



GRACE COMMUNION SEMINARY

# GCS NEWS

A Newsletter for Students and Alumni of Grace Communion Seminary

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## President's Letter



### Our goals for our students

Our mission is to equip leaders who equip members for works of ministry (Ephesians 4:12). Within that mission, we might also describe some of the goals that we have for our work:

Our goals draw on the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20). Jesus told the people who would lead his church: Make disciples, baptize them and teach them. This command is fleshed out in the rest of the New Testament, such as with Paul's admonition: "Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction" (2 Timothy 4:2).

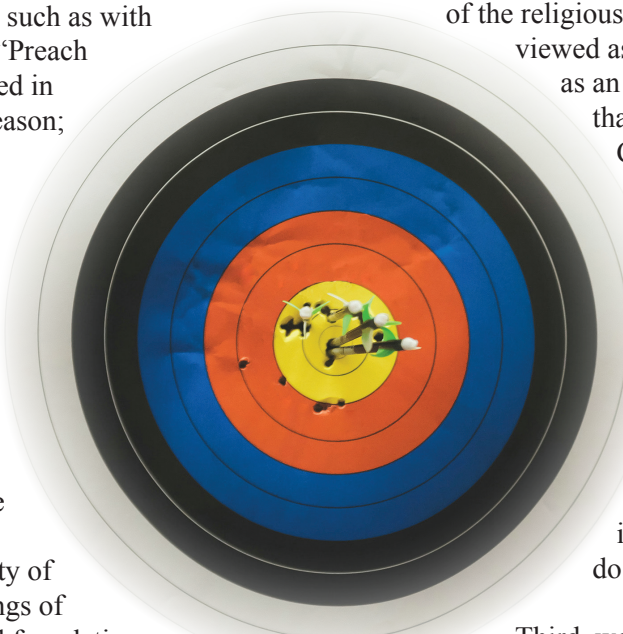
We aim to help the church understand what Jesus taught and to obey what he commanded. The church is not just a feel-good community of friends – the teachings of Jesus give us a solid foundation for relationships to the triune God, to believers, and to those who do not believe. They also help people have an accurate understanding of their own role in these relationships.

Our goals touch on our relationships in three areas:

First, we want education to improve our relationship with God. In some sectors of the religious world, the academic environment promotes skepticism and encourages students to disagree with the texts and orthodoxy. We want instead to promote faith and worship, to encourage students to submit to the authority of the biblical text and the church's ancient creeds. The more we learn about God, the more reasons we have to love and praise him.

Second, we want education to promote healthy relationships between believers, and to promote our collective worship and work in and through the church. In some sectors of the religious world, the church is viewed as an option, sometimes as an embarrassment rather than an environment Christ uses to develop his people. We want to help the church carry out Jesus' commands more faithfully and more accurately by helping leaders understand the Bible and the theology of what Jesus has done, is doing, and will yet do.

Third, we want education to help our relationships with people who do not believe in or trust in Christ as their Savior. Some religious groups present an adversarial relationship between believers and "the world"; others have allowed modern culture to set the agenda and methodology of the church. Some deny that the church has anything to say to the culture; others deny that



we have any responsibility toward our culture. As prophet, priest and king, Jesus set a holistic example, where true religion includes words and actions. If we neglect beliefs and focus on actions, we promote pretense; if we focus on beliefs without actions, we promote Gnosticism. We teach that beliefs should make a difference in what we do; faith leads to works. We have a message for non-Christians, and part of that message is the way we live. God loved the world by sending his Son to do something for it, and part of what he did is to teach and to

command more teaching. Last, we might mention a more personal goal: We want leaders to understand who they are in Christ, in the church, and in the world. In all three, we are servants or slaves of Christ. It is to him that we must answer. We want to help leaders grow in the way that they live out the grace of our Lord and Savior, and this comes in part through growth in knowledge (2 Peter 3:18).

As teachers in this seminary, we believe that Christ has gifted us and

called us to this role in the church. We teach not only in obedience to Christ's command, but also because we find joy in doing what he wants us to do. We are excited by the things we have learned and we enjoy sharing them with others. We serve in our niche to help you serve in yours.

*Michael Morrison, PhD  
President*

## GCS DEVOTIONALS

*Words of Faith Seeking Understanding*

# An Easter Epiphany

By Lance McKinnon

### Psalm 16

*Keep me safe, my God, for in you I take refuge. I say to the Lord, "You are my Lord; apart from you I have no good thing." I say of the holy people who are in the land, "They are the noble ones in whom is all my delight." Those who run after other gods will suffer more and more. I will not pour out libations of blood to such gods or take up their names on my lips. Lord, you alone are my portion and my cup; you make my lot secure. The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; surely I have a delightful inheritance. I will praise the Lord, who counsels me; even at night my heart instructs me. I keep my eyes always on the Lord. With him at my right hand, I will not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure, because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead, nor will you let your faithful one see decay. You make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand. (NIV)*

I had an epiphany this Easter that came from the collision of two seemingly disconnected sources. One is Psalm 16, a passage that is regularly visited during the Easter season. The other was, to my chagrin, the ever-popular Easter egg hunt. Personally, this common tradition held by many churches on Easter Sunday has left me scratching my head in puzzlement. I have failed to find any significant witness from eggs, bunnies, and chocolate that point to the Risen Lord. That all changed, unexpectedly, when hearing a reading of Psalm 16.

There was no egg hunt scheduled on the day of its reading, nor was one on my mind. However, upon hearing the second verse, "I say to the Lord, "You are my Lord; apart from you I have no good thing" an image surprisingly popped into my mind. It was a picture of children excitedly gathering bright shiny eggs in an open field, hidden by adults who clearly never won at hide-and-seek, and placing every one of those eggs into a basket that never left the child's side.

There it was. A witness to the Risen Lord that is on display each year in this quirky activity of children filling a basket with eggs. Somehow, I had missed it. But thanks to Psalm 16 it now stands out as a hilarious indictment of what we adults so often assume as settled, sound, and sage advice. Advice these egg-gathering-children have summarily dismissed—never put all your eggs in one basket.

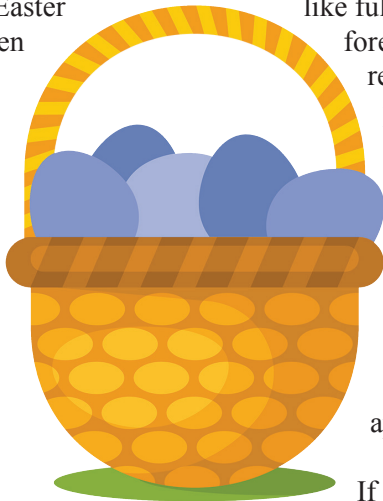
In our world today, putting all your eggs in one basket can quickly earn you the label of foolish or naïve. You may be accused of being a "basket case." And for good reason. Many a fortune has been lost on the allure of cashing in on that one single investment basket over following the sound financial advice of diversifying between many. When it comes to purchases, it's better to shop around the many baskets where goods and services can be found. If you are facing a car repair or health crisis, we are told to seek second, third, and fourth opinions. Every day, in one way or another, we are reminded that whatever we do, we should be sure

not to put all our eggs in one basket.

However, on Easter day, that is exactly what our children will be doing if they participate in an Easter egg hunt. Their parents hand them one basket, and without question or protest, they run to put as many eggs into it as they can. King David most certainly didn't have Easter egg hunts in mind when he wrote Psalm 16. Nevertheless, he is proclaiming the same truth that can be seen, at least metaphorically, in an Easter egg hunt. Apart from the Lord, we have no good thing. David and Easter egg hunts are telling us that the Lord Jesus, the Risen Lord, is the only basket we can trust with all our eggs. Unlike everything else in our world that requires diversifying, shopping around, and second opinions, Jesus alone is fully trustworthy.

David goes further and tells us what happens when we follow the advice of having more than one basket when he writes, "Those who run after other gods will suffer more and more." He follows this up using some analogies of his own with, "Lord, you alone are my portion and my cup; you make my lot secure." Instead of using a "basket" as a stand-in for the Lord, David employs the use of "portion," "cup," and "lot." Different images, same message. Only the Lord is trustworthy, so you can trust him with all your "eggs."

For David, trusting in multiple "baskets," or running "after other gods" doesn't just amount to a loss in a few baskets with some gain in others, but rather a multiplication of losses, a suffering "more and more."



With this description David helps fill in some gaps our "basket" metaphor leaves. Jesus is not just one who holds our goods for safe keeping. He is himself the very good we are seeking. One of the themes of Psalm 16 is that joy and satisfaction are found in the Lord. The language throughout is permeated with phrases and words like fullness of joy, pleasures forevermore, glad hearts, rejoicing to the fullest, pleasant places, delight, and good, among other similar expressions. David has in mind that the Lord is our ultimate and complete joy and satisfaction, not just a means to that end. Joy and satisfaction are lost apart from the Lord.

If we need some assurance that Psalm 16 is talking about the Risen Lord Jesus, we have it from the Apostle Peter, who chose to quote from it in his first sermon, at the birth of the Church on Pentecost (Acts 2). With Peter's usage we are to know that Psalm 16 is rightly applied to Jesus more than to David. For example, more than David, Jesus is the one who set God before his face and trusted in God as his ally. Also, more than David, Jesus is the one who trusted God in his life and his death. And finally, more than David, Jesus trusted that after his death, his body would not be left in the blackness of the grave. And he wasn't, as Easter celebrates, and that's why Psalm 16 is a permanent fixture during the Easter season.

I think it's noteworthy that for the first sermon preached by the Apostle Peter, on the day the church was birthed, he was inspired to use Psalm 16 to point to Christ, a psalm that reminds us that the Lord is trustworthy, and all our joy and satisfaction is found only in him. Peter was essentially saying, the only

basket you can put all your eggs in is Jesus Christ, the Risen Lord.

That tells us a bit about what it means to "be the church." That phrase gets thrown around a lot. We are rightly encouraged to "be the church." However, we should ask, "what do we mean by this?" Is it not to be those who have put their full trust in the Lord? Is it not to be the adopted children of the Father who have discovered that Jesus alone is the one to trust with all our "eggs"?

Perhaps that is why the church is essentially called to be a worshiping and witnessing community. That's the purpose of the church, to worship and witness, which flows out of its identity of belonging to the Lord. Worship and witness are both an exercise of trust. We do not worship one we do not trust, and we wouldn't share any "good news" about one who is not trustworthy. On that ground, I think it's safe to say that Psalm 16 also encourages us to "be the church."

Here is one final thought on that topic: We are not to be the church apart from Christ. That would, by definition, be contradictory. Not only are we to see in Psalm 16 the Risen Lord, we are to see ourselves in union with him. He is the "basket" who never leaves our side, in whom all the joy and satisfaction of the Triune God is poured out on us by the Spirit. And as we see in Romans 6:4-5, our union with Christ gives us a participation in his resurrection life.

#### **Romans 6:4-5**

*We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his. (NIV)*



## Welcome to the GCS Staff

### Join us in welcoming Hazel Raduban to the staff of Grace Communion Seminary

Hazel will be joining us as the new Registrar beginning in late June. She comes to us with a background in education, serving as a classroom teacher in an elementary setting, as well as having valuable experience as a school site coordinator. Hazel also shares a history in Grace Communion International and has served in various leadership roles for over a decade. Her experience and array of skills make her a welcome and valuable part of the GCS staff.

Welcome Hazel! We are excited for your arrival.

## Fall Schedule of Courses

All schedules are tentative

**Fall 2026:** Registration begins August 31. The first lecture will be posted on Monday, September 14. Other lectures will be posted on Mondays, September 21 through November 16. All work is to be completed by December 13.

BI524	Epistles of Paul	Mike Morrison
CH501	Church History: The First Millennium	Stephen Dolson-Andrew
CM501	Foundations of Christian Ministry	Lance McKinnon
CM514	Missional Living	Charles Fleming
FE501-3	Field Education	Jeff Broadnax
TH502	Jesus Christ, the Nature of Humans and Salvation	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.**

## Summer Semester Online Convocation » June 1, 2026



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 June 1, 2026 at 8:00pm Eastern Standard Time.** Invitations with Zoom links will be sent to all students who register for summer 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](mailto: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.

# CONGRATULATIONS To Our Recent Graduates

Master of Pastoral Studies (MPS)

**David Borum**

Master of Theological Studies (MTS)

**Ebenezer Maninang**



## 2026 GRADUATION

Grace Communion Seminary will hold a graduation ceremony at the 2026 GCI Celebration in Dallas, Texas. It will be held in the Main Ballroom on Friday, July 24<sup>th</sup>, from 4:30pm - 6:00pm. We look forward to seeing all those who are able to attend and we are excited to celebrate those who have completed their degree programs with GCS.



## 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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3120 Whitehall Park Drive, Charlotte, NC 28273  
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