

Trinity Reformed Church of Northwest Connecticut

Biblical, Traditional, Congregational

Lord's Day Worship for

November 23, 2025

"Saying, 'Amen, blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might, be to our God forever and ever. Amen.'" – Revelation 7:12



trinityreformedct.org

“✠” = Please stand if you are able.

Welcome, Greeting & Announcements

Call to Worship – Ephesians 1:11-17

Leader: *Also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose*

People: **Who works all things after the counsel of His will,**

Leader: *To the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ*

People: **Would be to the praise of His glory.**

Leader: *In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed,*

People: **You were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise,**

Leader: *Who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession,*

People: **To the praise of His glory.**

Leader: *For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which exists among you*

People: **And your love for all the saints**

Leader: *Do not cease giving thanks for you,*

People: **While making mention of you in my prayers;**

Leader: *That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom*

People: **And of revelation in the knowledge of Him.**

Prayer of Invocation and Confession

Gospel Absolution Text – Colossians 1:12-14

***Hymn #363** – “We Gather Together”

Scripture Reading – 2Corinthians 9:9-15

Ancient Creedal Proclamation – 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!]

[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 #100E** – “In All the Land Rejoice”

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 – Heidelberg Catechism, 1-2.

Leader: *What is your only comfort in life and in death?*

People: **That I am not my own,**

1Cor 6:19-20

Leader: *But belong body and soul, in life and in death*

Rom 14:7-9

People: **To my faithful Savior, Jesus Christ.**

1Cor 3:23; Titus 2:14

Leader: *He has fully paid for all my sins with His precious blood,*

1Pet 1:18-19

1John 1:7-9; 2:2

People: **And has set me free from the tyranny of the devil.**

John 8:34-36; Heb 2:14-15

1John 3:1-11

Leader: *He also watches over me in such a way that not a hair can fall from my head without the will of my Father in heaven;*

John 6:39-40; 10:27-30

2Thes 3:3; 1Pet 1:5

Matt 10:29-31; Luke 21:16-18

People: **In fact, all things must work together for my salvation.**

Rom 8:28

Leader: *Because I belong to Him, Christ, by His Holy Spirit, assures me of eternal life*

Rom 8:15-16; Eph 1:13-14

2Cor 1:21-22; 5:5

People: **And makes me wholeheartedly willing and ready from now on to live for Him.**

Rom 8:1-17

Leader: *What must you know to live and die in the joy of this comfort?*

Rom 3:9-10

People: **Three things: First, how great my sin and misery are;**

1John 1:10

Leader: *Second, how I am set free from all my sins and misery;*

John 17:3

Acts 4:12; 10:43

People: **Third, how I am to thank God for such deliverance.**

Matt 5:16; Rom 6:13

Eph 5:8-10; 1Pet 2:9-10

Ministry of the Word

Prayer of Illumination

***Sermon Text** – 1Samuel 7:1-14

***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 – “Thanksgiving”

A Sermon Series on 1Samuel 1-8

***Hymn #457** – “Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing”

***Benediction**

Everyone is welcome to Coffee Hour Fellowship downstairs after church today

Announcements

- With the holidays, and Pastor Doug’s vacation, below is when the various **studies will NOT meet:**
Sunday School (all ages): December 28th & January 4th. (So church starts at 10:30 on those days.)
Tuesday: December 16th, 23rd, 30th, January 6th.
Wednesday: December 17th, 24th, 31st, January 7th.
YADG: December 19th, January 2nd.
- The next **Lady’s Study Luncheon** will be in **January**. The book is The Dawn of Redeeming Grace by Sinclair Ferguson (\$9.00) is in. If you are interested in the book please see Verna. There are extra copies available if you didn’t sign up.
- Pastor Doug is on vacation from December 22 through January 5th.
- Dave & Janelle Franceschetti have set up a gofundme page to help with the medical costs for **baby Caleb’s** upcoming transplant surgery. You can go to: <https://gofund.me/95103c5b9>
Or search for: “Help Caleb and Family During Transplant”.

Upcoming Events

- The 3rd **Annual Calvinist-Christmas Party** is Friday, **December 5th**, at 6:30 PM, at the Grange.
- The **Annual Meeting** will be after church on **December 14th**.

ONLINE RESOURCES

TRC’s Webpage:	TrinityReformedCT.org
TRC’s Facebook Page:	facebook.com/people/Trinity-Reformed-Church/61554974150922/
TRC’s Youtube Channel:	youtube.com/@TrinityReformedCT
Pastor Doug’s	youtube.com/simplyreformed
Youtube Channels:	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@arthurgrossell.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	Music Coordinator:	Cindy Rines
Clerk:	Sheryl Gabelmann	Treasurer:	Cindy Rines

Trinity Reformed Church of Northwest Connecticut

Worship Starts At: 10:30 AM (9:30 AM in the summer)

Sunday Worship At: Winchester Grange (100 Newfield Rd; Winchester Center, CT 06098)

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 343; Riverton, CT 06065 – Phone: (860) 238-7399

Webpage: trinityreformedct.org – Email: trinityreformedct@gmail.com

Sermon Notes

1Samuel 7:1-14

"Thanksgiving"

Sermon Series on 1Samuel 1-8

November 23, 2025

Introduction

- 1) We are in the time of the Judges – A time of moral decline in Israel. Judg 2:10-19; 17:6; 21:25
 - a) God has judged the high priest and judge Eli, and his household. 1Sam 2:27-36; 3:11-14; 4:17-18
 - b) Israel is defeated in two battles against the evil Philistines around the town of Ebenezer. 1Sam 4:1-11; 7:7-14
 - c) Shockingly the Ark of God, the Lord's throne on earth, is captured. 1Sam 4:10-11,17,22
Ps 78:60-61
 - d) God, by His power, causes the Ark to return to Israel. 1Sam 5:1-12; 6:1-12
 - e) The Ark first goes to the town of Beth-shemesh, who prove less than faithful by defiling the Ark. 1Sam 6:13-21
Num 4:20
 - f) The Ark is therefore brought to Kiriath-jearim (Kirjath-jearim in the KJV). 1Sam 6:21
- 2) Kiriath-jearim was a fortified Israelite city that originally belonged to the Gibeonites and went by several names throughout the OT. 1Sam 7:1; 2Sam 6:2
Josh 9:17; 15:9,60; 18:28
 - a) They bring the Ark to "*the house of Abinadab on the hill.*" – 1Samuel 7:1b
 - b) There they "*consecrated Eleazar his son to keep the ark of the LORD.*" – 1Samuel 7:1b
 - c) This is strange.
 - i) Abinadab and Eleazar are hardly famous people in the Bible, outside of this story.
 - ii) They are never called a priest or a Levite.
(Remember the priestly order had collapsed in 1Sam 4.)
 - iii) The Ark should be in a sanctuary attended to by priests.
 - iv) Not some random non-priest's private home!
 - v) It shows God's judgment, the breakdown of proper worship, and that something new is coming.
 - d) Abinadab and Eleazar have the most important thing.
 - i) Faith which produces godly living and obedience.
 - ii) How do we know this? Next verse.
- 3) The Ark remains with Eleazar for a long time: 20 years. 1Sam 7:2
 - a) That is a long time to have something that holy in your house.
 - b) It shows Eleazar's faithfulness: We have no record of God being displeased with him.
 - c) Again, it shows God's judgment: That God's presence, and His Word, is withdrawn from public worship.
 - d) Slowly, the people realize how barren their spiritual condition is.
 - e) Thus "*all the house of Israel lamented after the LORD.*" – 1Samuel 7:2b

1Samuel 7:3-9 – God Responds

1) Samuel, in his first public act of ministry, declares to Israel: *“If you return to the LORD with all your heart, remove the foreign gods and the Ashtaroth from among you and direct your hearts to the LORD and serve Him alone; and He will deliver you from the hand of the Philistines.”* – 1Samuel 7:3b

- a) The normal way God speaks in the Old Testament, in the New Testament, and in this age now, is through ordained men. Jer 7:25; Matt 10:40
Luke 10:16; Rom 10:14-15
Eph 4:11-12; 1Thes 2:13
 - i) In Biblical times they were called prophets/Apostles, who received direct revelation of God. Deut 18:18; Jer 1:4-9; Ezek 2:1-7
Amos 3:7; Heb 1:1; 2Pet 1:21
 - ii) In this church age they are called pastors, preachers, elders, etc., who are called to proclaim, teach, and preach Scripture and not go beyond it. Matt 28:19-20; Acts 20:27-28
1Cor 4:1-6; Eph 4:11-12
2Tim 4:1-2; Titus 1:9
- b) Here is a great example of bold, Old Testament preaching.
- c) It starts with repentance.
 - i) The Hebrew word here for “repentance” means to “return” or “to turn back”. Deut 30:2-3; Is 6:10; 55:7
Jer 3:12-14,22; Hos 14:1
 - This is a physical turning.
 - A covenant renewal.
 - ii) The common Greek word for “repent” is to “change one’s mind.” Matt 3:2; 4:17; Mark 1:15
Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; 17:30
 - iii) These concepts of repentance go together.
 - Your thoughts are turned from yourself, sin, the world and Satan and to/return to the Triune God, and do His will.
 - You hear this in today’s text *“return to the LORD with all your heart.”*
 - Remember, the biblical word for “heart” is not emotions.
It is the inner man: Mind, soul, spirit, will, self, etc.
With a special focus on thinking, volition and feelings.
- d) In particular their repentance is about the worship of the Lord.
 - i) By first removing idols.
 - ii) Remember the first four of the Ten Commandments. Ex 20; Deut 5
(No other god besides God, No idols, No taking God’s name in vain, remember the Sabbath.)
- e) They are to remove *“the foreign gods and the Ashtaroth from among you”* – 1Samuel 7:3b
 - i) “Foreign gods” is anything, besides the Lord, they are worshipping or serving.
 - ii) *“The Ashtaroth”* refers to a particular pagan god.
 - It is, in the single, Astarte (or Ashtoreth) which is the Canaanite–Phoenician goddess of fertility and war. The consort of Baal, the storm-fertility god.
 - Here *“Ashtaroth”* is in the plural because it refers to all the idols, shrines, or manifestations of the goddess. Judg 10:6
1Sam 7:3

f) Once the evil things are removed then they can “*direct your hearts to the LORD and serve Him alone;*” - 1Sam 7:3b

i) Note, faith without repentance is not true faith. Matt 3:2,8; Mark 1:15; Luke 13:3
Acts 2:38; 20:21; James 2:17

ii) Proverbs 28:13 – “*He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion.*”

iii) With repentance, only then will the evil Philistines be stopped.

2) The sons of Israel obey!

a) 1Samuel 7:4 – “*So the sons of Israel removed the Baals and the Ashtaroth and served the LORD alone.*”

b) Frequently, it takes fallen man a long time to get the message. Ex 32:9; Neh 9:16-17; Ps 78:8-11
Jer 7:25-26; Matt 13:13-15; Acts 7:51

c) Which is only by God’s grace according to His good timing. John 1:12-13; 6:44; Acts 13:48
Rom 9:15-16; Eph 2:8-9; Phil 1:29

3) Samuel calls for a national convocation at Mizpah.

a) And Samuel, as prophet and priest, “*will pray to the LORD for you.*” – 1Samuel 7:5

b) Mizpah will become a place for national gathering for Israel.¹

4) The people listen and gather and engage in acts of repentance.

1Sam 7:6

a) They “*drew water and poured it out before the LORD*”. – 1Samuel 7:6b

i) In the broad sense, it is definitely a sign of repentance.

ii) We read in David’s great Psalm 22 (the one the Lord Jesus quoted on the cross) that he is “*I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; It is melted within me.*” – Psalm 22:14 Matt 27:46
Mark 15:34

iii) In Scripture, water often marks cleansing and signifies a public turning from impurity. (Think NT baptism.) Lev 15:5-13; Ezek 36:25; Heb 10:22
John 3:5; 13:10; Eph 5:26
Acts 2:38; 8:36-38; 22:16

b) They fasted – a voluntary act of national repentance.

i) Fasting is a common practice in both Old and New Testaments. 2Sam 12:16; Ezra 8:21; Matt 6:16-18
Matt 9:14-15; Acts 13:2-3; 14:23

ii) Fasting expresses humility before God. Ezra 8:21; Ps 35:13; Is 58:5
Dan 9:3; Joel 2:12-13; James 4:10

iii) It is an outward act of inward contrition. 1Sam 7:6; 2Sam 12:16; Ps 35:13; Joel 2:12-13
Jonah 3:5-10; Matt 6:16-18; Luke 18:12-14

iv) It is an act of renouncing self-reliance. Ezra 8:21-23; Ps 69:10; Is 58:3-6
Dan 9:3; Joel 2:12-13; James 4:6-10

c) They confess with their mouths, “*We have sinned against the LORD.*”

¹ Israel had gathered to go to war against the tribe of Benjamin at Mizpah. (Judg 20:1; 21:1) Later Samuel will call for another assembly at Mizpah to publicly designate Saul as king. (1Sam 10:17-25) Judas Maccabeus called the people together at Mizpah “because Israel formerly had a place of prayer in Mizpah” (1Mc 3:46).

- 5) Here Samuel starts to function as the judge of Israel. 1Sam 7:6
- a) The previous judge, Eli, is dead.
 - b) It is a rare thing to have a single man to be a priest, prophet and judge.
- 6) The Philistines heard that Israel had gathered at Mizpah. 1Sam 7:7
- a) So they moved against Israel.
 - b) And Israel was afraid – Remember they had just suffered two major defeats. 1Sam 4:1ff
 - c) This time, however, it goes differently.
 - i) In 1Samuel 4 they ran to get the Ark as if it was some magic item.
 - Trusting a thing instead of Who the thing represents.
 - In 1Samuel 4 there is no repentance just political calculations.
 - ii) In 1Samuel 7 they now beg for God, through His priest, to intercede.
 - They fast, confess their sins and submit to Samuel's authority.
 - They put their faith into practice by putting away the Ashtaroth.
- 7) Samuel offers a "suckling/nursing lamb" as "a whole burnt offering". 1Sam 7:9
- a) Burnt offerings, by definition mean the whole animal is consumed. Lev 1:1ff
 - i) The writer here, probably emphasizes to the point that this is correct worship.
 - ii) This is complete dependence and submission to God.
 - b) Samuel "cries" out to the Lord.
 - i) The focus here is not an emotional outburst.
 - ii) But a covenantal, mediatorial, appeal of repentance seeking intervention.
 - c) And we read, "*The LORD answered him.*" - 1Samuel 7:9

1Samuel 7:10-14 – The Ebenezer

- 1) As Samuel makes the offering the Philistines move to attack Israel. 1Sam 7:10
- a) Then God thundered with a great thunder against the Philistines.
 - i) This is not just some weather pattern but God attacking.
 - ii) It is a powerful, miraculous act of God. Ex 9:23; Josh 10:10
Judg 7:22; Ps 18:7-15; 29:3
 - b) The Philistines are thrown into confusion.
 - c) The men of Israel rout the Philistines and pursue them. 1Sam 7:10-11
- 2) When the battle is over "*Samuel took a stone and set it between Mizpah and Shen*" - 1Samuel 7:12.
- a) Throughout the Old Testament stones/pillars are placed as a public memorial and witness of God's acts, and to instruct future generations.²
 - b) Mizpah is where Israel gathered and repented.
 - i) Shen is likely the point to which the Philistines were driven.
 - ii) The stone marks the complete victory, solely the Lord's doing.

² Jacob's pillar at Bethel (Gen 28:18-22); Jacob-Laban covenant heap (Gen 31:44-52); Moses' twelve pillars (Ex 24:4); Joshua's memorial stones in the Jordan (Josh 4:1-9, 20-24); Joshua's great stone at Shechem (Josh 24:26-27); Absalom's pillar (2Sam 18:18)

c) Samuel called the stone "Ebenezer."

1Sam 7:12

i) The name literally means "stone of help."

ii) It was the name of the town where the two battles Israel fought, and lost, against the Philistines.
(Maybe the town was renamed "Ebenezer" after the battle?)

1Sam 4:1; 5:1

iii) As Samuel explains: "Thus far the LORD has helped us." - 1Samuel 7:12b

3) The Lord's mercy continues through all the days of Samuel.

1Sam 7:13-14

a) God's hand is against the evil Philistines.

b) The cities the Philistines had taken were restored.

c) Including the major Philistine cities of Ekron and Gath.

d) And there was even peace between Israel and the Amorites.

(i.e. the remaining Canaanite population in the region did not bother Israel.)

Conclusion

1) What happens in 1Samuel is not focused on thanksgiving.

a) There are thanksgiving holidays in the Old Testament.³

b) These holidays are about celebrating God's mercy and deliverance.

c) They require repentance, however, which is what our sermon text is all about.

2) We see this in the American concept of Thanksgiving.

a) The first historical Thanksgiving was in the Plymouth Colony in the autumn of 1621 AD. It was a three-day harvest celebration giving thanks to God for preservation through a deadly first year.

b) The first official Thanksgiving was proclaimed by President Washington for November 26, 1789 as a national day of public thanksgiving and prayer to Almighty God for being now under the new Constitution from the Revolution.

c) The first annual national Thanksgiving was proclaimed by President Lincoln on October 3, 1863, during the Civil War. Congress made the 4th Thursday of November the official date in 1941.

3) Thanksgiving is a very difficult concept for modern secularists.

a) Thanksgiving assumes it is a group action.

i) Yes, individuals can, and should be, thankful.

ii) However, the focus in Scripture, and throughout most of Christian history, it is a group activity.

iii) Yet, in the modern Evangelical church how often do we think of repentance and thanksgiving as a collective activity?

iv) Even for the modern Thanksgiving, which is supposed to be about families and a nation.

³ The Feast of Firstfruits (Lev 23:9-14)

The Feast of Weeks / Pentecost (Lev 23:15-21; Deut 16:9-12)

The Feast of Tabernacles / Booths (Lev 23:33-43; Deut 16:13-17)

A Day of Dedication after a major deliverance (1Chr 29:10-22; 2Chr 20:26; Ezra 3:10-11; Neh 12:27-43)

Purim (Esther 9:20-22); Psalm 136

- b) It is contrary to the secular glorification of victimhood and entitlement.
 - i) Unlike the godly, who know the only thing we sinners are entitled to is God's just wrath. Ps 51:4-5; Eph 2:1-3
Rom 1:18; 3:10-12,23
 - ii) And our help only comes from God. John 15:5; 2Cor 3:5; Heb 4:16
- c) It is particularly hard for secularists because who are you supposed to be thanking?
- d) There is no need to raise an Ebenezer because there is only the self.
- 4) Should we still raise stones to remember times of great deliverance?
 - a) It is not forbidden in the New Testament.
 - b) If the church, or Christians, wanted to create a statue that is allowable.
- 5) The New Testament, however, puts a far greater emphasis on the finished work of Christ and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit over the "shadows" and "figures" of the Old Testament. John 1:17; Rom 8:1-4,9
2Cor 3:6-11; Gal 3:24-25
Col 2:16-17; Heb 10:1
- 6) The only directly physical things we have in the New Testament were directly instituted by Christ Himself.
 - a) For our help: As "means of grace." Matt 26:26-28; 28:19; John 6:53-56
 - b) They are the sacraments of the Baptism and the Lord's Supper.
- 7) Thanksgiving is a critical part of the Christian life. Ps 100:4; Eph 5:20; Phil 4:6
Col 2:6-7; 3:17; 1Thes 5:18
 - a) As the Heidelberg Catechism describes the basics of the Christian life it is:
 - i) Knowing one's sin and misery. Eph 2:1-3
 - ii) Knowing only Christ sets us free from our sin and misery. Eph 2:4-9
 - iii) Finally, there is "*how I am to thank God for such deliverance.*" Eph 2:10
 - b) For the NT Church our Ebenezer is much more about a life of thanksgiving for such a great deliverance we have in Christ than any statue. Luke 1:68-69; 1Cor 15:57
Rom 6:17; 7:24-25
2Cor 9:15; Col 1:12-14
 - c) As the pastor and hymnodist Robert Robinson wrote in his famous hymn, "*Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing*" in 1757 at the age of 22: "*Here I raise my Ebenezer; hither by thy help I'm come; and I hope, by thy good pleasure, safely to arrive at home. Jesus sought me when a stranger, wandering from the fold of God; He, to rescue me from danger, interposed his precious blood.*"