



**Prayer of Thanksgiving:** That God works in his greatness chooses to work with all kinds of people. **“26 For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. 27 But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; 28 God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, 29 so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. 30 He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, whom God made our wisdom and our righteousness and sanctification and redemption.” (1Co 1:26-30 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 February 2019**

Times of worship services: **Moncton** – 10:30 AM every Sunday

**In Saint John** – February 10 and 24 at 2:30 p.m.

**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.

**Discipleship Group** at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Vautour this coming Wednesday February 13 at 7:30 PM. **Topic: continuation of 1 Peter chapter 2.**

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**Prayer Requests suggested by GCI headquarters: (For February – from www.gci.org)**

“27 ¶ “But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, 28 bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. 29 To one who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also, and from one who takes away your cloak do not withhold your tunic either. 30 Give to everyone who begs from you, and from one who takes away your goods do not demand them back. 31 And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them.” (Lu 6:27-31 ESV)

<p><b>3 / GRACE COMMUNION J JACKSONVILLE, FL</b></p> <p>We are thankful for the five new families that connected with our congregation through our children's Christmas party evening outreach and our New Year's Eve bonfire party outreach. Join us in asking God to help us love and disciple our neighbors well.</p>	<p><b>4 MEDITATION MONDAY</b></p> <p>Ephesians 1:4 You are chosen by Christ. He sees you, knows you, and longs to be in relationship with you. In relationship with him, he makes us like him: holy, innocent, and loving. Turning toward God and acknowledging our need for Jesus to transform us into his holy people is known as repentance. Ask God today to continue transforming your life. Is there something you need to surrender to him? Ask the Holy Spirit to replace what has been surrendered with a gift of grace.</p>	<p><b>5 - GRACE COMMUNION YUKON, OKLAHOMA</b></p> <p>Gracious God, in perfect assurance of Your presence among us, we pray your blessings upon Mike and Michele Urmie, as Mike steps into his new role of pastor. May he honor you as he joyfully joins with you in the ministry you prepared for him.</p>	<p><b>6 - GRACE COMMUNION</b></p> <p>Many of our pastors are bivocational. Please join us in praying for our pastors involved in our new pastor training program. We pray that they would be shepherds after your own heart, who will share your knowledge and understanding.</p>
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<p>7 GCI USA Please join us in lifting up our new pastors who are attending an orientation this weekend at the home office. May they feel supported, encouraged, and inspired as they join with Jesus in shepherding our congregations across the country.</p>	<p><b>8 GRACE COMMUNION MINDANAO, PH</b> Sixty-six participants attended a Trinitarian Preaching Workshop. Pray that God may continue to reveal himself through the reading and preaching of his Word. Ask God to help our members grow in grace and understanding through inspirational, Bible-based sermons.</p>	<p><b>9 GRACE COMMUNION FRANCISCO VILLA, MX</b> Praise God for land donated to the local congregation for a meeting place. Join us in lifting up their dynamic local leadership and for God to bless their meeting place and ministry.</p>	<p><b>10 GRACE COMMUNION INTERNATIONAL</b> We pray that you will create leaders among us — individuals made in your image who will apply your teachings in their lives and positively impact our families, workplaces, communities, and church. Help us develop and empower new leaders in our fellowships.</p>
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**AUDIO SERMONS** are also now uploaded to YouTube.ca. To listen to those sermons, you can Google Grace Communion International New Brunswick or go to <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCgKazyWhmKmDZy69vJcFFPg>. Please pray that they will be a source of inspiration in sharing the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ to a wider audience. They continue to be available in our local website at [www.worshipim.ca](http://www.worshipim.ca)

**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 in 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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### **GOD: WE WERE ALWAYS ON HIS MIND**

**Mr. Joseph Tkach (<https://www.gci.org/articles/we-were-always-on-his-mind/>)**

The doctrine of the Trinity has been with us for more than 1,600 years. Most Christians consider it to be one of the “givens” of their faith, and don’t give it much thought. Theologian J.I. Packer noted that the Trinity is usually considered a little-thought-about piece of “theological lumber” that no one pays much attention to.(1)

But whatever your level of understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity, one thing you can know for sure: The Triune God is unchangeably committed to including you in the wonderful fellowship of the life of the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit.

#### **Communion**

The doctrine of the Trinity teaches that there are not three Gods, only one, and that God, the only true God, the God of the Bible, is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This has always been a concept that is difficult to put into words. But let’s try. The Father, Son and Spirit, we might say, mutually indwell one another, that is, the life they share is perfectly interpenetrating. In other words, there is no such thing as the Father apart from the Son and the Spirit. There is no such thing as the Son apart from the Father and the Spirit. And there is no Holy Spirit apart from the Father and the Son. That means that when you are in Christ, you are included in the fellowship and joy of the life of the Triune God. It means the Father receives you and has fellowship with you as he does with Jesus. It means that the love that God once and for all demonstrated in the Incarnation of Jesus Christ is no less than the love the Father has always had for you even before you were a believer, and he always will have that love for you.

It means that God has declared in Christ that you belong to him, that you are included, that you matter. That’s why the Christian life is all about love: God’s love for you and God’s love in you.

God did not make us to be alone. To be created in God's image, as the Bible says humanity is (Genesis 1:27), is to be created for loving relationships, for communion with God and with one another. The systematic theologian Colin Gunton put it this way: "God is already 'in advance' of creation, a communion of persons existing in loving relations."(2)

### **Mutual indwelling**

This union/communion of Father, Son and Spirit was referred to as perichoresis by the early Greek fathers of the church. They used the word in the sense of mutual indwelling. (3)

Why does this matter? Because that inner life of love in the Triune God is what God shares with us in Jesus Christ. Theologian Michael Jinkins describes it this way:

Through the self-giving of Jesus Christ, through God's self-emptying assumption of our humanity, God shares God's own inner life and being in communion with us, uniting us to himself by the Word through the power of the Holy Spirit. Thus the God who is Love brings us into a real participation in the eternal life of God. (4)

Too "theological" sounding? Let's make it simpler. Paul told the pagans at Athens that we all "**live and move and have our being**" in God (**Acts 17:28**). The God in whom we live and have our being is the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, each existing in the other in perfect communion and love. The Son became human so that we humans can join him in that perfect communion of love that he shares with the Father and the Spirit. We learn this from God's perfect revelation of himself in Jesus Christ in the Scriptures:

**"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well" (John 14:6-7).**

**"Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me?... Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me" (John 14:10-11).**

**"On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you" (John 14:20).**

**"I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you" (John 17:20-21).**

**"God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him [Jesus Christ], and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross" (Colossians 1:19-20).**

Salvation flows from God's absolute love for and faithfulness to humanity, not from a desperate attempt to repair the damages of sin. God's gracious purpose for humanity existed before sin ever entered the picture (Ephesians 1:4). God has assured our future – he has, as Jesus said, "been pleased to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12:32). Jesus has taken us with him where he is (Ephesians 2:6).

God has purposed to never be without us. **"God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross" (Colossians 1:19-20).** We often forget that, but God never does.

### **In his embrace**

In Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit by the will of the Father, we mortal, sinning human beings, in spite of ourselves, are graciously and lovingly held in the divine embrace of the triune God. That is exactly what the Father intended for us from the beginning. **"In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will – to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves" (Ephesians 1:5-6).**

Redemption starts with God's nature, his absolute and unquenchable love for humanity, not with human sin. Through the incarnation of the Son, his becoming one of us and making us one with him, God includes us humans in the all-embracing love of the Father for the Son and the Son for the Father. God made us for this very reason – so that in Christ we can be his beloved children. This has been God's will for us from before creation:

**For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will – to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.... He made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ...to bring all things in heaven and earth together under one head, even Christ. (Ephesians 1:4-6, 9-10)**

Through the atoning incarnation of the Son, humans are already forgiven, reconciled and saved in him. Divine amnesty has been proclaimed for all humanity in Christ. The sin that entered the human experience through Adam cannot hold a candle to the overwhelming flood of God's grace through Jesus Christ. **"Consequently,"** the apostle Paul wrote, **"just as one trespass resulted in condemnation for all people, so also one righteous act resulted in justification and life for all people" (Romans 5:18).**

## Universal salvation?

So will everyone automatically – perhaps even against their will – enter into the joy of knowing and loving God? Such a thing is an oxymoron, a self-contradiction, because it is impossible for you to love someone against your will. God draws all humanity to himself (John 12:32), but he does not force anyone to come. God wants everyone to come to faith (1 Timothy 2:4), but he does not force anyone. God loves every person (John 3:16), but he doesn't force anyone to love him – love has to be voluntary, freely given, or it is not love.

Contrary to the idea of universal salvation, only those who trust Jesus are able to love him and experience the joy of his salvation. Those who don't trust him, who refuse his forgiveness or the salvation he has already won for them, whether because they don't want it or simply because they don't care, can't love him and enjoy fellowship with him. For those who consider God their enemy, God's constant love for them is grossly annoying. The more they are confronted with his love, the more they hate him. For those who hate God, life in God's world is hell.

As C.S. Lewis put it, "The damned are, in one sense, successful, rebels to the end; that the doors of hell are locked on the inside." (5) Or as Robert Capon explained: "There is no sin you can commit that God in Jesus hasn't forgiven already. The only way you can get yourself into permanent [trouble] is to refuse forgiveness. That's hell." (6)

## Always on his mind

The doctrine of the Trinity is far more than a creed to be recited or words printed on a statement of faith. The central biblical truth that God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit actually shapes our faith and our lives as Christians. The wonderful and beautiful fellowship shared by the Father, Son, and Spirit is the fellowship of love into which our Savior Jesus places us through his life, death, resurrection and ascension as God in the flesh (John 16:27; 1 John 1:2-3). From before all time, the Triune God determined to bring humanity into the indescribable life and fellowship and joy that Father, Son and Holy Spirit share together as the one true God (Ephesians 1:4-10). In Jesus Christ, the Son of God incarnate, we have been made acceptable to the Father, and in Jesus we are included in the fellowship and joy of the shared life of the Trinity (Ephesians 2:4-6). The church is made up of those who have already come to faith in Christ. But redemption applies to all (1 John 2:1-2). The gap has been bridged. The price has been paid. The way is open for the human race – like the prodigal son in the parable – to come home.

Jesus' life, death, resurrection and ascension are proof of the total and unwavering devotion of the Father to his loving purpose of including humanity in the joy and fellowship of the life of the Trinity. Jesus is the proof that the Father will never abandon us. In Jesus, the Father has adopted us and made us his beloved children, and he will never forsake his plans for us.

When we trust Jesus to be our all in all, it is not an empty trust. He is our all in all. In him, our sins are forgiven, our hearts are made new, and we are included in the life he shares with the Father and the Spirit.

Salvation is the result of the Father's ever-faithful love and power, proven through Jesus Christ and ministered to us by the Holy Spirit. It's not our faith that saves us. It's God alone – Father, Son and Spirit – who saves us. God gives us faith as a gift to open our eyes to the truth of who he is – and who we are, as his beloved children.

God's eternal and almighty word of love and inclusion for you will never be silenced (Romans 8:32, 38-39). You belong to him, and nothing in heaven or earth can ever change that.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> James Packer, *God's Words* (Baker, 1998), 44.

<sup>2</sup> Colin Gunton, *The Triune Creator: A Historical and Systematic Study* (Eerdmans, 1998), 9.

<sup>3</sup> Other theological terms that describe this inner communion of the Father, Son and Spirit are *coinherence*, each existing within the other) and *circumincessio* (the Latin equivalent of *perichoresis*).

<sup>4</sup> Michael Jenkins, *Invitation to Theology* (InterVarsity, 2001), 92.

<sup>5</sup> C.S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain* (Collier, 1962), chapter 8, page 127).

<sup>6</sup> Robert Farrar Capon, *The Mystery of Christ* (Eerdmans, 1993), 10.

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Quotes from <https://www.deseretnews.com/top/817/0/Top-100-CS-Lewis-quotes-.html>)

Source: "Mere Christianity" (1952)

- "No man knows how bad he is till he has tried very hard to be good."
- "If a man thinks he is not conceited, he is very conceited indeed."
- "Love is not affectionate feeling, but a steady wish for the loved person's ultimate good as far as it can be obtained."

**GCI principle** website and Moncton Websites—[www.gci.org](http://www.gci.org), [www.worshiphim.ca](http://www.worshiphim.ca), [www.facebook.com/GCIMoncton](https://www.facebook.com/GCIMoncton); 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)*