



**Prayer of Thanksgiving:** that Jesus has the capacity to calm any storm we may find ourselves in. He profoundly cares. **"38 ...And they woke him and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" 39 And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm." (Mr 4:38-39 ESV)**

Please do not forget to pray for all the shut-ins and isolated brothers and sisters in our congregations Mrs. Jack and C. Campbell (Fredericton) and J. Steffes (Caribou, Me), Mr. Ross Bathurst, P. Ward (Saint John) and others.

**Open Hand Food Bank – Moncton** - is in need of grocery plastic bags to give out food to those in need. If you are interested in donating your unused grocery bags, you can bring them to church and someone will collect them and bring them over. Those who want to bring food to give to the **Open Food Bank** may do so by bringing to church and giving it to **Michael M.** of the Moncton congregation.

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#### ACTIVITIES FOR THE MONTH OF JULY 2018

Times of worship services: **Moncton** – 10:30 AM every Sunday **except for June 17 services will be cancelled..**

In **Saint John**, worship services will be July 8 and 22 at 2:30 PM

**Communion**- on the second and fourth Sunday of the month.

**Address: Moncton**—70 King St. —Sage building;

**Saint John**—50 Newport Cres., Portland United church.

**Friday, October 5 and Saturday, October 6** – Thanksgiving celebration same venue as last year – Congregational Christian Church of Moncton, 1530 Ryan St, Moncton.

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**The good news of the gospel is a message to be shared with others.** Please pray that God will give us the love and wisdom to be able to share this message with others in a loving, clear and confident matter as we participate in his missional work on the earth in our generation. **"5 ¶ Conduct yourselves wisely toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. 6 Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person." (Col 4:5-6 ESV)**

**Please pray** that God will put an end to the senseless violence happening every in our North America continent and other parts of the world.

**Pray that we will see the good works that God has prepared for us in advance** so that we can enthusiastically participate in the on-going work He is doing now on this earth in bringing people in relationship with him in Jesus by the Holy Spirit.

**Please pray, as per Jesus instructions, the disciples prayer, "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. 10 Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" (Matt 6:9-10)** as our world is suffering so much and in need of complete restoration by the King of kings, Jesus. As we are his royal priesthood, let us proclaim the excellencies of him who called us out of darkness into his marvelous light, as we are instructed in 1 Peter 2.

**Pray for the world and for all people:** we live in a world that does not know the way to peace. Important to pray as we are instructed by the apostle Paul — **"1 ¶ First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, 2 for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. 3 This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior," (1Ti 2:1–3 ESV)**

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**From the President**

## ORDERING OUR WORSHIP

**This “From the President” letter is by GCI Vice President Greg Williams.**

Dear Pastors and Ministry Leaders:

Is there a particular way that worship services in the church should be conducted? That’s not a new question—the apostle Paul addressed it in his first letter to the church in Corinth. Their services had become contentious and chaotic, and Paul wanted to help them solve the problem. He did so by noting that, while their desire to exercise their spiritual gifts in worship was commendable, they must do so in ways that build up the church rather than causing division and confusion (1 Cor. 14:26, 33). Paul exhorted them to conduct their worship in “a fitting and orderly way” (1 Cor. 14:40). Believing that Paul’s exhortation is relevant for us today, I encourage all our pastors to gather with their leaders (including those who plan and direct worship) to evaluate their worship services.

Greg and Susan Williams



### **History of worship liturgy**

Let me share some relevant history. As various worship traditions developed, some churches and whole denominations adopted a “liturgical” approach to structuring their worship services, while others adopted an approach called “non-liturgical.” By definition, liturgical churches follow a set liturgy (order of worship). Some utilize a “high liturgy” that is fully-scripted while others have a “low liturgy” that, being less-scripted, allows more flexibility. Non-liturgical churches, while still having an order of services, are even more flexible. Historically, many Protestant churches became non-liturgical—not because they were against order in their worship, but because they did not like what they felt was the excessive ritual of the liturgy practiced in their day.



Whether liturgical (high or low) or non-liturgical, all churches (whether acknowledging it or not) have a liturgy—some sort of “order” to their worship. That’s good because a lack of order can lead to the chaos Paul addressed in 1 Corinthians 14. Interestingly, there is a movement today among some non-liturgical churches to return to certain elements of the ancient, more formal liturgy of the church (click [here](#) and [here](#) for more information). They find that this shift makes their worship more appealing and inspiring to both regular attenders and visitors.

### **GCI’s history and a challenge for us today**

Historically, worship in GCI (reaching back to WCG and beyond) followed a highly structured, standardized order. With our reformation came greater flexibility in how our congregations ordered their worship services. However, it is my observation that in adopting a less structured approach, some of our services have become somewhat chaotic and thus not as edifying as they need to be. Given that situation, I ask all our pastors and fellowship group facilitators to gather with their leaders to examine how they are conducting their worship services. Here are some questions to ask:

- Do our services focus on who God is as revealed in Jesus?
- Do they reflect the communal nature of our triune God who exists in harmony and unity?
- Are our services uplifting and hope-filled, or are they uninspiring?
- Do all aspects of our worship build up the church, or is there confusion and chaos?
- Do all who are open to hearing the gospel (including non-Christians) feel welcome in our services?

Conducting this evaluation and making needed changes will take careful and intentional effort. That’s appropriate since the root words of *liturgy* mean “the work of the people.” Wanting to assist you in that work, we have published in this issue an article that addresses [worship in GCI congregations](#). It includes a standard order of services (liturgy) that, though not required, is strongly recommended. Over the next six months in *GCI Equipper*, we’ll publish additional articles that will provide further guidance to help you discern the Spirit’s direction concerning your worship services. As you go through this time of discernment and restructuring, I encourage pastors to discuss their insights and plans with their Regional Pastor (U.S.) or Regional Director (elsewhere).

### **Points to ponder about congregational life**

Though our worship services are vital, they are only one part of a congregation's life. With this broader perspective in mind, as pastors gather with their leadership teams to evaluate their liturgy, I challenge them to also evaluate some other key issues. To help them do so, I've listed below some points to ponder. It's my observation that we've tended to overlook some (many?) of these issues. Perhaps that's because we've been (necessarily) focused on doctrinal and theological renewal over the past several years. I believe it's now time to attend to these other issues as we enter a new season of living out of the loving, inclusive relationship we have through Jesus in the power of the Spirit.

- If your congregation is functioning more like a small group (with high levels of interaction and sharing of the leadership/facilitation role), it's likely that you should consider yourself a "fellowship group" rather than a "church" that provides a well-planned and executed worship service. Healthy churches need to have a combination of both well-executed worship services as well as small group gatherings where disciples are enriched, and depth of community is built. Please be satisfied with what you can currently offer, and trust the Lord for the future growth you desire.
- If you are holding your primary worship service on Saturday, that puts you out of step with most of GCI and the rest of the Christian world. Doing so sends a misleading signal about who GCI is. While circumstances may have prevented some GCI congregations from moving to Sunday services, making that change should now be a priority. In my far and wide GCI travels, I have rarely experienced a strong, vibrant and growing GCI church that is meeting on Saturday.
- If you are meeting at an awkward time of day that makes it hard for people to gather, then you need to make a course correction.
- If you are gathering in a hall that is difficult to locate and is out of the flow of normal activity, then consider how to improve your location, and find a target community to be immersed in.
- If you are renting space in a church building that is owned by another congregation/denomination, consider the problems you face with identity. Is it clear that you are a congregation of a separate denomination?
- If you have a rotating speaking schedule with multiple preachers, it's likely that you are in "maintenance mode," lacking cohesive leadership and vision for your church. The lead pastor should preach a minimum of three times per month, and it is even better if they preach five out of six weeks.
- If your lead pastor also fills the role of "chief deacon," then members need to step up. Perhaps the pastor needs to let some things go.
- If you have people conducting the musical aspects of your worship (instrumental and/or vocal) who are not musically gifted, something needs to change. Get people involved in worship, but in accordance with their giftedness.
- If your weekly worship service is structured in accordance with GCI's past tradition, and hasn't been examined in a long time, now is the time for a "come to Jesus" meeting! Take a good, hard look and have the difficult conversations. You will be glad you did!

Once again, I encourage pastors to discuss their findings concerning these points with their immediate supervisor. Let us work together as a team to bring improvements to the worship and other aspects of congregational life in our churches and fellowship groups. Thank you for your cooperation.

Your brother in Christ,

Greg Williams, GCI Vice President

*(Excerpt from We Believe – GCI - You are encourage to read and study it all. I believe you will find it a great blessing.*

<https://resources.gci.org/we-believe>)

**1.1 Does that mean there are three Gods?**

*No. The triune God is one God who exists eternally as three distinct Persons: the Father, The Son, and the Holy Spirit. The triune God is one in being and three in Persons.*

**1.2 How can God be both one in being and three in Persons?**

*Though we cannot know exactly how God's being functions since we are mere creatures, we can say that, unlike human persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are related to each other in such an absolutely unique and profound way that they are one in being. The oneness of God's being is a tri-unity.*

**1.3 Are the three Persons of the Trinity three different ways God acts towards his creation, or three roles the one God plays?**

*No, in the being of God there is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit who know, love and glorify each other for all eternity. There never was a time when God was not triune.*

**1.4 Is one of the Persons of the Trinity the origin of the others, and thus superior?**

*No, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are equally eternal and divine and share the same authority and power, and have the same mind, will and purpose in all things.*

**1.5 Does the equality of the three divine Persons mean that they are interchangeable with each other?**

No, the divine persons are not interchangeable “parts” of God. Each has a unique relationship of holy love to the other two, and each has an eternal name that reveals their real personal distinction.

**1.6 What are the unique relationships in the being of the triune God that are not interchangeable?**

The Father eternally begets the Son, the Son is eternally begotten by the Father, and the Holy Spirit proceeds eternally from the Father and through the Son.

**1.7 Do that three divine Persons act independently of each other towards creation?**

No, all the works of the triune God toward his creation are indivisible since God is one in being and of one mind, will, and authority and holy love.

**1.8 Is there no difference, then, in how they three divine Persons relate to creation?**

There is a difference, for though the acts of the divine Persons are undivided, each contributes uniquely to the perfectly united works of the one triune God.

**1.9 How can we speak of the unique contributions of the three divine persons without separating their works?**

We could say that one of the Persons initiates, or takes the lead, in one or another of the distinct and gracious acts towards the triune God's creation, while the others perfectly follow in complete harmony with each other.

**1.10 What are the primary acts of the triune God towards creation?**

The Father is most associated with creation, the Son with redemption, and the Holy Spirit with bringing all things to perfection. However, all three of the divine Persons are involved in all the works of the one triune God.

**1.11 Why did the triune God create?**

Because the triune God is a living, loving, and generative God who creates for the sake of communion and holy love with his creation.

**1.12 Why did the triune God redeem creation?**

From the beginning, God's human creatures, in distrusting God, have alienated themselves and sought to live autonomously from their good, faithful, and life-giving Creator. But because the triune God is a faithful and loving God who does not give up on his creatures, God himself made a way for them to be reconciled to him and thus returned to fullness of communion with him as their Lord and Saviour.

**1.13 Why does the triune God now work to perfect the creation?**

Because the triune God is a communion of perfect love who created us to share in the triune God's love and life for all eternity and in that way give glory to God.

**1.14 How can the finite creatures know, love and trust the triune God?**

The triune God has the desire, will and ability to make himself known to his human creatures who do not have the desire, the will, or the ability to know God on their own. That revelation, which culminated in the Father's personal self-revelation in Jesus Christ, has, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, been preserved for us in the holy Scriptures.

GCI principle website and Moncton Websites—[www.gci.org](http://www.gci.org), [www.worshipim.ca](http://www.worshipim.ca),

[www.facebook.com/GCIMoncton](https://www.facebook.com/GCIMoncton); <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCgKazyWhmKmDZy69vJcFfPg>. For a wealth of helpful articles about God, grace and his plan for salvation, who we are, etc., please see the GCI.org website. Contact Information: Pastor's contact information: email—[evatour47@outlook.com](mailto:evatour47@outlook.com)