

# Trinity Reformed Church of Northwest Connecticut

Biblical, Traditional, Congregational

Lord's Day Worship for  
January 28, 2024



*“Now, therefore, fear the LORD and serve Him in sincerity and truth; and put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. If it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.” - Joshua 24:14-15*

“\*” = Please stand if you are able.

## Welcome, Greeting & Announcements

### Call to Worship – 1Peter 4:4-10

*Leader: In all this, they are surprised that you do not run with them into the same excesses of dissipation, and they malign you;*

**People: But they will give account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.**

*Leader: For the gospel has for this purpose been preached even to those who are dead, that though they are judged in the flesh as men,*

**People: They may live in the spirit according to the will of God.**

*Leader: The end of all things is near; therefore, be of sound judgment and sober spirit*

**People: For the purpose of prayer.**

*Leader: Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another,*

**People: Because love covers a multitude of sins.**

*Leader: Be hospitable to one another*

**People: Without complaint.**

*Leader: As each one has received a special gift,*

**People: Employ it in serving one another**

*Leader: As good stewards*

**People: Of the manifold grace of God.**

## Prayer of Invocation and Confession

### Gospel Absolution Text – 1John 4:4

\*Hymn #342 (red hymnal) – “Christ Is Made the Sure Foundation”

### Scripture Reading – Ephesians 5:31-33; 1Timothy 3:2-5

### 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 #103B (see insert below) – “Bless the Lord, My Soul”

### 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 – Savoy Declaration (1658 AD), 25.1-2

*Leader: Marriage is to be between one man and one woman:*

**People: Neither is it lawful for any man to have more than one wife,**

*Leader: Nor for any woman to have more than one husband,*

**People: At the same time**

*Leader: Marriage was ordained for the mutual help of husband and wife,*

**People: For the increase of mankind with a legitimate issue,**

*Leader: And of the Church with an holy seed;*

**People: And for preventing of uncleanness.**

### Ministry of the Word

#### Prayer of Illumination

#### \*Sermon Text – Titus 1:6-7a

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 – “Above Reproach”

A Sermon Series from the Letter of Paul to Titus

#### \*Hymn #347 (red hymnal) – “The Church’s One Foundation”

#### \*Benediction – Numbers 6:24-26

[After service there is coffee hour fellowship downstairs – Everyone is welcome!]

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## Announcements

- Remember the **Game Night this Friday!** (see below)
- 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 the 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Fridays 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 this 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 loath 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.

## 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/](https://facebook.com/people/Trinity-Reformed-Church/61554974150922/)

**Church's Webpage:** [TrinityReformedCT.org](https://TrinityReformedCT.org) (*under construction*)

**Church Youtube Channel:** [youtube.com/@TrinityReformedCT](https://youtube.com/@TrinityReformedCT)

**Pastor Doug's Youtube Channels:**

*Simply Reformed:* [youtube.com/simplyreformed](https://youtube.com/simplyreformed)

*Pilgrims of Plunder:* [youtube.com/@PilgrimsofPlunder](https://youtube.com/@PilgrimsofPlunder)

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

## Leadership

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

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

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## Sermon Notes

Titus 1:6-7a

"Above Reproach"

A Sermon Series on Titus

January 28, 2024

## Introduction

- 1) Some basic rules for understanding the Bible:
  - a) **Rule #1 – Context, Context, Context**
    - i) Always put any verse within the context of what surrounds it, understanding its historical and grammatical background.
    - ii) You want to know the author's original intended purpose.
  - b) **Rule #2 – Unpack the Pronouns**
    - i) Who are the "I, you, he/she, us, you'll, them, etc."?
    - ii) Don't first try to insert yourself.
    - iii) For example, in Titus 3:8b, it reads: "*I want you to speak confidently*".
      - Most hear: "*I, God, want you, (insert your name), to speak confidently.*"
        - No! That is wrong!
        - It is really: "*I, Paul the Apostle, want you, Pastor Titus, to speak confidently.*"

- Yes, we should make application and there is a place to hear yourself in any text.
  - To handle this text correctly, however, we first start our thinking about the church and our role in it! (Are you supporting the pastor to speak confidently?)
  - Then you can focus on yourself and work on speaking confidently, which is taught in other places in Scripture. (Again, see 1Pet 3:15)
- c) **Rule #3** (a new one!) – **If your first reaction when hearing the word is: “yeah but . . .!” then ask yourself “why?”**
- i) Yes, we should wrestle with the written word, ask tough questions and it must be understood in context (see Rule #1).
  - ii) The word, however, is suppose to cut deep, let it. Heb 4:12
  - iii) The “yeah but” reaction might be exposing an idol you have.
  - iv) For example, what is your reaction to these verses about leadership:
    - 1Peter 5:2b-3 - Elders are to labor “. . . *voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock.*”
    - Hebrews 13:17b – “*Obey your leaders and submit to them . . .*”
  - v) If your first reaction is “yeah but”, with a long list of qualifications, then why?
    - Please note, a “yeah but” could be said for either verse. (Dealing with a bad congregation or bad leadership.)
    - Again, there is a place to deal with any verse in context.
    - But why was your first reaction “yeah but”?  
Maybe you have an idol in your heart?
- 2) Keep this in mind as we go through Titus or any part of Scripture.

### **“Namely, If Any Man” – Titus 1:6a**

- 1) So when we hear in our sermon text, “*namely, if any man is above reproach*” (Titus 1:6a) what should we first hear?
  - a) What is the context?
  - b) The church! Paul, with apostolic authority, is commanding Pastor Titus to appoint elders in the church of Crete.
  - c) Should Christians strive to be “*above reproach*”? Sure that is commanded elsewhere in Scripture. (See Philippians 2:15)
    - i) And certainly those moral standards church leaders are called to should also be something all Christians should strive to do.
    - ii) If it is very important for the general to be brave so too should the private.
  - e) However, don’t start trying to hear yourself in any text, first focus on where Scripture is going, in context.
- 2) The first thing this text teaches is something our culture would scream “yeah but!” about.
  - a) That elders are to be men: “*namely, if any man . . .*”

- b) The clear teaching of both Testaments, and the witness of the church, is that men are called into leadership offices.
    - i) It is the clear pattern of leadership in the Bible, from male only priests in the Old Testament, to the Lord Jesus picking only men to be His Twelve Apostles.
    - ii) The Bible explicitly excludes women from the pastoral/elder office. 1Cor 11:5,13; 14:34;  
1Tim 2:11-15
    - iii) This is part of the created order that men and women have different but complementary roles with men called to lead, protect and provide for his family. Gen 1:26-30;  
Gen 2:18-24
    - iv) And when that order is perverted, it leads to disaster. Is 3:12; Amos 4:1ff; Titus 2:5
  - c) Does this mean women have no role? No purpose? That women are inferior in all things?
    - i) No, why would you think that? (Worldly thinking creeping in?)
    - ii) The gender differences are beautiful. Gen 2:23-24
    - iii) We are different, with different strengths and weaknesses, and we complement each other.
- 3) Let us not get too distracted by one word, for we will be dealing with this in more detail when we get to Titus 2:5.

### **"Above Reproach" - Titus 1:6b**

- 1) In the Apostle's detailed list of the qualifications of elders in 1Timothy 3:1ff (*anepilēptos*) and Titus 1:5ff (*anegklētos*) he starts with "above reproach."
  - a) He repeats it twice in this one sentence in our sermon text, Titus 1:6-7!
  - b) It is a requirement for deacons (*anegklētos*) and widows (*anepilēptos*). 1Tim 3:10; 5:7
  - c) And all Christians (*amōmos*). Phil 2:15
- 2) This (*anegklētos*) means to be "blameless", i.e. "free from accusation."
- 3) This does not mean "free from false accusation."
  - a) Paul was frequently accused of evil by the pagan world. Acts 17:5ff; 18:12ff; 19:26ff;  
Acts 21:27ff; 24:1ff; 2Cor 6:8
    - i) Even mistakenly by Christians. Acts 15:2ff; 1Cor 9:3ff; 2Cor 11:1ff
    - ii) Let alone the Lord Jesus who was unjustly executed. Matt 26:65; Mark 3:22;  
Luke 23:2; John 7:12; 10:33
  - b) Christians, especially those in leadership, will endure false accusation. John 15:21; Heb 11:26;  
1Pet 4:14-16
    - i) Matthew 5:11 - "*Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me.*"
    - ii) Read about the cost of discipleship as found in Matthew 10:24ff
    - iii) We will be called bigoted, hateful, judgmental, homophobic, sexist, narrow-minded, anti-science, etc.
    - iv) Why the church needs strong leaders.



- 4) Nor is it not about sinless perfection.
- a) We all wrestle with that old man of sin even those great in faith. Job 15:14; Prov 20:9; Rom 3:10ff; 6:6; 7:21-24; Eph 4:22-24; Col 3:9; James 3:2; 1John 1:8
  - b) How one deals with sin shows one's character. Matt 19:20-23; 26:75; Luke 15:11ff; John 21:15-19
- 5) It is about consistent character over time.
- a) Not just personal morality, as we will see in Titus 1:7b-8.
    - i) Such as not being self-willed, quick-tempered, addicted to wine, etc.
    - ii) Something all Christians should strive for.
  - b) Or, abilities necessary for the office, as we will see in Titus 1:9ff.
    - i) Such as being able to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict. 1Tim 6:14 (anepilēptos)
    - ii) Something all Christians should encourage in the church.
  - c) To see if a man is "above reproach" first look at how he deals with those closest to him, those whom he has charge over.
    - i) Those whom he leads, in love.
    - ii) You look to the quality of a man by judging how he runs his household.

### **"The Husband of One Wife" – Titus 1:6b**

- 1) Paul commands that the elder be "*the husband of one wife.*" - Titus 1:6 1Tim 3:2
- 2) At the very least the text forbids polygamy (i.e. multiple wives) and bigamy (i.e. marrying someone else when is already married).
  - a) Which was an option in the ancient Near-East, even among the Jews.
  - b) Though the ancient Romans, who conquered Crete in 69 BC, believed in monogamy, which might have also encouraged Paul to make sure the church not be a bad witness to a pagan culture getting something right. Rom 13:1ff 1Pet 2:11ff
  - c) The biblical teaching, based in creation and the commands of Christ, is for strict monogamy (i.e. one wife). Matt 19:1-12
- 3) This text, however, has raised questions throughout history:
  - a) Does the elder have to be married? (No single, remarried or widower elders?)
  - b) Can the elder be married only once? (No divorced or remarried elders?)
- 4) To answer these important questions quickly: The narrow focus of this text does not directly forbid a single, remarried or widowed elder.
  - a) It does not say "*must be married*" or "*only has been married once.*"
  - b) Not everyone is called to marriage. Matt 19:12; 1Cor 7:1,8ff,26  
There were Christian leaders who were not married including: Paul (1Cor 7:7-8), Jeremiah (Jer 16:1-2), probably John the Baptist and certainly the Lord Jesus.
  - c) The Gospel is about forgiveness and making things new. Gal 6:15; Col 2:13

- 5) There is much more than this minimal standard in this verse, however.
- a) There are higher standards for those who teach. James 3:1
  - b) This verse is both direct, clear, broad, simple, challenging and beautiful.
    - i) Just like God's name, "*I Am*". Ex 3:14
    - ii) Unless one tries to list every possible meaning, which Scripture rarely does.
  - c) The verse literally reads: "*one woman's man*."
- 6) The norm is marriage: That two should become one.
- a) Marriage and children are a blessing from God. Gen 9:1,7; 33:5; 48:4; Lev 26:9; Deut 7:13; 28:4; Ps 113:9; 127:3-5; 128:3; Prov 5:18; 12:4; 19:14; 20:7; Is 13:18; 1Cor 7:9; 1Tim 4:3; 5:14; Heb 13:4
  - b) Marriage was created before the fall. If there are no children there will be no more humanity. Gen 1:26-28; 2:20-25
  - c) *Marriage defined*: A life-long covenant union between one man and one woman, who are not related, for the purpose of mutual help, children ("increase the Church with an holy seed") and the only place where physical relations are allowed. Gen 2:18,24; Prov 2:17; Mal2:15; Matt 19:5-6; 1Cor 7:2,9; Heb 13:4
- 7) So, if an older man wants to be an elder and is not married, that doesn't immediately disqualify him, however, it should raise questions.
- a) Leaders must be tested, and if they are against answering questions, then there is a bigger problem. 1Tim 3:10; 5:22
  - b) For example:
    - i) "You are 40 and single, why? Are you against marriage?"  
Which would be a false teaching. 1Tim 4:2
    - ii) "You are divorced? Why?"  
If a man, as a young atheist marries a pagan wife, who soon leaves him, and he later comes to Christ, and marries a believer, and they have a godly marriage, then that remarriage might not immediately disqualify him as an elder. 1Cor 7:15
- 8) This use to be the standard not only in the church but all parts of western (i.e. Christian) society.
- a) Up until recently it used to be the unofficial standard in the US military.
    - i) For officers, marriage was strongly encouraged.
    - ii) If you weren't married that might damage your later career.
  - b) Why? Because what we have been pondering in regards as commanded in Titus! It is a helpful general indicator to judge a potential leader.
  - c) Could there be exceptions? Sure: Think of the career of the noted Marine General James Mattis, the "warrior monk."
  - d) The norm, however, for being an "officer and a gentleman" was to be married.
- 9) If marriage is important to judge a man, so too should be how he handles his children.



## **Godly Children – Titus 1:6b**

- 1) An elder is to have "*children who believe, not accused of dissipation* (i.e. recklessness, debauchery, wildness, etc.) *or rebellion.*" - Titus 1:6b
- 2) Like the "wife" text this raises questions: Do you have to have children?  
Does it apply to adult children?
- 3) Like the "wife" text this is broad, simple and direct, with both a narrow and broader application.
- 4) In the narrow sense: If a man has young children (i.e. not adults) who are his and do not believe making them rebellious (those two things go together!) then he is not qualified to be an elder.
  - a) Yes, this is judging him, because there are higher standards for leadership.
    - i) As Paul explains in 1Timothy 3:4-5 - "*He (an elder) must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?)*,"
    - ii) The husband is commanded to govern, provide and protect Eph 5:22-6:9  
for his family and all those in his household.
    - iii) So, it is not surprising that one way to judge an elder, to see if he can govern the family of God, is to look at how he governs his own family.
  - b) Also, this charitable, because he has things he needs to take care of first.
- 5) If there are broader concerns, that should at least bring questions.
  - a) An older child, who is an unbeliever/rebellious, though no longer under that man's household, would not bring immediate disqualification for an elder.
    - i) The godly judge-priest-prophet (!) Samuel, one of the most godly 1Sam 8:3  
men in the Bible, whose sons turn away into evil.
    - ii) Let alone in Christ's household there was Judas.
  - b) It should bring questions, however, because leaders are held to a higher standard and should be tested.
- 6) Because an elder is an overseer of God's people and a steward of the things of God.

## **Stewardship – Titus 1:7a**

- 1) Paul repeats himself: "*For the overseer must be above reproach as God's steward . . .*" – Titus 1:7a
- 2) The word for "steward" (*oikonomos*) is a general word for a "manager of a Rom 16:23;  
household", "administrator", "manager", and even in context a "treasurer". Gal 4:2
- 3) Elders are to shepherd (literally "pastor") God's people. Acts 20:28; 1Pet 5:2
  - a) Thus therefore are standards!
  - b) One of the main reasons the church is so weak, and so also is western culture,  
is because we have ignored these standards.
  - c) All too often the church encourages effeminate leadership. 2Sam 10:12; Is 3:12; 1Cor 16:13
    - i) For a woman to be feminine is a good thing. 1Pet 3:1ff
    - ii) Men, especially those in leadership, to be effeminate Is 3:12; 19:16  
is a bad thing. Jer 51:30;
  - d) Having the "blind leading the blind" is a dangerous and wicked thing. Matt 15:14

- 4) The main job of the elders are to be stewards of the ministry of the Word, Acts 6:4  
literally, *“stewards of the mysteries of God.”* 1Cor 4:1-2
- a) They are to make sure the word is preached, in season and out of season, 2Tim 4:2  
to reprove and exhort with great patience and instruction.
- b) As we will soon read, they are to be strong enough to be hospitable Titus 1:7,9  
and not pugnacious, and yet be able to *“refute those who contradict.”*

## **Conclusion**

- 1) We have striven, first and foremost, to hear this sermon text in context, which is about Christ’s church rightly ordered.
- 2) The truths in this text also apply to all Christians.
- a) For example, all Christians are to be faithful stewards of the good gifts Luke 12:42;  
we all have received, whether they are temporal or spiritual. Luke 16:1,3,8
- b) 1Peter 4:9-10 – *“Be hospitable to one another without complaint. As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.”*
- 3) If these texts have brought any conviction – Praise God!
- a) Repent and change your ways.
- b) But always remember, all sins have been covered by Christ for those who trust in Him.
- 4) Our being perfect and blameless, and above reproach, comes from Christ alone.  
Christ has made us blameless before His Father because of His blood.

## **Colossians 1:18-23**

- 18 He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.
- 19 For it was the Father’s good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him,
- 20 and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven.
- 21 And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds,
- 22 yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach (*same word for “above reproach in Titus 1:6-7)*—
- 23 if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister.