

# Trinity Reformed Church of Northwest Connecticut

Biblical, Traditional, Congregational

Lord's Day Worship for

April 5, 2026

Easter Sunday

*"Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, so that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God." – Romans 7:4*



[trinityreformedct.org](http://trinityreformedct.org)

---

“\*” = Please stand if you are able.

## Welcome, Greeting & Announcements

**Call to Worship** – John 12:23-26 (Which takes place right after Palm Sunday.)

*Leader: And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour has come*

**People: For the Son of Man to be glorified.**

*Leader: Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies,*

**People: It remains alone;**

*Leader: But if it dies,*

**People: It bears much fruit.**

*Leader: He who loves his life*

**People: Loses it,**

*Leader: And he who hates his life in this world*

**People: Will keep it to life eternal.**

*Leader: If anyone serves Me,*

**People: He must follow Me;**

*Leader: And where I am,*

**People: There My servant will be also;**

*Leader: If anyone serves Me,*

**People: The Father will honor him.**

## Prayer of Invocation and Confession

**Gospel Absolution Text** – 1Peter 1:3-5

\***Hymn #277** – “Christ the Lord is Risen Today”

**Scripture Reading** – John 20:1-12

**Ancient Creedal Proclamation** – Nicene Creed (pg#846 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 #118E** – “Now Open Wide the Gates”

**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, Q45.

**Leader:** *What does the “resurrection” (as taught in the Apostles Creed) of Christ profit us?*

**People:** **First, by His resurrection He has overcome death,** 1Cor 15:16

**Leader:** *That He might make us partakers of that righteousness* Rom 4:25

**People:** **Which He had purchased for us by His death;** 1Pet 1:3

**Leader:** *Secondly, we are also by His power* Rom 6:4; Col 3:1,3

**People:** **Raised up to a new life;** Eph 2:5-6

**Leader:** *And lastly, the resurrection of Christ* 1Cor 15:12,20-21

**People:** **Is a sure pledge of our blessed resurrection.** Rom 8:11

**Ministry of the Word**

**Prayer of Illumination**

**\*Sermon Text** – Matthew 13:23

**\*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** – “Hearing Easter”

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** (see insert) – “Alleluia! Alleluia! Hearts to Heaven”

**\*Benediction**

## Announcements

- There is *no Fellowship Meal* after church today because of Easter.
- **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.

## Upcoming Events

- **April 24<sup>th</sup>**, 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 16<sup>th</sup>**, from 8:00-10:00ish AM, at the Aldrich's.
- **June 6<sup>th</sup>**, (Note: THIS DATE IS A CHANGE) 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 27<sup>th</sup>)
- **July 18<sup>th</sup>**, 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 10<sup>th</sup>**, Saturday, there will our annual **Oktoberfest** at the Aldrich's. If possible, please bring a food item. (Rain Date: October 17<sup>th</sup>)
- *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 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup>: Thessalonians. On other: Free discussion.
  - Gen-Alpha Club** 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesdays, at Pastor Doug's house.
  - Friday Young Adult Discussion Group** (6:30 PM) meets on 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> 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](mailto:trcnwprayer@gmail.com). (If you would like to join the Prayer Chain, also see Donna.)

## LEADERSHIP

<b>Elders:</b>	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
<b>Deacons:</b>	David Mattson (chair), Carl Bierce, Caleb Goodell, Mason Goodell, Dean Winters		
<b>Sunday School:</b>	Verna Aldrich	<b>Music Coordinator:</b>	Cindy Rines
<b>Clerk:</b>	Sheryl Gabelmann	<b>Treasurer:</b>	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](http://trinityreformedct.org) – Email: [trinityreformedct@gmail.com](mailto:trinityreformedct@gmail.com)

---

# Sermon Notes

Matthew 13:23  
"Hearing Easter"  
An Easter Sermon  
A Sermon Series on Parables  
April 5, 2026

## Introduction

- 1) What is your favorite parable in the Bible?
  - a) Let me tell you what the correct answer should be!
  - b) It is the Parable of the Sower.
  - c) Of course you can like any parable.
  - d) However, we should note the Lord Jesus' favorite parable.
  - e) Mark 4:13 – *"Do you not understand this parable? How will you understand all the parables?"*
- 2) The Parable of the Good Samaritan, for example, can be twisted into thinking it is just about being "a nice person".
  - a) It is about loving our neighbor!
  - b) And a whole lot more.
  - c) More about that in a later sermon.
- 3) The Parable of the Sower is far more demanding and troubling to worldly ears.
  - a) It is about the complete sovereignty of God in salvation.
  - b) It is about a massive war going on between light and darkness.
  - c) It is about the fact that man, by his fallen nature, is dead in sin and under God's wrath.
  - d) It is about that salvation is only through Jesus Christ.
  - e) I would contend it is prophesied in the Old Testament.
  - f) And it is fulfilled in the New Covenant.
- 4) I would argue that the Parable of the Sower covers all of redemption history.
  - a) It is all about hearing and understanding.
  - b) Ever think the Parable of the Sower is about Easter?!
  - c) Well, at least I think it is, so let us see if we can get there.
  - d) Remember how the Parable goes.
- 5) 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 He/he who proclaims the Word of God.
    - i) The Sower, of course, is first and foremost Christ Himself. Matt 13:1-9,18-23
    - ii) Then His Apostles, His lieutenants, who will write the New Testament and finish the Bible. Mark 4:1-9,13-20
    - iii) Then those ordained by His church to preach the Word. Luke 8:4-8,11-15
    - iv) And all Christians are called to *"sanctify (set apart) Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence"* - 1Pet 3:15

b) The seed is the Word of God.

Luke 8:11 – *“Now the parable is this: the seed is the word of God.”*

c) The soils are different human hearts.

i) Always remember when the Bible says “heart” it doesn’t mean emotion.

- It is the whole of one’s inner being: Mind, soul, spirit, will, emotion, etc.
- With a slight priority put on the mind.

ii) The 1<sup>st</sup> Soil is hardened hearts where the Word has no effect.

- They don’t understand it.
- And Satan snatches it away.

iii) The 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Soils are like rocky places, and thorns, that though the person at first receives the word but in the end rejects it because of the concerns of the world and no fruit comes from them.

iv) But today, Easter Sunday, we are going to look at the good soil.

6) An Easter text before we return to the Parable of the Sower.

a) Listen for: The sowing of the Word, hearing, and changed hearts.

b) Luke 24:44-49 – *“Now He said to them, ‘These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.’ Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and He said to them, ‘Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And behold, I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.’”*

c) We need to carefully define “the Word of God.”

## **The Word**

1) The first thing that should appear in your mind when we hear the phrase “the Word of God” should not be a thing, like the Bible, but a Person, a “Who.”

a) The Second Person of the Godhead is literally the eternal Word of God.

b) He is co-equal and co-eternal with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

c) This is the doctrine of the Trinity: That there is only one God, in three co-equal, co-eternal persons: Father, Son (who is the Word) and Holy Spirit.

2) When God speaks it is always through the Second Person of the Trinity.

3) The Word of God is also what God speaks.

a) God does reveal Himself through His creation.

b) However, God has spoken to His people directly.

c) And how God has spoken has changed over time, as per His plan.

4) In Old Testament times God spoke in various ways.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> To list a few examples: By direct speech / audible voice. (Gen 3:9; Ex 20:1) Through angels / the Angel of the LORD. (Gen 16:7-13; Judg 6:11-14) Through signs and wonders. (Ex 7:3-5; 1Kgs 18:36-39) Through dreams. (Gen 37:5-9; Dan 7:1) Through the Law / written tablets. (Ex 31:18; Deut 5:22) Through the Urim and Thummim. (Num 27:21; 1Sam 28:6) Through visions. (Is 1:1; Ezek 1:1) Through prophets. (Jer 1:4-9; Ezek 2:1-7)

- a) All those ways have ceased with the New Covenant. Heb 1:1-2
- b) Where God's Word is fully committed to writing.
- c) Why? Prov 22:19-21; Is 8:19-20; Matt 4:4,7,10  
Luke 1:3-4; Rom 15:4; 2Tim 3:15; 2Pet 1:19
  - i) To better preserve and promote the truth.
  - ii) To better establish and comfort Christ's church.
- d) Besides, with the incarnation of the Word of God, His death, His resurrection, the sending of His Spirit, there is no more need for special revelation. What else do you need?
- 5) The Word in the Parable of the Sower in particular is the gospel proclamation of Christ and His Kingdom.

## Hearing

- 1) We read in the beginning of our sermon text, "*And the one on whom seed was sown on the good soil, this is the man who hears the word and understands it," - Matthew 13:23a*
- 2) Hearing and understanding are critical throughout the Bible.
- 3) Think of how the great OT prayer called the Shema begins:
  - a) Deuteronomy 6:4 – "*Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!*"
  - b) "LORD" is the personal name for God, so God is not some generic energy (like the force from Star Wars) but very much has opinions and tells us about them in His Word.
  - c) That God takes sides; He is a particular people's God.
  - d) And that there is only one God.
- 4) In the Old Testament, it is interesting how many verses (though not all) talk about hearing and not understanding. Deut 29:4; Ps 115:6; 135:17  
Is 6:9-10; 42:18-20; 43:8  
Jer 5:21-22; Ezek 12:2
  - a) For example, in Deuteronomy 29 we read of the covenant renewal in the land of Moab.
    - i) Israel had wandered in the wilderness for 40 years because of their disobedience.
    - ii) The covenant at Moab is a renewal and reaffirmation of the Mosaic covenant.
    - iii) Yet Moses says, "*Yet to this day the LORD has not given you a heart to know, nor eyes to see, nor ears to hear.*" – Deuteronomy 29:4
    - iv) The point is that Israel had witnessed God's works outwardly, but had not yet been granted inward spiritual understanding.
    - v) This points to the need for a New Covenant. Deut 30:6; Jer 31:33-34; Ezek 36:26-27
  - b) In some ways it is the purpose of the Old Testament.
    - i) As Paul writes, "*but when the commandment (of God's Law) came, sin became alive and I died; and this commandment, which was to result in life, proved to result in death for me;*" - Romans 7:9b-10
    - ii) Or, "*For if the inheritance is based on law, it is no longer based on a promise*" – Galatians 3:18a
    - iii) Or, "*Why the Law then? It was added because of transgressions*" – Galatians 3:19a
    - iv) Or, "*But the Scripture (the Old Testament) has shut up everyone under sin,*" – Galatians 3:22a

- v) Or, *“But before faith came, we were kept in custody (held prisoner) under the law”*  
– Galatians 3:23a
- c) Do we not hear this in the Parable of the Sower?!
- i) Remember the Parable of the Sower causes the disciples to ask the Lord *“Why do You speak to them in parables?”*  
Matt 13:10-17  
Mark 4:13  
Luke 8:9-10
- ii) Our Lord answers by quoting the call of the prophet Isaiah.
- That Isaiah’s mission was to bring judgment on sinful Israel.
  - And the judgment? They would hear and not understand.
  - Isaiah 6:9-10 – *“He (God) said, ‘Go, and tell this people: Keep on listening, but do not perceive; Keep on looking, but do not understand.’ Render the hearts of this people insensitive, their ears dull, and their eyes dim, otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts, and return and be healed.”*
- iii) Then the Lord Jesus says to His disciples, *“But blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear. For truly I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.”* – Matthew 13:16-17
- d) Yet, no other book in the OT so clearly speaks about the Messiah then Isaiah. Is 11:1-5
- 5) Ever notice the phrase our Lord frequently uses: Matt 11:15; 13:9, 43; Mark 4:9, 23; Luke 8:8; 14:35  
*“He who has ears to hear, let him hear”?* Rev 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22; 13:9
- a) When the Creator of the universe, He who will judge all creation, casting the wicked into eternal fire, starts to repeat Himself, it might be wise to listen.
- b) It is interesting this phrase shows up in basically two sections of Scripture:
- i) Tied with the parables the Lord Jesus taught during His earthly ministry around the Sea of Galilee, before He went to Jerusalem.
- ii) The seven “sermons” the Lord Jesus gives to the seven churches in Revelation.
- c) This ability to hear and understand is central to creation, life, Scripture and the New Covenant.
- 6) We read in Scripture:
- a) We are commanded to hear and understand. Ps 95:7-8; Prov 2:2-3; 5:1  
Is 55:3; Heb 3:7-8; 4:7
- b) Because the wise man will hear and increase in learning and be able to make discernment. Prov 1:5
- c) A faithful person prays to God to give understanding and seeks it. 1Kgs 3:9  
Prov 4:5; 23:12
- d) Those who listen to God, will be blessed. Prov 8:33-34
- e) Great fruit will come from those who hear and understand. Matt 13:23
- i) As we read in today’s sermon text.
- ii) Matthew 13:23b – *“who indeed bears fruit and brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty.”*
- f) God’s judgment will be on those who do not listen. Luke 8:18; Heb 3:10,12

- g) However, fallen man cannot hear or understand. Ps 115:6; 135:17; Jer 5:21-22; Ezek 12:2  
As we heard in the Parable of the Sower.
- h) This lack of understanding is by God's Is 6:9-10; Matt 13:13-15  
judgment and plan. Acts 28:26-27
- i) Because God only, solely by His grace, gives the ability Deut 29:4; Ps 40:6  
to hear, understand, have wisdom, and be saved. Prov 2:6; Luke 24:45
- j) Yes, God's written Word gives understanding. Neh 8:8; Luke 24:45
- k) But the purpose of Scripture is to testify about Christ, John 5:39-47  
the incarnate Word. Luke 24:25,-27; Acts 13:27
- l) Because understanding is fulfilled in the Messiah Is 50:4-5; 55:3  
and with His New Covenant.
- m) The saints hear their Master's voice and His calling. John 10:27
- n) Because faith comes from hearing the Word proclaimed, Rom 10:14-15,17  
which requires preachers.
- o) True hearers of the word will do the things of God James 1:22-25  
and bear much fruit.
- p) Because God's Word never comes back void. Is 55:11

## **Fruit**

- 1) Christ's resurrection does many things; to list but a few:
- a) It vindicates and confirms all of Christ's words and works, Rom 1:4; 4:25  
especially His death. 1Cor 15:14-17
- i) Which perfectly turns away God's righteous wrath.
- ii) His perfect righteousness of keeping the Law and going to the cross  
is credited/imputed to us by faith alone.
- iii) And this alone justifies us.
- b) Because He has conquered death and the grave. 1Cor 15:54-57
- c) It defeats Satan and the powers of darkness. Heb 2:14; Col 2:15
- d) It establishes Christ's exaltation, reign and begins Luke 22:20; Eph 1:20-22  
His New Covenant. Heb 9:15-17
- e) Because His Spirit will go out to all the elect in all the nations. Acts 2:32-33; Eph 1:13-14
- 2) It also secures our regeneration / new birth. 1Pet 1:3
- a) Which creates in us faith and newness of life. Rom 6:4
- b) And gives us living hope. 1Pet 1:3
- c) This true faith, and hope, will always produce the fruit of love, Rom 7:4  
giving sanctification.
- 3) Those who hear and understand Christ and His Gospel will bear fruit.
- a) As our Lord teaches, "*who indeed bears fruit and brings forth, some a hundredfold,  
some sixty, and some thirty.*" – Matthew 13:23b
- b) Question, is this a request? A command? Or a statement of fact?
- c) Our self-focused, world-centric ears, hears this as a doing statement.

- d) True, we are to remain faithful, even during persecution.  
As the Parable of the Sower clearly warns about!
  - e) True, if there is no fruit there is only judgment,  
because there is no true saving faith. Matt 3:10; 7:19; John 15:2  
James 2:14-26
  - f) And yes, God does prune the faithful so that they produce  
more fruit, causing them to trust more in His Word. John 15:2-4; Rom 6:21-22  
Phil 1:9-11; Heb 12:11
  - g) And repentance is required for fruit. Matt 3:8
  - i) Because godly fruit comes from a new heart. Matt 12:33
- 4) And that is only possible because He died and has risen!
- a) John 12:23-24 – *“And Jesus answered them, saying, ‘The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.’”*
  - b) So, this wheat, this crop, this fruit (the Greek word for fruit and crop is the same word) is Christ and His death.
    - i) He *“falls into the earth”*, i.e. dies and is buried.
    - ii) He *“remains alone”*; He was alone at His death – as per prophecy, because only He who is fully God, fully man, and without sin, can redeem His people.
  - c) But this seed, His death, will bear *“much fruit.”*
    - i) Question, what, or who, is the fruit here?
    - ii) It is you.
    - iii) His redeemed people.

## **Conclusion**

- 1) You see, the Parable is not primarily, a works-based text.
  - a) Yes, it should inspire us to remain faithful and do the work of loving God and our neighbor.
  - b) But it is primarily about Christ, because all Scripture is about Him.
  - c) The verse *“who indeed bears fruit and brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty.”* (Matt 13:23b) The fulfillment of the promised effectual work of the Word in the New Covenant.
    - i) It is not a suggestion or even a command.
    - ii) It is a statement of fact. (All the verbs are in the indicative.)
- 2) Romans 7:4-6 – *“Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, so that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God. For while we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were aroused by the Law, were at work in the members of our body to bear fruit for death. But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter.”*