

Trinity Reformed Church of Northwest Connecticut

Biblical, Traditional, Congregational

Lord's Day Worship for
February 25, 2024



"In pointing out these things to the brethren, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, constantly nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound doctrine which you have been following." - 1 Timothy 4:6

“*” = Please stand if you are able.

Welcome, Greeting & Announcements

Call to Worship – Psalm 119:25-32

Leader: My soul cleaves to the dust;

People: **Revive me according to Your word.**

Leader: I have told of my ways, and You have answered me;

People: **Teach me Your statutes.**

Leader: Make me understand the way of Your precepts,

People: **So I will meditate on Your wonders.**

Leader: My soul weeps because of grief;

People: **Strengthen me according to Your word.**

Leader: Remove the false way from me,

People: **And graciously grant me Your law.**

Leader: I have chosen the faithful way;

People: **I have placed Your ordinances before me.**

Leader: I cling to Your testimonies;

People: **O LORD, do not put me to shame!**

Leader: I shall run the way of Your commandments,

People: **For You will enlarge my heart.**

Prayer of Invocation and Confession

Gospel Absolution Text – Romans 1:15-17

*Hymn #16 (red hymnal) – *“Come, Let Us Sing unto the Lord”*

Scripture Reading – Ephesians 4:1-24

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 #119U** (see insert below) – “My Grief Regard”

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 – Westminster Larger Catechism (1647 AD), Q#105

Leader: *What are the sins forbidden in the first commandment (which is “Thou shalt have no other gods before me.”)?*

People: **Atheism, in denying or not having a God;** (Ps 14:1; Eph. 2:12)

Leader: *Idolatry, in having or worshipping more gods than one, or any with or instead of the true God; (Jer 2:27-28; 1Thes 1:9) the not having and avouching him for God,*

People: **And our God;** (Ps 81:11)

Leader: *The omission or neglect of any thing due to Him, required in this commandment; (Is 43:22-24) ignorance, (Jer 4:22; Hos 4:1,6) forgetfulness, (Jer 2:32) misapprehensions, (Acts 17:23,29) false opinions, (Is 40:18)*

People: **Unworthy and wicked thoughts of Him;** (Ps 50:21)

Leader: *Bold and curious searching into His secrets; (Deut 29:29) all profaneness, (Titus 1:16; Heb 12:16)*

People: **Hatred of God;** (Rom 1:30)

Leader: *Self-love, (2Tim 3:2) self-seeking, (Phil 2:21) and all other inordinate and immoderate setting of our mind, will, or affections upon other things,*

People: **And taking them off from Him in whole or in part;** (1John 2:15-16; 1Sam 2:29; Col 3:2,5)

Leader: *Vain credulity, (i.e. to believe false things, 1 John 4:1) unbelief, (Heb 3:12) heresy, (Gal 5:20; Titus 3:10) misbelief, (Acts 26:9) distrust, (Ps 78:22) despair, (Gen 4:13) incorrigibleness, (i.e. incapable of taking correction, Jer. 5:3) and insensibleness under judgments, (Is 42:25) hardness of heart, (Rom 2:5)*

People: **Pride, presumption, carnal security,** (Jer 13:15; Ps 19:13; Zeph 1:12)

Leader: *Tempting of God; (Matt 4:7) using unlawful means, (Rom 3:8) and trusting in lawful means (instead of God); (Jer 17:5)*

People: **Carnal delights and joys;** (2Tim 3:4)

Leader: *Corrupt, blind, and indiscreet zeal; (Gal 4:17; John 16:2; Rom 10:2; Luke 9:54-55) lukewarmness, (Rev 3:16)*

People: **And deadness in the things of God;** (Rev 2:1)

Leader: *Estranging ourselves, and apostatizing from God; (Ezek 14:5; Is 1:4-5) praying, or giving any religious worship, (Rom 10:13-14; Hosea 4:12; Acts 10:25-26; Rev 19:10; Matt 4:10; Col 2:18; Rom 1:25)*

People: **To saints, angels, or any other creatures;**

Leader: *All compacts and consulting with the devil, (Lev 20:6; 1Sam 28:7,11; 1Chr 10:13-14)*

People: **And hearkening to his suggestions;** (Acts 5:3)

Leader: *Making men the lords of our faith and conscience; (2Cor 1:24; Matt 23:9)*

People: **Slighting and despising God and His commands;** (Deut 32:15; 2Sam 12:9; Prov 13:13)

(continued . . .)

Leader: Resisting and grieving of His Spirit, (Acts 7:51; Eph 4:30) discontent and impatience at His dispensations, charging Him foolishly

People: For the evils He inflicts on us; (Ps 73:2-3,13-15,22; Job 1:22)

Leader: And ascribing the praise of any good we either are, have or can do, to fortune, (1Sam 6:7-9) idols, (Dan 5:23) ourselves, (Deut 8:17; Dan 4:30)

People: Or any other creature. (Hab 1:16)

Ministry of the Word

Prayer of Illumination

***Sermon Text** – Titus 1:10-13

***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 – “*Be Sound in the Faith*”

A Sermon Series from the Letter of Paul to Titus

***Hymn #30** (red hymnal) – “*Our God, Our Help in Ages Past*”

***Benediction** – Numbers 6:24-26

[*After service, until 12:30 PM, there is coffee hour fellowship downstairs – Everyone is welcome!*]

Announcements

• **Church starting time will change in March!**

9:00 – 10:15 AM

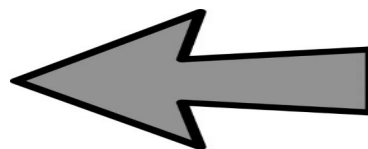
10:30 – c.11:40 AM

c.11:40 AM – 12:30 PM

Sunday School starts!

Worship

Coffee Hour



Events

- **Movie Night** will be held on Friday, March 8th at 6:30 P.M at the Decker-Gabelmanns' Pool House. Pizza and Beverages will be provided. Snacks and/or desserts to share would be welcomed and appreciated! RSVP to Sheryl would be helpful for the pizza order.
- **Sunday School** for all ages will start on **March 3rd** from 9:00 to 10:15 AM. The following classes will be offered:
 - » The **Younger Children's Class** will be taught by Vika Winters.
 - » The **Older Children's Class** will be taught by Mason Goodell.
 - » The **Women's Study** will be led by Verna Aldrich and will be reading through Taking Hold of God: Reformed & Puritan Perspectives on Prayer edited by Joel R. Beeke & Brian G. Najapfour. (\$16 for the book).
 - » The **New Members Class** will meet on March 3rd, 10th, 17th & 24th will be lead by Pastor Doug.
 - » The **Adult Study Class** for March 3rd, 10th, 17th & 24th will be an introduction to the Psalms lead by Pastor Jon Haulenbeek. After that Pastor Doug will be leading a study on the Great Creeds of Congregationalism.

- **New Members Classes:** Will meet on Sunday from 9:00 to 10:15 AM on March 3rd, 10th, 17th & 24th, led by Pastor Doug. If you have not been baptized, please mention this. New members will be joining on Easter Sunday (March 31st)
- **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 1st & 3rd Fridays at Pastor Doug's house at 7:00 PM.
- 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/

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 boost 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

Sermon Notes

Titus 1:10-13

"Be Sound in the Faith"

A Sermon Series on Titus

February 25, 2024

Introduction

- 1) C.S. Lewis in his great book The Screwtape Letters gives a wonderful piece of sanctification advice for the church and Christians.
 - a) He argues one of the "greatest" tricks of the devil is to keep us focused on the exact opposite problem that we are in danger of becoming.
 - b) For example, in a very zealous fundamentalist legalistic age, we are terrified of becoming too liberal when actually a bit more focus on charity would be helpful.
 - c) Or, in a very liberal tolerant permissive age we are terrified of becoming too puritanical (which is actually good word, to illustrate the problem) when a bit more focus on holiness and the fear of the Lord would be helpful.
 - d) Both are actually caving in to the world around them and both are being legalistic, however, more about that later, though keep this axiom in your mind.
- 2) Last week we heard how important doctrine is to the church.
 - a) We are going through the Book of Titus, one of the Pastoral Epistles (i.e. 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus) where Paul instructs pastors on how to govern the church.
 - b) Here, Paul commands Titus to appoint elders in churches on the Island of Crete. Titus 1:1-5
 - c) The main qualification of those who lead the church is to hold "*fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.*" - Titus 1:9
- 3) There is a faction (or factions?) within the church which are causing much trouble. They are:
 - a) "*rebellious men*" - Titus 1:10
 - b) "*empty talkers*" - Titus 1:10
 - c) "*deceivers*" - Titus 1:10
 - d) "*upsetting whole families*" - Titus 1:11
 - e) "*teaching things they should not teach for the sake of sordid gain*" - Titus 1:11-12
 - f) "*liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons*" - Titus 1:12
- 4) These heretics, Paul commands pastor Titus and the elders, "*must be silenced*" - Titus 1:11
The leadership is to "*reprove them severely*" - Titus 1:13
- 5) This is a serious problem.
 - a) These heretics are not Christians asking questions like good Bereans. Acts 17:11
 - b) Nor are they new Christians, or some simple meek believer, who should receive much charity. Ex 22:22-24; Is 42:3; Matt 9:13; 11:29-30; Luke 10:41-42; John 8:7

About Heresy & Heretics

- 1) Let's define some terms:
 - a) **Orthodoxy:** Right, true, correct belief or opinion.
 - b) **Heresy:** Wrong, false, erroneous belief or opinion that especially is promoted.
- 2) For example,
 - a) The belief that Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man (i.e. the doctrine of the **hypostatic union**) is **orthodox**, i.e. correct.
 - b) The belief that Jesus did not have a real physical body, but only an illusory one, is the **heresy** of **Docetism**, a Gnostic belief.
- 3) Technically, a pagan, or unbeliever, cannot be a heretic.
 - a) To be a heretic you have to claim to be a Christian but believe something that is clearly against the orthodox (i.e. correct) Christian faith.
 - i) Note, the denomination "Eastern Orthodox", sometimes simply called "Orthodox" is different from simply being "orthodox" – having correct doctrine.
 - ii) Just like "catholic church" means the "universal church" is different from the "Roman Catholic Church" which sometimes is simply called "Catholic."
 - b) Being a pagan or unbeliever is bad, however, a heretic is far more dangerous to the church. Luke 12:46; 1Cor 5:12-13;
2Cor 6:14-15; 1Tim 5:8
- 4) Everyone actually believes in orthodoxy, heresy and disciplining heretics.
 - a) I use to think one of the problems with theological liberals, and mainstream Evangelicals, is that they don't practice church discipline.
 - b) After Covid, I realized I was wrong. They do.
 - i) Though they would reject any such "judgmental" terms as "heresy."
 - ii) They have no problem disciplining anyone who promotes evil the world thinks is also evil (e.g. racism) or correcting anyone that sins against worldly dogma (e.g. wearing masks or being against feminism). They also certainly train all in the church to agree with their dogmas, while saying they have no dogmas.
 - iii) Their problem is they do discipline but wrongly, based on a fear of the world, instead of a fear of God. They are using the language of "tolerance" to hide their heresies while appeasing the world, making them hypocrites.
 - c) The people who proclaim "tolerance" tend to be very dogmatic and intolerant.

How to Spot a Heretic! – Titus 1:10-13a

- 1) When you think of a heretic, a very evil person, what image comes to mind?
 - a) A Neo-Nazi? A member of the Clan? Someone with a handle-bar mustache and a black top hat?
 - i) A quick reading of Titus 1:10-12 might even encourage this.
 - ii) The heretics are "*rebellious*", "*empty talkers*", "*deceivers*", "*upsetting whole families*", "*teaching things they should not teach for the sake of sordid gain*".
 - b) Someone almost comically evil?

- 2) We all tend to do this: Making evil, so ridiculously evil, so we don't have to deal with it.
- a) We make evil people like Hitler, or even Satan, so comic that it is easy to deal with them.
 - i) Imaging a fictitious guy in a red suit, horns and a plastic trident, is easy to ignore.
 - ii) Remembering that Satan disguises himself as an angel of light, and he and his minions are engaged in an age long battle against Christ church's requires solid doctrine, faith, courage, love and solid leadership.
 - Gen 3:15; Job 1:12;
 - 2Cor 2:11; 11:14;
 - Eph 6:12; 1Pet 5:8;
 - James 4:7; Rev 12:17
 - iii) If you claim to be a Christian and don't believe in Satan, I can assure you Satan is very pleased with you.
 - b) We lie to ourselves, as we like to think "of course I, and all my family and friends, would never have been a Nazi in WW2 Germany."
 - i) And, of course, "I alone would have courageously stood up to Hitler, even though all society would have been against me."
 - ii) No, no you wouldn't. The vast majority of us would have caved. Very few people are that brave.
- 3) That is why Paul is so insistent that trained, godly, faithful, courageous *men* are to lead the church.
- a) As a generalization, men are better at putting truth over feelings. Is 3:12
For example, they make better executioners. Deut 21:21
 - b) Also, there is courage in numbers. It is easier to be a pastor when surrounded by godly men. Eccles 4:9-12
- 4) Many of the worst heretics throughout the history of the church were sincere people who really thought they were helping the church and in many cases had many admirable personality traits. (Think of Marcion, Pelagius, Schleiermacher, Finney, Osteen or Warren.)
- 5) Question, could someone be very soft-spoken, winsome, tolerant and be "*rebellious*", "*empty talkers*", "*deceivers*", "*upsetting whole families*", "*teaching things they should not teach for the sake of sordid gain*"?
- a) Of course! And they would be even better at spreading their heresy.
 - b) Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, "*Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they? So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit.*" - Matthew 7:15-17
 - i) And what is the good fruit? Orthodoxy! Correct doctrine. Gal 5:19-26
 - ii) With that correct doctrine worked out in love as defined by God, not this world.
- 6) Though going on a (false) "witch hunt" can be a great sin, it is very common for heretics to complain about "witch hunts" when people start to question their doctrine.
- 7) This might be the reason Paul gets so aggressive, when he writes, "*One of themselves, a prophet of their own, said, 'Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.' This testimony is true*" – Titus 1:12-13a
- a) Paul is not being racist here. He is simply using one of their own to point out the danger of the heretics.¹

¹ Paul is quoting the famous Cretan philosopher Epimenides (c. 600 BC). Similar to a Jewish comedian telling jokes about Jewish habits. So, Paul half-jokingly agrees that their country's most famous writer accurately describes these false teachers as liars, beasts and lazy gluttons. Thus, Paul is not saying all Cretans are liars, just the bad ones. Obviously, the church was concerned that Crete hear the Gospel. (Acts 2:11; Titus 1:5)

- b) Paul is pointing out how dangerous they are: They are liars (whether they realize it or not), they are like wild animals who are useless people only concerned with themselves.
- 8) Calling out a completely evil man is easy, calling out a seemingly nice person with bad teaching is much harder. For example:
- a) Calling out a pastor who only works 10 hours a week, is mean and is a terrible public speaker is easy.
 - b) Calling out a pastor who only works 10 hours a week and is very charismatic but doesn't fully preach Scripture is harder.
 - c) Calling out a pastor who works 50 hours a week, is very charismatic and preaches only the nice parts of Scripture out of fear of losing his job, is much much harder.
 - d) However, all are dangerous to the church, thus Paul's strong language.

The Purpose – Repentance & Sound Faith – Titus 1:13b

- 1) Note how the pastor/elders are to deal with heretics - *“reprove them severely”*. - Titus 1:13
- 2) A little false teaching, like leaven, will do a lot of damage. Matt 16:6ff; 1Cor 5:6-8; Gal 5:9
- 3) The purpose of this correction is *“that they may be sound in faith”* – Titus 1:13
 - a) Faith, to believe in something, or someone, clearly involves doctrine.

Romans 10:14 – “How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher?”
 - b) Correct (or orthodox) faith will produce correct hope, which will produce correct love.
 - c) False (heretical) faith, will produce either false hope or despair, and then will produce false love which is actually a love for evil and a hatred of what is good.
- 3) This concern about checking heresy and promoting orthodoxy is all about love/charity.
 - a) Charity for the orthodox saints that are to be protected.

The main job of the pastor (i.e. shepherd) is to protect the sheep. Eph 4:11-12
 - b) All too often in the modern church we are far more concerned about being nice to unrepentant sinners while having no regard for the faithful.
 - c) We never think that repentance (to change one's mind) is an option.
 - i) Because we have so bought into the cult of hyper-individualism.
 - ii) We fear man, we fear the world, we fear the future, instead of fearing God and trusting in Him.
 - Proverbs 1:7 – *“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; Fools despise wisdom and instruction.”*
 - We are called to be faithful not necessarily successful.
 - iii) We put the guilt on the one speaking truth while coddling the sinner.
 - d) Also, note the purpose of this correction is also to return the heretic to “sound faith.”
 - e) Ignoring the grievous sins of loved-ones is not loving.
 - f) It is not loving to them, those around them, and it is not loving and honoring to God, the great law giver and just judge.

Conclusion

- 1) In this day and age, do we err more on the side of being too tolerant or too zealous for orthodoxy?
 - a) We are clearly way too tolerant.
 - b) Much of Christianity is more terrified about being labeled a "*fundamentalist*" then being called "*worldly*."
 - c) Why?
 - i) Not out of Christianity charity but out of fear of the world.
 - ii) Remember C.S. Lewis' axiom.
- 2) Can we over do a zeal for orthodoxy and discipline and become like Pharisees?
 - a) Sure! That is always a danger and we should be vigilant against it.
 - b) What is the antidote to it, however?
 - i) Better doctrine!
 - ii) To "*love your neighbor*" is by definition a doctrine.
 - iii) However, every single word in that statement has to be defined by God's word not by the world!
- 3) We need to fear and love God more, knowing His Law and resting in His Gospel, for there is the correct balance.
- 4) 2Timothy 2:7-13