

# Trinity Reformed Church of Northwest Connecticut

Biblical, Traditional, Congregational

Lord's Day Worship for  
January 21, 2024



*“For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this.” - Isaiah 9:6-7*

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“\*” = Please stand if you are able.

## Welcome, Greeting & Announcements

### Call to Worship – Psalm 2

*Leader: Why are the nations in an uproar*

**People: And the peoples devising a vain thing?**

*Leader: The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers take counsel together*

**People: Against the Lord and against His Anointed, saying,**

*Leader: Let us tear their fetters apart*

**People: And cast away their cords from us!**

*Leader: He who sits in the heavens laughs,*

**People: The Lord scoffs at them.**

*Leader: Then He will speak to them in His anger*

**People: And terrify them in His fury, saying,**

*Leader: But as for Me, I have installed My King*

**People: Upon Zion, My holy mountain.**

*Leader: I will surely tell of the decree of the Lord: He said to Me, ‘You are My Son,*

**People: Today I have begotten You.**

*Leader: Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance,*

**People: And the very ends of the earth as Your possession.**

*Leader: You shall break them with a rod of iron,*

**People: You shall shatter them like earthenware.**

*Leader: Now therefore, O kings, show discernment;*

**People: Take warning, O judges of the earth.**

*Leader: Worship the Lord with reverence*

**People: And rejoice with trembling.**

*Leader: Do homage to the Son, that He not become angry, and you perish in the way,  
for His wrath may soon be kindled.*

**People: How blessed are all who take refuge in Him!**

## Prayer of Invocation and Confession

**Gospel Absolution Text – Psalm 103:1-4**

**\*Hymn #235** (red hymnal) – “*All Glory, Laud and Honor*”

**Scripture Reading** – John 18:33-37

**Ancient Creedal Reading** – Apostles Creed (pg#845 in the red hymnal)

## Offerings Presented

[Please put your tithe/offering in the plates before or after the service – Thank you!]

**\*Doxology #731** (red hymnal)

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him, all creatures here below;  
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host: Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.*

**\*Prayer of Dedication**

**\*Sung Psalm #24A** (see insert below) – “The Earth and the Riches”

**Prayers of the Church & Lord’s Prayer** (sins)

*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 sins, as we forgive those who sin 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. Amen.*

**Reformation Creedal Reading** – Cambridge Platform, 5 (of 1648 AD)

**Leader:** *The first subject of church-power is either Supreme,*

**People:** **Or Subordinate and Ministerial:**

**Leader:** *The Supreme (by way of gift from the Father)*

**People:** **Is the Lord Jesus Christ:**

**Leader:** *The Ministerial is either extraordinary;*

**People:** **As the Apostles, Prophets and Evangelists;**

**Leader:** *Or Ordinary;*

**People:** **As every particular Congregational church.**

**Leader:** *Ordinary church-power is either power of office,*

**People:** **That is, such as is proper to the Eldership:**

**Leader:** *Or power of privilege,*

**People:** **Such as belongs to the brotherhood.**

**Leader:** *The latter (i.e. power of privilege for the congregation) is in the brethren formally and immediately from Christ, that is, so as it may, according to order,*

**People:** **Be acted or exercised immediately by themselves:**

**Leader:** *The former (i.e. power of the office for the elders),*

**People:** **Is not in them formally or immediately,**

**Leader:** *And therefore cannot be acted or exercised immediately by them, but is said to be in them, in that they design the persons unto office,*

**People:** **Who only are to act or to exercise this power.**

## Ministry of the Word

### Prayer of Illumination

**\*Sermon Text** – Titus 1:5

A Sermon Series of Paul's Epistle to Titus

**\*Gloria Patri #735** (red hymnal)

*Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.*

**Sermon** – “Polity”

A Sermon Series from the Letter of Paul to Titus

**\*Hymn #295** (red hymnal) – “Crown Him with Many Crowns”

**\*Benediction** – Numbers 6:24-26

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## Contact Information

**Worship:** Every Sunday at 10:00 AM at the Winchester Grange  
100 Newfield Rd, Winchester Center, CT 06098

**Church's Mailing Address:** Trinity Reformed Church; P.O. Box 343; Riverton, CT 06065

**Pastor Doug:** (860) 379-1147; douglas\_aldrich@sbcglobal.net

## Online Resources

**Church's Facebook Page:** facebook.com/people/Trinity-Reformed-Church/61554974150922/

**Church's Webpage:** TrinityReformedCT.org (*under construction*)

**Church Youtube Channel:** youtube.com/@TrinityReformedCT

**Pastor Doug's Youtube Channels:**

*Simply Reformed:* youtube.com/simplyreformed

*Pilgrims of Plunder:* youtube.com/@PilgrimsofPlunder

*Liking, Commenting, Sharing  
facebook posts and Subscribing,  
Liking, Commenting on youtube  
helps boast TRC's online  
outreach.*

## Leadership

**Teaching & Preaching Elder:** Pastor Doug Aldrich  
(860-379-1147; douglas\_aldrich@sbcglobal.net)

**Ruling Elders:** Bob Ensminger  
(860-485-8738; robert.ensminger@arthurgrussell.com)  
Rich Gabelmann  
(860-605-7852; rgabelmann0415@gmail.com)

**Deacons:** David Mattson (*chair*), Carl Bierce, Caleb Goodell,  
Mason Goodell, Dean Winters

**Music Coordinator & Treasurer:** Cindy Rines

**Clerk:** Sheryl Gabelmann

**Sunday School:** Verna Aldrich, Mason Goodell

## Announcements

- There are copies of TRC's bylaws in the back.
- If anyone has any suggestions or concerns for this new church, and/or would like to give of their time and/or talents, please see Pastor Doug.

## Events

- **MEMBERSHIP SUNDAY**: On Sunday, **February 4<sup>th</sup>**, all former members of the old church, who desire to be members of TRC, will covenant together and we will officially become a Congregational church. If you are interested, please fill out a **Membership Information Form** and see Pastor Doug.
- ***New Members Classes***: For those who were not members of the old church there will soon be New Membership Classes. Please see Pastor Doug if you are interested. There will be four classes. If you have not been baptized, please mention this.
- ***Communion***: The first celebration of the **Lord's Supper** will be on February 4<sup>th</sup>. We will be practicing open Communion (all those who profess Christian faith are welcome to partake in the meal). Communion will be monthly (on the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday) and will be full service (we will not be using the self-sealed prefilled Communion cups). This policy will be reviewed by the elders once we are fully established.
- ***Tuesday Classics Study***: Augustine's City of God. Every Tuesday from 10:30 AM to noon at Pastor Doug's house.
- ***Wednesday Bible Study***: Genesis. Every Wednesday from 6:30 to 8:00 PM at Pastor Doug's house. Baby sitting will be provided by Verna.
- ***Saturday Prayer Group***: Gathers on Saturday Mornings for informal prayers and fellowship. All are welcome and prayer participation is optional. The usual location is at the Decker-Gabelmann household. Start time is variable. If you are interested contact Sheryl Gabelmann by phone or text at 860-309-7250 the preceding Friday for start time and directions.
- ***YADG***: The Young Adult Discussion Group, i.e. college age adults, will meet on Friday, January 26<sup>th</sup> at Pastor Doug's house at 7:00 PM.
- ***Sunday School***: Coming soon!
- ***Family Game Night***: On Friday, **February 2<sup>nd</sup>**, there will be a family game night at Pastor Doug's house starting at 7:00 PM. If possible, you can bring a snack to share and/or your favorite game. RSVP to: verna\_aldrich@yahoo.com
- ***Upcoming Social Events***:  
Starting next Sunday we will have **Coffee Hour** downstairs!  
A Movie Night.
- If anyone is interested in hosting an event at their house, especially those who live in the farther away regions of the church's membership, please contact Pastor Doug.
- ***Snow Policy***: Though we are loathed to cancel Lord's Day worship, because we are in someone else's building, and Winchester Center is rural and gets more snow, we might have to cancel due to bad weather. If there is a cancellation, I will email and/or call everyone and post it on Facebook, the webpage and Channel #3. With regards to Bible studies we are much more liberal about cancellation. When in doubt, give Pastor Doug a call: 860-379-1147.

# Sermon Notes

Titus 1:5  
"Polity"

A Sermon Series on Titus  
January 21, 2024

## Introduction

1) What is the best form of polity?  
(Polity means "church government")

2) Basically, there are three types of polity:

| <u>Name</u>           | <u>Description</u> | <u>Think</u> | <u>Final Say With</u> | <u>Favorite Verse</u> |
|-----------------------|--------------------|--------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Episcopal</b>      | Top down           | Monarchy     | Bishop                | Titus 1:5             |
| <b>Presbyterian</b>   | Middle out         | Aristocracy  | Regional Elders       | Acts 15:6             |
| <b>Congregational</b> | Bottom up          | Democracy    | Local Church          | 1Pet 2:9              |

3) With your patience, before we get to the sermon text, if I could briefly give you what I think is the correct answer, which comes from a pagan: The Greek philosopher Aristotle.

a) Aristotle wrote (in his book Politics) that there are six types of governments:  
Monarchy, Aristocracy & Democracy, with each one having a good and bad version.

b) He listed them in order from good to bad:

|                    |                    |                                      |
|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <i>Best:</i>       | <b>Monarchy</b>    | (government by a single good ruler)  |
| <i>Next:</i>       | <b>Aristocracy</b> | (government by a few of good elites) |
| <i>Least Good:</i> | <b>Democracy*</b>  | (government by a moral majority)     |
| <i>Least Bad:</i>  | <b>Mob Rule</b>    | (bad democracy)                      |
| <i>Next:</i>       | <b>Oligarchy</b>   | (bad aristocracy)                    |
| <i>Worst:</i>      | <b>Tyranny</b>     | (bad monarchy)                       |

c) So the best and worst form of government is single person rule.

d) While the "least good" and "least bad" form of government is rule by the majority.

e) Winston Churchill affirmed this with his famous quote: "*Democracy is the worst form of government, except for all the others.*"

f) What makes Aristotle's answer so brilliant is he unintentionally taught that critical doctrine of sin: Any organization made up of fallen humans can go corrupt.

i) Can not a bishop, regional group of elders and/or a congregational go evil? Yes!

ii) Look at all the old mainline Protestant denominations, they have all gone apostate:

*Episcopal* = The Episcopal Church, United Methodist, (let alone Rome)

*Presbyterian* = Presbyterian Church (USA)

*Congregationalist* = United Church of Christ

iii) Sin can corrupt anything in this fallen world.

g) Though we believe in congregational government, if you moved to a different state and the only choice was between a Bible preaching Anglican church and a very theologically liberal Congregational church then that choice is a no-brainer.

i) Go and kiss the bishop's ring! (i.e. join the Anglican church)

ii) Because that Anglican church has the Holy Spirit with it  
and that Congregational church is just a synagogue of Satan.

- 4) We, as Congregationalists, believe that the final earthly say should be with the local assembly.
  - a) We must admit, however, that the Bible teaches elements of all three types of government.
  - b) And a healthy biblical Congregational church will have all three elements.

### **The Church is a Democracy**

- 1) Did you hear the Congregationalism in today's sermon text (Titus 1:5)?
  - a) At first, this seems to be a great verse for Episcopalians or Presbyterians.
  - b) Look carefully, because there is a congregationalist element in this verse.
- 2) Question, according to this verse, which came first in ancient Crete: Elders were commissioned to create churches or that churches already existed and needed elders?
  - a) Clearly the latter.
  - b) Notice the "*I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains*", which means there are already Christians gathering together in Crete.
- 3) Paul had already been to the island of Crete.
  - a) He was shipwrecked on the island probably around the year 56 AD. Acts 27:7ff
  - b) The language of Titus 1:5 that Paul "left" Titus behind to appoint elders implies Paul was recently on Crete. Which was probably sometime around the year 65 AD, which scholars think is when Paul wrote Titus.
  - c) So, Christians already exist on the island though they didn't have elders.
- 4) This means you can have a church without elders.
  - a) As the Lord Jesus taught and promised: "*For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst.*" - Matthew 18:20
    - i) This passage isn't about prayer, as if Christ isn't present when one Christian prays.
    - ii) It is about church because the context is about church discipline. Matt 18:20-20
    - iii) This is one of the two times the Lord uses the word "church" Matt 16:18; 18:17 in the Gospels.
  - b) This is a great verse for Congregationalism because what is essential for a church is to have the saints (even just 2 or 3) gather in Christ's name.
    - i) What a great promise!
    - ii) Just as our Lord promised at the very end of the Gospel of Matthew: "*I am with you always, even to the end of the age.*" - Matt 28:20b
  - c) So, two Christians, with very minimal knowledge of the faith, stranded on a desert island without the Bible, still constitute a church. And Christ is with them!
- 5) Though this is an amazing promise, this minimal approach, it is not the ideal.
  - a) As if being stranded on a desert island is a good thing, whether physically or spiritually.
  - b) A healthy church has leaders: Pastors, elders, deacons, etc., as the Bible commands.

### **The Church is an Aristocracy**

- 1) The main purpose of the Epistle to Titus is for Titus to appoint elders, as commanded by the Apostle Paul.

- 2) The elite of the church are the Apostles, of whose authority we talked about last week.
- a) A brief recap is always in order, since so few Christians understand or believe in apostolic authority. (e.g. the idiotic belief one can follow the King and reject His lieutenants.)
  - b) The Apostles (e.g. Peter, Matthew, Paul, etc.) and Prophets (e.g. Mark, Luke, etc.)<sup>1</sup> are those leaders specially commissioned directly by the Lord Jesus in the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD with unique authority as those literally “sent out” (i.e. Apostles) by Christ and those who “proclaim His Word” (i.e. prophets).
 

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|  | Matt 10:1-5;  |
|  | 2Cor 12:12;   |
|  | Rom 15:18-19; |
|  | 1Thes 2:6     |
  - c) Their authority is now found in their writings: The New Testament.
 

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|  | Acts 2:42; 1Cor 4:6; 2Thes 3:15; 2Pet 3:2,15-16; |
|  | Rev 22:18-19; 1Tim 5:18 (Luke 10:7)              |
  - d) This special power is seen in our sermon text.
    - i) Both to appoint elders in newly created churches.
    - ii) And that Paul’s letter (to Titus) becomes sacred Scripture.
- 3) Those “sent out” and those “who proclaim God’s Word”, in the broader sense exist today as those commissioned by the church. (i.e. pastors, elders, missionaries, etc.) As seen in our sermon text: Paul as an Apostle sent by Christ Himself, commands Titus to “*appoint elders in every city as I directed you.*”
- 4) Elders (those who govern the local church) are similar to Apostles in a limited way.
- a) In the epistles the Apostles equate themselves with elders, like a general might encourage a second lieutenant to act like a good fellow officer.
 

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|  | 1Pet 5:1;        |
|  | 2John 1; 3John 1 |
  - b) Thus elders have local, limited apostolic authority, constrained by the Scriptures.
 

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|  | Acts 15:2,6,22; 20:17;       |
|  | 1Pet 5:1-4; 2John 1; 3John 1 |
- 5) In almost every case, when the NT speaks about church leaders, it speaks about elders in the plural.

|  |                                     |
|--|-------------------------------------|
|  | Acts 20:17; Phil 1:1; 1Tim 5:17,19; |
|  | Titus 1:5; James 5:14; 1Pet 5:1     |
- 6) The Bible implies there are two types of elders that form an elder board: Eph 4:11; 1Tim 4:14; 5:17-18
- a) **Teaching & Preaching Elders**, i.e. pastors / clergy, who focus on leading worship, preaching, administering the sacraments, teaching and pastoral care.
  - b) **Ruling (or Governing) Elders** those who, with the pastor, deal with the daily governing of the church, and aid the pastor in the “Ministry of the Word.”
- 7) The main duties an elder is to:
- a) **Govern** – Make administrative and executive decisions for the church by overseeing community affairs (Num 11:16-17; Acts 11:30; 1Tim 5:17; Titus 1:5,7; 1Pet 5:5) and deciding disputes. (Matt 18:17; Acts 15:2, 6, 22; 1Cor 6:4) Note that governing is considered a “spiritual” function not a physical one. (Acts 6:1-6)
  - b) **Teach** – Lead in worship (Ex 12:21-22; Lev 4:15) , especially by preaching and teaching, (1Tim 3:2; 5:17) to encourage and preserve orthodoxy while checking heresy (Deut 27:1; Acts 20:29-31; Titus 1:9). Note, that teaching and ruling are closely associated functions (1Thes 5:12).
  - c) **Shepherd** – Concerned with helping in the mental and spiritual life of the members (Acts 20:28,35; Eph 4:12; 1Timothy 4:14; James 5:14; 1Pet 5:1-4).

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<sup>1</sup> For “Apostles & Prophets” see: Luke 11:49; 1Cor 12:28-29; Eph 2:20; 3:5; 4:11; Rev 18:20. The Apostles had universal authority in the church, (Acts 2:42; 4:11; 1Cor 12:28-29; 14:37; Eph 2:20; 4:11; 1Thes 2:6; Philem 8; 1John 4:6; 2Pet 3:2) because they were handpicked by Jesus. (Acts 1:21-22; 10:40-42; 1Cor 9:1)

- 8) Real biblical Congregationalism strongly believes in elders.
- a) Because it is commanded in Scripture!
  - b) All the earliest Congregational statements of faith teach there should be elders.  
(i.e. the Cambridge Platform, Savoy Declaration of Faith, etc.)
- 9) Congregationalism, however, believes the elders are held accountable by the local church members. Matt 18:15-20; Acts 1:23; 14:23;  
2Cor 8:19; 2Thes 3:6

## **The Church is a Monarchy**

- 1) Trick question: Do we, as Congregationalists, believe in monarchy when it comes to polity?
- 2) In one sense, the answer is a hard “no”, we reject there should be a “bishop”, i.e. a super-pastor who governs the church.
- a) The word translated as “bishop” in older Bibles (*episkopos*) is better translated as “*episkopos*” which means “overseer”, since it is a common Greek word for a leader found in everyday life, not some special label of a high-ranking priestly leader.
  - b) The word for “overseer” / “bishop” (*episkopos*) is clearly interchangeable with the word for “elder” (*presbyteros*). Acts 20:17,28
  - c) As we see in Titus:
    - i) Titus 1:5 – “... *that you would set in order what remains and appoint elders...*” (*presbyteros*).
    - ii) Titus 1:7 – “*For the overseer (*episkopos*) must be above reproach as God’s steward...*”
    - iii) Clearly, this is talking about the same group of people.
  - d) So, Bible-believing Congregationalists do believe in elders, which are clearly commanded in Scripture, though we reject the idea of bishops.
- 3) As faithful Congregationalists, however, when asked “what type of government do you have?” we should boldly state “monarchy!”
- a) When speaking about the big-picture of polity, we should *never* first focus on ourselves or being a democracy.
  - b) We are first and foremost Christians and we have a King, and His name is Jesus Christ.
    - i) Remember Paul’s focus as he began this Epistle:
    - ii) It is about the sovereignty of God:
      - “*slave of God*” – Titus 1:1
      - “*sent out (literally, “an apostle”) by Jesus Christ*” – Titus 1:1
      - “*for... those chosen of God*” – Titus 1:1
      - “*in... God, who cannot lie*” – Titus 1:2
      - “*according to the commandment of God our Savior*” – Titus 1:3
      - “*Grace and peace from God the Father*” – Titus 1:4
      - “*and Christ Jesus our Savior*” – Titus 1:4
  - c) We know the governance of all creation is with Him, our Lord.
  - d) Thus, our system and reality itself, is best described as a “monarchy.” Ps 110; Heb 1:13



- e) As that great Christmas prophecy in Isaiah proclaims: *“For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this.”* - Isaiah 9:6-7
- 4) Christ governs His church by His Word and Spirit. To the faithful He gives His Spirit so they believe and follow His Word (i.e. all of Scripture). Prov 1:23; Is 59:21; Zech 7:14; John 3:36; 6:63; 14:16-28; 15:26; 16:5-15; Acts 4:31; Rom 7:6; 8:1-28; 1John 4:1-6,13-14; 5:6-8
- 5) The vast majority of modern-day Congregationalism is just theological liberalism and thus is mob rule, the blind leading the blind. Matt 15:1-14  
Matt 23:13-36
- 6) One of the most terrifying judgments is when the Lord turns over the unfaithful and the wicked to their hardened hearts and lets them go astray into darkness and judgment. Prov 28:14; 29:1; Ps 81:11-12  
Is 6:9-10; 63:17; Jer 5:23  
Amos 8:11-12; Matt 13:3-23  
Rom 1:24-28; 1John 2:19
- 7) We believe congregational government is the best form of polity, which is fine.
- a) We love our Congregational heritage, which is also good.
- b) Our true heritage, however, is faithfully serving and following our King, as He reveals Himself in Scripture.
- c) This must be done with fear and trembling because we have a King! Prov 1:7; Eph 5:21
- i) The leaders must remember they will be judged by a higher standard. James 3:1
- ii) All congregants must fear the King too, as all Christians are commanded.
- Even more so for Congregationalists.
  - Since you (members) have the final earthly say in Christ’s church.
  - Thus you must be educated in the Word. Acts 17:11
  - Because it is never about giving your opinion but rather submitting your thinking, actions and voting to God and His Word.

## **Conclusion**

- 1) To remain faithful, in the fear of God, and submission to His Word, is the key to good polity.
- 2) The fear of the King, however, removes all other fears, leads to great joy and good government.
- 3) As we read in 1Peter 2:4-10 – *“And coming to Him as to a living stone which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God, you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For this is contained in Scripture: ‘Behold, I lay in Zion a choice stone, a precious corner stone, and he who believes in Him will not be disappointed.’ This precious value, then, is for you who believe; but for those who disbelieve, ‘The stone which the builders rejected, this became the very corner stone,’ and, ‘A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense’; for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this doom they were also appointed. But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.”*