



GRACE COMMUNION  
SEMINARY

# GCS NEWS

A Newsletter for Students and Alumni of Grace Communion Seminary

## GCS STAFF

PRESIDENT

**Dr. Michael Morrison**  
dean@gcs.edu

DEAN OF FACULTY

**Dr. Michael Morrison**  
dean@gcs.edu

PROFESSOR OF  
THEOLOGY

**Dr. Gary Deddo**  
gary.deddo@gcs.edu

ASSISTANT DEAN OF  
FACULTY

**Dr. Lance McKinnon**  
lance.mckinnon@gcs.edu

REGISTRAR

**Georgia McKinnon**  
registrar@gcs.edu

## INSTRUCTORS

**Randy Bloom**  
**Jeff Broadnax**  
**Dr. Gary W. Deddo**  
**Dr. Timothy Finlay**  
**Dr. Larry Hinkle**  
**Ted Johnston**  
**Dr. Lance McKinnon**  
**Dr. Michael Morrison**  
**Dr. Dan Rogers**  
**Dr. Greg Williams**

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

CHAIR

**Dr. Randy Bloom**

**Dr. Gary W. Deddo**  
**Becky Deuel**  
**Eric Larison**  
**Robert Meade**  
**Dr. Michael Morrison**  
**Linda Rex**

## CONTACT INFO:

3120 Whitehall Park Drive,  
Charlotte, NC 28273  
**1-800-851-2611**  
**or 1-980-495-3978**  
Fax: 1-844-350-3419

## President's Letter



### Informed by Grace

Central to Christianity is the teaching that we are saved by grace, not by what we do. “When the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of any works of righteousness that we had done, but according to his mercy” (Titus 3:4-5, NRSV). “By grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not ... the result of works” (Eph. 2:8-9). We can never do enough good works to earn our salvation. The gospel tells us that humans cannot do it, but that Christ has done it for us.

We are saved by grace. A related point is that we *know* only by grace. By ourselves, we humans are not able to figure out the way of salvation. Jesus came not only to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins, but also to reveal the Father (Matthew 11:27). Jesus is “the way, and the truth, and the life” (John 14:6); if he had not come we would not know the way, the truth or the life. We might have a partial picture, based on the Old Testament, but even that is possible only because God took the initiative to reveal himself to Abraham and his descendants.

Without Jesus, we wouldn’t even know what salvation *is*. Different cultures have very different ideas about whether there is life after death, what that life might be like, and how that makes any difference to the way we live now.

We can know what salvation is, and the way it comes to us, only by grace. If we could have figured this out on our own, then we did not need Jesus to reveal it to us. The gospel reveals not just a change in our destination—it also reveals to us something of what that future will be like, as we share in the life and love of the Father, Son and Spirit. There is no point in accepting a future life with Christ if we don’t also want to live in a way that agrees with that future.



The gospel reveals a way of thinking that is characteristic of the divine life. Some call it cruciform love—love shown to us by Jesus in his willingness to be crucified for our salvation. We might call it a sacrificial love, love that is willing to give up our own privileges in order to help others. This kind of love is defined not by human standards, but by Christ.

Humans have all sorts of ideas about what love is. Some are close to the truth; others are far from it. How can we know which ideas are good and right? Which is the way that will

Cont.

Cont.

make future life enjoyable forever, for everyone? We can know only if we have a benchmark, a standard by which ideas can be measured. That benchmark is Jesus Christ; he is the perfect embodiment of love. He reveals to us what love, grace and truth are.

We each have our own experience with Jesus. Some think Jesus is like this, some think he is like that. Again, we can know only by grace, by what God graciously gives us – in this case in written form. The Bible reveals to us that Jesus existed, how he lived, what he taught, and the significance of his life and death for us. We value

God’s grace given to us in Jesus, and his grace given to us in Scripture.

In Grace Communion Seminary we see Scripture as the basis for our understanding of what salvation is and how it is given to us. Scripture is the primary reference point for Trinitarian theology, for ethics, and for ministry. In our desire to follow Christ, we keep these connected.

Theology is a lens through which we read Scripture, and Scripture is a lens through which we view theology; they are mutually informing. But they are not a closed loop in which we see only what we already believe – we recognize that our understanding is

not perfect and we need to be open to more growth, as enabled by the Holy Spirit. It has happened in our past and we hope that, by God’s grace, it continues in our future.

*Michael Morrison, PhD  
President*

“The church must always turn to the Holy Scripture as the immediate source and norm of all revealed knowledge of God and of his saving purpose in Jesus Christ.”

— T.F. Torrance, *Divine Meaning: Studies in Patristic Interpretation* (Edinburgh, U.K.: T&T Clark, 1995), 5.

## Introducing New Course



We are happy to announce a new course for GCS, CM513 Trinitarian Worship, taught by Lance McKinnon, D.Min.

The total life of the church can be summed up in one word—Worship. Worship is not limited to a stand-alone activity or a one-day-a-week ceremony containing music, preaching, and ritual. Worship is a whole-life, personal and communal response to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit. In addition, worship is a mediated response provided only in Christ. This mediated response envelops all the church does in her mission and service in the world. In this way, Jesus, as our High Priest, serves as our true Worship Leader. These theological foundations, along with others, bring far-reaching implications to the local church, their pastors and worship leaders, along with the members they serve. Our goal

in CM513 will be to return once again to these foundations and to the Triune God revealed in Jesus Christ where worship is renewed by the power of the Holy Spirit.

In that spirit of renewal CM513 will also address the corporate worship that is conducted by local churches as an invitation to discern and align efforts to more fully participate in Jesus’ worship of the Father in the power of the Spirit. It does so by exploring how doxology (worship) flows from and is informed by incarnational Trinitarian theology.

The course also looks at the history of the development of the church’s liturgy of worship and other related issues. The course seeks to aid in equipping pastors, worship leaders, and others responsible for planning and conducting worship in a local church context,

### FEATURED CLASS CM513 Trinitarian Worship

by providing a theological-historical framework along with potential tools to consider.

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

Lance McKinnon, D.Min  
*Assistant Dean of Faculty*





Neil Earle

We were greatly saddened in late December by the death of GCS faculty member Neil Earle, who taught our church history courses.

Neil enjoyed teaching, and his students gave him high marks for his work. He enjoyed reading a wide range of topics, and enjoyed understanding how human events worked together. His enthusiasm for the subject made his history courses more interesting. He participated in his classes, and liked to share the good work that students did. He submitted his grades for CH501, and then requested that CH502 be delayed until summer, because he had a health issue “that will require work into the new year.” We look forward to when we can learn from him again. We are thankful for his many years of service – and for the work that his wife, Susan, did as our Registrar for many of those years.

— Mike Morrison,  
GCS President

For the many years that I did not know Neil personally, I had a great deal of respect for him as a writer for our denominational publications. As our ministry orbits began to intersect, I had many opportunities to get to know him better on a more personal

## Tribute: Neil Earle

February 25, 1947 — December 23, 2021

level. When he and Susan retired and moved to Memphis, I got to know him better. We shared an interest in history and various genres of literature, and we would occasionally share new and old information we had or learned. He always had some good anecdotes or quotes to share.

I was impressed with the way he immediately immersed himself into Memphis living: writing articles for the local paper, participating in social/cultural events, making presentations and participating in a local C.S. Lewis group. He also joined an informal group of local pastors I had been a part of. They embraced him heartily and enjoyed his company. It was a great honor to officiate at his funeral. He was a true gentleman and scholar. Many of us will miss his unique personality and gifts. Our loss is heaven’s gain.

— Randy Bloom,  
GCS & GCI Chair of the Board

Neil was one of the most knowledgeable men I have ever known. He was dearly loved by his students. Personally, I appreciated how positive he was and supportive toward the church. He was a voice of encouragement. He is missed!

— Greg Williams,  
GCI President

Neil Earle was one of my favorite writers and speakers. He had an incredible wit developed from his life’s experiences, which began in Newfoundland. He was one of my dear email friends with whom I had a monthly dialogue. He always had a new and interesting story or

quote for me. Nearly on a monthly basis, we would have an exchange on everything from Belgian beer to the National Hockey League. Several of our mutual friends who are hockey fans would annually discuss the potential winner of Lord Stanley’s Cup. Neal was fairly good at predicting the winner, so much so that a few of us nicknamed him our “oracle of hockey.”

He had amazing connections, from family members to chance acquaintances. For example, his cousin, Davis Earle, was a nuclear physicist who was part of the team that studied neutrinos and won the Nobel Prize in 2015. Neil often had a one-liner that proved entertaining. Did you know that Napoleon’s challenge to his Cardinal—“Prove God exists in one word”—had this simple and effective answer—“Jews!” I miss the regular contact and exchanges I had with Neil; but I know that they are continuing even now as he has joined eternity with Christ.

— Joe Tkach,  
former GCS & GCI Chair of the Board & GCI President

Having taken both of Neil’s classes and serving with him in the seminary it became very apparent that Neil was very invested in his students. He was always heavily involved throughout his classes, interacting with students in the forums and through personal messages of encouragement. It was clear Neil wasn’t just teaching history, he was discipling people. He is a bright witness of the Father’s love.

— Lance McKinnon,  
Assistant Dean of Faculty



## Cont.

Neil Earle was a colleague, a pastor, and a mentor. We worked in the Editorial department during the early 1990s where Neil produced a stream of brilliantly worded articles. Just as important to me were the numerous wide-ranging discussions we had in the corridors. He was my pastor for about two decades, and his sermons were never dull. Among the many things I am grateful to him for as a pastor was how he and Susan made Glendora church a welcoming place for my Catholic wife, Eileen. Neil was a very encouraging mentor who provided me with numerous opportunities to develop my scholarship and teaching. He also never stopped learning himself. Neil Earle was a good man, whom I miss very much.

— *Tim Finlay,*  
*GCS Instructor*

I have known and collaborated in ministry with Neil over the last 30-some years. It has always been a pleasure because of Neil's warm and encouraging ways. He was truly a Barnabas to me and I am forever grateful. I miss him greatly, and look forward to our reunion. Rest in peace, brother.

— *Ted Johnston,*  
*GCS Instructor*

I knew Neil Earle for many years and in many capacities. Neil was

a Christian, a husband, a pastor, a teacher, a historian, and a friend. Those are some mighty impressive things to be. I will also always remember Neil for his kindness, graciousness, sensitivity, and delightful sense of humor. It was such a joy to have known him and he will, indeed, be very greatly missed.

— *Dan Rogers,*  
*GCS Instructor*

My first introduction to Neil Earle was as a classmate in a GCS class. Later, I was a student in both of his Church History classes and I also had the privilege of working with him in my role as Registrar of GCS. His desire to learn and his enthusiasm for Church History was infectious. I enjoyed conversing with him as a classmate, student and co-worker. Though he is greatly missed, we look forward to seeing him again.

— *Georgia McKinnon*  
*GCS Registrar*

There were some lovely memories of Neil's life and as I listened to them [from Neil's memorial service] I reflected on how blessed I am to have been able to study on his courses over the last year. I am so pleased that I did. He was a truly gifted teacher with a passion for his subject and a genuine warmth of personality that inspired others. Neil was a lovely man. I know that he will be sadly missed by all who knew him. My prayers are with

his family and for all his friends at GCS and those within the church family who are deeply grieved by his passing. He is with his Saviour in the peace and joy that lies beyond.

— *John Gent,*  
*GCS Student*

Neil was an excellent tutor on my GCS semester last year, he so obviously loved what he did and poured himself into it. It was a blessing to be taught by him. He left a great impression and example.

— *Andrew Montgomery,*  
*GCS Student*

Learned a lot from Church History as my professor. Learned about the lives and faith of early Christians which strengthened and deepened my faith in the Triune God. Thank you Professor Neil Earle!

— *Ebenezer Maninang,*  
*GCS Student*

He was my first instructor with GCS. I really appreciated his sense of humor and knowledge of the Christian Church. I learned much from him. Sending prayers for all the family and friends.

— *Tamar Gray,*  
*GCS Student*

## Summer 2022 From the Registrar



I want to extend a hearty welcome to our new students in 2022. I also want to take a minute to remind our current students to reach out with any questions you may have regarding specific classes or a projected course of study. I am happy to advise.

*Georgia McKinnon*  
*Registrar*



# Schedule of Courses 2022

All schedules are tentative

**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
CM503	Christian Counseling	Ted Johnston
CM508	Church Planting and Development	Randy Bloom
CM511	Homiletics	Dan Rogers
CM513	Trinitarian Worship	Lance McKinnon

**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.

BI522	The Prophets	Tim Finlay
BI524	Epistles of Paul	Mike Morrison
CM501	Foundations of Christian Ministry	Lance McKinnon
CM506	Trinitarian Youth Ministry	Jeff Broadnax
CM507	Experiencing the Trinity	Larry Hinkle
FE501-3	Field Education	Randy Bloom
TH502	Nature of Humans and Salvation	Gary Deddo

**Spring 2023:** 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.

BI501	Biblical Interpretation	Mike Morrison
BI523	Acts of the Apostles	Dan Rogers
CM504	Practice of Ministry	Ted Johnston
CM512	Small Group Bible Study Leadership	Cathy & Gary Deddo
FE501-3	Field Education	Randy Bloom
TH501	Nature of God and Jesus Christ	McKinnon & 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 2022 Graduates

These student have completed their  
Master of Pastoral Studies (MPS):

**Steve Solari**

**Ian Woodley**



***The next GCS Graduation will be held at the GCI  
denominational celebration in the summer of 2023.***



## **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](https://gcs.edu/donate).