

Trinity Reformed Church of Northwest Connecticut

Biblical, Traditional, Conservative, Congregational

Lord's Day Worship for
May 17, 2026

*"When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also
will be revealed with Him in glory." – Colossians 3:4*



trinityreformedct.org

“*” = Please stand if you are able.

Welcome, Greeting & Announcements

Call to Worship – Matthew 24:3-14

Leader: *As He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, “Tell us, when will these things happen, and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?” And Jesus answered and said to them,*

People: **See to it that no one misleads you.**

Leader: *For many will come in My name, saying, “I am the Christ,”*

People: **And will mislead many.**

Leader: *You will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not frightened, for those things must take place,*

People: **But that is not yet the end.**

Leader: *For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes.*

People: **But all these things are merely the beginning of birth pangs.**

Leader: *Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations*

People: **Because of My name.**

Leader: *At that time many will fall away and will betray one another and hate one another.*

People: **Many false prophets will arise and will mislead many.**

Leader: *Because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold.*

People: **But the one who endures to the end, he will be saved.**

Leader: *This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations,*

People: **And then the end will come.**

Prayer of Invocation and Confession

Gospel Absolution Text – Hebrews 9:28

***Hymn #320** – *“Rejoice, All Ye Believers”*

Scripture Reading – 1Thessalonians 4:13-18

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 #1A – “That Man Is Blessed”

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 Confession, Q#33.1.

Leader: *God has appointed a day, wherein He will judge the world, in righteousness, by Jesus Christ,* Acts 17:31

People: **To whom all power and judgment is given of the Father.** John 5:22,27

Leader: *In which day, not only the apostate angels shall be judged, but likewise all persons that have lived upon earth shall appear before the tribunal of Christ,* 1Cor 6:3; Jude 6
2Pet 2:4
2Cor 5:10

People: **To give an account of their thoughts, words, and deeds;** Eccl 12:14

Leader: *And to receive according to what they have done in the body,* Rom 2:16; 14:10,12

People: **Whether good or evil.** Matt 12:36-37

Ministry of the Word

Prayer of Illumination

***Sermon Text** – Matthew 13:47-52

***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 Dragnet”

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 #541** – “When the Roll Is Called Up Yonder”

***Benediction**

Everyone is welcome to Coffee Hour Fellowship downstairs after church today

Upcoming Events

- The Elders & Deacons would like to thank Verna for providing breakfast at their meeting on Saturday.
- Wednesday Night Bible Study for June 3rd is canceled.
- **June 6th**, 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 13:47-52

“The Parable of the Dragnet”

A Sermon Series on Parables

May 17, 2026

Introduction

- 1) We read in today’s sermon text a powerful statement about the end times by our Lord.
 - a) Matthew 13:49-50 – *“So it will be at the end of the age; the angels will come forth and take out the wicked from among the righteous, and will throw them into the furnace of fire; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”*
 - b) We are going through parables and are at the final parable in this section of parables in Matthew 13.
 - c) Not surprisingly, this last parable of the Dragnet, is about the end times.
- 2) Our Lord then says to His disciples: *“Have you understood all these things?”* – Matthew 13:51a
- 3) Remember the chronology of Matthew 13.
 - a) *Matthew 13:1-9* = The Lord told the Parable of the Sower to the crowd.
 - i) The parables are about God’s Kingdom, which is not surprising since Christ is the King.
 - ii) The Parable of the Sower is the most important parable in the Bible. Mark 4:13
 - iii) The Parable of the Sower is about the Word of God’s effect on different kinds of human hearts. It brings judgment to the hard-hearted who give into the world, but much fruit to the faithful who endure in Christ.
 - b) *Matthew 13:10-23* = Jesus explains to His disciples why Ps 78:2-8; Is 6:9-10
He speaks in parables and explains the Parable of Matt 13:10-17,34-35
the Sower, which is to bring wisdom to the faithful Mark 4:11-12; Luke 8:10
and pre-ordained judgment to the wicked. John 12:37-40; Rom 11:7-8
 - c) *Matthew 13:24-46* = Jesus teaches His disciples, in several parables, that the Kingdom of God exists now in hidden, mixed, yet priceless form as it grows according to God’s sovereign purpose.
 - d) *Matthew 13:47-50* = Today’s sermon text.
 - i) One final parable, the Parable of the Dragnet.
 - ii) About the end of the age and judgment against the wicked.
 - iii) We read *“at the end of the age; the angels will come forth”*. – Matthew 13:49b
 - e) *Matthew 13:51* = Jesus asks disciples: *“Have you understood all these things?”*
 - i) “Understand” (συνίημι, *syniēmi*) here means more than just facts.
 - ii) It implies perceiving and grasping the true meaning with insight.
 - iii) The disciples answer: “Yes”.

- f) *Matthew 13:52* = Jesus concludes with: “*Therefore every scribe who has become a disciple of the kingdom of heaven is like a head of a household, who brings out of his treasure things new and old.*”
- i) The imagery is that of a wealthy household who has treasure that he has collected over time.
 - When needed he brings out treasure that is old, that he already possesses, and new valuable things recently added.
 - Both old and new for the benefit of his household.
 - ii) Thus the meaning is: A true disciple of the Kingdom of God rightly understands and brings forth both the old and new treasures of God’s revelation — seeing the fulfillment of the Old Testament in Christ and His kingdom.
- 4) So, do you believe the Lord will return and send forth His angels?
- a) I assume most of us, hopefully all of us, would say: “Yes!”
 - b) Just like the disciples did in *Matthew 13:51*
 - c) However, many modern Christians, including some here, might have said:
 - i) “Yes! I am waiting for the rapture!”
 - ii) Or, “Lord Jesus, take me out!”
- 5) We need to talk about this.

The Modern View of the Rapture

- 1) Do you believe in “the rapture”?
 - a) That God will gather His people at, or near, the end of the age.
 - b) The “rapture” has been an important part of American Evangelicalism since the 20th century.
 - c) As popularized by such works as The Late Great Planet Earth and the Left Behind series.
- 2) The common modern definition of the term “rapture” in American Evangelicalism, is based on Premillennial Dispensational theology.
- 3) This tradition defines the rapture as the church (both living believers and dead believers who will be resurrected) will be supernaturally and instantaneously removed from the earth.
- 4) Premillennial Dispensationalism, with its understanding of the Rapture, was created in the late 19th century and popularized in the 20th century.
 - a) It started with John Nelson Darby (1800-1882) and popularized by the Plymouth Brethren into American Evangelicalism.
 - b) It is not taught in the Bible or found in Church history.
 - c) Historically, the Reformed Tradition, and Pastor Doug (an Amillennialist), rejects Premillennial Dispensationalism. (John MacArthur being a rare exception.)

Eschatology (End Times) Overview

- 1) It is true Christians can disagree about end times theology (called eschatology).
 - a) But all theology matters.

- b) Calling a doctrine “secondary” doesn’t mean it is “unimportant.”
(Church government, polity, might be secondary, but it isn’t unimportant.)
 - c) A minimalistic theology is not a virtue; It is usually encouraged by the lazy, cowardly, or the deceptive.
- 2) The Westminster Confession does a great job outlining the core beliefs of the end times, especially the last two chapters. .
- a) Note one of its greatest strengths: It has a God-centric theology.
 - i) It starts its thinking from God’s perspective and works down.
 - ii) Which is very hard to do.
 - iii) But there is much wisdom and comfort to be found if, by the grace of God, you can do that.
 - b) To give the basic outline of the core doctrines of the end times:
 - i) At death the souls of the righteous go to heaven, the wicked to hell.
 - ii) Christ will return in power and glory in the future.
 - iii) Everyone, those currently living and the dead who will be resurrected, will stand before Christ for final judgment.
 - iv) The wicked go into the lake of fire; The righteous, into the new heavens and new earth to be with Christ forever.

The Rapture Defined

- 1) The rapture, as defined by Premillennial Dispensationalism, is not found in the Bible or church history.
- 2) The idea that God will gather people out before the end is clearly found in the Bible.¹
- 3) The famous verse is, 1Thessalonians 4:16-17 – *“For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 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.”*
 - a) The word “rapture” comes from the Latin translation of “*will be caught up.*”
 - b) At the end of the age, the Lord Jesus will appear and gather His saints to Him.
 - c) Again, this is taught throughout Scripture. Matt 24:30-31; John 14:1-3; 1Cor 15:51-52
1Thes 4:16-17; 2Thes 2:1; 2Tim 4:8
- 4) A question for you today.
 - a) One I never thought of until working on this sermon.
 - b) The righteous are “*gathered out*” of this fallen world, but so are the unrighteous, right? Matt 13:39-42; 13:47-50; 2Thes 1:7-9
Jude 14-16; Rev 14:14-20
 - c) Granted there is a big difference.
 - i) The righteous are gathered up, raptured to be with Christ in glory.
 - ii) The wicked are gathered together, in the sense of being removed, unto judgment.
- 5) Let’s ponder this with today’s sermon text.

¹ Deut 30:3-4; Ps 107:2-3; Is 11:11-12; 27:12-13; 43:5-7; Jer 23:3-4; 31:8-10; Ezek 11:17; 34:11-13; Matt 13:30,39-43; 24:14,31,40-41; 28:18-20; Luke 13:29; John 6:37-40,44; 10:14-16,27-29; 11:51-52; Acts 2:39; 15:14; Rom 8:28-30; 11:25-26; Eph 1:9-10; 1Thes 4:13-17; 2Thes 2:1; 2Pet 3:9; Heb 10:25; 12:22-24; Rev 5:9-10; 7:9-14; 14:14-16; 19:6-9; 20:4-6; 21:1-3.

Parable of the Dragnet

- 1) The dragnet is God gathering people into His **visible church** throughout **this age**.
 - a) The **visible church** is the church we see.
 - i) It is made up of both those who are truly saved and false believers who either secretly reject the faith or will fall away. Matt 7:21-23; Acts 20:29-30
Matt 13:24-30,36-43,47-50
John 6:66-71; 1John 2:19
(See the Parable of the Sower.) Matt 13:3-9,18-23; Mark 4:3-20; Luke 8:5-15
 - ii) The **invisible church** is the church God sees, true Christians who will remain faithful, these are the elect. John 10:14-16,27-29
Rom 8:29-30; Eph 1:3-14
2Tim 2:19; Heb 12:22-24
 - iii) We cannot fully tell who is who in this life. 1Sam 16:7; Matt 7:21-23; 13:24-30
John 2:23-25; 1Cor 4:5; 2Tim 2:19
(See the Parable of the Tares Among the Wheat.) Matt 13:24-30
 - b) **This age** refers to the period between Christ's two advents. Matt 12:32; 13:39-40,49; 24:3
Matt 28:20; Luke 20:34-36; Eph 1:21
 - i) Christ's 1st Advent began with His earthly ministry 2,000 years ago. Matt 1:18-25; Mark 1:14-15; Luke 1:30-35
Luke 2:1-11; John 1:14-17; Gal 4:4-5
 - ii) His 2nd Advent is in the future, at the consummation (the final and complete fulfillment) of the age, with His return for final judgment bringing forth the "*new heavens and new earth*." Is 65:17; 66:22; Dan 7:13-14
Matt 24:29-31; 25:31-46
John 5:28-29; Acts 17:31
2Pet 3:10-13; Rev 21:1-4
- 2) The fish "*of every kind*" are those taken from all the nations (i.e. people groups) of this earth. Gen 12:1-3; Is 49:6; Jer 31:31-34
Matt 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; Eph 2:11-22
 - a) Where the Old Covenant was for one nation, Israel.
 - b) The New Covenant is for people of all different nations.
- 3) When the net is "filled" then the end comes.
 - a) When God gets all those whom He has ordained to be His people, chosen from the beginning of time, the end of this age begins. Ps 110:1-3; Matt 13:37-43; 24:14,31
John 6:37-39; 10:14-16; 17:2,6,9,24
Acts 13:48; Rom 8:29-30; 2Pet 3:9
 - b) Probably one of the key passages about this is 2Peter 3:8-9.
 - i) Remember: Unpack the pronouns.
 - ii) 2Peter 3:8-9 – "*But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved (Christians; 2Pet 1:1; 3:1), that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day. The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you (the Christians Peter is writing to), not wishing for any (all the elect throughout history) to perish but for all (the elect) to come to repentance.*"
 - iii) We focus on the "1,000 years" and miss the other logic of the passage.
 - iv) The text teaches the reason for the seeming delay is that God is getting all His saints throughout the age.
 - If Christ returned in 67 AD it would have been great for the audience of 2Peter, but kind of terrible for us, since we wouldn't even have existed.
 - And we might desire Christ to return right now (Rev 22:20) yet what about the generations beyond us?

- c) That is why the Gospel must be preached to all the nations, i.e. all types of distinct ethnic groups.
- i) Matthew 24:14 – *“This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come.”*
 - ii) The emphasis is the global expansion of Christ’s kingdom before the consummation, as we have heard in several parables in this chapter.
 - iii) There is a clear sequence here: When all the nations hear the Gospel then the end will come.
 - However, God defines what a nation is.
 - And different nations are created throughout history.
 - It does not say how long after the Gospel goes to all the nations that the end will come.
 - And we clearly do not know when the end will come. Matt 24:36,42-44; Mark 13:32-37
Acts 1:7; 1Thes 5:1-3; 2Pet 3:10
 - iv) This text gives a necessary condition before the end, not necessarily the only sign. Matt 24; 2Thes 2
Rev 20
 - v) God is working out His plan and it is by His timetable, for His glory, and for the mercy of all His people who have been born and will be born. Ps 115:3; Is 46:9-10
Rom 8:28-30; 11:33-36
Eph 1:9-12; 2Pet 3:9
- d) Therefore, we should remain faithful and be ready.

Gehenna

- 1) The dragnet is opened and the fisherman put the good fish into containers and the bad fish are thrown away.
 - a) The Lord Jesus tells us that this parable is about the end of the age.
 - b) The angels will be sent forth to gather the elect and to *“take out the wicked from among the righteous and will throw them into the furnace of fire; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”* – Matt 13:49b-50
- 2) The Lord does not focus on heaven at the end of these parables but on hell.
 - a) In English “hell” refers to two places.
 - i) The present place of torment where the wicked dead now go, which the NT usually calls “Hades.” Luke 16:19-31; Acts 2:27,31
Rev 1:18; 20:13-14
 - ii) And the final place of eternal judgment called the Lake of Fire, or usually Gehenna. Is 66:24; Matt 5:22,29-30; 10:28
Mark 9:43-48; Rev 20:10-15; 21:8
 - b) In Matthew 13:47-50, the Lord is speaking about the final judgment, Gehenna/the Lake of Fire.
- 3) Note who is being removed in this text: The wicked. But why?
 - a) Certainly, the righteous will also be gathered to Christ.
 - b) But here the emphasis falls on the removal of the wicked from among the righteous.
- 4) Because the physical creation is not completely destroyed but radically remade.
 - a) It will be purged and transformed by fire.
 - b) 2Peter 3:7 – *“But by His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.”*

- c) The creation was made very good and it will be redeemed too, into a new heavens and new earth.
 - i) It will be a radical transformation!
 - ii) This present earth, the first earth, will “pass away”
into a glorified new creation.
- 5) That is why the righteous are gathered to Christ, to inherit the renewed new heavens and new earth.
- 6) And it is why the wicked are removed.
 - a) Evil can have no place in God’s holy and perfected creation.
 - b) They are cast into the Lake of Fire, to Gehenna.

Rev 21:1

Conclusion

- 1) Let me ask you the question our Lord asked His disciples 2,000 years ago:
“Have you ‘realized to the point of insight’ all these things?”
- 2) There are many problems with Premillennial Dispensationalism, and its view of the rapture.
 - a) It is not taught in the Bible and is a modern creation.
 - b) There is an escapism to it.
 - i) The church goes through tribulation, including the Great Tribulation at the end of the age.
 - ii) These tribulations produce faith and much fruit, as we heard in the most important parable, the Parable of the Sower.
- 3) When the Apostle John cries out at the end of the Bible, “Come, Lord Jesus.” – Rev 22:20b
 - a) He is not calling out to be magically removed from the earth.
 - b) He is praying for Christ to return in power and glory so that there will be final judgment because all the elect have been gathered together and that God’s wrath will be on the wicked – removing them from this earth and casting them into eternal fire, so that the remade creation will be ready for His now perfectly redeemed children.
 - c) That is no small thing to pray for.
 - d) Don’t believe me? Go read what comes before starting in Revelation 22:10ff, Let alone starting with Revelation 20:1ff
 - e) By the way, you pray this every time we pray the Lord’s Prayer: “Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” – Matthew 6:10
 - f) Careful, and be mindful of, what you pray for.
- 4) But praise God, He speaks kindness to us, and gives us grace, in/through/by His Supper.