

**Sunday 14 September 2025,  
Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity**

**Collect:**

Almighty God,  
you search us and know us:  
may we rely on you in strength  
and rest on you in weakness,  
now and in all our days;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Readings for this week:**

*Exodus 32:7-14; Psalm 51:1-11; 1 Timothy 1:12-17; Luke 15:1-10*

Murmuring and complaining about how the Israelites who have escaped Egypt are being treated by God is one thing, but building a golden calf to worship instead of Yahweh takes their disobedience and ingratitude to another level. They are breaking the covenant they have made with the God who has already saved them from slavery and annihilation. Which is where our passage from Exodus picks up. It contains two distinct units. In the first Moses and God are having a mountaintop dialogue when God commands Moses to leave immediately because in his absence the people he is leading have turned to other gods. Their actions are so heinous that God is preparing to destroy them. However, in the second part Moses responds with a prayer of intercession on behalf of the people. Reading on from verse 14, while Moses' intercession is successful and God reiterates faithfulness to the existing covenant despite the sin of the people, there is punishment and it is severe. The people have sinned and require a mediator, in this case Moses, to deflect them from the punishment due to them for breaking the first two Commandments. At the same time the capacity and willingness of God to repent is woven throughout this episode, setting Moses up to intercede in the teeth of the threat of punishment. Psalm 51, a heartfelt plea for mercy from one who admits their sin, serves as a response to Moses' chastisement of his wayward people.

Six weeks of readings from the two letters of Paul to Timothy open with today's snippet where Paul lays out his credentials as an apostle, foremost among them being that he is a sinner saved by grace through Christ. In Luke we find hope for those who sin – God's capacity for forgiveness is boundless, indeed God will come searching for those who fall away from the true and honest path. The pair of parables underscores this message through repetition while also highlighting that divine forgiveness brings joy, not only to the one forgiven, but also to the one who does the forgiving.

God our creator,  
you feed your children with the true manna,  
the living bread from heaven:  
let this holy food sustain us through our earthly pilgrimage  
until we come to that place  
where hunger and thirst are no more;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Readings for next week:**

*Amos 8:4-7; Psalm 113; 1 Timothy 2:1-7; Luke 16:1-13*  
*Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity*