

A reading from the Gospel of Luke

38 Now as they went on their way, he entered a certain village, where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. ³⁹She had a sister named Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to what he was saying. ⁴⁰But Martha was distracted by her many tasks; so she came to him and asked, 'Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her then to help me.' ⁴¹But the Lord answered her, 'Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; ⁴²there is need of only one thing.* Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her.'

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

[Canticle A: A Song of Wisdom, Wisdom 10:15-19,20b-21]

Wisdom freed from a nation of oppressors a holy people and a blameless race.

She entered the soul of a servant of the Lord, withstood dread rulers with wonders and signs.

**To the saints she gave the reward of their labors, and led them by a marvelous way;
She was their shelter by day and a blaze of stars by night.**

**She brought them across the Red Sea, she led them through mighty waters;
But their enemies she swallowed in the waves and spewed them out from the depths of the abyss.**

**And then, Lord, the righteous sang hymns to your Name, and praised with one voice
your protecting hand;**

**For Wisdom opened the mouths of the mute, and gave speech to the tongues of a
new-born people.**

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning is now and shall be for ever. Amen.

The Apostles' Creed

**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

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.
Let us pray.

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy Name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

Almighty God, who gave to your servants Mechthilde and Gertrude special gifts of grace to understand and teach the truth in Christ Jesus: Grant that by their teachings we may know you, the one true God, and Jesus Christ your Son; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Merciful God, we entrust to your tender care those who are ill or in pain, knowing that whenever danger threatens your everlasting arms are there to hold them safe. Comfort and heal them, and restore them to health and strength; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*¹

Gracious God, give skill, sympathy and resilience to all who are caring for the sick, and your wisdom to those searching for a cure. Strengthen them with your Spirit, that through their work many will be restored to health; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*²

¹ <https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-parishes/coronavirus-covid-19-liturgy-and-prayer>

² <https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-parishes/coronavirus-covid-19-liturgy-and-prayer>

Grant us, Lord God, a vision of your world as your love would have it:
a world where the weak are protected, and none go hungry or poor;
a world where the riches of creation are shared, and everyone can enjoy them;
a world where different races and cultures live in harmony and mutual respect;
a world where peace is built with justice, and justice is guided by love.
Give us the inspiration and courage to build it, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

O God: You bring hope out of emptiness, energy out of fear, new life out of grief and loss.
As Mary returned to mourn yet found unspeakable joy, so comfort all who have lost their homes
through persecution, war, exile, or deliberate destruction.
Give them security, a place to live, and neighbors they trust to be, with them,
a new sign of peace to the world. *Amen*

We cannot merely pray to you, O God, to end war;
*For we know that You have made the world in a way that people must find their own path to
peace within themselves and with their neighbors.*
We cannot merely pray to You, O God, to end starvation;
*For You have already given us the resources with which to feed the entire world,
if we would only use them wisely.*
We cannot merely pray to You, O God, to root out prejudice;
*For You have already given us eyes with which to see the good in all people, if we would
only use them rightly.*
We cannot merely pray to You, O God, to end despair;
*For You have already given us the power to clear away slums and to give hope, if we would
only use our power justly.*
We cannot merely pray to You, O God, to end disease;
*For You have already given us great minds with which to search out cures and healing, if we
would only use them constructively.*
Therefore we pray to You instead, O God, for strength, determination and will power,
To do instead of just pray,
To become instead of merely to wish.¹

**Lord, make us instruments of your peace. Where there is hatred, let us
sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is discord, union;
where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there
is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy. Grant that we may not
so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to
understand; to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive; it
is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are
born to eternal life. Amen.**

Spirit of God,
We have heard your call to share in building up the Kingdom of God.
Fill us with the desire to change ourselves and to change the world.

Enflame our passion for justice into a commitment to address unjust situations and structures.

Deepen our concern for our sisters and brothers in America and overseas who endure the burdens of poverty, war, exploitation and persecution.

Let us enthusiastically play our part in the mission of the Church in the modern world.

Banish any complacency in our hearts and minds.

Teach us to recognize the lack of justice.

May we always act in the Spirit of justice.

May we envisage, pray about and create a different sort of world

in which injustice is replaced with a renewed sense of solidarity and care.

Enlivened by the Spirit, may we go forth in the peace of the Holy Spirit to love and serve the Lord.ⁱⁱ *Amen*

Thanks be to God.

BIOGRAPHY

Mechtilde of Hackeborn (1240/1241 – 19 November 1298) was a Saxon (from what is now Germany) Benedictine nun in the monastery of Helfta. Born Matilda von Hackeborn-Wippa, in 1240 or 1241, she belonged to one of the noblest and most powerful Thuringian families; her sister was the illustrious Abbess Gertrude of Hackeborn (not to be confused with Gertrude the Great, below).

She was famous for her musical talents and was called the “Nightingale of Helfta”. Gifted with a beautiful voice, Mechtilde also possessed a special talent for rendering the solemn and sacred music over which she presided as *domina cantrix*.

Mechtilde is best known for her revelations. The Lord would say to Mechtilde: Everything you have and by which you can please me you have from me and through me. In one extraordinary vision she perceived that "the smallest details of creation are reflected in the Holy Trinity by means of the humanity of Christ, because it is from the same earth that produced them that Christ drew his humanity." At the age of 50, Mechtilde went through a grave spiritual crisis, as well as physical suffering. Much troubled, Mechthilde, first had recourse to prayer. She had a vision of Christ holding in His hand the book of her revelations, and saying: "All this has been committed to writing by my will and inspiration; and, therefore you have no cause to be troubled about it." He also told her that He wished this book to be called *The Book of Special Grace*, because it would prove such to many.

Mechtilde died in the Monastery of Helfta, on November 19, 1298.

Gertrude the Great (January 6, 1256 – c. 1302) was a German Benedictine nun, mystic, and theologian.

Gertrude was born on the feast of the Epiphany, January 6, 1256, in Eisleben, Thuringia. At the age of four, she entered the monastery school at the monastery of St. Mary at Helfta and was confided to the care of Mechtilde (above). She received a thorough education in a range of subjects. In 1281, at the age of 25, she experienced the first of a series of visions that continued

throughout her life, and which changed the course of her life. Her priorities shifted away from secular knowledge and toward the study of Scripture and theology. Gertrude devoted herself strongly to personal prayer and meditation, and began writing spiritual treatises for the benefit of her monastic sisters.

Gertrude produced numerous writings, though only some survive today. The longest survival is the *Legatus Memorialis Abundantiae Divinae Pietatis* (known in English today as *The Herald of Divine Love* or *The Herald of God's Loving-Kindness*). The *Herald* is composed of five books. Book 2 forms the core of the work, and was written by Gertrude herself. Books 3, 4, and 5 were written by another nun, or possibly more than one, during Gertrude's lifetime and probably at least in part at her dictation. Book 1 was written shortly before or after Gertrude's death as an introduction to the whole collection, likely by another Helfta nun.

<http://www.satucket.com/lectionary/Mechtilde&Gertrude.html>

¹ <https://socialjusticeresourcecenter.org/prayers/justice/>