

Trinity Reformed Church of Northwest Connecticut

Biblical, Traditional, Congregational

Lord's Day Worship for
February 23, 2025

"Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words." – 1Thessalonians 4:17-18



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“*” = Please stand if you are able.

Welcome, Greeting & Announcements

Call to Worship – John 14:1-6

Leader: Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God,

People: Believe also in Me.

Leader: In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you

People: For I go to prepare a place for you.

Leader: If I go and prepare a place for you,

People: I will come again and receive you to Myself,

Leader: That where I am, there you may be also.

People: And you know the way where I am going.

Leader: Thomas said to Him, Lord, we do not know where You are going,

People: How do we know the way?

Leader: Jesus said to him,

People: I am the way,

Leader: And the truth,

People: And the life;

Leader: No one comes to the Father

People: But through Me.

Prayer of Invocation and Confession

Gospel Absolution Texts – Ephesians 5:25b-27

***Hymn #2** (red hymnal) – “O Worship the King”

Scripture Reading – Psalm 135

Ancient Creedal Proclamation – Apostle Creed (pg#845 in the red hymnal)

Offerings Presented

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

[Gifts labeled “Deacon’s Fund go to aid those in need in the congregation.]

***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 #23C** – “The Lord’s My Shepherd”

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, Q#90.

Leader: *What shall be done to the righteous at the day of judgment?*
People: **The righteous, being caught up to Christ in the clouds,** 1Thes 4:17
Leader: *Shall be set on His right hand,* Matt 25:33
People: **And there openly acknowledged and acquitted,** Matt 10:32
Leader: *Shall join with Him in the judging of reprobate angels and men,* 1Cor 6:2-3
People: **And shall be received into heaven,** Matt 25:34,46
Leader: *Where they shall be fully and forever freed* Eph 5:27
People: **From all sin and misery;** Rev 14:13
Leader: *Filled with inconceivable joys,* Ps 16:11
People: **Made perfectly holy and happy**
Leader: *Both in body and soul, in the company of innumerable saints*
People: **And holy angels,** Heb 12:22-23
Leader: *But especially in the immediate vision and fruition of God the Father,* 1John 3:2
People: **Of our Lord Jesus Christ,** 1Thes 4:17-18
Leader: *And of the Holy Spirit,*
People: **To all eternity.**
Leader: *And this is the perfect and full communion,*
People: **Which the members of the invisible church**
Leader: *Shall enjoy with Christ in glory,*
People: **At the resurrection and day of judgment.**

Ministry of the Word

Prayer of Illumination

***Sermon Text** – Revelation 7:9-12

***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 – “The Heavenly City”

(A Sermon Series on Revelation 4-7)

***Hymn #274** (red hymnal) – “Thine Be the Glory”

***Benediction**

All are welcome for Fellowship & Food downstairs after Worship

Announcements

- **New Members Classes** will start soon. If you are interested in joining the church, or have questions, please contact Pastor Doug.
- As of now, **Wednesday Study** will begin at the standard time of **6:30 PM**. Gen Alpha Club will be starting soon.
- *Snow Cancellation Policy:* Though TRC is loathed to cancel **Sunday worship**, because of the rural location of the Grange, and that Rt 263 seems to be of low snow-plowing priority we are going to take a moderate approach to cancellation. If we cancel, everyone will be emailed, and it will be posted on Channel #3 and the church's facebook & webpage.
When it comes to **week-day studies**, Pastor Doug is very liberal about canceling (he lives on a rural hill). He will email and call everyone, however, if in doubt, study is probably canceled.

Upcoming Events

- There will be a **Ladies Bingo & Pot-Luck Supper Night** on Friday, March 28th at 6:00 PM (with a snow date of Friday, April 4th) at the Gabelmanns' pool-house. All adult ladies are welcome!
- Easter is on April 20th.

Regular Weekly Events

<i>Sunday</i>	9:00 – c.10:00 AM	Sunday School Children's curriculum: KVB Publications Women's Study: Baucham's <u>Expository Apologetics</u> Adult Study: Westminster Larger Catechism Worship (Lord's Supper on the 1 st Sunday of the month) Coffee Hour Fellowship
	10:30 – c.11:40 AM c.11:40 AM	
<i>Tuesday</i>	10:30 AM – Noon	Tuesday Study (Evangelism in Acts) at Pastor Doug's house
<i>Wednesday</i>	6:30 – 8:00 PM	Wednesday Study (on Exodus) at Pastor Doug's house
<i>Friday</i>	6:30 - ??? PM	Young Adult Discussion Group at Pastor Doug's house (1 st & 3 rd Fridays)
<i>Saturday</i>	morning	Prayer Group at the Gabelmann's. (Please call Sheryl to confirm if the group is meeting that day, 860-309-7250.)

ONLINE RESOURCES

<i>TRC's Webpage:</i>	TrinityReformedCT.org
<i>TRC's Facebook Page:</i>	facebook.com/people/Trinity-Reformed-Church/61554974150922/
<i>TRC's Youtube Channel:</i>	youtube.com/@TrinityReformedCT
<i>Pastor Doug's</i>	youtube.com/simplyreformed
<i>Youtube Channels:</i>	youtube.com/@PilgrimsOfPlunder

INTERNET PRAYER CHAIN

If you have any prayer requests for our prayer chain, please email them to Donna Ensminger at: trcnwprayer@gmail.com. (If you would like to join the Prayer Chain, also see Donna.)

LEADERSHIP

Elders:	Rev. Douglas Aldrich, pastor	860-379-1147	douglas_aldrich@sbcglobal.net
	Bob Ensminger	860-485-8738	robert.ensminger@arthurgrussell.com
	Rich Gabelmann	860-605-7852	rgabelmann0415@gmail.com
	Rev. Jonathan Haulenbeek	203-709-0784	jhaulenbeek@icloud.com
Deacons:	David Mattson (chair), Carl Bierce, Caleb Goodell, Mason Goodell, Dean Winters		
Sunday School:	Verna Aldrich, Mason Goodell	Music Coordinator:	Cindy Rines
Clerk:	Sheryl Gabelmann	Treasurer:	Cindy Rines

Sermon Notes

Revelation 7:9-12
“The Heavenly City”
A Sermon Series on Revelation 4-7
February 23, 2025

Introduction

- 1) We are in a sermon series on Revelation 4-7.
- 2) One of the great blessings of Revelation, especially chapters 4 and on, is that we are allowed to see how all of reality really is, from God’s glorious perspective.
- 3) Through the Apostle John’s visions we see God enthroned in heaven.
 - a) We hear of the Trinity, because Revelation is one of the most Trinitarian books in the Bible.
 - i) The Trinity is the critical core doctrine that there is only one God who eternally exists in three coequal, and co-eternal, Persons: Father, Son & Holy Spirit.
 - ii) The Father is enthroned in the center of all, Rev 1:6; 2:27; 3:5,21;
Rev 7:17; 14:1; 22:1,3
because He decrees all things.
 - iii) The Son is the Lamb once slain and now alive.
 - He is beside His Father on the throne. Rev 7:9-10,17; 22:1,3
 - He is near (literally “in the middle of”) the throne revealing and executing the Father’s plan by opening the 7 sealed scroll. Rev 5:6
Rev 5:1ff
 - He is currently going forth, by His Gospel, in this world “conquering and to conquer.” – Revelation 6:2
 - He will return at the end of this age to judge all and bring forth His perfect Kingdom of a new heavens and new earth. Rev 19:11-19
 - iv) The Spirit is before the throne perfectly as He goes out into all the creation, especially to be with the saints. Rev 1:4,10; 2:7; 4:2,5;
Rev 5:6; 14:13; 17:13;
Rev 21:10; 22:17
 - b) We see God worshiped and praised by His host, including: Rev 4:3ff
 - i) All the angels, including the greatest of angels, the cherubim, the “four living creatures.” Rev 4:6-9
 - ii) All the saints, represented by the “24 elders” – a symbolic number showing all the saints who are now in heaven (12 for the OT church – the 12 Tribes of Israel and 12 for the NT church – the 12 Apostles). Rev 4:4,10

4) We are now at the very end.

- a) The church has gone through the Great Tribulation – that time of great lawlessness in the future right before the end. Matt 24:1ff
Rev 6:12-17
 - b) At the end of the Tribulation, creation itself turns against the wicked and they finally realize, to their doom, the glory and power of the Lamb once slain.
 - c) Because Christ has returned in power and glory.
 - i) Everyone is resurrected and stands before God for judgment.
 - ii) The wicked are raised unto dishonor and wrath and the righteous, in Christ, unto honor and glory. John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15;
1Cor 15:43; Phil 3:21
 - d) As we read about last week when all the saints are perfectly sealed by God. Rev 7:1-8
- 5) This week we continue to read what that final heaven – the new heavens and new earth, will be like. Rev 7:9-12

Revelation 7:9-11

- 1) John writes “*after these things I looked, and behold*” (Rev 7:9a) showing that there has been a dramatic change: We are now in the “age to come.”
- 2) He sees “a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues”. – Rev 7:9b
 - a) This is the 144,000 of those sealed in Revelation 7:4-8. This symbolic number represents all the saints throughout all ages.
 - b) It is true, in this age, the way to eternal destruction is broad and many enter through it, and the way to eternal life is narrow, and a few find it. Matt 7:13-14
Luke 13:24ff
 - i) However, this does not contradict that there will still be a great multitude, too many to count, that will populate the heavenly city.
 - ii) As our Lord promised during His earthly ministry, “*Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me* (note the Trinitarian language!). *‘In My Father’s house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also.’*” – John 14:1-3
 - c) We see the fulfillment of this in today’s sermon text!
- 3) The saints come “*from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues*”. – Rev 7:9b
 - a) This is not referring to governments, as if the United States will be saved and not Saudi Arabia.
 - b) But people from every different country, ethnic group, nationality, language, etc.
 - c) That is why the catholic/universal visible church is made up of people from all nations. Rom 3:22; 10:12; 1Cor 12:13;
Gal 3:28; Col 3:11
 - i) Unlike the OT church (Israel), ethnicity is irrelevant for the NT church.
 - ii) Even in the OT, it was prophesied that Israel will be a priest to all the nations, in particular the Messiah, the Savior of the world, will come from the line of Judah. Gen 18:18; 22:18; 26:4;
Ex 19:6; Ps 72:17;
Is 11:10,12; 52:15
 - d) In heaven we are of one citizenship, one people – the people of God, made up of all the nations. Eph 2:19; Phil 3:21
Heb 12:22

- e) The curse from the Tower of Babel has been undone, there will be no more division by language or ethnicity. Gen 11:1-9
- i) I'm not saying we will be all boringly generic, like Ken & Barbie dolls.
- ii) The good differences will probably be there.
- iii) The bad differences will be done away with.
- iv) The details of heaven are vague because our fallen limited minds cannot comprehend a sinless eternal creation. Dan 12:8-9,13
John 3:13
- v) Whatever heaven will be like, it will be perfectly good.
- 4) All the saints are now "*standing before the throne and before the Lamb*". – Revelation 7:9b
- a) Again, note the Trinitarian language!
- i) The most common title for Christ in Revelation is "Lamb."¹
- ii) Showing His sacrifice and His triumph over death.
- b) God enthroned is a common theme in Revelation.²
- c) Though Satan had a false throne, it has been destroyed with Christ's return. Rev 2:13; 13:2; 16:10
- d) A throne is the seat of power, where only the king can sit, and where the actions of the king, i.e. reign. Esther 1:2; 5:1
- e) Though standing before the King's throne can be terrifying, because He can tolerate no evil in His sight, this is not the case for the saints. Prov 25:5
Ex 33:20; Is 6:5
Rev 20:12
- f) To stand by the throne means you are one of the King's men, having special privilege and status. 1Kgs 22:19; 2Chr 18:18;
Rev 7:11
- 5) Why are they able to stand so boldly before the throne of God and the Lamb?
- a) Because they have been washed in Christ's blood – fully forgiven of all sins
- b) And for the saints in heaven, they have been changed, fully glorified. They are now sinless with a perfect body and soul.
- 6) This is described in Revelation as being "*clothed in white robes*." – Revelation 7:9b Rev 6:11; 7:9,13-14
- a) White throughout the Bible, and especially in Revelation, is the symbol of holiness.
- i) For God and His Son. Rev 1:14; 6:2; 14:14; 19:11,14; 20:11
- ii) For angels. Mark 16:5; Acts 1:10
- b) Showing that they are priests, special unto the Lord, like all Christians. Ex 28:2; 29:29; 35:19,21; Lev 16:32;
Is 61:6; 66:21; 1Pet 2:5,9; Rev 1:6
- i) It is a sign of being chosen. Rev 2:17
- ii) That having white clothing is a sign of being made holy/clean, that one is faithful, and is reigning now in heaven. Rev 3:4-5,18;
Rev 4:4; 6:11;
Rev 7:9,13-14
- c) They have been made perfect, without sin, and sin and death can no longer touch them.

¹ Rev 5:6,8,12-13; 6:1,7,9,16; 7:9,10,14,17; 8:1; 12:11; 13:8; 14:1,4,10; 15:3; 17:14; 19:7,9; 21:9,14,22-23,27; 22:1,3.

² Rev 1:4; 3:21; 4:2-6,9-10; 5:1,6-7,11,13; 6:16; 7:9-11,15,17; 8:3; 12:5; 14:3; 16:17; 20:11-12; 21:3,5; 22:1,3.

7) The saints in heaven are shown as holding “*palm branches*”, why?

a) During the Feast of Booths, the OT church was to take palm branches, and other boughs, and “*shall rejoice before the LORD your God for seven days.*” – Lev 23:40b.

i) The Feast of Booths is also called: Ex23:16; 34:22;
The Feast of Tabernacles, Lev 23:33-36; 39-43;
The Feast of Ingathering, Num 29:12-32; Deut 16:13-16;
and in Hebrew: Sukkot. Ezra 3:4; Zech 14:16,18-19

ii) It was one of the three great pilgrimage-festivals of the Old Testament.

iii) During this holiday, Israel would live in tents/booths to celebrate the fall harvest and remember the time when Israel wandered in the wilderness and lived in temporary shelters.

b) When the Feast of Booths was restored during the time of Nehemiah (because Israel had been conquered and deported by the Babylonians) they followed the Law and celebrated with palm branches and other boughs.

We read, “*The entire assembly of those who had returned from the captivity made booths and lived in them. The sons of Israel had indeed not done so from the days of Joshua the son of Nun to that day. And there was great rejoicing.*” - Nehemiah 8:17

c) Of course, the most famous imagery of using palms is from Palm Sunday, when King Jesus entered the royal city of Jerusalem, the week before His death and resurrection.

i) John 12:12 – “*took the branches of the palm trees and went out to meet Him, and began to shout, ‘Hosanna*! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel.’*”

ii) “Hosanna” is an exclamation of praise, implying rulership to the one you are praising, which literally means “*Save us, please!*”

d) Thus, the imagery of the saints in heaven holding palm branches is one of rejoicing before God, where we will know perfect unceasing joy.

8) The saints cry out with a voice: “*Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.*” – Revelation 7:10

a) Again, note the trinitarian language!

b) This is not to “cry” in the sense of tears but to shout, call out, exclaim (*krazō*).

i) This is not saying God needs saving.³

ii) This is exclaiming that salvation only comes from God and the saints are rejoicing in it. Rev 12:10; 19:1

c) This cry has been found throughout history:

i) As King David prayed in Psalm 3:7-8 - “*Arise, O LORD; save me, O my God! For You have smitten all my enemies on the cheek; You have shattered the teeth of the wicked. Salvation belongs to the LORD; Your blessing be upon Your people!*”

ii) As God proclaimed through Isaiah, “*I, even I, am the LORD, and there is no savior besides Me.*” - Isaiah 43:11

iii) As the Angel of the Lord proclaimed to Joseph about the birth of Christ, “*you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.*” - Matthew 1:21b

³ In the Greek the verb “cry” “designates a durative present, which in this context denotes not a cry for help but ongoing praise.” (Schreiner, 304) The use of the dative (to God) means salvation comes from God.

- iv) As the Apostles, and the church, has proclaimed, *“And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.”* - Acts 4:12
 - v) The saints, are at rest, in heaven right now crying out about the church's suffering and demanding justice saying, *“How long, O Lord, holy and true, will You refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?”* - Revelation 6:10b
 - d) Now, in the next age, salvation, in all its perfection, has come, Rev 12:10; 19:1
and the saints rejoice.
- 9) Verse 11, returns us to the beginning of this section of Scripture (Revelation 4-7).
- a) All the hosts of the new heavens, the angels, including the highest level of angels - the cherubim (the four living creatures) and all the saints (represented by the elders), worship God.
 - b) Note how worship is described, *“and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God”*.
 - c) To emphasize this is full worship, all of creation falls on their faces.
 - d) This seems strange to us moderns who worship ourselves, however, it is the norm for worship.
 - e) There are several Hebrew and Greek words for "worship" but they all involve some sort of obedience - to prostrate yourself before God.
 - f) The word for worship (*proskyneō*) here, is a very common word for “worship”, which means "to bow as an act of allegiance, prostrate oneself before, kneel down as an act of reverence."
 - g) The question is not “whether I will worship something” but “what will I worship.”
 - i) Even the most militant atheist worships something. (e.g. himself, science, government, etc.)
 - ii) In the end, we become like what we worship.
 - If the creation, then darkness, weeping and hateful rage.
 - If the Creator, covered in the blood of the Lamb, then the next verse.

Conclusion – Revelation 7:12

- 1) Revelation 7:12 – *“Amen, blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might, be to our God forever and ever. Amen.”*
- 2) The heavenly hosts cry “Amen!”
 - a) Note how this song of praises starts and ends with “amen.”
 - b) Amen (*amēn*) means “truly, indeed, it is the truth”.
- 3) The host proclaim worship of God, describing and desiring the following unto the Almighty:
 - a) Blessing (*eulogia*) - praise, speak in favorable terms.
 - i) Where we get our world “eulogy” from.
Literally, “good sayings” or to “speak well of someone.”
 - ii) We will be saying good things of God for all eternity.

- b) Glory (*doxa*) - splendor, brightness, radiance, amazing might, greatness.
- i) Where we get our word “doxology” from.
Literally, “glorifying words”.
 - ii) Heaven is an eternity of doxology.
- c) Wisdom (*sophia*) - prudence, discretion, insight, to act correctly.
- i) Where we get our word “philosophy” from.
Literally, “the love of wisdom”.
 - ii) How can we not praise the source of all wisdom?
- d) Thanksgiving (*eucharistia*) - expression of gratefulness.
- i) Where we get the fancy English for the Lord’s Supper: Eucharist.
 - ii) We will be grateful to God for all eternity because we now have perfect communion with Him.
- e) Honor (*timē*) - respect, status, value, worth.
- i) For the ancient Greeks, and most ancient cultures, honor was critical.
 - ii) True honor is now given to the One who alone has perfect honor.
- f) Power (*dynamis*) - ability to perform an activity, mighty deed, miracle.
- i) Where we get our word “dynamic” and “dynamo” from.
 - ii) This is one of the most common NT words for miracle.
 - The focus not on the wildly supernatural nature of a miracle.
 - But a work of God’s power.
 - iii) In heaven, it is all miracles.
- g) Might (*ischys*) - capability, personal potential, strength, power.
- i) Salvation is only by the power of God.
 - ii) Thus, the saints in heaven, and we now today say to God all glory,
“forever and ever. Amen.”