



GRACE COMMUNION
SEMINARY

GCS NEWS

A Newsletter for Students and Alumni of Grace Communion Seminary

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President's Letter



Do you remember?

When the ancient Israelites came into the land of Canaan, they were told to remember and retell their story:

⁵ *A wandering Aramean was my ancestor; he went down into Egypt and lived there as an alien, few in number, and there he became a great nation, mighty and populous.*

⁶ *When the Egyptians treated us harshly and afflicted us, by imposing hard labor on us, ⁷ we cried to the Lord, the God of our ancestors; the Lord heard our voice and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression.*

⁸ *The Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with a terrifying display of power, and with signs and wonders; ⁹ and he brought us into this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey.* (Deuteronomy 26:5-9)



This creed begins in verse 5 with Abraham in the third person, but starting in verse 6, it talks about “us.” It’s like we were there. We were slaves in Egypt, and God rescued us and blessed us. The people of Israel of every generation were to identify themselves as participants in the national story.

God made a covenant with the people of Israel at Mt. Sinai (Horeb), but because of the people’s persistent disobedience, that generation died in the wilderness. When the next generation was about to enter the land, Moses led them in a renewal of the covenant, and he told them:

² *The Lord our God made a covenant with us at Horeb. ³ Not with our ancestors did the Lord make this covenant but with us, who are all of us here alive today. ⁴ The Lord spoke with you face to face at the mountain, out of the fire.* (Deuteronomy 5:2-4)

Some of the older people in this audience may have been children at Mt. Sinai, but most of the people were not there. Nevertheless, Moses speaks to them as if they were. He wants them to see themselves as being there. It is their story.

The traditional Passover liturgy includes a similar provision:

²⁶ *When your children ask you, “What does this observance mean to you?” ²⁷ you shall say, “It is the Passover sacrifice to the Lord, for he passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt when he struck down the Egyptians but spared our houses.”* (Exodus 12:26-27)

Again, the people are invited to remember not just the history, but to see themselves as part of that history. They were there. They suffered under Pharaoh. They saw the mighty works of God. They heard the words from Sinai. They failed to do what they had promised to do. They experienced God’s mercy. They are living in the same story. We all need to remember where we’ve come from, how we got here, and how we should respond.

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The Christian story

Christians also have a point of reference that defines who we are – it’s the story of Jesus. One song asks the question: Were you there when they crucified our Lord? Were you there when they put him in the tomb? A historian might say it’s a dumb question, because we weren’t even alive then.



But the Bible says we were there. Do you remember it?

Paul says, “We were buried with him” (Romans 6:4). “If we died with Christ” – and he assumes that we did – “we believe that we will also live with him” (verse 8). We were there when he called, “Follow me.” We were there when he fed the 5000, when he called Lazarus to come out of the grave. His story is our story.

We were with him at the Transfiguration, at the wedding in Cana, at the temptations in the wilderness, on the journey to Jerusalem, at the triumphal entry and the Garden of Gethsemane. Do you remember being there, watching, wondering, falling asleep? Do you remember when he was arrested, beaten, nailed to a cross? We should, because we were nailed with him.

“Our old self was crucified with him,” says Paul in verse 6. Praise God that we were there. We were slaves and he set us free. It’s not about our ancestors, it’s not about our old church – it’s about us. The covenant is with us. Do we remember the cup of the new covenant? Jesus shared it with us. Remember?

Historically, two criminals were crucified with Jesus, and perhaps we can see ourselves in them as well. One of the men insulted Jesus; the other asked to be with Jesus in eternity. Perhaps our first reaction to Jesus was like the first man, but now it is the second. And Jesus tells us, even now you are with me.

(OK, for historians, those are not the exact words. The criminal on the cross asked about paradise, the “waiting area” for entry into the kingdom of God, and Jesus didn’t have time for a long explanation of precisely what this might be – he just responded to the man according to what he had been asked. I’m taking a bit of literary license here. Our old criminal self was crucified with Jesus, and we can see some parallels with this conversation between Jesus and the criminal. For the remainder of the story, however, we are with Jesus.)

Raised with Christ

The good news is that we were crucified with Jesus; the good news is also that we were raised with him. Paul writes, “If you have been raised with Christ” – and he implies that we were – “seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God” (Colossians 3:1). We are new people in him, we have a new life – and that means not just more of the same, but a new kind of life, a new reason for life, a new way of life. We are with Christ.

Do you remember that he “made us alive together with Christ” (Ephesians

2:5)? Do you remember the surge of new life in the power of the Spirit? We were there; I hope we remember.

Do you remember rising into heaven with Jesus? Do you remember being “seated...with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus”? Oh, what a glorious memory! We were there; we *are* there, in Christ Jesus our Lord.

I don’t remember a lot of details from my childhood, or when I went to university, or Ambassador College, or when my children were young. But I do remember being baptized, and I think that’s a good thing, because that is a reminder that my life has changed with Jesus Christ. The old self died with Christ, and a new person lives in and is defined in Jesus.



Do you remember your baptism? Do you remember dying with Christ, and being raised to new life in Christ? Were you there when they crucified our Lord? Yes, we were there. We were there when they put him in the tomb, we were there, and we came out with him. Our life is in him. Do you remember?

As we get near to Pentecost, remember that it’s part of our story, too. This is part of our identity, too. We were there when the Holy Spirit came upon us, changing us. We hide no more – we are confident as we share the good news about Jesus Christ that is also good news about us. How well do we remember it?

*Michael Morrison, PhD
President*

Around the World in Four Years



In December 2019, Johannes Maree earned two certificates from Grace Communion Seminary, a Certificate of Theological Studies and a Diploma of Christian Ministry. These certificates were mailed to his residence in South Africa in early 2020. Unbeknownst to us, the certificates never arrived at their intended destination. Imagine our surprise when four years later, they were returned to the offices of GCS as undeliverable! By this time, Johannes had nearly completed his Master of Theological Studies degree.

When Johannes completed his degree, we decided that it would not be prudent to mail his diploma in the same manner. We attempted to mail it to him while he was visiting a family member in another nation over the holidays, but this did not work out. Instead, we were able to give the diploma to Regional Director Takalani Musekwa when he was visiting the Home Office earlier this year. Pastor Takalani then personally transported the diploma to South Africa and presented it to Johannes at a pastoral conference at Aruka in Bela-Bela, South Africa.

Thank you Pastor Takalani for delivering and presenting Johannes with his diploma (and certificates). Congratulations to Johannes and also to Pastor Takalani, who is also a recent GCS graduate.

Georgia McKinnon — Registrar



Summer Semester Online Convocation May 13, 2025

A Time to Gather for Devotion and Prayer

Join us for our next convocation, where we meet by Zoom to share in a short devotional and prayers for the work we are doing together. The meeting is open to current students, alumni, faculty members and board members from around the globe. We hope to see you there.

The convocation for the Summer semester will be held on May 13, 2025 at 8:00pm Eastern Standard Time. Invitations with Zoom links will be sent to all students who

register for spring semester courses. If you aren't taking a class this semester but still want to attend the assembly, send an email to Georgia McKinnon at registrar@gcs.edu.

In a world with more than 24 time zones, we know that everyone may not be able to attend our gathering. If you have a schedule conflict at this time slot, let us know for our future planning considerations.



GCPodcasts featuring GCS Instructors

Three GCS instructors who are teaching a course this semester were interviewed on the GCPodcast with Cara Garity. The interviews were targeted on the GCI denominational theme Kingdom Culture. Using

the links below you can listen to these recordings and hear how each instructor relates the intersection of this theme to the teaching offered in their courses.



Theological Ethics with Dr. Gary Deddo

<https://resources.gci.org/media/videos/theological-ethics-w-dr-gary-deddo>

In this episode, Dr. Gary Deddo and Gara Garrity discuss theological ethics and its impact on daily ministry.



Missional Rhythms with Dr. Charles Fleming

<https://resources.gci.org/media/videos/missional-rhythms-w-charles-fleming-3>

In this episode, Dr. Charles Fleming and Gara Garrity discuss missional living and how to apply it practically in ministry.



Ministry Leadership with Dr. Lance McKinnon

<https://resources.gci.org/media/videos/ministry-leadership-w-lance-mckinnon>

In this episode, Dr. Lance McKinnon and Gara Garrity discuss the theological foundations of Christian living and their relevance to our daily ministry.



Schedule of Courses

All schedules are tentative

Summer 2025: Registration begins April 21. The first lecture will be posted on Monday, May 5. Other lectures will be posted on Mondays, May 12 through July 14. All work is to be completed by August 3.

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| BI523 | Acts of the Apostles | Dan Rogers |
| BI524 | Epistles of Paul | Michael Morrison |
| CH502 | Church History: The Second Millennium | Stephen Dolson-Andrew |
| CM501 | Foundations of Christian Ministry | Lance McKinnon |
| CM514 | Missional Living | Charles Fleming |
| FE501-3 | Field Education | Randy Bloom/Jeff Broadnax |
| TH501 | The Triune God Revealed in Jesus Christ | Gary Deddo |

Fall 2025: Registration begins August 18. The first lecture will be posted on Monday, September 1. Other lectures will be posted on Mondays, September 8 through November 3. All work is to be completed by December 7.

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| BI501 | Biblical Interpretation | Michael Morrison |
| BI512 | Prophets | Tim Finlay |
| CH501 | Church History: The First Millennium | Stephen Dolson-Andrew |
| CM504 | Practice of Ministry | Ted Johnston |
| CM507 | Experiencing the Trinity | Larry Hinkle |
| TH503 | The Holy Spirit, the Church and Last Things | Gary Deddo/Lance McKinnon |
| TH505 | Doctrine of the Trinity | 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.**

THANK YOU FOR PARTNERING WITH GCS

We are thankful for all 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 and a blessing to those we serve. We pray God's grace and blessing for you.

PLEASE CONSIDER DONATING TO GCS AS PART OF YOUR YEARLY GIVING.

Financial support from alumni and friends like you has a profound impact on the seminary's mission of *"Equipping Men and Women for Church-based Ministry."*

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



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