

# Trinity Reformed Church of Northwest Connecticut

Biblical, Traditional, Conservative, Congregational

Lord's Day Worship for

July 12, 2026

*"For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus."* – Galatians 3:26



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

---

“✠” = Please stand if you are able.

## Welcome, Greeting & Announcements

### Call to Worship – Romans 8:29-31

*Leader: For those whom He foreknew,*

**People: He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son,**

*Leader: So that He would be the firstborn among many brethren;*

**People: And these whom He predestined, He also called;**

*Leader: And these whom He called, He also justified;*

**People: And these whom He justified, He also glorified.**

*Leader: What then shall we say to these things?*

**People: If God is for us, who is against us?**

### Prayer of Invocation and Confession

### Gospel Absolution Text – Hebrews 2:10-11

**\*Hymn #16** – *“Come, Let Us Sing unto the Lord”*

### Scripture Reading – Mark 3:22-35

### 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 #82B** – *“God Is in His Congregation”*

### 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 Larger Catechism, 90.

**Leader:** *What shall be done to the righteous at the day of judgment?*

**People:** ***They are caught up to Christ in the clouds,***

1Thes 4:17

**Leader:** *Shall be set on His right hand, and there openly acknowledged and acquitted,*

Matt 25:33

Matt 10:32

**People:** ***Shall join with Him in the judging of reprobate angels and men,***

1Cor 6:2-3

**Leader:** *And shall be received into heaven, where they shall be fully and for ever freed*

Matt 25:34,46

**People:** ***From all sin and misery;***

Eph 5:27; Rev 14:13

**Leader:** *Filled with inconceivable joys, made perfectly holy and happy both in body and soul,*

Ps 16:11

**People:** ***In the company of innumerable saints and holy angels,***

Heb 12:22-23

**Leader:** *But especially in the immediate vision and fruition of God the Father, of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit,*

1John 3:2

1Cor 13:12

**People:** ***To all eternity.***

1Thes 4:17-18

**Leader:** *And this is the perfect and full communion, which the members of the invisible church shall enjoy with Christ in glory,*

**People:** ***At the resurrection and day of judgment.***

## Ministry of the Word

### Prayer of Illumination

**\*Sermon Text** – Matthew 25:31-46

**\*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 Sheep and the Goats”

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 #311** – “Hail to the Lord’s Anointed”

**\*Benediction**

## **Announcements**

- **In July and August church starts at 9:30 AM.** There is no Sunday School during the summer months.
- **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.)
- Pastor Doug will be on vacation from August 3<sup>rd</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup>.
- **Sunday School** for all ages returns on Sunday, September 13<sup>th</sup>.
- The next in-person **Elder & Deacon Meeting** will be at Pastor Doug's house, in the morning, of **October 3<sup>rd</sup>**.
- **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>)
- The **4<sup>th</sup> Annual Christmas Party** will be on Friday, December 4<sup>th</sup>.
- TRC's **Annual Meeting** is after church, on Sunday, December 13<sup>th</sup>. The snow-day is December 20<sup>th</sup>.

## **Regular Studies & Gatherings** (for the summer)

- Sunday School, Tuesday Morning Study & Wednesday Study have stopped for July & August.
  - **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**

|                               |                                                             |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>TRC's Webpage:</b>         | TrinityReformedCT.org                                       |
| <b>TRC's Facebook Page:</b>   | facebook.com/people/Trinity-Reformed-Church/61554974150922/ |
| <b>TRC's Youtube Channel:</b> | youtube.com/@TrinityReformedCT                              |
| <b>Pastor Doug's</b>          | youtube.com/simplyreformed                                  |
| <b>Youtube Channels:</b>      | 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**

|                       |                                                                                |                           |                                     |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Elders:</b>        | Rev. Douglas Aldrich, pastor                                                   | 860-379-1147              | douglas_aldrich@sbcglobal.net       |
|                       | Bob Ensminger                                                                  | 860-485-8738              | robert.ensminger@arthurgrossell.com |
|                       | Rich Gabelmann                                                                 | 860-605-7852              | rgabelmann0415@gmail.com            |
|                       | Rev. Jonathan Haulenbeek                                                       | 203-709-0784              | jhaulenbeek@icloud.com              |
| <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 – Email: trinityreformedct@gmail.com*

---

# **Sermon Notes**

Matthew 25:31-46  
"Parable of the Sheep and the Goats"  
A Sermon Series on Parables  
July 5, 2026

## **Introduction**

- 1) *Question:* Who are Christ's brothers and sisters?
- 2) We have been going through the parables in the Gospel of Matthew over the last few months.
  - a) Which focus on Christ's Kingdom.
  - b) Remember the first one: The Parable of the Sower. Matt 13; Mark 4
  - c) About how the Word of God produces fruitful faith even during times of temptation and persecution, but not in everyone in the visible church.
- 3) Today, the last major parable in Matthew: the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats.
  - a) And as we have been hearing in the parables of Matthew 24-25 we must be ready for the Lord's return.
  - b) A subject the Lord Jesus is very concerned about.
  - c) Because only Christ's brethren will enter His Kingdom.

## **Matthew 25:31-33**

- 1) We read, "*when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne.*" – Matthew 25:31b
  - a) This is not *a* Day of the Lord but *THE* Day of the Lord.
  - b) A Day of the Lord, is any time when God decisively and visibly acts in judgment and/or deliverance to bring forth His justice. Ex 6:6-8; 14:13-31; Is 13:6-13  
Joel 2:1-11,28-32; Amos 5:18-20  
Zeph 1:14-18; 2Pet 3:7-13
  - c) However, there will be *THE* Day of the Lord, that time of final justice.
    - i) This is Christ's glorious Second Advent.
    - ii) This is the consummation of the age when Christ returns in power and glory, there will be final judgment, and the final next age, the new heavens and new earth will begin. Dan 7:13-14,26-27; 12:2-3  
Matt 24:3,29-31; 25:31-46  
John 5:28-29; 2Pet 3:7-13  
Rev 20:11-21:5; 22:12,20
- 2) At this time, "*All the nations will be gathered before Him.*" – Matthew 25:31a
  - a) This is everyone whoever existed. Dan 12:2; John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15; Rom 14:9-12  
1Cor 15:51-53; 1Thes 4:13-17; Rev 20:12-13
    - i) All those who have died will be given new bodies.
    - ii) And those alive at His return ("the quick") will be changed.
  - b) Christ then will judge, "*and He will separate them from one another.*" – Matthew 25:32b
- 3) And then we get to the parable part which describes what this is like – "*as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.*" – Matthew 25:32c
  - a) A shepherd is one who tends to sheep; literally a "sheep-herder."
  - b) They guard, guide, feed, gather, and separate the flock.

- c) They often live close to the sheep to protect them from danger.
  - d) Shepherds could own the flock, be a family member watching over the family's flock, or simply be a hired hand of a wealthy owner.
    - i) We know from John 10:11-13 that the Lord Jesus is the Good Shepherd, He owns His flock, unlike some mere hired hand.
    - ii) The imagery of Matthew 25:32 is very clear; the Shepherd knows His flock and has authority to divide sheep from goats according to their kind.
- 4) At the end, the Shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.
- a) In ancient times a shepherd's flock would have both sheep and goats, because both are useful. Gen 30:32-33; 31:38  
Ex 12:5; Deut 14:4
    - i) Sheep are domesticated, grass-grazing herd animals, especially valued for their wool, though they were also used for meat, milk, and skins.
    - ii) Goats are domesticated, hardier browsing (eating leaves, brush, etc.) herd animals kept especially for their milk, hair, and skins, though they could be used for meat.
    - iii) According to the OT Ceremonial laws, both sheep and goats were considered "clean" animals, and both were used in proper OT sacrifices. Ex 12:5; Deut 14:4  
Lev 1:10; 3:6-12  
Lev 4:23-24,28,32; 5:6
  - b) This parable is *not* teaching that sheep, as an animal, are better than goats.
  - c) This parable *is* teaching that the Shepherd can easily separate goats from sheep, because He is powerful, and because they have two very different natures, which is obvious to Him.
    - i) The sheep represent the righteous who belong to the Shepherd-King.
    - ii) The goats represent the wicked.
    - iii) And the Lord uses both for His glory through this age. (Think of Peter and Judas.)
  - d) In this life, the righteous and wicked will be intermingled.
    - i) As we heard in several parables. Matt 13:24-30,36-43; 13:47-50; 22:1-14; 25:1-13
    - ii) Both in the world and in the visible church.
    - iii) But there will be a separation at the end of the age.
- 5) We read the Shepherd is "the King" who puts the sheep/righteous on His right and the goats/wicked on His left.
- a) The right side of the King is the best place, the favored place, because His right hand is powerful. Ex 15:6; Ps 16:11; 45:9; 110:1  
Mark 16:19; Acts 2:33; Rom 8:34  
Heb 1:3; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2
    - i) It is not saying left-handed people are evil! Gen 48:13-20; Eccl 10:2
    - ii) Right and left are used as contrasts throughout Scripture, like sheep and goats. Ex 14:22,29; Deut 5:32  
Prov 3:16; SoS 2:6; 2Cor 6:7
  - b) The King divides all humanity into positions: The blessed at His right hand, and the damned at His left.

## **Matthew 25:34**

- 1) The King declares those on His right to be blessed.
  - a) They are blessed because it is the will of God the Father, thus the “blessed of My Father.”
  - b) Blessings come from God, not yourself.
- 2) The blessed will inherit the Kingdom.
  - a) Remember, the Kingdom is where Christ the King reigns directly, which is already and not yet. Dan 7:13-14; Matt 12:28; 28:18-20  
Acts 2:33-36; 1Cor 15:24-28; Heb 2:8-9
    - i) Yes, God reigns over all things in this fallen world, even using the wicked, including Satan, as unwitting agents of His glory. Gen 50:20; Job 1:6-12; 2:1-10  
Prov 16:4; Job 1:6-22; 2:1-10  
Acts 2:23; 4:27-28
    - ii) However, Christ reigns directly in His church right now, through His Word and Spirit.  
(Remember the Parable of the Sower.) Matt 13
  - b) We get excited on some level about receiving a normal inheritance.
    - i) Imagine inheriting a kingdom, the Kingdom.
    - ii) You might say, “But wait, there are a lot of people who will get this inheritance!”
      - Remember, in this Kingdom there is no sin, no death, no want, no greed, no desire for the world. Is 25:6-9; 65:17-25  
1Cor 15:24-28,50-57  
2Pet 3:13; Rev 21:1-8; 22:1-5
      - Imagine living in that place.
- 3) However, inheritances are usually bittersweet, because there is a death of a loved one.
  - a) Yet this Kingdom is based on the death of a testator. Luke 22:20,29-30; Rom 6:8-11; 1Cor 15:20-28  
Heb 9:15-17; 1Pet 1:3-5; Rev 1:17-18
  - b) A “testator” is the one who makes a testament or will, whose death brings the promised inheritance into effect.
  - c) How wonderful it is to inherit a Kingdom whose Testator has died and has defeated death and given us life! And His Kingdom.
- 4) Note, when this Kingdom was created: “*inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.*”
  - a) The whole purpose of Creation is so that God can bring Himself glory by creating a Kingdom that we, His children, will inherit. Is 43:6-7; Dan 7:13-14,27  
Rom 8:16-23; Eph 1:5-14  
Heb 12:28; Rev 21:1-7
  - b) This has been Plan A from the beginning, from before the fall. Gen 50:20; Is 46:9-11; Acts 2:23  
Acts 4:27-28; Eph 1:4-11; Rev 13:8
  - c) All the sin, death, suffering, and pain, were planned to an ultimate glorious end. Gen 50:20; Is 46:9-11; Rom 8:18-30  
Rom 11:32-36; Eph 1:9-11; Rev 21:1-5
- 5) Then the King explains why they will inherit His Kingdom.
  - a) He says, “*For I was hungry, and you . . .*”
  - b) We have to stop here.
    - i) This is one of the most critical pronouns in all of Scripture.
    - ii) If you mess this up, you will get so many things wrong.

c) Remember my two core rules for interpreting Scripture:

i) Context, Context, Context.

ii) Unpack the pronouns.

6) *So, the million-dollar question: Who is the “you” in Matthew 25:35?*

## **The “You” in Matthew 25:35**

1) Our Lord tells us who the “you” is in verse 40.

a) Matthew 25:40 – *“The King will answer and say to them, ‘Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.”*

b) So the “you” in Matthew 25:35 is the “brothers of Christ.”

c) This leads to the next obvious question: Who are the brothers of Christ?

2) Since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, it has been common in Mainline/Liberal denominations, especially Congregationalism, to define “brothers” as all mankind, especially the poor.

a) This is a damnable and very dangerous heresy.

b) This heresy is called the “Social Gospel”, which teaches that the Good News of the Gospel is helping poor people.

i) This is *NOT* the Gospel.

ii) It is not only a rejection of the real Gospel, but it is legalism, being a Pharisee, thinking one’s own righteousness can save oneself.

iii) Yes, Theological Liberalism is actually Pharisaism.<sup>1</sup>

c) This is where our more modern phrase “Social Justice” comes from.  
(Plus, from a major dose of Cultural Marxism.)

d) The real thing is, *“the gospel of God, which He promised beforehand through His prophets in the holy Scriptures, concerning His Son, who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh, who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace . . . For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, ‘But the righteous man shall live by faith.’”* – Romans 1:1b-5a,16-17

3) It is true, everyone, and I mean all of mankind, are made in the image of God, because all the nations are from Adam.

Gen 1:26-27; 5:1-3; 9:6; Acts 17:26

1Cor 15:21-22; James 3:9

a) It is also true that everyone is our neighbor.

Lev 19:18,33-34; Matt 5:43-48; 22:37-40

Luke 10:25-37; Rom 13:8-10; James 2:8-9

b) And we are called to love our neighbors, which again is everyone.

Lev 19:18,33-34; Matt 5:43-48; 22:37-40

Luke 10:25-37; Rom 13:8-10; James 2:8-9

c) And unless we missed the point, we are directly commanded to even love our enemies.

Ex 23:4-5; Prov 24:17-18; 25:21-22

Matt 5:43-48; Luke 6:27-36; Rom 12:14-21

4) However, the Bible is very clear, that all humanity begins this life as fallen, as children of Satan.

Matt 13:37-39; John 8:38-47; 12:31

Acts 13:9-10; 26:18

Eph 2:1-3; 1John 3:7-10

---

<sup>1</sup> Pharisaism, literally “of the Pharisees, is legalism. It refers to a rigid adherence to the external forms or rules of religion and morality without possessing genuine inner piety, resulting in hypocrisy and self-righteousness.

Is 29:13; Matt 6:2; 15:7-9; 23:23-28; Luke 18:9-14; Rom 10:2-4; 1Cor 13:3; Col 2:20-23; 2Thes 3:10.

- a) That is why we need to be adopted in Christ! John 1:12; 11:52; Rom 8:14-25  
2Cor 5:18-19; Gal 3:26; 4:5; Eph 1:5
- b) The Lord Jesus is very clear, that only those who hear the word of God, which is the will of the Father, and do it, are His brothers. Matt 7:21-27; 12:48-50  
Luke 8:19-21; 11:27-28  
John 15:14; James 1:22-25  
Luke 8:21 – *“But He answered and said to them, ‘My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it.’”*
- c) Throughout the Gospels, Jesus speaks of those who follow Him as His brethren, not the world. Matt 12:48-50; 25:40; 28:10  
Mark 3:33-35; Luke 8:19-21; John 20:17
- d) As does the rest of the New Testament. Acts 1:15-16; Rom 8:29; Heb 2:10-17  
James 2:1; 1John 3:1-10; Rev 19:10

### **Matthew 25:35-46**

- 1) The Lord Jesus defines “the sheep” as those who have real faith in Him that produces good works towards His church.
- 2) When Christians charitably tend to the needs of other Christians (food, drink, clothing, visiting the sick and those in prison), they are actually doing it to Christ. Matt 25:35-39
  - a) As the Lord states, *“Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.”* – Matthew 25:40b
  - b) The church is Christ’s spiritual body on earth. Rom 12:4-5; 1Cor 6:15-20; 12:12-27  
Eph 1:22-23; 4:11-16; Col 1:18; 2:19
  - c) The church is organized locally (into local congregations/assemblies) and universally (catholic). Matt 16:18; 18:15-20; 28:18-20  
Acts 14:23; 1Cor 1:2; 12:12-27  
Eph 1:22-23; 2:19-22; 4:4-16
- 3) Much of the Book of James deals with this.
 

James 2:15-17 – *“If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, and one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace, be warmed and be filled,’ and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that? Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself.”*
- 4) So we in TRC should be first concerned with those in need in this local congregation, especially “the least” of us (i.e. the poor, the widow, the orphan, the defenseless).
  - a) Hence our Deacon’s Fund.
    - i) Which I think we do in this church.
    - ii) And thank you for your prayers and support.
    - iii) If anyone knows of a need, please inform the pastor or an elder.
  - b) We should also have concern for supporting the wider church.
    - i) The NT clearly shows local churches supporting other local churches. Acts 11:27-30; Rom 15:25-27; 1Cor 16:1-4  
2Cor 8:1-15; 9:1-15; Phil 4:15-18
    - ii) But to what extent does “denominational loyalty” come into play (on some level it must) is a topic for another sermon.
- 5) This whole parable assumes you are in the church.



- a) There is no ordinary means of salvation outside the church because the church alone has the Ministry of the Word. Matt 28:18-20; Acts 2:41-47  
Rom 10:14-17; Eph 4:11-16  
1Tim 3:15; 2Tim 4:1-5
- b) And always remember back to that first parable, the most important one, the Parable of the Sower in which the truly faithful have the living Word in them that produces perseverance and that produces fruit. Matt 13:3-23  
Mark 4:3-20  
Luke 8:4-15
- 6) The wicked do not care for Christ's brothers and sisters.
  - a) *"These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."*  
– Matthew 25:46
  - b) It is interesting that one of the favorite sections of Scripture of liberals ends in hell, that clear teaching of Christ that they hate and reject.
  - c) Again, remember the Parable of the Sower.

## **Conclusion**

- 1) The question is not whether we can put ourselves into His Kingdom by our works; We cannot.
- 2) The question is whether we truly belong to the King.
  - a) If we belong to Him, living faith will not remain barren.
  - b) It will love what He loves.
  - c) It will love Him, His Word, His church, His brethren, especially the least of them.
- 2) On that Day, the Shepherd will not be confused.
  - a) He will know His sheep.
  - b) He will separate them from the goats.
    - i) He will place His sheep at His right hand.
    - ii) And the goats on His left.
  - e) To the sheep He will say, *"Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."* – Matthew 25:34
- 3) Therefore, do not think that mere intellectual agreement is saving faith.
  - a) Do not think that being nice to poor people is salvation either.
  - b) Have faith in Christ: Know, agree and daily trust in Him.
    - i) Hear His Word and love His church.
    - ii) Do not despise the least of Christ's brethren.
  - c) And, go and bear the fruit of living faith.
- 4) For the same King who judges the nations is the Shepherd who laid down His life for His sheep.
  - a) And the Day is coming when all nations will be gathered before Him.
  - b) On that Day, there will be no third group.
  - c) There will be only sheep and goats.
  - d) There will be only eternal punishment and eternal life.
  - e) There will be only: "Come" or "Depart."
- 5) So, let us hear Christ's summons and go to His table where He declares mercy and life to us.