



GRACE COMMUNION
SEMINARY

GCS NEWS

A Newsletter for Students and Alumni of Grace Communion Seminary

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President's Letter



Dear Students, Alumni
and Donors,

It's time for me to send out the President's letter as we wrap up the Summer Term before the Fall Term (well, Summer and Fall for those in the Northern hemisphere!). The last five months have been unusual to say the least. You have probably experienced a number of delays, cancellations, rearrangements, and disappointments. Some have experienced grievous loss of loved ones. And most if not all of these circumstances have been beyond our control. Such situations do indeed play on our anxieties and fears and test our faith in the living God.

Perhaps some of you found yourself reviewing the book of James: "... whenever you face various kinds of trials/temptations." I had to recall that James tells us that we can regard all these things adding up to joy because of who our Triune God is. He mentions four things regarding the God he and his readers worshiped: God 1) gives, 2) gives to all, 3) gives to all generously, and 4) gives without reproach (not making us wish we had never asked). Our Triune God, revealed in Jesus Christ and by his Word and Spirit, remains the same in character and purpose whether we are in the midst of trials and temptations or not. Our Triune God's working is not thwarted by our earthly circumstances, even if they are moved by the remnant of evil powers operating in our fallen world.

Our God remains faithful, remains the same, yesterday, today and forever. Nothing can separate us from the love of God. The meaning and purpose of our lives in Christ

cannot be taken from us. Our Triune Creator and Redeemer God remains sovereign over all—upholding, guiding, cooperating and overruling. Our gracious God does not allow anything that he cannot ultimately redeem.

That truth, of course, is most powerfully lived out in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus for us and our salvation. Even crucifixion could not stop the Lord Jesus from accomplishing his redemptive purpose. In fact, it was incorporated into it by the gracious providence of our Triune God. "For the joy set before him, he endured the cross" (Heb. 12:2).

But yes, we "fight the fight of faith," especially when trials and temptations draw close. But that, after all, is what we are taught to expect. That's just what Jesus prays about in his high priestly or intercessory prayer for us in John 17. Knowing and counting on his eternal purpose to leave us, for a little while, in this fallen world as his disciples and witnesses, is not easy. But being renewed daily in faith, hope and love toward our Redeemer God is the right struggle to be in. For our God is the one who gives, gives to all, gives generously and gives without reproach. Jesus, "for the joy set before him endured the cross"—for us!

I trust also that there have been various signs of God's own presence and faithfulness giving you comfort, strength and peace over these past months. Such signs serve as reminders, indicators, even though they are not meant to justify our trials. Only the redemptive life of the Son of God can do that. Cathy and I have had a welcome few of those in the past months. Our daughter Linda and her husband Liam are expecting a baby girl!

Cont.

Cont. I also would like to share with you some signs of God's providential care and of hope that involve GCS. Let me share with you several of those. First of all, we had a successful summer term with just about the normal number of classes and enrolled students. And I heard a few students remark that they had a little bit more time this term to devote to the courses (and family time, too). From my perspective that's all to the good!

Second, I am very pleased to announce that we have received the renewal of our accreditation for five years from the Distance Education Accreditation Commission (DEAC). Word of that took a little longer than expected, but was received when it came through just a few weeks ago. All the work put into that effort by my staff, Russell Duke, Mike

Morrison, Lance McKinnon and Georgia McKinnon, paid off—a very significant hurdle to clear. So, thank the Lord (and the GCS staff!).

We also applied for and have been granted by the DEAC the OK to offer a third degree, the Master of Divinity (MDiv.). There are some minor requirements set by the states of CA and NC to be met before we can officially enroll students in that degree program. But they should easily be fulfilled. I'll let Dean Morrison tell you more about that very encouraging development.

Another notice you'll appreciate is that the GCS Board decided that, for the benefit of all, tuition for 2021 through December 2022 will remain what the current rate is: \$220/unit, \$660/three-credit course.

And finally, I should note that our GCS graduation ceremony has been rescheduled to take place on Friday, July 23 during the GCI International Conference, July 21-25, 2021. So, we'll be looking forward to that wonderful time of gathering.

I hope to hear of many of you signing up for our coming Fall classes. A great lineup, if I don't say so myself. And if you yourself are not planning on taking a course, perhaps you can think of someone you might encourage to do so. As you know, you don't have to commit to a degree. You can simply take a class you're interested in. Georgia will be waiting to hear from you!

Grace and Peace in Christ Jesus,
Dr. Gary Deddo
President

New Degree Option: Master of Divinity



Our accrediting agency now allows us to offer the Master of Divinity (MDiv).¹ In many seminaries, this is the “standard” pastoral

degree; it is sometimes a benchmark for employment, for entry into chaplaincy programs, or for entry into PhD or DMin programs. At least 72 semester units are required for the degree, following the pattern set by the dominant accrediting agency for theological schools. Some students may wish to choose their courses in light of this degree.

How will the MDiv work at GCS?

Our MDiv degree requires 25 courses, 72 semester units of credit. This requires three years of full-time study, but since all our students are part-

time, most students will take six or more years to complete the degree; ten years is the maximum. At one course per semester, it will take a little more than eight years. There's much to learn, and it is a significant achievement.

The MDiv requires five courses in biblical studies, two in church history, seven in Christian ministry, three in Field Education, six in theology, a written thesis, and a capstone course. All courses must be passed with a grade of C+ or better; the grade point average must be 3.0 or higher.

Portfolio necessary

An important component of the MDiv Capstone Course is a review and analysis of your previous work at GCS. You will need copies of the major papers you did for the courses required for the degree. See the

CM599 syllabus for the list of papers you'll need. We hope that you have stored printed or electronic copies of your papers and the instructors' comments. If a disaster has wiped out your copies, we might be able to find your paper in an old GCS computer archive. But if your paper was submitted by email, it might be lost forever, and we'll have to work out an alternative.

- Even if you do not plan to get the MDiv, it is possible that you'll change your mind later, so it is best to save your papers now, even before you formally enter the program.
- Hard disks have been known to fail. Save printed copies of your papers, along with comments made by the instructors when the papers were graded.
- As additional insurance for your

¹We are a California religious corporation, and the new degree falls within our exemption from California government regulations; in North Carolina we have applied for and are waiting for them to acknowledge that this new degree is similarly exempt from their regulations because it concerns our religious beliefs and practices.

papers, we highly recommend that you keep a copy of your final papers on the GCS website. Log in and go to your dashboard. In the right column is a box labelled “Private files.” Click on “Manage private files,” then upload a copy of your papers here (label them by course number), and you will be able to access them in future semesters.

- If you did not take a course that is required for the portfolio (e.g., you took a similar course at another school and had transfer credit), and did not have a similar final paper, or your files have been destroyed, contact our portfolio coordinator, lance.mckinnon@gcs.edu.

What if you already have a degree?

If you already have the 42-unit Master of Pastoral Studies or Master of Theological Studies degree, you can transfer 36 units into the MDiv program, and you would then need to earn an additional 36 units in the next ten years. If you did a thesis for the first degree, that will suffice for the MDiv as well. But if you did TM501 option A, then you will need to write a thesis, either in theology or in Christian ministry.

If you want two degrees, you will need 78 units. If you want only the MDiv degree, 72 units. If you can take three or more courses each year, going straight for the MDiv is a viable option. But if you can take only two courses per year, you won't be able to finish the MDiv within the ten-year maximum. In that case, you can complete the first degree, then “reset the clock” to give yourself an additional ten years to complete the MDiv.

How do you begin?

You are welcome to begin planning for the MDiv now, especially by taking courses that are required for that degree. But you will not be able to enter the program formally until you have completed 36 semester units, including at least nine units of theology and nine units of ministry, with a GPA of 3.0 or better. If you think you can complete all the requirements within ten years, you may ask the Registrar to put you on the list for this degree. However, there is no penalty for delaying this decision until a later date.²

Dr. Michael Morrison
Dean of Faculty

² However, in the two-degree approach, there may be a penalty for delaying the MPS or MTS degree. For example, if a student has accumulated 50 semester units and then takes the MPS or MTS, only 36 of those units can be used for the MDiv.

MDIV REQUIREMENTS

Bible (15 units)

- BI501 Hermeneutics
- BI522 The Gospels
- BI524 Epistles of Paul
- One Old Testament course
- One more course in biblical studies

Church history (6 units)

- Two church history courses

Christian ministry (21 units)

- CM501 Pastoral Leadership
- CM503 Christian Counseling
- CM504 Practice of Ministry
- CM510 Polity of GCI
- CM511 Homiletics
- Two more courses in ministry

Field Education 1, 2, and 3 (6 units)

Theology (18 units)

- TH501 God and Jesus Christ
- TH502 Humanity and Salvation
- TH503 The Holy Spirit, the Church, and Eschatology
- TH515 Theological Ethics
- Two additional theology courses

Additional (9 units)

- One elective from any area
- Summative exam (no units)
- A thesis, written for CM519, TH519, or TM501 option B
- CM599 MDiv Capstone



Save the date!

On July 23, 2021, GCS will hold its
3rd graduation ceremony as part of our denominational
conference in Charlotte, NC.

GCS Welcomes New Treasurer, Robert Meade

At the most recent GCS Board Meeting, Mat Morgan, the Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer of GCS passed his Treasurer role to Robert Meade. Though Mr. Morgan will continue as the CFO of GCS, Mr. Meade will handle financial duties and responsibilities pertaining to the regular operations of the seminary. Mr. Meade is the Accounting and Budgeting Manager of Grace Communion International. GCS would like to thank Mat Morgan for his service in this role, and extend a welcome to Robert Meade.



Robert Meade

Mat Morgan



**GCS has a new Facebook page!
Check us out at:**

<https://www.facebook.com/GraceCommunionSeminary>



PARTNERS WITH GCS

Financial support from alumni and friends like you has a profound impact on the seminary's mission of
"Equipping the Saints for Pastoral Ministry."

If you have a passion for the provision of seminary training informed by an Incarnational Trinitarian faith, GCS is grateful for your partnership through prayer and financial support.

**Donations to Grace Communion Seminary can be mailed to
3120 Whitehall Park Drive, Charlotte, NC 28273
or donate online at gcs.edu/donate.**

Fall 2020 Registrar's Update



Our Fall semester is upon us, and we are offering the following classes: Hermeneutics, Church History:

The First Millennium, Practice of Ministry, Experiencing the Trinity, Nature of Humans and Salvation, and Theological Ethics. Registration details have been sent to all current

students and alumni who may be interested in taking a class. If you are a current student or alumni who did not receive the registration email, please contact me.

If you would like to review your academic goals or chart a plan for your studies, please feel free to contact me via email or phone call. With the introduction of our MDiv,

this may be a good time to review your path.

As always, if you know of any potential student who may benefit from classes that we offer, please encourage them to contact us.

Georgia McKinnon
Registrar

Schedule of Courses 2020

All schedules are tentative

Fall 2020: Registration begins Aug. 24. Sept. 7 is a U.S. holiday, so the first lecture will be posted on Tuesday, Sept. 8. Subsequent lectures will be posted on Mondays, Sept. 14 to Nov. 9. All work is to be completed by Dec. 7.

BI501	Hermeneutics	Mike Morrison
CH501	Church History: The First Millennium	Neil Earle
CM504	Practice of Ministry	Ted Johnston
CM507	Experiencing the Trinity	Larry Hinkle
TH502	Nature of Humans and Salvation	Russell Duke
TH515	Theological Ethics	Gary Deddo

Spring 2021: Registration begins January 4. Lectures will be posted on Mondays, January 11 to March 15. March 29 to April 4 is a study week. Easter is April 4. All work is to be completed by April 12.

BI523	Acts of the Apostles	Dan Rogers
BI524	Epistles of Paul	Mike Morrison
CH502	Church History: The Second Millennium	Neil Earle
CM501	Pastoral Leadership	Russell Duke
FE502	Field Education 2	Randy Bloom
TH503	The Holy Spirit, the Church, and Eschatology	Gary Deddo

Summer 2021: Lectures will be posted Mondays, May 10 to July 12. June 24-July 4 is a study week. All coursework is to be done by Monday, August 9.

BI512	The Prophets	Tim Finlay
BI521	New Testament Background	Mike Morrison
CM503	Christian Counseling	Ted Johnston
CM506	Trinitarian Youth Ministry	Greg Williams, Jeff Broadnax
CM510	Polity of Grace Communion International	Greg Williams
CM511	Homiletics	Dan Rogers
FE501	Field Education	Randy Bloom
TH501	Nature of God and Jesus Christ	Russell Duke
TH507	Theology of C.S. Lewis	Gary Deddo

If fewer than five students register for a course, it may be cancelled, at the discretion of the instructor. Capstone courses for the master's degrees are offered in all semesters. When Monday is a holiday in the U.S., lectures may be posted on Tuesday.