

Trinity Reformed Church of Northwest Connecticut

Biblical, Traditional, Conservative, Congregational

Lord's Day Worship for
August 30, 2026

"But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.'" – Luke 2:10-11



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“*” = Please stand if you are able.

Welcome, Greeting & Announcements

Call to Worship – Colossians 1:19-23a

Leader: For it was the Father's good pleasure

People: For all the fullness to dwell in Him,

Leader: And through Him to reconcile all things to Himself,

People: Having made peace through the blood of His cross;

Leader: Through Him, I say,

People: Whether things on earth or things in heaven.

Leader: And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind,

People: Engaged in evil deeds,

*Leader: Yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death,
in order to present you before Him*

People: Holy and blameless and beyond reproach—

Leader: If indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast,

People: And not moved away from the hope of the gospel

Leader: That you have heard,

People: Which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven,

Prayer of Invocation and Confession

Gospel Absolution Text – 2Timothy 1:9-10

***Hymn #176** – “Hail, Thou Once Despised Jesus!”

Scripture Reading – Acts 13:26-34

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 #103B** – “Bless the LORD, My Soul”

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, 7.3b,6a.

Leader: . . . *The covenant of grace; wherein He (God) freely offers unto sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ;* Is 42:6; Gal 3:15,21
Rom 8:3; 3:20-21

People: **Requiring of them faith in Him, that they may be saved,** Mark 16:15-16; John 3:16
Rom 10:6-9; Gal 3:11

Leader: *And promising to give unto all those that are ordained unto eternal life His Holy Spirit,*

People: **To make them willing, and able to believe . . .** Ezek 36:26-27; John 6:44-45

Leader: *Under the gospel, when Christ, the substance, was exhibited,* Col 2:17

People: **The ordinances in which this covenant is dispensed**

Leader: *Are the preaching of the Word, and the administration of the sacraments of Baptism*

People: **And the Lord's Supper . . .** Matt 28:19-20; 1Cor 11:23-25

Ministry of the Word

Prayer of Illumination

***Sermon Text** – Mark 1:1

***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 Gospel”

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 #571** – “Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus”

***Benediction**

Everyone is welcome to Coffee Hour Fellowship downstairs after church today

Announcements

- The church would like to thank Jon Haulenbeek for preaching during Pastor Doug's vacation.
- After church, today Pastor Doug would like to have a brief **discussion** about:
 - 1) To see if there is interest in a Wednesday Night Study.
 - 2) To see who is interested in children's Sunday School.
 - 3) How can the church support Home Schoolers.
- Next Sunday (September 6th) **church starts at 10:30 AM**. There is NO Sunday School.
- **Sunday School** for all ages returns on Sunday, **September 13th**.
- The elders would like to take a **new photo of the entire church** (and of the elders & deacons) on **September 20th** after church.
- The next in-person **Elder & Deacon Meeting** will be at Pastor Doug's house on **October 3rd**.
- **October 10th**, Saturday, there will our annual **Oktoberfest** at the Aldrich's. (*Rain Date*: October 17th)
- The **4th Annual Christmas Party** will be on Friday, **December 4th**.
- TRC's **Annual Meeting** is after church, on Sunday, **December 13th**. The snow-day is December 20th.
- This church has experienced **cyber-attacks** before. Please be very discerning about any emails you get from the church, Pastor Doug or any church member. We will never ask for money via email or texts. When in doubt *call* Pastor Doug.

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

TRC's Webpage: TrinityReformedCT.org
TRC's Facebook Page: facebook.com/people/Trinity-Reformed-Church/61554974150922/
TRC's Youtube Channel: youtube.com/@TrinityReformedCT

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@arthurgrossell.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

Mark 1:1
"The Gospel"
August 30, 2026

Introduction

- 1) *Question*: What is the Gospel?
 - a) Is your reaction:
 - i) That's easy, all (conservative Protestant) Christians know that!
 - ii) *Answer*: The Good News that Jesus has died for our sins to save us!
 - b) Fine, okay answer.
- 2) But then another question: Why do so many, including those in conservative Protestant churches, struggle to give that answer?
 - a) Let alone making it the center of their life?
 - b) And we (conservative Protestants) understand the Gospel better than anyone else!
- 3) You can see the difficulty when people will affirm Jesus dying for their sins but when the next day they are asked: How do you go to heaven? They will say: Be a good person, obey God, believe in God, go to church, etc.
 - a) That is why when people are asked "what is the Gospel" they default to such bad answers as: The Bible, the Word of God, loving your neighbor, helping the poor, etc.
 - b) These are all terrible answers: Now, they are things related to the Gospel, but you are missing the main central point if you answer that way.
 - c) However, those bad answers are common, and even mature Christians can slip into that way of thinking.
- 4) So today, I want to define "the Gospel."
 - a) I am NOT going to give you the perfect systematic definition because that is contrary to the Bible and our Reformed heritage.
 - b) I want to give you a few key words that should first come into your mind when asked, or when you think about the Gospel, which should be frequent.
- 5) Before we continue, please note we are defining "*the Gospel*" (singular) not "*the Gospels*" (plural).
 - a) The Gospels (plural) refer to the first four books of the New Testament (NT): The Gospel of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Part of the four thematic divisions of the NT.¹
 - b) The Bible only uses the word "Gospel" in the singular.
 - i) As we see in today's sermon text.
 - ii) Mark 1:1 – "*The beginning of the gospel (singular) of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.*"
 - c) As my seminar professor once told a group of future preachers: "*There is not four Gospels but only one Gospel, that of Jesus Christ. There are four Evangelists (four writers of the Gospel) how you put them together that is your problem.*"
- 6) A simplistic reading of Scripture could almost lead to this confusion.
 - a) Actually, it shows our problem.
 - b) So let's look at the times "Gospel" is used in the Gospel of Mark.

¹ The New Testament is divided up into four sections: 1) The Gospels (4 books; Matthew through John).

2) History (1 book; Acts). 3) Epistles (21 books; Romans through Jude). 4) Apocalypse (1 book; Revelation).

"Gospel" in the Gospel of Mark

- 1) The beginning of the Gospel of Mark clearly speaks about the Gospel!
 - a) The very first line is: *"The beginning of the gospel (εὐαγγέλιον, euangelion) of Jesus Christ, the Son of God."* – Mark 1:1
 - b) Great! The Gospel of Mark will be telling us what this gospel is.
 - c) However, apparently, we are not directly told what the Gospel is in verse 1.
- 2) Soon we get the Lord Jesus's first words of public ministry:
 - a) Mark 1:14-15 – *"Now after John had been taken into custody, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel (euangelion) of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel (euangelion).'"*
 - b) The Gospel is obviously critical!
 - i) But again, it apparently is not directly spelled out.
 - ii) We are not even told what He was preaching in this text.²
- 3) At the turning point of the Gospel of Mark, right after Peter's confession of Christ, and right before the Transfiguration, we read:
 - a) Mark 8:35 – *"For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's (euangelion) will save it."*
 - b) But again, no direct definition.
- 4) After teaching that it is impossible to enter the Kingdom of God by your own ability, and Jesus explaining He must go to Jerusalem to die, we read:
 - a) Mark 10:29 – *"Jesus said, 'Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or farms, for My sake and for the gospel's (euangelion) sake,'"*
 - b) But again, no direct definition.
- 4) When speaking about what is to come, our Lord taught: (Also see: Mark 14:9)
 - a) Mark 13:10 – *"The gospel (euangelion) must first be preached to all the nations."*
 - b) Again, no direct definition.
- 5) At the very end of the Gospel of Mark we read:
 - a) *"And He said to them, 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel (euangelion) to all creation.'" – Mark 16:15*
 - b) Again, no direct definition."
- 6) So, let's start with the basics; Let's first define the word "gospel" in the generic sense.

"A" Gospel Defined

- 1) My favorite verse to define what "a gospel" would be is 1Samuel 31:9.
 - a) 1Samuel 31:9 – *"They (the evil Philistines) cut off his (Saul, king of Israel) head and stripped off his weapons, and sent them throughout the land of the Philistines, to carry the good news (εὐαγγελίζω, euangelizō, verb, "to proclaim the good news") to the house of their idols and to the people."*
 - b) One might ask: How is it good news that the evil Philistines kill the king of Israel and celebrate by telling this news to an evil pagan people at their house of idols?
 - c) I said I was defining "a gospel" not "The Gospel."

² This is common in the Gospels. See: Mark 1:14-15,21-22,38-39; 2:2,13; 6:2,6,34; 10:1.

2) The word Gospel literally means “good news.”³

a) It is “*euangelion*” in New Testament Greek.

i) It is a combination of the word “*good*” (*eu*) with “*to announce / bring a message*” (*angellō*).

ii) *eu* + *angellō* = “*a good announcement*”, or simply, “*good news*.”

iii) The word for “*to announce*” is related to the word “*messenger*” (*angelos*), where we get our word “*angel*.”

b) This proclaiming of good news can have a broader meaning,
such as proclaiming a new king or the birth of a son.

1Kgs 1:42

Jer 20:15

c) But in particular, the word more directly implies
“*bringing news of victory*” or “*declaring a victory*”.

2Sam 4:10

2Sam 18:25-27

i) The imagery is a king who leaves his city to go fight an enemy.

ii) The king defeats the enemy and sends heralds back to the city to proclaim his victory and that the city is saved.

iii) These heralds that proclaim victory and deliverance are called
“*evangelists*”, a proclaimer of good news.

3) So, 1Samuel 31:9 is “*a*” good news, in the worldly sense to the Philistines, because they won the battle and heralds are sent back to declare the good news of their victory to their idolatrous temples and to the people.

4) So the first thing to remember about defining the Gospel, it has to be: Good and News.

“Gospel” in the Gospel of Mark (Redone)

1) By the way, did you think you got a direct answer in those texts we read in the Gospel of Mark?

a) You did.

b) The reason many people miss it, especially moderns, is that we are looking for some systematic individual self-help message.

c) We are focusing on the self.

d) We miss the fact that the Messenger is more important than the message.

e) Which, I grant you is unique in history.

i) Usually, the message is more important than the messenger.

ii) But when the Messenger is God’s Son, the Word Incarnate, then the Messenger is the important part.

2) Go back to Mark 1:1, the “beginning of the gospel” is because Mark is telling us about Christ.

a) The Gospel is not defined in the Gospels because the Gospel is about Jesus Christ.

b) Remember Christmas: “*But the angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news (euangelizō) of great joy which will be for all the people; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.’*” - Luke 2:10-11

c) Jesus’s first words of public ministry are “preaching the gospel” because the main focus is not His words (which are important) but Christ, Himself.

i) What is the Kingdom of God is at hand?

ii) Because God incarnate is speaking!

³ In Greek it is: *euangelion* (εὐαγγέλιον) – a noun, “good news”. (Mark 1:1,14-15; Rom 1:1,16)

euangelizō (εὐαγγελίζω) – a verb, “to proclaim the good new”. (Luke 1:19; 2:10; 3:18; 4:18,43)

euangelistēs (εὐαγγελιστής) – a noun, “a proclaimer of good news”, “an evangelist”. (Acts 21:8; Eph 4:11; 2Tim 4:5)

- d) Note how the Gospel is fundamentally tied to Christ: That "*for My sake and the gospel's*"
- Mark 8:35; 10:29
- e) When the church proclaims the Gospel, it is proclaiming Christ. Mark 13:10; 16:15
- 3) So the next thing you should remember about the Gospel – is the most important thing – is that it is about Jesus Christ.
- 4) That is why Paul can say to the very troubled Corinthian church: "*For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.*" - 1Corinthians 2:2
 - a) So the most important word to remember when defining the Gospel is: Jesus!
 - i) All Sunday School children learn to shout that answer to any question.
 - ii) On a simplistic level, they are not wrong.
 - b) However, my recommendation is to maybe start with another word.
 - i) Note the qualifier in 1Cor 2:2 - "and Him crucified".
 - ii) Why was Jesus born? To die on a cross.
- 4) When someone asks you "what is the Gospel", I would recommend the first thing to come into your mind is: The Cross.
 - a) Again, Jesus is the more important answer.
 - b) The Cross is the central part of the Gospel.

The Cross

- 1) The Gospel is fundamentally tied to Christ's cross, His death, and the good news of His resurrection.
 - a) Why is Good Friday called "good"?
 - i) Because He died for our sins.
 - ii) It is the whole purpose of the incarnation.
 - b) There are so many Mark 8:34-35; Acts 13:28-29,32-34; Rom 1:4
verses tied to this. 1Cor 1:17-18; 15:1,3-4; Col 1:20,22-23; 2Tim 1:8,10
- 2) To give one verse: 1Corinthians 1:17-18 - "*For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel (euangelizō), not in cleverness of speech, so that the cross of Christ would not be made void. For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.*"
- 3) The cross is good news thus, by definition, it is the Gospel.
 - a) King Jesus has gone out to war on His enemies (sin, Satan, Ps 110:1-2; Matt 28:18
the world, etc.) and has defeated them by His death, John 12:31-32; Col 2:13-15
resurrection, and ascension. Heb 2:14-15; 1John 3:8
 - b) "*O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting? The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*" - 1Corinthians 15:55-57

The Gospel is Not DO But DONE

- 1) This gets to another critical word to remember: **Done**.
The Gospel proclaims done!
 - a) "Done" is good news.
 - b) "Do" is not.

- 2) Question: Is this the Gospel: *"And He said to him, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets."* – Matthew 22:37-40
- a) Is it the Gospel?
 - i) No! It is the Law.
 - ii) Now, the Law of God is good, holy, and needed. Rom 7:12,16; 1 Tim 1:8
 - b) However, God's Law is not good news to us Rom 3:19-20; 4:15; 7:10-13,22-24
 sinners, because it brings condemnation. Deut 27:26; 2Cor 3:6-9; Gal 3:10-12
 - i) Do you love God with your whole being and love your neighbor as much as you love yourself?
 - ii) Do you? Of course not.
- 3) That is why Christ said on the cross: *"It is finished."* John 19:30
- 4) What else do you need than the perfect God-man taking Is 53:4-6,11-12; Rom 3:21-26
 on all your sins and crediting His righteousness Rom 4:5-8; 5:18-19; 2Cor 5:21
 to you, which you receive by faith alone? Eph 2:1-10; Phil 3:8-9; Titus 3:3-8
- 5) As a generalization, when you hear "do" in the Bible think law, when hear "done" think Gospel.
- a) Though the Gospel and the Law are different Eph 4:32; 5:2; Rom 15:7
 they do go together. 1John 4:19; 1Pet 2:21
 - b) For example, Colossians 3:13 – *"bearing with one another (law), and forgiving each other (law), whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you (Gospel), so also should you (law)."*

Summary

- 1) When you are asked "what is the Gospel" or when you think about the Gospel, which should be frequent, I would suggest the following words:
 - a) First: **Cross**.
 - b) Then you would think: "Jesus dying on the cross".
 - i) This gets you to the most important word about the Gospel: **Jesus**.
 - ii) But if you start with the cross, you have to ask: Why did Jesus die on the cross?
 - c) Which gets to the reason why the cross: The **Good News**.
 - d) And the Good News is that our justification is **Done**.
- 2) If you unpack those words: **Cross - Jesus - Good News - Done**, you are getting at the heart of the Gospel and much power.

The Problem

- 1) But why is it so hard to make this the central point?
 - a) The Bible warns that *"the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing" and "Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness,"* - 1Cor 1:18,23
 - b) The Bible also warns that it is easy for Luke 9:62; 1Cor 15:1-2
 Christians to lose sight of the Gospel 2Cor 11:3-4; Gal 1:6-9; 3:1-3
 and Christ's cross. Col 1:23; Heb 2:1-3; 2Tim 2:8

2) Why the problem?

- a) The worldly mind hates the idea that God is holy and sovereign, that God will judge, that God has spoken with clarity, and that everyone is born a sinner under God's condemnation. Ps 2:1-3; John 3:19-20
Rom 1:18-25,28-32; 3:9-19
Rom 8:7-8; Eph 2:1-3
- b) The worldly mind thus hates even the idea that one even needs salvation, that one cannot save oneself, and, even worse, that salvation is only through Jesus Christ. John 3:18-20; 14:6
Acts 4:12; Rom 8:7-8
1Cor 1:18-24; 2:14

3) The law is intuitive, to fall man, the Gospel is not.

- a) All of man's religions and philosophies teach: Pull yourself up by your own abilities.
- b) Only the one true religion correctly teaches: You can't, only Christ can save.

4) It is truly only by the grace of God that a dead sinner comes to new life and belief. Ezek 36:26-27; John 6:44; Rom 9:16 Eph 2:1-9; Phil 1:29; Titus 3:3-7

Conclusion

- 1) Imagine being in that besieged city and the King has won; His victory is proclaimed, securing our deliverance, and a person responds with: Does the King even exist? How idiotic is that.
 - a) Though the citizens are saved only by the King's work, they still have to live in this new freed life.
 - b) However, it is very easy to forget the great victory and take things for granted, especially if it seems the King is gone away for a bit.
- 2) That is why we must be constantly fed on the Gospel through preaching and the sacraments.
 - a) Because it is the power of God.
 - b) The more the knowledge of the Gospel floods your life, the more you will after with Christ and live in faith, hope and love.
- 3) The Gospel is thus simple: Jesus died for our sins to save us.
- 4) But it is also profoundly deep. Just think of the Trinity, the incarnation, the cross, the ascension, regeneration, justification, indwelling of the Holy Spirit, sacraments, etc.
- 5) And the Gospel works out into all things.
 - a) The gospel drives good works, increases belief, obedience to God, obey the Law, causes us to go to church, get our children baptized, to read the Bible – the written Word of God, love our neighbor, and help the poor.
 - b) But you can never start with good works.
 - i) It is the Gospel that drives good works. Titus 3:7-8
 - ii) Ephesians 2:8-10 – *“For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.”*
- 6) We will be going through a sermon series on Proverbs 1-9, which is about practical wisdom, much needed this day and age. However, avoid the trap it's author, Solomon, fell into - He lost sight of Christ and the Gospel. Because wise living is found only in Christ.
- 7) Let us go to Christ's Table and taste His kindness.