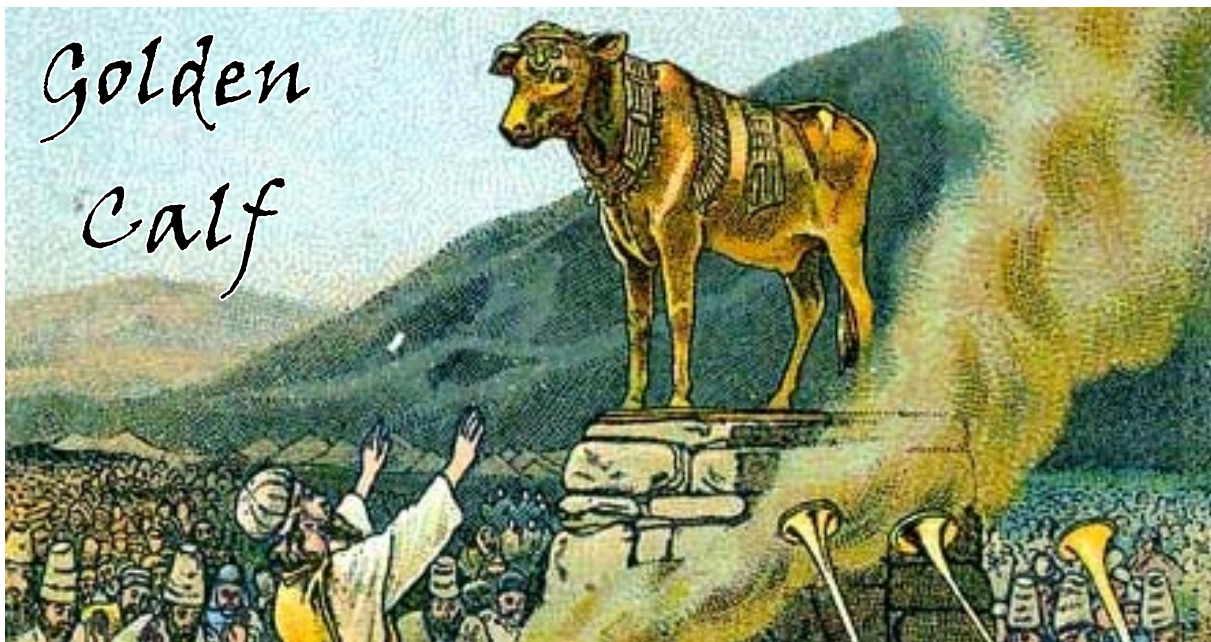


A Mission Congregation of the ELCA
Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church
P. O. Box 64 - 8520 Oakes Rd - Pittsburg, Ohio 45358

Sermon Series on the Book of Exodus
Week 2
October 11, 2020



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- **Prelude** “Now I Belong; Jesus, We Just Want to Love You;
For those Tears; Moment by Moment” **Roxanne Groff**
- **Office of the Acolyte and Ringing of the Bell**
- **Welcome** **Pr Mel**
- * **HYMN OF PRAISE Lord, Keep Us Steadfast In Your Word - LBW 230**



1 Lord, keep us stead - fast in your word; curb those who
 2 Lord Je - sus Christ, your pow'r make known, for you are
 3 O Com - fort - er of price - less worth, send peace and



by de - ceit or sword would wrest the king - dom from your Son
 Lord of lords a - lone; de - fend your ho - ly church, that we
 u - ni - ty on earth; sup - port us in our fi - nal strife



and bring to naught all he has done.
 may sing your praise e - ter - nal - ly.
 and lead us out of death to life.

* **CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

P: We confess our sins before God and one another.

Pause for silence and reflection.

P: God of all ages,

C: You have chosen us as your own, yet we so often live as if it were not so.

We succumb to things which are not good for us. We believe we know better than you. We refuse to put our trust in your promises. Sweep away our foolishness and bring us back into a trusting relationship with the one who has lovingly created us and longs to be our strength and life.

P: Dear people, hear the joyful words that God has forgiven us! Our misdeeds and folly are forgotten; grace and mercy abound. Let us give thanks that we have a compassionate creator!

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C: Amen.

*** GREETING**

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: And also with you.

*** PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P: Merciful God, You do not punish us as our deeds deserve, but rather show compassion to your wayward people. May we in turn show grace to others, that love may abound, and all may know your mercy, through Jesus our savior,

C: Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING

Exodus 32:1-14

P: Our scripture reading for this morning is from Exodus, Chapter 32.

C: Glory to you O Lord.

32 When the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people gathered around Aaron, and said to him, “Come, make gods for us, who shall go before us; as for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.” ²Aaron said to them, “Take off the gold rings that are on the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me.” ³So all the people took off the gold rings from their ears, and brought them to Aaron. ⁴He took the gold from them, formed it in a mold, and cast an image of a calf; and they said, “These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!” ⁵When Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation and said, “Tomorrow shall be a festival to the Lord.” ⁶They rose early the next day, and offered burnt offerings and brought sacrifices of well-being; and the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to revel.

⁷The Lord said to Moses, “Go down at once! Your people, whom you brought up out of the land of Egypt, have acted perversely; ⁸they have been quick to turn aside from the way that I commanded them; they have cast for themselves an image of a calf, and have worshiped it and sacrificed to it, and said, ‘These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!’” ⁹The Lord said to Moses, “I have seen this people, how stiff-necked they are. ¹⁰Now let me alone, so that my wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them; and of you I will make

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a great nation.”¹¹ But Moses implored the Lord his God, and said, “O Lord, why does your wrath burn hot against your people, whom you brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? ¹²Why should the Egyptians say, ‘It was with evil intent that he brought them out to kill them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth’? Turn from your fierce wrath; change your mind and do not bring disaster on your people. ¹³Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, your servants, how you swore to them by your own self, saying to them, ‘I will multiply your descendants like the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have promised I will give to your descendants, and they shall inherit it forever.’”¹⁴ And the Lord changed his mind about the disaster that he planned to bring on his people.

P: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: **Praise to You, O Christ** (*Spoken*)

- **SERMON**

Pr Mel Musser

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the true object of our worship, Jesus Christ our Lord, amen.

I can't resist starting with a question: who really brought Israel up, out of Egypt and whose people are they anyway? The people began by saying, “Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt”. Then they changed their mind, saying the golden calf was their god who brought them up out of the land of Egypt. Then, speaking to Moses, the LORD referred to Israel as “your people, which you brought out of the land of Egypt. Moses replied to God in prayer that it was your people, whom you brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand. I find this aspect of the story so comical. I mean, the people of Israel, Moses, and even the Lord God all want to disown each other when things

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aren't as they want them to be and they claim each other only when it suits them to do so. I'm not certain there's any great theological insights to be gained from this observation, but it made me smile and I thought you might smile too. Can you imagine the tone in God's voice to Moses as he says they're your people...??? I remember so many times saying to PJ guess what **your** son has done now! Other times like when he got a big hit in the baseball game, I was the first one to say "That's my boy!"

The sarcasm runs deep in this story about a people's disloyalty and betrayal of their God. I think it was intended to make us smile. It was intended to soften the blow of the deadly serious issue caused by the people's desire to put their faith and trust in a created object rather than the faithfulness of a loving God. The Golden Calf is much more than a slap in the face to God. I mean when you put this story into the context of the entire Exodus story you can see how disappointing this must have been for God. This should have been a triumphant moment where a thankful people worshipped the living God who had just freed them from slavery. Instead, they can't wait to set up an idol as the object of their worship. Walking away from Pharaoh's chariots and armies on dry land and watching as those chariots and all of Pharaoh's armies utterly destroyed was still fresh in their minds when they begged Aaron to make a graven image for their worship. Instead of

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giving their worship to this living God who loved them, who had saved them from their suffering, they ask for and bend their knees to a molded piece of metal.

The truth is, all they were really asking for was a visual aid. Ever since they left Egypt, they had something they could look at and point to and say, “There is our God.” Remember God’s messenger, or angel of God, led them through the wilderness by a pillar of cloud by day and fire by night. So, now they’re camped out, at the foot of Mt Sinai, and Moses heads up to speak to the Lord. In the story just before what we read today the Bible says the entire glory of the Lord settled over the top of Mt Sinai as a cloud. The pillar of cloud and fire have rested atop the mountain, their leader, Moses had gone up into that cloud, and the people were left without a visible, tangible God. They simply wanted Aaron to fashion something that looked like the messenger or Angel that had been leading them along throughout their wilderness journey. The Bible doesn’t come right out and say this, but it seems to me that’s exactly what they’re asking for when they say, “Come, make gods for us, who shall go before us.” They want a replacement for the pillars of cloud and fire who had been going before them on their wilderness hike. All they were looking for was something they could look at and believe in. The problem is they placed the object on the same level as the Lord God.

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This whole scene is a kind of anticlimax to the larger Exodus story. God had carried Israel out of slavery in Egypt with many miracles and mighty acts. He gathered them together at His Holy Mountain. All of this had one singular purpose, so they would be free to worship the living Lord God right there on his mountain, while all the rest of the world looked on in order that all the nations of the world could come to know the one true living god. So, with all the nations of the world watching, these very chosen people, handpicked by God for this very purpose, panic and bow to a cheap imitation made out of someone else's costume jewelry. How frustrating and embarrassing for God! Is there any wonder he changes from calling them his people to **those people**?

This Golden Calf story is repeated in our lives today. God has brought each one of us, out of slavery to sin, through the miraculous provisions of our two Holy Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. He gathers us together today at this Holy place of worship. Yes, the ground you walked on to get to your seats, either here in the sanctuary or in your sanctuary at home, are all this ground is consecrated Holy Ground because we gather together to worship the one true and living God. And God still has one singular purpose in mind for us. God's purpose is still for us to worship Him unashamedly before the eyes of the watching world, so that all people and nations can come to know the one true living God at work in

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our midst. Unfortunately, we're still molding God after our own sinful image. Imagine the deep disappointment felt by the Lord when we offer up our weak excuses for failing to honor the God who has given us everything...

Martin Luther said anything that comes between you and the Lord God is your idol. As I pondered Luther's statement again this week in the context of this story, where the people fashioned an idol to replace the twin pillars of cloud and fire, I wondered what the god of our favorite temptations might look like... I imagined the god of gossip to look like a gigantic ear with a jabbering mouth coming out of the ear canal! No doubt it would be made of pure gold!

Before we condemn these stiff-necked people from long ago, let's not excuse ourselves so easily. Some of my favorite excuses for bowing to false gods go like this: My friends influenced me to do it. Everyone else is doing it... Or, I prayed and prayed, but God didn't answer me. I had to do something... Or, the pressure was too great. I couldn't help it! All our excuses for why we turned to something other than God as the foundation for our faith and trust seem to center on the fact that we can't seem to take responsibility for our own actions. I know I'm impatient, so I take action based on my best judgment. Who can fault someone for that? When we can't hear or see God for some time, the natural thing to do is take matters into our own hands. We build our own idols and we try to

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shape God into our image rather than trusting the God who created us in God's image and gave us, well, everything... God sees our actions of placing created objects between ourselves and God and it grieves God. We too, do it with the whole world watching... And just like that... We're right there with the Israelites, a frustrating, embarrassing, disappointment to God. That's our common human predicament.

How can we be saved? The Israelites had a crafty and insightful advocate by the name of Moses. Moses used every argument at his command to change God's mind about the punishment for the people's betrayal. He even used God's own words against Him by reminding God the nations of the world were watching. What would they say if God destroyed the very people God had rescued? Moses was successful in getting God to repent of his intentions to consume these wretched people. Who can convince God not to give us what we rightfully deserve for our own betrayal? Every confirmation student should be able to answer that question! It's our Lord Jesus Christ, of course. Jesus, God in human form, came here from heaven to live that perfect life, keeping all the commandments, including the 1st one by having no other gods. Thanks to Jesus who was obedient to the perfect will of God, even though it led to his death on the cross, we have someone who sits at God's right hand. Jesus is the one who not only lived the life we

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cannot, He also has the ear of the Father and constantly reminds God as He whispers into God's ear, how much He loves you.

Jesus has one more gift for us. Not only did His life, death, and resurrection set us free from our bondage to sin, not only does he continually lobby the Father on our behalf, He also sent us His very own Holy Spirit to live in us as our pillar of cloud and fire. The Holy Spirit, living in you, reminds you who your God really is and continues to make you a pure and righteous soul despite all our sin and our tendency to create false gods.

May this story of the Golden Calf remind us all of God's great capacity to forgive, even the most heinous of sins. May the Holy Spirit lead and guide you as plainly and as clearly as the pillars of cloud and fire led the Israelites through the wilderness. May God's mind be changed and our witness to God's greatness never be sullied by our disobedience. May our worship and acts of service be a powerful witness to the nations, so they can come to know the one true, living God. Amen.

Silence for reflection may follow

*** APOSTLES' CREED**

**C: 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 into hell. 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.**

➤ *Or, He descended to the dead.*

*** PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

P: We pray for the church, the world, and all those in need...

A brief silence.

L: So often we miss the mark, just as the ancient Israelites did, when we look to other sources to fill our need for you, O Lord. Forgive us for all the foolish ways in which we fail to trust you, and gently lead us back onto the path that leads to life. Patient God,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: As our Jewish sisters and brothers celebrate the gift of your holy word, we rejoice that we have also received the words which proclaim your promises of never-ending love and eternal life for all your people. Patient God,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: Sometimes this world seems full of danger and fury, with storms and conflict raging around us. Give us peace in the middle of the tempest and assure us that your presence has never left us. Patient God,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: Help those who have been misled by cults and harmful ideologies to find their way back to your life-giving grace. We ask for your wisdom for our governmental leaders. We lift up for your blessing our president, our Governor, and our mayors. Speed the discovery of treatments for all diseases, especially for the treatment and vaccine to prevent Covid-19. Grant your peace to all people and families affected from this Pandemic. Give your peace to and calm the anger that is running rampant in the streets of some of our cities. May your justice reign and may all people be equally and fairly treated. Be with all who feel abandoned or isolated. Send your healing spirit to those whom we name

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this day... Patient God,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: Whether we live or die, we belong to you, O Lord. Assure us of the promise of your resurrection, and when our time on earth is finished, unite us once more with all your saints in light. Patient God,

C: Hear our prayer.

Here other petitions may be offered.

L: Receive our prayers into your merciful arms, for the sake of Jesus our savior and friend.

C: Amen.

*** OFFERING PRAYER**

While the congregation is still standing say:

P: Instead of passing the offering plate, we ask you to please place your offering in the Offering Plates conveniently located on your way out of worship. For those worshipping with us from their vehicles, there is a ceramic flower pot located near the back door of the church.

P: You long for us to worship you with acts of loving kindness. Bless these gifts we offer to your service and for the benefit of all your children in need.

Through Jesus Christ we pray,

C: Amen.

*** SHARING OF THE PEACE**

(The Sharing of the Peace that began when the congregation arrived is now shared with the Pastor at this time...)

P: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: And also with you.

*** THE LORD'S PRAYER**

P: Jesus is the "tie that Binds us together", let us pray as Jesus taught... I'll lead the prayer and invite you to pray silently, trusting God hears what is on your heart...

**C: 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, forever and ever.
Amen.**

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• **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

* **SENDING BLESSING**

P: Mothering God, Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you and lead you into the way of truth and life.

C: Amen.

* **SENDING HYMN “God of Grace and God of Glory” LBW 415**
(Verses 1 & 4 only)



1 God of grace and God of glo - ry, on your peo - ple
 2 Lo! The hosts of e - vil round us scorn the Christ, as -
 3 Cure your chil - dren's war - ring mad - ness; bend our pride to
 4 Save us from weak res - ig - na - tion to the e - vils



pour your pow'r; crown your an - cient chur - ch's sto - ry;
 sail his ways! From the fears that long have bound us
 your con - trol; shame our wan - ton, self - ish glad - ness,
 we de - plore; let the gift of your sal - va - tion



bring its bud to glo - rious flow'r. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age
 free our hearts to faith and praise. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age
 rich in things and poor in soul. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age,
 be our glo - ry ev - er - more. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age,



for the fac - ing of this hour, for the fac - ing of this hour.
 for the liv - ing of these days, for the liv - ing of these days.
 lest we miss your king - dom's goal, lest we miss your king - dom's goal.
 serv - ing you whom we a - dore, serv - ing you whom we a - dore.

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*** DISMISSAL**

P: Depart in Christ's Love.

C: Seeking, welcoming, and serving all. Amen!

Postlude

“America, the Beautiful”

Roxanne Groff

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Trinity Worship Assistants and Staff

Ministers	All the People of Trinity
Organist	Roxanne Groff
Parrish Nurse	PJ Musser
Custodian	Mark Groff
Secretary	Sharon Fourman
Facebook Live Recorder	PJ Musser

Health Tips for the Week

BODY: Try foods from around the world

MIND: Not always about what you say but how you say it

SPIRIT: Feel the wind and give thanks to God



Scripture readings for next Sunday, October 18th
1 Samuel 1:9-11; 19-20; 2:1-10



Trinity is on the Air at FM 88.3

If you are near the Church on Sunday morning, you can tune in to FM 88.3 at 10:30 AM and hear the sermon from your car.

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This Week @ Trinity – October 11 thru October 18, 2020

Sun, October 11

10:30 am Worship Service

Wed, October 14 ANNUAL MEETING REPORTS DUE!

6:30 pm Christian Education Meeting

7:00 pm Trinity Bible/Book Club via ZOOM

Fri, October 16

3:30 pm FISH Pantry @ 400 Markwith, Greenville OH

Sun, October 18

10:30 am Worship Service

ANNUAL MEETING REPORTS ARE DUE BY WEDNESDAY, OCT. 14.

You may mail or drop them off to the church office or email them to secretary@pitsburgtlc.org.

COMING SOON!

- **October 25, 2020 - Catechism Class Confirmation**
- **Also on October 25, 2020 – Trinity’s Fall Festival:** This year our Festival will be an all outdoors event for our Trinity family and their guests. It will be from 3:00 – 5:00 pm and will feature Joseph, a superb children’s entertainer and singer. We will also have gift bags for each child.
- **TRINITY ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING – NOVEMBER 1, 2020 following the worship service.**