

**Sunday 24 August 2025,  
Trinity 10**

**Collect:**

Lord of heaven and earth,  
as Jesus taught his disciples to be persistent in prayer,  
give us patience and courage never to lose hope,  
but always to bring our prayers before you;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Readings for this week:**

*Isaiah 58:9b-14; Psalm 103:1-8; Hebrews 12:18-29; Luke 13:10-17*

The final portion of Isaiah (chapters 56-66) is known as Third Isaiah because it forms a distinct unit, which some discern to be written by a different author from either of the first two sections of the book. It relates to the years immediately following the exiles return from Babylon. Over time they have picked up new religious practices, which sometimes divide opinion. At the start of chapter 58 people have been complaining that although they have been fasting assiduously God hasn't answered their prayers, and God has replied that true fasting puts aside selfish and oppressive practices to focus on loosing the bonds of injustice and caring for the poor. Verses 9b-14 reiterate this message: God will hear their cry if they likewise hear, and respond to, the cries of those in need. As they provide nourishment for others, so they will be nourished and nurtured themselves. Psalm 103 echoes this theme – faithful service to God will bring the benefits of the One who is full of compassion and mercy, gracious and slow to anger.

Our passage from Hebrews opens with unsettling, intangible images, redolent of insecurity and danger, describing a route to God via Mount Sinai that is uncertain, unclear and crackling with jeopardy. It contrasts this with a journey to Mount Zion, which is allied to the city of the living God, with hosts of angels aiding pilgrims along the Way opened up by Jesus' life and sacrifice. This leads the writer to both invite the community listening to the letter to strike out together on this journey, while also reminding them that they have no need to live in fear as, in Jesus, they have been gifted a grace-giving Saviour. We witness an example of this grace-giving in the Gospel, where Jesus heals a crippled woman, restoring her to health dignity and joy, putting into practice the instructions given in Isaiah for holy living. He then exposes and expresses his revulsion of those who elevate rules over compassionate response to human need. This is the last time that Luke mentions Jesus entering a synagogue. The tensions between him and his opponents among the authorities have now reached such a level of polarisation that devastating confrontation in Jerusalem is inevitable. Yet, even as he creates a crisis, a woman is set free from eighteen years of crippling illness, so for Jesus, the crisis is justified.

God of our pilgrimage,  
you have willed that the gate of mercy  
should stand open for those who trust in you:  
look upon us with your favour  
that we who follow the path of your will  
may never wander from the way of life;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Readings for next week:**

*Proverbs 25:6-7; Psalm 112; Hebrews 13:1-8, 15-16; Luke 14:1, 7-14*

*Eleventh Sunday after Trinity*