

Trinity Reformed Church of Northwest Connecticut

Biblical, Traditional, Conservative, Congregational

Lord's Day Worship for
June 7, 2026

*"Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong.
Let all that you do be done in love." – 1Corinthians 16:13-14*



trinityreformedct.org

“*” = Please stand if you are able.

Welcome, Greeting & Announcements

Call to Worship – Song of Songs 2:10-13

Leader: My beloved responded and said to me, Arise, my darling, my beautiful one,

People: And come along.

Leader: For behold, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone.

People: The flowers have already appeared in the land;

Leader: The time has arrived for pruning the vines,

People: And the voice of the turtledove has been heard in our land.

Leader: The fig tree has ripened its figs,

People: And the vines in blossom have given forth their fragrance.

Leader: Arise, my darling, my beautiful one,

People: And come along!

Prayer of Invocation and Confession

Gospel Absolution Text – Hebrews 10:10

*Hymn #5 – “God, My King, Thy Might Confessing”

Scripture Reading – James 5:7-16

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 #104A** – “My Soul, Bless the Lord!”

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, 33.3.

<i>Leader:</i>	<i>As Christ would have us to be certainly persuaded that there shall be</i>	2Pet 3:11,14 2Cor 5:10-11
People:	A day of judgment,	2Thes 1:5-7
<i>Leader:</i>	<i>Both to deter all men from sin; and for the greater consolation</i>	Luke 21:27-28
People:	Of the godly in their adversity:	Rom 8:23-25
<i>Leader:</i>	<i>So will He have that day unknown to men,</i>	Matt 24:36,42-44
People:	That they may shake off all carnal security,	Mark 13:35-37
<i>Leader:</i>	<i>And be always watchful, because they know not</i>	Luke 12:35-36
People:	At what hour the Lord will come;	Rev 22:20
<i>Leader:</i>	<i>And may be ever prepared to say,</i>	
People:	Come Lord Jesus, come quickly. Amen.	

Ministry of the Word

Prayer of Illumination

***Sermon Text** – Matthew 24:32-42 (Mark 13:28-31; Luke 21:29-33)

***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 – “Parable of the Fig Tree”

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 #567** – “*Rise, My Soul, to Watch and Pray*”

***Benediction**

Everyone is welcome to Coffee Hour Fellowship downstairs after church today

Announcements

- **In July and August church start at 9:30 AM.** There is no Sunday School during the summer months.
- **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 (for the summer)

- **Sunday School** stops for July & August.
- **Tuesday Morning Study** has stopped for the summer.
- **Wednesday Study & Gen-Alpha Club** will continue through June; It's last day is June 24th.
- **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 24:32-42
(Mark 13:28-31; Luke 21:29-33)
"Parable of the Fig Tree"
A Sermon Series on Parables
June 7, 2026

Introduction

- 1) To go with an old preacher's analogy: If your father tells you to clean up the garage while he is gone, and that he will be back soon, what is your appropriate response?
 - a) Should you spend your time guessing about the exact time when he returns?
 - b) Should you ponder if you are living in this "soon" period of time or not?
 - c) Should you engage in a philosophical debate with yourself about what exactly did he mean by "clean up" or "garage"?
 - d) Or maybe not to worry at all, because of course your father will not punish you, because he "loves everyone."
 - e) Or, doubt, or even disbelieve, that he will return at all?
Maybe your father doesn't even exist!
 - f) No, of course not! That would be immoral and stupid.
- 2) What is the correct response?
 - a) Be faithful, get to work, and do the thing your father told you to do.
 - b) If you do that, do you not desire your father's return?
 - c) Even if you goof up the job, but were trying, your father is
compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding
in lovingkindness and truth, if you are being faithful. Ex 34:6-7; Num 14:18
John 14:21,23; 15:9-10
Ps 103:8-13; 1John 2:3-5
 - d) However, he is also a hard and exacting man and will
by no means leave the guilty unpunished. Ex 34:6-7; Num 14:18; Deut 32:4
Nah 1:2-3; Rom 2:5-6; Heb 10:30-31
 - e) Please note the proof-text for 2c & 2d are the same verse! Exodus 34:6-7.
- 3) Keep this in mind as we look at today's parable.

Matthew 24:32-33 – The Fig Tree

- 1) The Lord Jesus teaches a parable about a fig tree.
- 2) Fig trees were, and still are, very common in 1st century Judea & Galilee.
 - a) They were widely cultivated for fruit
and frequently mentioned in Scripture. Judg 9:10-11; 1Kgs 4:25; Mic 4:4
Matt 21:19-21; James 3:12; Rev 6:13
 - b) They are around 10-30 feet tall, though many were smaller and spreading.
 - c) They have a broad, rounded canopy, with large, hand-shaped leaves.
- 3) Fig trees would change with the seasons, thus they were obvious signs of such changes.
 - a) As winter approaches they lose their leaves and become dormant. (Being deciduous.)
 - b) After the winter, the branches soften and leaves appear, a clear sign summer is coming.
 - c) Soon figs would appear and would mature for harvest in summer.
 - d) And for an ancient society based on agriculture knowing the seasons is literally a matter of life and death.

- 4) The parallel text in Luke puts it vividly: “Behold the fig tree and all the trees; as soon as they put forth leaves, you see it and know for yourselves that summer is now near.” – Luke 21:29b-30
- 5) Again, Luke tells us directly what this parable is about: “So you also, when you see these things happening, recognize that the kingdom of God is near.” – Luke 21:31
 - a) Or as Matthew puts it: “so, you too, when you see all these things, recognize that He is near, right at the door.” – Matthew 24:33
 - b) So, we are to be ready for the coming of the Kingdom of God.
 - c) There will be obvious signs that it is near.
 - e) Remember, the Kingdom of God is where Christ reigns directly.

	Ps 2:6-12; 45:6-7; Dan 7:13-14; Matt 28:18
	Luke 1:32-33; 17:20-37; Col 1:13; Rev 11:15

 - i) It is already, because Christ was literally present to those around Him 2,000 years ago, and reigns in the hearts of His subjects now, as Christ now reigns in heaven at the right hand of the Father.
 - ii) And is not yet, because He promises to return at the end of the age.
- 6) The application is simple, that we are to remain faithful, daily living for Christ and dying to sin.

	Luke 9:23; Rom 6:11-14; 8:13
	Gal 2:20; Col 3:5; Titus 2:11-14
- 7) But this does lead to question: When is the Kingdom coming?

Matthew 24:34 – When?

- 1) The Lord Jesus answers the “when” question with: “Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.” – Matthew 24:34
 - a) This is where it gets challenging, in the good sense!
 - b) Because we then ask: “Which generation is this?”
- 2) The grammar of “this generation” as opposed to “that generation” (demonstrative adjectives) implies the generation that is near, the generation the Lord Jesus is talking to.
 - a) Thus Matthew 24:34 is the best verse for Partial Preterism, that a type of Second Coming (the *eschaton* in Greek, literally “the last thing”) happened in 70 AD when the Romans destroyed the Temple, the House of God, according to the Old Testament.
 - b) Full Preterism, which teaches the final and full Second Coming happened in 70 AD, is a heresy.
 - c) The Bible, and the church, have consistently taught that Christ will return in the future at the end of the age.

	Matt 24:29-31; 25:31-32
	John 14:3; Acts 1:11
	1Thes 4:16-17; Rev 22:12
 - d) The problem is if you keep on reading the text focuses on *the* end of the age.
- 3) Pastor Doug’s answer: I believe this text is primarily focusing on the final end of the age while at the same time making reference to 70 AD.
- 4) This is not saying the text has two separate meanings that we may pick and choose between.
 - a) Scripture, and the Reformed confessions teach, that every passage has one meaning, which we must diligently seek to discover.

	Neh 8:8; Luke 24:27
	2Tim 2:15; 2Pet 1:20-21
 - b) However, to say that a text can make multiple allusions, applications, or patterns is not saying that it has multiple meanings.

- 5) To give an example: When our Lord said "*you are the salt of the earth*" (Matt 5:13).
- a) Does this mean that believers should . . .
 - i) Restrain moral corruption by their godly presence and witness, like salt preserves?
 - ii) Exhibit holiness because salt is associated with cleanness and purity?
 - iii) Make visible the beauty and goodness of the Gospel, like salt brings flavor?
 - iv) Know they are in the world but not of it, like salt which brings distinctiveness?
 - v) Remain faithful in their spiritual offerings, because salt was associated with covenant offerings in the Old Testament? Lev 2:13; Num 18:19
2Chr 13:5
 - b) Answer: Yes!
 - i) Only one meaning: Christians are to be like salt.
 - ii) But there are several layers of implications and applications to the one meaning of the text.
- 6) This is especially true of prophecy, which frequently, and perhaps even ordinarily, has multiple layers of implication and fulfillment.¹ For example:
- a) 2Samuel 7:8-17 is both about King Solomon & Jesus Christ.
 - b) Joel 2:28-32 (Acts 2:14ff, Rev 6:12ff) is about the 1st Pentecost & the end of the age.
 - c) John 6:32-35 is about the bread both the OT manna in the wilderness and Christ's physical and spiritual body.
- 7) So, our sermon text, when taken in context, is about both the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 and the consummation of the age at Christ's return.
- 8) We see the shift from 70 AD to the end of the age in the next verse.

Matthew 24:35 – Certainty

- 1) The Lord Jesus focuses our attention to the big picture with: "*Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away.*" – Matthew 24:35
- 2) "Heaven and earth" refers to the whole created order, including the atmosphere, space, this planet, all matter, which will be redone into the new heaven(s) and new earth at the end of the age. Gen 1:1; Is 65:17
Is 66:22; 2Pet 3:10-13
Rev 21:1,5; 22:1-5
- 3) The meaning of the text, however, is the absolute certainty that a/the end will come. Deut 28:49-57,64-68; 9:26-27
Matt 24:2,15-22,34; John 5:28-29
 - a) Judgment is coming to Old Testament Israel in 70 AD.
 - b) And judgment is coming to the created order at the end of the age.
- 4) Because the King has spoken, thus it will happen.

Matthew 24:36 – No One Knows When the End Will Come

- 1) However, can we know when the end will happen?
 - a) Could the disciples before the destruction of Jerusalem know the end was the year 70 AD?

¹ This is why I greatly dislike Fundamentalist Premillennial Dispensationalism that confuses the plain reading of the text with a wooden tone-deaf hyper literalism, especially trying to have a wooden reading of Old Testament prophecies while ignoring the New Covenant fulfillment in Christ.

b) Can we know what date the end of the age will happen?

c) No!

2) The Lord Jesus was very clear in this: *“But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone.”* – Matthew 24:36

Matt 24:36; Mark 13:32
Acts 1:7; 1Thes 5:1-3
2Pet 3:10

a) No one knows when the end will be!

b) Not even the timeless angels, who are superior in power and intellect to humans.

c) Not even the Son of God!

3) Wait! Christ didn't know? Does this mean He is not God?

a) Yes, Jesus is God incarnate.

John 1:1,14; 8:58; 20:28; Col 2:9; 1Tim 3:16

b) No, this is Christ speaking in His humanity.

c) He had to take on weak human flesh in order to die and redeem His people.

John 1:14; Rom 8:3; Gal 4:4-5
Phil 2:6-8; Heb 2:14-17; 10:5-10

d) This includes limiting His knowledge.

i) It is the difference between an old crippled woman with polio.

ii) And a strong man who willfully puts on heavy iron braces on his legs to become like the old woman, and to sympathize with her.

Heb 2:17

Heb 4:15

iii) We read in Philippians 2:6b-7 – *“although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped (asserted), but emptied (laying aside privileges) Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.”*

e) That is why Jesus aged and didn't know things during His earthly ministry.

Matt 24:36; Mark 13:32; Luke 2:40,52
John 1:14; 11:34; 19:28

f) Though He never ceased to be God.

i) However, if He fully removed His weakness, which He willed Himself to have before the cross, it would undo everything.

ii) As the Lord taught at His arrest, *“Or do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels? How then will the Scriptures be fulfilled, which say that it must happen this way?”* – Matthew 26:53-54

iii) The mission, the purpose of all history and creation, is the cross.

Luke 24:26-27; John 12:27-33; Acts 2:23
Eph 1:9-10; Col 1:16,20; Rev 13:8

g) That is why the Temptation in the Wilderness is so satanic, it is not the devil trying to get Christ to break His fast but to undo the incarnation and thus the cross.

Matt 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13
Heb 2:14-18; 4:15; 5:7-9

4) This leads to a question: *If no one knows when the end is coming why discern the seasons?*

a) This is NOT saying we shouldn't guess the day or month, but guessing the year of the end is okay.

b) We have just been ordered not to engage in vain speculation!

c) It IS teaching Christians are to live in continual expectancy:

i) Not predicting dates, but recognizing the character of the times and remaining ready for Christ's return at any moment.

- ii) That is why the last verse of our sermon text: *“Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming.”* – Matthew 24:42
 - d) If we knew the time then watchfulness would not be necessary.
 - e) If there were no signs then discernment would be impossible.
- 5) Christ teaches both signs and uncertainty, so that His people remain vigilant rather than complacent, which produces faithfulness.

Matthew 24:37-39 – Signs of the Days of Noah

- 1) The Lord Jesus then compares His return to the days of Noah.
- 2) People were engaging in ordinary things: eating, drinking, getting married. Matt 24:37-39
 - a) Those activities in themselves are not a problem.
 - b) The problem is they were unaware and unprepared for the coming judgment of God.
 - c) So too with Christ’s return, it will come unexpectedly on many.

Matthew 24:40-41 – One Taken and One Left

- 1) The Lord Jesus then tells a story of pairs of people (two men and then two woman) doing ordinary work (farming, mill grinding).
 - a) One is taken and one is left.
 - b) The over all meaning is clear: That at Christ's return, those living side by side will be suddenly and decisively separated by God's judgment, with one destined for salvation and the other for damnation.
- 2) There is some debate on which group is the saved and the damned in this story.
 - a) [Theologically, there is no debate, the faithful in Christ are saved and the wicked outside of Christ are damned.]
 - b) The traditional interpretation, and probably the most grammatically defensible, is that those taken are the saved in Christ, being brought to heaven. And those left behind are the damned, consumed by eternal fire.
 - c) Some have argued, following the preceding context of Noah and the flood, the taken are taken into judgment because they reject Christ, while those left behind are spared.
 - d) This is a good example that both meanings cannot be right.
 - e) Pastor Doug thinks the traditional interpretation has the more merit.
- 3) Either way, the meaning is clear: You want to be ready for the Lord’s return.
 - a) This fits in nicely with the theological themes, and biblical reading techniques, we have been learning.
 - b) Be ready! Be discerning! Christ will return!
There will be judgment! There is no doubt.
 - c) However, don’t try to pry into mysteries that are to be left as mysteries.
 - d) Deuteronomy 29:29 – *“The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of this law.”*

Critical Question – Discern Without Guessing?

- 1) *You should ask:* But what does it mean to be discerning about the end of age if the focus is not trying to guess the date of the end or that if we are in the end times?
- 2) The New Testament teaches the church has been in the last days since our Lord's 1st Advent 2,000+ years ago. Acts 2:16-17; 1Cor 10:11; Heb 1:1-2
Heb 9:26; James 5:3; 1Pet 1:20
 - a) The literal Word of God has become incarnate and has died for our sins, what other new revelation do you need? John 1:1,14; 19:30
Gal 1:8-9; Heb 1:1-2
 - b) His Kingdom has been inaugurated. Mark 1:15
 - c) The Holy Spirit is being poured out. Acts 2:16-17
 - d) Satan has been bound so the Gospel will go to all the nations. Rev 20:1-3
Matt 24:14
- 3) Yes, we have been warned that it will get very bad at the very end of the age, a great Tribulation. Dan 12:1; Matt 24:21-22; Mark 13:19-20
2Tim 3:1-5; 2Thes 2:3-4; Rev 7:14
 - a) However, our job is not to guess "are we in the Great Tribulation?" (And yes, the church will go through the Great Tribulation.) Matt 24:21-22; John 16:33
Acts 14:22; 2Thes 1:4-10
Rev 7:14; 13:7-10
 - b) Even worse, to try to guess what year it will be. (That always ends in foolishness.)
 - c) Our job is to understand that tribulations and persecutions will happen throughout this age. And He will return. We have been warned, we should not be surprised when it happens. John 16:33; Acts 14:22
1Thes 3:3-4; 2Tim 3:12
1Pet 4:12-13; 1John 3:13
- 4) Our response should be:
 - a) Above all to remain faithful.
 - b) What is that great British meme: Keep calm and carry on.
 - c) We should always be on-guard against false teachers and apostasy, which will dramatically increase as the end of the age draws near.
 - d) We know Christ could return at any time, and individually we could die at any time and stand before the Lord, thus we should be ready.
- 5) What does this remaining faithful look like?
 - a) In the parallel Luke text notices what follows: "*Be on guard, so that your hearts will not be weighted down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of life, and that day will not come on you suddenly like a trap; for it will come upon all those who dwell on the face of all the earth. But keep on the alert at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are about to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.*" – Luke 21:34-36
 - b) Or my favorite end times passage: "*The end of all things is near; therefore, be of sound judgment and sober spirit for the purpose of prayer. Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins. Be hospitable to one another without complaint. As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.*" – 1Peter 4:7-11
- 6) If you are living in faith, you will welcome when the Lord appears.