

Trinity Reformed Church of Northwest Connecticut

Biblical, Traditional, Congregational

Lord's Day Worship for

March 29, 2026



trinityreformedct.org

*"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.'" – John 12:13*

“*” = Please stand if you are able.

Welcome, Greeting & Announcements

Call to Worship – Hebrews 6:7-12

Leader: *For ground (human hearts) that drinks the rain (Word of God) which often falls on it and brings forth vegetation (good works, especially remaining faithful) useful to those for whose sake it is also tilled (the church, especially those who preach the Word), receives a blessing from God (life in the Spirit and finally redemption); but if it yields thorns and thistles,*

People: **It is worthless and close to being cursed, and it ends up being burned.**

Leader: *But, beloved, we (the apostles) are convinced of better things concerning you (Christians), and things that accompany salvation,*

People: **Though we are speaking in this way.**

Leader: *For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown toward His name,*

People: **In having ministered and in still ministering to the saints.**

Leader: *And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence so as to realize*

People: **The full assurance of hope until the end,**

Leader: *So that you will not be sluggish, but imitators of those*

People: **Who through faith and patience inherit the promises.**

Prayer of Invocation and Confession

Gospel Absolution Text – 2Timothy 2:11-13

***Hymn #235** – “All Glory, Laud, and Honor”

Scripture Reading – Luke 19:28-44

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 #22B** – “My God, My God”

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 – Canons of Dort, 3,1.9.

Leader: It is not the fault of the gospel, nor of Christ offered therein, nor of God, who calls men by the gospel and confers upon them various gifts, that those who are called by the ministry of the Word

People: Refuse to come and be converted.

Leader: The fault lies in themselves; some of whom when called, regardless of their danger,

People: Reject the Word of life;

Leader: Others, though they receive it, suffer it not to make a lasting impression

People: On their heart;

Leader: Therefore, their joy, arising only from a temporary faith, soon vanishes,

People: And they fall away;

Leader: While others choke the seed of the Word by perplexing cares and the pleasures of this world, and produce no fruit.

People: This our Savior teaches in the Parable of the Sower.

Ministry of the Word

Prayer of Illumination

***Sermon Text** – Matthew 13:20-22

***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 Parable of the Sower, part 2 – Rocks & Thorns”

A Sermon Series on Parables

Ministry of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

Invitation & Warning

TRC practices guarded open communion. All who profess faith in Christ, have been baptized, have a basic understanding of this sacrament, and are in good standing with a biblical local church are welcome to the Lord's Table. If you are uncertain whether you should partake, it is wise to abstain and speak with the pastor afterward.

Prayer

Words of Institution – Matthew 26:26-28 + Luke 22:19-20; 1Corinthians 10:16-17; 11:26

“While they were eating, Jesus took some bread, and after a blessing, He broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, ‘Take, eat; this is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.’ And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, ‘Drink from it, all of you; for this is My blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins.’ . . . Is not the cup of blessing which we bless a sharing in the blood of Christ? Is not the bread which we break a sharing in the body of Christ? Since there is one bread, we who are many are one body; for we all partake of the one bread. For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.”

Partaking of the Bread and then the Cup

Prayer of Thanksgiving

***Hymn #252** – “When I Survey the Wondrous Cross”

***Benediction**

Announcements

- Next Sunday is Easter (4.5), there will be **no Coffee Hour**, though there will be Sunday School.
- **Warning:** Fake emails/texts have been going out in the name of various members of the church including Pastor Doug and David Mattson. Do NOT trust, or even reply, if anyone asks you to reply, call, or send things. When in doubt – do not reply, if you have questions call the person.
- Leona and Kim will be contacting church members this week via email regarding the meals and visitation ministries.

Upcoming Events

- **April 24th**, Friday, there will be a **Pot-Luck Game Night** starting at 6:30 PM at the Aldrich's.
- The next in-person **Elder-Deacon meeting** is on Saturday, **May 16th**, from 8:00-10:00ish AM, at the Aldrich's.
- **June 20th**, Saturday, there will be a **Pot-Luck Picnic** starting at noon at the Ensminger's. (100 Hallow Rd, Winchester, CT) If possible, please bring a side, drink or a dessert. Hot dogs & hamburgers will be provided. (Rain Date: June 27th)
- **July 18th**, Saturday, there will be a **Pool Party / Picnic Pot-Luck** starting at noon at the Gabelmann's. Sandwich platters, beverages and an ice cream bar will be provided. If possible, please bring a pot-luck food item. (We will gather rain or shine.)
- **October 10th**, Saturday, there will our annual **Oktoberfest** at the Aldrich's. If possible, please bring a food item. (Rain Date: October 17th)
- *Regular Studies & Gatherings:*
 - Sunday School** for all ages (9:00 AM) at the Grange.
 - Tuesday Study** (10:30 AM – noon) – Augustine's Sermons, at Pastor Doug's house.
 - Wednesday Study** (6:30 – 8:00 PM) – On 2nd & 4th: Thessalonians. On other: Free discussion.
 - Gen-Alpha Club** 2nd & 4th Wednesdays, at Pastor Doug's house.
 - Friday Young Adult Discussion Group** (6:30 PM) meets on 1st & 3rd Friday, at Pastor Doug's house.
 - Saturday 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	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

Matthew 13:20-22

“The Parable of the Sower, part 2 – Rocks & Thorns”

A Sermon Series on Parables

A Palm Sunday Sermon

March 29, 2026

Introduction

- 1) Palm Sunday is one of the most bittersweet, poignant, and melancholy, events in the Bible.
 - a) The King has come to His royal city as per prophecy.
 - b) And five days later He will be tortured to death by pagans and hypocrites, as per prophecy.
- 2) One of the major secondary themes in the Gospels, especially the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark & Luke), is the geographic movement of our Lord.
 - a) The Old Testament (OT) prophesies the Messiah will come from Bethlehem.
 - i) The Messiah, or in Greek “Christ”, is the promised Anointed One of God, who will free and rule over God’s people.

Ps 2:2,6-8; Is 61:1
Dan 9:25-26; Luke 4:18-21
John 1:41; Acts 2:36
 - ii) The Lord Jesus was born in Bethlehem.

Mic 5:2; Matt 2:1,5-6; Luke 2:4-7,11,15
 - b) The OT also prophesies that Messiah’s ministry will appear in Galilee.

Is 9:1-2

 - i) Jesus’ family is from Nazareth, which is in the Galilee region.

Matt 2:23
 - ii) His earthly ministry starts in Capernaum, a town in the Galilee region.

Matt 4:12-13,17; 8:5; 9:1; 11:23; 17:24
Mark 1:14-15,21; Luke 4:31-32
 - c) During His Galilee ministry the Lord Jesus frequently spoke in parables.

Ps 78:2; Matt 13:1-3,10-13,34-35
Mark 4:1-2,11-12,33-34; Luke 8:4,10

 - i) Remember, parables are not meant as an easy, understandable teaching method.
 - ii) Parables reveal the truths of the Kingdom to His disciples while bringing judgment to those whose hearts are hardened, in fulfillment of prophecy.

Is 6:9-10
Matt 13:10-15,34-35
Mark 4:11-12; Luke 8:10
 - d) Over three years He makes His way to Jerusalem.

Luke 13:7; John 2:13; 6:4; 11:55

 - i) Jerusalem is the capital of Israel.

2Sam 5:6-9; Ps 48:1-2; 132:13-14
 - ii) It is where God’s House, the Temple, stands.

1Kgs 6:1; 8:10-13,27-30; John 2:19-21
 - iii) According to prophecy, the Messiah’s reign and redemptive work will be inaugurated in Jerusalem.

Is 2:2-3; Joel 2:28-32
Zech 9:9-10; Luke 24:47
Acts 1:4-8; 2:1-4,14-36

- 3) Jerusalem is excited because they believe the promised Messiah, their King, has arrived. Ps 118:25-26; Zech 9:9; Matt 21:4-11
Mark 11:9-10; Luke 19:37-38; John 12:12-13
- a) They have heard of His profound teaching. Matt 7:28-29; Luke 4:32,36; John 7:46
- b) Of the great miracles He has done. Matt 4:23-24; 8:16-17; 9:33-35; John 6:2; 12:17-18
- 4) The crowd had no understanding about His true mission.
- a) That His Kingdom is not of this world. Matt 16:23; 20:25-28; 22:21; John 18:36
- b) That He, and His New Covenant Kingdom, is not about conquest through earthly means of power. Zech 4:6; Matt 20:25-28; 26:52-54
John 18:36; 2Cor 10:3-5; Eph 6:12
- c) It is about victory through Christ's death and life in the Spirit that will produce faith, hope and love. Jer 31:31-34; Luke 22:20; John 12:23-24
Rom 5:1-5; 6:3-11; 8:1-4,10-11; 12:9-12
Gal 5:22-23; Heb 9:15; 1Pet 1:3-5,22
- 5) This show of popular support by the masses on that first Palm Sunday, will quickly dissipate when the world comes crashing in, and is a vivid illustration of the Parable of the Sower

Parable of the Sower Recap

Matt 13:1-9,18-23; Mark 4:1-9,13-20; Luke 8:4-8,11-15

- 1) Parables are brief fictional analogies drawn from ordinary life that usually convey a single central universal truth.
- a) The Parable of the Sower is the most important parable.
- b) As the Lord Jesus taught, "*Do you not understand this parable? How will you understand all the parables?*" – Mark 4:13
- 2) A sower scatters seed on four different kinds of soil—some falls on the road, rocky ground, and among thorns and fails to grow, but some falls on good soil and produces an abundant crop.
- a) The sower is anyone who preaches the Word of God, which is about Christ's Kingdom.
- b) The seed is the Word of God.
- c) The soils are different human hearts.
- i) Last week we talked about those hearts that are so hardened that the Word has no effect but to bring only judgment.
- ii) Next week, Easter, we will talk about the good soil.
- iii) This week, soils 2-3 (among rocks and thorns), which are terrifying.
- iv) It shows that judgment is upon those who seem to believe but in the end do not.
- 3) Let's first look at the imagery of Soils 2 & 3.

The Soils – The Rocky Places & Thorns

Matt 13:5-7,20-22; Mark 4:5-7,16-19; Luke 8:6-7,13-14

- 1) The rocky places are the hearts of men who do hear the Word of God.
- a) Immediately they receive it with joy.
- b) They believe for a while.
- c) Yet it will not last, it is only temporary, because it has "no firm root."
- d) Afflictions or persecution will destroy this seed.
- i) This is not general worldly difficulties.
- ii) But because of the Word.
- e) And then those people will immediately, or in time, fall away. Matt 13:21; Luke 8:13

- 2) The thorns are the hearts of the men who do hear the Word of God.
 - a) But the worry and deceitfulness of the world choke the Word.
 - b) *"They go on their way"*. Luke 8:14
 - c) In particular seeking after wealth, riches, pleasures, and desires of things of the world.
 - d) So, the Word becomes unfruitful, because no fruit is brought to maturity.
- 3) This is a stark warning.
 - a) There will be many who seem to believe but will fall away.
 - b) Some will even receive the Word with joy at first.
 - c) Because the world is a very dangerous thing.
- 4) We need to define the "world", which takes some thought.

The World

- 1) The concept of the "world" is a very important biblical concept.
- 2) There are several words the Bible uses for "world" to highlight different aspects, though like all words can have overlapping meanings.
- 3) To list a few NT words¹ for "world":
 - a) There is "**gē**" which means "earth, land, or ground".
 - i) This is the physical earth, its surface.
 - ii) Mark 13:31 – *"Heaven and earth (gē) will pass away, but My words will not pass away."*
 - iii) The word "soil" in the Parable of the Sower is "gē". Matt 13:5,8,23
 - b) There is "**aiōn**" which means "era, age, world-order in time".
 - i) This is the world in Matthew 13:22b – *"and the worry of the world (age, aiōn) and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word"*.
 - ii) 2Corinthians 4:4 – *"in whose case the god of this world (age, aiōn) has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God."*
 - iii) It emphasizes a temporal age along with the moral character of the age.
 - iv) Galatians 1:4 – *"who gave Himself for our sins so that He might rescue us from this present evil age (aiōn), according to the will of our God and Father,"*
 - c) There is "**kosmos**", the most famous word, meaning "universe, earth, the created order."
 - i) This is a broad term that focuses on creation, humanity, or a fallen system, depending on the context.
 - ii) John 1:10 – *"He was in the world (kosmos), and the world (kosmos) was made through Him, and the world (kosmos) did not know Him."*
- 4) The next parable, which is similar to the Parable of the Sower, called the Parable of the Tares (Matt 13:24-30,36-43), shows the nature of the world.

¹ There is also "oikoumenē" which means "the entire land/earth, the inhabited world (nations)." Matthew 24:14 – *"This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world (oikoumenē) as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come."*

- a) Matthew 13:37-39 – *“And He said, ‘The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man, and the field is the world (kosmos – the inhabited world); and as for the good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom; and the tares are the sons of the evil one; and the enemy who sowed them is the devil, and the harvest is the end of the age (aiōn – this present age); and the reapers are angels.’”*
- b) The cosmos is passing away and will be replaced by the age to come. Is 65:17; Matt 12:32; 24:35; 1Cor 7:31
2Pet 3:10-13; 1John 2:17; Rev 21:1
- 5) Be careful here, the Bible sometimes seems to teach that everything is about dualism: radical opposites (e.g. wet vs. dry, dark vs. light, etc.).
- a) Such as: God is the opposite of the devil, good is the opposite of evil, the spirit is opposite of the body, or the spiritual realm is opposite of the physical world.
- b) The Bible gets close to this but never fully does.
- c) Because radical dualism would be a rejection of God’s sovereignty and that He is the Creator. Gen 1:1,31; Deut 6:4; Is 45:5-7
John 1:1-3; Col 1:16-17; Rev 4:11
- i) God is the Creator, the devil is a mere creation.
- ii) Evil is a privation of good (like a hole in a piece of paper), so good can exist without evil but evil cannot exist without good.
- iii) God created everything, both physical and spiritual good, originally good.
- iv) And there will be a new heavens and new earth.
- 6) So, extreme fleeing of the world is not allowed. **Col 2:20-23**
- a) Suicide is a sin: You can’t murder yourself to get to heaven. Gen 9:6; Ex 20:13; Job 1:21
Ps 31:15; 1Cor 6:19-20; 10:13
- i) Yes, suicide is murder, that is why it is wrong.
- ii) Our bodies are gifts from God, He owns them. Ps 100:3; Rom 12:1; 1Cor 6:19-20
2Cor 5:15; Col 1:16; 1Pet 1:18-19
- iii) And our bodies were created good.
- b) Likewise, Christians are not to seek out martyrdom. Matt 4:5-7; 10:23; John 7:1; 8:59
1Cor 10:13; 1Pet 4:15-16
- c) Becoming a monk or a hermit, is not taught in the Bible. Gen 1:28; Matt 5:14-16; 28:19-20
John 17:14-18; 1Cor 5:9-10; Col 2:20-23
- d) Earthly goods are not, in themselves inherently evil. Gen 1:31; Eccl 3:12-13; 5:18-20; Matt 6:19-21
1Cor 10:31; 1Tim 4:4-5; 6:17; James 1:17
- i) Because, all good, and created things, are from God.
- ii) They should be used wisely with moderation.
- iii) And should be loved in the correct order.
- iv) If you love pizza more than spouse, you are doing it wrong.
If you love your spouse more than God, you are doing it wrong.
- 7) However, the modern American church is hardly in danger of becoming monks.
- a) We could use a lot more **asceticism**.
- b) Asceticism is the practice of denying worldly pleasures and comforts in pursuit of holiness.

- c) A balanced asceticism is clearly taught throughout the Bible.²
- i) Not as a system but a life of self-denial and disciplined godliness.
 - ii) 1John 2:15-17 – *“Do not love the world (kosmos) nor the things in the world (kosmos). If anyone loves the world (kosmos), the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world (kosmos), the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world (kosmos). The world (kosmos) is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.”*
- d) This is a concept modern Evangelicalism has no category for because it has so bought into consumerism to sell Christianity to the world in order to be worldly successfully.
- e) The Parable of the Sower is a clear warning about the dangers of the world.
- 8) When the Bible warns about the “world” it is warning that because of our fallen nature we will be drawn to worship the creation instead of the Creator, which is idolatry. Rom 1:21-25; 12:2
1Cor 10:14; Col 3:5
1John 2:15-17; 5:19
- a) We do live in the world, and God does bless us with earthly blessings, (e.g. beauty of creation, life itself, family, a nation, etc.), and we can “enjoy” them. Gen 1:28,3; 1Tim 4:4-5; 6:17
Eccl 3:12-13; 5:18-20
Acts 14:17; 17:24-25
 - b) However, we are pilgrims and strangers who are just passing through this evil age. Ps 39:12; John 17:14-16; Phil 3:20
Heb 11:13-16; 1Pet 1:1; 2:11
 - c) Because our citizenship is of a Kingdom that is not of this world. John 18:36; Phil 3:20; Col 1:13
Heb 11:13-16; 12:22-24; 13:14
 - d) Christ’s Kingdom is not based on earthly political power and worldly might.
 - i) Which the crowd on the first Palm Sunday seemed to yearn for.
 - ii) And many within the church today still yearn for, whether for Social Justice or Christian Nationalism.
 - e) Colossians 3:5-8 – *“Therefore consider the members of your earthly (gē) body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. For it is because of these things that the wrath of God will come upon the sons of disobedience, and in them you also once walked, when you were living in them. But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth.”*

Dealing With the World

- 1) How do we deal with the world?
 - a) Parable of the Sower is a great help!
 - b) It teaches us how dangerous the world really is.
 - c) Eternal consequences are at stake.
- 2) Overt sin, directly violating one of God’s commandments, should be immediately mortified (i.e. killed) and we should flee it. Ex 20:1-17; Rom 8:13
1Cor 6:18; 10:14
Col 3:5; 2Tim 2:22
 - a) Obviously this requires knowing and studying God’s Law. Ps 1:1-2; 119:9-11; John 17:17
Rom 7:12; 2Tim 3:16-17; James 1:22-25

² Prov 25:16,27; Eccl 3:12-13; Matt 6:16-18; 16:24-26; Mark 7:14-23; Luke 9:23; Rom 12:1-2; 13:13-14; 14:5-6,17; 1Cor 6:12; 8:8; 9:24-27; 10:23-31; Gal 5:16-24; Col 2:20-23; 1Tim 4:1-5; 6:6-8,17; 2Tim 2:3-5; Titus 2:11-12; Heb 12:5-11; 13:5; 1Pet 2:11; 4:1-4.

- b) And a helpful check is to ask: “Would I pray before I engage in this task/event”? (If not, then it is probably a thing you shouldn’t be doing.) Ps 66:18; 1Cor 10:31
Col 3:17; 1Thes 5:17-22
Heb 11:6; James 4:3
- c) That is probably what Paul meant by “*pray without ceasing*” – 1Thes 5:17
- 3) The world can be very subtle.
- a) For example, though money is not inherently evil, however, Scripture frequently warns against how dangerous it can be. Eccl 5:10; Matt 6:24
Luke 12:15; 1Tim 6:9-10
Heb 13:5; James 5:1-5
- b) 1Timothy 6:10 – “*For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.*”
- c) So to, with worldly pleasures and desiring the things of the world. Matt 13:22; Luke 8:14; Rom 12:2
James 4:4; 1John 2:15-17; 5:19
- d) A sign worldly desires might become an idol:
- i) Do you worry more about the concerns of the world instead of God?
- Example: You are more willing to skip worship rather than work, school, or preparing for a family holiday.
 - Example: School or extra-curricular activities for your children are more important than Lord’s Day worship?
 - Let alone facing persecution.
- ii) Especially, if they cause you to stumble in your walk with the Lord.
- iii) Are you willing to give up that desire for Christ?
- e) The antidote to worry is to fear the Lord and to rest in Christ. Prov 3:5-7; Matt 6:25-34; 11:28-30
Luke 12:22-32; Phil 4:6-7; 1Pet 5:6-7
- 4) Healthy seeds have a firm root.
- a) What is the firm root?
- b) Back to 1Timothy 6:10-12 – “*For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. But flee from these things, you man of God, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called, and you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.*”

Conclusion

- 1) When hearing these glorious and godly law passages, as in the Parable of the Sower, always remember how the Gospels end.
- 2) Not with Christ forcing an earthly kingdom but with a cross.
- 3) Isaiah 55:6-11