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GCS NEWS

A Newsletter for Students and Alumni of Grace Communion Seminary

President's Letter



Dear Students, Alumni
and Donors,

A lot of life involves transitions—living between the times. In fact, the New Testament describes our lives here and now as located between the times of the two advents of Jesus Christ. As I write this we are in the church season of Advent that culminates at Christmas. It marks the beginning of the incarnate life of the Son of God with his birth. The season of Easter marks the end of Jesus' earthly life with his death and resurrection—and with his promise of return, his second advent. And so, we are living now, as members of his Body, the church, “between the times.”

It's not easy to live between the times. But we are given gifts of grace to do so. We are given the Word of God written, we are given the presence of the Holy Spirit and we are given the gift of prayer. All these gifts nourish and fortify our hope in the return of our Lord and Savior, when every tear will be wiped away, all things will be put right, all things made new.

As we pray, now, here, between the times, we do not pray alone. In fact, guided by Scripture and moved by the Spirit, we join our risen and ascended Lord and Savior in his intercessions for us. The words from the book of Hebrews are especially important: as our eternal and living mediator, he always “lives to make



intercessions” for us (Heb. 7:23-25).

A central work or ministry of the church of Jesus Christ, in these times-between-the-times, is prayer. Not to get our Triune God to do something he would rather not do, but rather to join with our risen Lord in what he is doing by his Word and Spirit between the times. Prayer is not a way to avoid doing something we ought to do. Rather, it is a vital way to participate in what the living God is doing in this present evil age, as it is passing away, as we wait, and even grieve in hope.

Often there are times when it seems there is little or nothing we can directly do to address

a concern or situation we are aware of. The challenge or obstacle, the depth or breadth of the problem, is far too deep or far too extensive. We may even sense we are being confronted with evil powers or influences far too great for us to overcome. Paul recognizes just this situation. In his letter to the Ephesians he reminds us that ultimately, we are “not contending with flesh

and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.” So what do we do? We “put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.” He goes on to describe prayer as the climax and conclusion of our putting on the whole armor of God. “And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with

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all kinds of prayers and requests.” By the mysterious ministry of the Holy Spirit we can offer up our own prayers to Jesus and join him in his own intercessions for us. It is in such prayer that we can “be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might” (Ephesians 6:10-18).

J. Oswald Sanders has written: “Prayer does not fit us for the greater work; prayer is the greater work.” Prayer is the central work and ministry of the church. And for anyone who has seriously taken it up, it is a demanding and arduous work. Perhaps that is why we are often tempted to minimize and even avoid it!

More extensively, but along the very same lines, let me share a lengthier quotation from Thomas F. Torrance, who puts prayer in its rightful place

and gives us hope in a world that can often seem dark and out of control. He indicates that prayer is the deepest and most effective way we can share in the continuing ministry of our once-born and now risen and ascended Lord Jesus Christ—in this time between the times of Christ’s first and second advents.

“So far as the Church in history and on earth is concerned, therefore, the



great connecting link between world history and the heavenly session of Christ is to be found in *prayer and intercession*. That is why when the New Testament speaks about the relations of Church and State it regularly directs the Church to prayer as its most important service, for it is in prayer that through the Spirit the heavenly intercessions of the risen and enthroned Lamb are made to echo in the intercessions of mankind and the people of God are locked with Christ in the great apocalyptic struggle with the forces of darkness. But because he who rules from the throne of God is the Lamb who has been slain, but behold he is alive for evermore and holds the keys of death and hell, the Church’s engagement in prayer is already a participation in the final victory of the Kingdom of Christ. Thus the life, mission, and worship of the Church on earth and in history are, as it were, in counterpoint to the victorious paens of the hosts above who surround the throne of the Lamb and worship and glorify God” (T.F. Torrance, *Space, Time and Resurrection*, Eerdmans, 1976, pp. 138-9).

May Torrance’s words concerning prayer be a reminder and encouragement to us all as we marvel in the miracle of what is good and joyful and as we face great sorrows and challenges in this time between our Lord and Savior’s two Advents. Before I conclude this letter, let me notify you of a few other transitions of a practical nature taking place in the life of Grace Communion Seminary.

First, I would like to announce that Lance McKinnon, who has been serving as our Liaison to our accrediting agency, the Distance Education Accrediting Commission, has just recently successfully completed his Doctor of Ministry degree. So, congratulations are due to him. But also, as we were anticipating, Lance will also transition to serving

full time as GCS Assistant Dean of Faculty. Congratulations, Dr. Lance McKinnon!

Another transition you may have heard about is my own. As of December 31st of this year I will be stepping down from serving as GCS president. It has been a privilege to serve in this capacity for the past six and a half years, but the time has come for me to direct more of my attention to retirement (well, semi-retirement). I will continue to work part-time as Professor of Theology, which will mostly involve teaching courses for GCS. I am looking forward to that!

And yet one more transition to announce. The office of president of GCS will be filled by Dr. Michael Morrison. He will remain our Dean of Faculty, but do so now with the help of our new Assistant Dean, Lance McKinnon!

You’ll find more news in the rest of this newsletter, but not all of them concerning transitions. I hope many of you will be able to join us for one of our upcoming courses.

As I close this final letter to you as president, let me express my thanks to GCI and GCS for the privilege of serving in this way. Also, I’m grateful for the support and encouragement of the GCS staff members over these past six years. I look forward to continuing to be a member of the faculty and am grateful that the seminary will continue to ably serve students and GCI. And most importantly, I’m grateful that we have a faithful Lord and Savior who not only accompanies us, but who leads the way through all our transitions by his Word and Spirit.

With prayer and thanksgiving,

*Dr. Gary Deddo
President*

Transitions in Leadership

— New Chair



Dr. Joseph Tkach



Dr. Randy Bloom

We are happy to announce some leadership transitions in Grace Communion Seminary. Our good friend Joseph Tkach has stepped down as board Chair after many years of service. We thank Dr. Tkach especially for his role in helping us center our doctrines in Incarnational Trinitarian theology, and in getting the seminary started and accredited.

Randy Bloom, new Chair of the GCI Board of Directors, has also become the Chair of the GCS Board of Directors. He has served on our Board for two years, as a GCS instructor for eight years, and a church elder for 45 years. He holds a Master of Divinity degree from Liberty University and a Doctor of Ministry from Trinity College of the Bible and Theological Seminary. We appreciate the experience he brings to this position.

— New Board Members



Ted Johnston



Dr. Dan Rogers



Eric Larison



Linda Rex

Dan Rogers and Ted Johnston have rotated off the board after completing four-year terms. Both of them will continue to teach for us, and we thank them for the additional service they gave on the board. They will be replaced by Eric Larison and Linda Rex.

Eric Larison has served as pastor of the GCI congregation in Syracuse, NY, for more than 20 years. He also brings with him 36 years' experience in teaching and educational administration. He earned a Master's Degree in English from California State University Los Angeles and a Certificate of Advanced Study in educational administration and supervision from the State University of New York in Oswego. He currently serves as the Executive Director of the New York State Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development, a professional learning organization for educators.

Linda Rex is a graduate of Ambassador College, holds a Master of Pastoral Studies, and is working towards her Master of Divinity at Grace Communion Seminary. Linda serves as lead pastor alongside other team members at Grace Communion Nashville (TN), where they are active in their church neighborhood. She also shares the gospel

through her "Our Life in the Trinity" blog, the church website and social media sites. She has a special interest in writing, music and the arts. We appreciate the perspective that she will bring to the Board.

We thank Eric and Linda for their willingness to serve on the Board.



New GCS Board

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— Change in Presidents



Dr. Gary
Deddo



Dr. Michael
Morrison



Another important transition is taking place in the seminary. After six and a half years as President, Dr. Gary Deddo is retiring at the end of the year. We appreciate his teaching and leadership in the seminary, as well as his instruction in Trinitarian theology. We are happy that he will continue to teach these courses and to serve as a resource for the seminary and the denomination.

The new president is well known in GCS circles, since he has been teach-

ing courses with GCS since its inception. Michael Morrison has worked for our denomination ever since graduating from Ambassador College in 1983. He worked as a writer, editor, executive assistant, and Dean of Faculty. He has a Master of Divinity degree from Azusa Pacific Seminary and a PhD in New Testament from Fuller Theological Seminary. He will continue teaching courses in New Testament.

— New Faculty Member

Lance McKinnon, our Liaison Officer, has completed all the requirements of the Doctor of Ministry degree at Shiloh University. He will become our Assistant Dean of Faculty. Dr. McKinnon has over seven years' experience as a GCI pastor and writes

sermons for GCI Equiper. He will be teaching courses in Christian Ministry and is already working with Ted Johnston to develop a new course in worship. We look forward to his growing role in our seminary.



Dr. Lance McKinnon

Introducing New Course



Gary & Cathy Deddo



a vision for service, outreach and mission. Cathy Deddo, who will be working with GCS for the first time, has a master's degree in theology and is a Bible teacher. In addition to co-authoring two books with her husband Gary, she is the author of a study guide on the book of James, called *The Letter of James: Meeting the Father of Lights in the Midst of Our Darkness*.

FEATURED CLASS

CM512
Small Group
Bible Study Leadership

If you would like any additional information about this course, please contact the registrar.



We are happy to announce a new course for GCS, CM512 Small Group Bible Study Leadership, taught by Gary Deddo, PhD and Cathy Deddo, MA. This course will train students to lead a small group for church congregations that are centered around Bible studies that contribute to a growing faith, hope and love for Jesus Christ. Students will learn and practice the skills needed to prepare for and lead Bible studies that foster fellowship, spiritual maturity and

Schedule of Courses 2022

All schedules are tentative

Spring 2022: Registration begins Jan. 4. The first lecture will be posted on Tuesday, January 18. Other lectures will be posted on Mondays, January 25 through March 21. All work is to be completed by April 11. Easter is April 17.

BI522	The Gospels	Mike Morrison
CM504	Practice of Ministry	Ted Johnston
CM512	Small Group Bible Study Leadership	Cathy & Gary Deddo
FE501-3	Field Education	Randy Bloom
TH505	Doctrine of the Trinity	Gary Deddo

Summer 2022: Registration begins April 25. Lectures will be posted Mondays, May 9 to July 18. No work is posted for the week of July 4-10. All coursework is to be done by August 7.

BI520	New Testament Survey	Mike Morrison
CH502	Church History: The Second Millennium	Neil Earle
CM501	Pastoral Leadership	TBD
CM503	Christian Counseling	Ted Johnston
CM511	Homiletics	Dan Rogers
TH503	The Holy Spirit, the Church and Last Things	Gary Deddo

Fall 2022: Registration begins Aug. 23. The first lecture will be posted on Tuesday, Sept. 7. Subsequent lectures will be posted on Mondays, Sept. 13 to Nov. 8. All work is to be completed by Dec. 5.

BI501	Biblical Interpretation (Hermeneutics)	Mike Morrison
BI522	The Prophets	Tim Finlay
CH501	Church History: The First Millennium	Neil Earle
CM506	Trinitarian Youth Ministry	Jeff Broadnax
CM507	Experiencing the Trinity	Larry Hinkle
CM510	Polity of Grace Communion International	Greg Williams
FE501-3	Field Education	Randy Bloom
TH501	Nature of God and Jesus Christ	Gary Deddo

All schedules are tentative. If fewer than five students register for a course, it may be cancelled, at the discretion of the instructor. **Thesis and Capstone courses for the master's degrees are offered in all semesters.**

CONGRATULATIONS to our 2021 Graduates

These students
have completed their
**Master of Theological Studies
(MTS):**

**Cynthia Quarles
Tim Wakeley**

This student
has completed his
**Master of Pastoral Studies
(MPS):**

Anthony Gregory

CTS & ADCM Earned

These students earned a
Certificate of Theological Studies (CTS):

Valerie Beverly
John Gent
Alaric Kurzawa

Annette Lewis
Sam Lewis
Andrew Montgomery

These students earned the
Advanced Diploma of
Christian Ministry (ADCM):

Valerie Beverly
Alaric Kurzawa
Sam Lewis
Ebenezer Maninang



THANK YOU FOR PARTNERING WITH GCS

As the year draws to an end, we look back with grateful hearts for those whose passion and enthusiasm for GCS have moved them to partner with us through financial support and prayer. Your sharing with us is a blessing for the seminary to be a blessing to those we serve. We pray God's grace and blessing for you in the new year.

WE HOPE YOU WILL CONSIDER GCS IN YOUR YEAR-END GIVING

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

Every gift is God's provision for his work in Grace Communion Seminary.



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