



Diocese of the Central States
REFORMED EPISCOPAL CHURCH

October 2025 Diocesan Update and DCS Synod Highlights



Pictures left to right: 1-2) Newly confirmed and newly received members, Trinity Anglican, Evansville, Indiana, 10/5/2025; 3) Newly received DCS parish, Christ Church Anglican Mission, Florence, Kentucky, 10/12/2025; 4-5) 18th Annual DCS Synod, Trinity REC, Mason, Ohio, 10/23-24/2025; 6) Newly confirmed, Trinity REC, Mason, Ohio, 10/26/2025.

By way of DCS

Until we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ (Ephesians 4:13).

Sermon Excerpt: 19th Trinity

So...to this morning's lesson: we hear it every Sunday: *You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, strength; and you shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.*

A good bit of Jesus' teaching and example were focused on the authority, priority and influence these two commandments should have upon the lives of God's people. Jesus was

ever attempting to transform the way in which the Jews understood themselves as the Chosen People of God; one of His tactics was to take advantage of and expand upon the high regard Israel already had for the two greatest commandments in order to readjust their sense of calling and self-understanding.

Specifically, Jesus wanted Israel and everyone to understand that the God of Israel—the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—the God who gave the Two Greatest Commandments—was also the God who had created all things and that loving Him meant loving ALL THOSE He had created and discovering as neighbors those beyond the national and ethnic borders of Israel.

The “chosen people” were chosen: not to erect ever more narrowly defined membership requirement barriers around themselves in order to keep people out but rather chosen to consider ways of announcing God’s goodness and grace, opening the doors of His house and His Kingdom, and inviting and persuading more and more people to come in. “You are the light of the world, a city set on a hill...let your light so shine before men that they may see the wonderful things you do and give glory to your Father in heaven,” Jesus had so poignantly insisted in speaking to His Jewish listeners.

The chosen people were chosen not to hoard but to give...a giving flowing from obedience to the Two Greatest Commandments and rooted in God who *is* love...a giving flowing from the very heart of the message Jesus preached and of the kingdom He had come to establish.

It is a “giving” and way of living that is only possible, of course, by believing and following Jesus the Messiah, by being connected to Him in His death and resurrection, and by sharing in the new life of the Spirit...the new creation/kingdom He came to inaugurate and begin.

In this morning’s Epistle lesson, St. Paul is bringing the same vision-expanding, self-understanding-expanding message to the new, formerly Gentile/pagan, Believers. *This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, foolish-minded as they are. Their understanding is darkened; they are cut off from the life of God because of their deep-seated ignorance springing from the fact that their hearts are hard. They have lost all moral sensitivity and have given themselves over to lewdness and whatever suits their fancy...greedily pursuing every kind of uncleanness.*

But you did not learn Christ in this way or that’s not how you “learned the King!”

That’s not the Jesus I have taught you about, the Jesus you have so eagerly received as Savior and Lord of your lives!—if indeed you did hear about Him and were taught in Him in

accordance with the truth about Jesus Himself. These verses have the sense of a parent saying to his child, “That’s not how you were brought up! That’s not how I taught you to behave!” St. Paul likewise insisting: That’s not how you learned to be a disciple of King Jesus...that’s not what you learned about Him and how to follow Him!

In this Epistle, St. Paul was addressing these Gentile believers whom he had led out of paganism and into faith in Jesus and into the Kingdom of God. The work of making them disciples had begun, and St. Paul, through this letter, wanted them to understand that this was a lifetime process that needed to continue. *Don’t go back to walking like you Gentiles formerly walked. Unbelieving Gentiles continue to walk/live in this foolish way because of their deep-seated ignorance and darkened understanding.* They just don’t get it...and they would not live the way they do if they really did!

Last week’s Gospel helps make some connections. St. Matthew wrote: *While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question. What’s your view of the Messiah? Whose son is he?* “David’s,” they said to Him. *So how then, asked Jesus, can David (speaking by the Spirit) call him ‘Lord’, when he says: the Lord said to my Lord, sit here at my right hand until I put your enemies beneath your feet? If David calls him Lord, how can he be his son? **No one was able to answer Him a single word.** From that day on nobody dared ask him anything.*

It was as though Jesus was giving the Jewish leaders one last time to figure out and acknowledge who He was. He had tried to have them “learn the Christ...learn the King” as St. Paul put it in our Epistle lesson. The long-awaited Messiah was standing right there in their midst; yet in a few days, these same Jewish leaders would conspire to hand Him over to the Romans to be crucified! Talk about being: *foolish-minded...their understanding darkened...cut off from the life of God because of their deep-seated ignorance springing from the fact that their hearts were hard!*

Like the pagan Gentiles St. Paul was criticizing in his epistle, these Jewish leaders in St. Matthew’s account just didn’t get it—they would not have crucified their Messiah if they did! They were supposed to be God’s people but rather they were acting like the pagan Gentiles whose hardened unbelief St. Paul was writing to condemn. So now I can hear St. Paul saying to his spiritual children in the verses before us this morning: **“I’ve seen it in the Jews, I’ve seen it in the pagans, but I don’t want to see it in you!”**...*foolish-minded...their understanding darkened...cut off from the life of God because of their deep-seated ignorance, springing from the fact that their hearts are hard!*

For the Jews, being the people of God turned into a sense of superiority, indifference and looking down upon their neighbors...whereas for the pagans, being the people of God carried no meaning or value at all. St. Paul was determined to change all that by opening the hearts and minds of his new converts to the breadth of the work God had begun in Jesus and the invitation and calling for all men to be a part of it.

For St. Paul, “learning the King” is learning that Christianity is much more than trying to be a good person. Christianity is confessing Jesus as Lord and understanding the calling to be the people of God and the blessing of being a member of His family...and it involves a soft, humble, changed heart as well as a renewed mind: “**soft hearts and tough minds**” is a pretty good way to look at it.

Christians are called to be humble...but that doesn’t mean we stop thinking in order to retreat into a shallow fantasy world. Rather Christians embrace the often-difficult task of rethinking everything in terms of our relationship to Jesus the Messiah and His kingdom and directing our lives accordingly.

Foolish-minded...darkened understanding...deep-seated ignorance...hardened hearts... cut off from the life of God... St. Paul’s description of the pagan Gentiles: no new birth, no new kingdom, no high calling to be the people of God...no spirit inside crying “Abba Father.” And then St. Paul continues: *They have lost all moral sensitivity, and have given themselves over to lewdness and whatever suits their fancy while greedily pursuing every kind of uncleanness.* ***But you have not so learned Christ...that’s not how you learned the King!*** (That’s not how I brought you up! That’s not how I taught you to behave)—*if indeed you did hear about Him, and were taught in Him, in accordance with the truth about Jesus Himself.*

“I’ve told you and retold you the truth about Jesus the Messiah...His lordship, His teaching and His love. I’ve told you about being born again and about being new creatures, and I’ve told you about God’s grace. Instead of going back to thinking like the pagans again, who ultimately are only concerned about themselves (having lost all moral sensitivity), continue to rethink your lives in terms of being the people of God—and the breadth, length, height and depth of what Jesus has accomplished and has invited us to become a part of. And I know God’s Spirit is with us, softening our hearts and toughening our minds in order to help us understand who we are and empowering us to be who He has called us to be.”

Reading on into the next chapter, St. Paul gives us a wonderful conclusion: *So you should be imitators of God, like dear children. Conduct yourselves in love, just as the Messiah loved us and gave Himself for us, as a sweet-smelling offering and sacrifice to God.*

I like thinking about Jesus' encounter with the paralytic in our Gospel. Some friends bring the crippled man to Jesus...mustard seed of faith...move an inch toward Jesus and heaven overflows to you...so they bring him to Jesus who says, "Cheer up friend, your sins are forgiven. Get up, pick up your bed and go home."

If you think about it, He says the same to us this morning, especially in the context of what we have been considering in these Trinity lessons: "Cheer up friends, your sins are forgiven. Get up, pick up your bed and go home." Understand that in coming to Jesus, our connection to that old condemned, crippled race we were a part of is over; and now before us lies a new life in fellowship with Jesus, His people and His Kingdom. Your sins are forgiven... with Jesus there are no barriers between you and God...and, if you have so *learned the king*,...with a soft heart and a tough mind endeavor, by the power of the Holy Spirit now present in your lives, to live the new life he has set before you.

May our Lord Jesus help us. Amen.

+*Peter*

DCS Synod 2025

Thank you, Bishop Jason, for overseeing Synod plans, Trinity Mason, and especially Deaconess Michelle Caldwell, Jodi Hubbard, and Juniper Hubbard for your tireless efforts to make this another wonderful Synod. It is ever a pleasure and a privilege to care for and shepherd the Flock serving the Lord and one another in this way and every day.













Direct us, O Lord, in all our doings, with thy most gracious favour, and further us with thy continual help, that in all our works begun, continued, and ended in thee, we may glorify thy holy Name, and finally, by thy mercy, obtain everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.