

Worship services are being cancelled until further notice because of Covid-19. However, we will have worship services through the Internet Zoom platform every Sunday at 10:30 AM in NB, NS and PEI. The Zoom link for this service will be sent to you by email. The telephone numbers for Zoom always remains the same but the Meeting ID and password number change every week.. Please let Mr. Vautour know if you would like to be added to the weekly email list. See the bottom of the bulletin for the contact information

If you have friends or acquaintances who want to join in the worship service, please do not hesitate to share with them the Zoom links to join with us in the worship our great God.

Please note that audio and video sermons are available at [www.gcine Brunswick.org](http://www.gcine Brunswick.org)

**Prayer Meeting: Our Prayer meeting will be on Thursday, January 28, 2021 @ 7:30 p.m.**

To see specific prayer requests from the church, please go to [www.gcine Brunswick.org](http://www.gcine Brunswick.org) – under “Members Only” and type the password. If you do not know the password, please contact Mr. Vautour.

- Let us pray for the Church to put first things first which is **to love God with all of our heart, with all of our soul and with all of our mind.** The secondary commandment and flowing from the first is **to love our neighbour as ourselves.**
- Let us pray according to God’s will as per his instructions: “**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, 4 who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.**” (1Ti 2:1-4 ESV)
- **Let us pray that God will strengthen his people with faith, perseverance, and love during this difficult pandemic period and that the good news of the Gospel will be spread widely.**
- Covid-19 is causing more and more pain and ravages. It is affecting us locally, nationally, and internationally. The illness isolates people. Let us remember that we all believers are united with and in Jesus Christ as member of his body his church. Let us persevere in Him and pray to walk in His will and love – a love that binds us together and extends to others.  
**The Spanish flu**, the microscopic killer circled the entire globe in four months, claiming the lives of more than 21 million people. The United States lost **675,000 people** to the Spanish flu in 1918-more casualties than World War I, World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War combined. Let us remember our brothers and sisters in the Lord who are affected by Covid-19. It is touching the lives of pastors and members alike and their families. Let us pray, “**Our Father in heaven, hallowed by your name. Your kingdom come; your will be done on earth as it is in heaven**” as we read in Matthew 6.
- Let us pray that God will give us to wisdom to know how he is working and how he wants us to humbly participate in his work of salvation. “**For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.**” (Eph 2:10 ESV)
- Let us pray to be active participants with Jesus as members of his body. Let us pray that God will call more and more people to himself during this time and that we will have the privilege of receiving and discipling some of them.

**Offerings: (Paraphrase of some information given by Mr. Hall, GCI Canadian Director):** Just a reminder that any donations we receive via either Credit Card or Canada Helps are subject to about a 3-3.5% fee which means any

donations we receive for your congregation, are reduced by that amount. Direct Debit (Pre-authorized Payment) or E-Transfers have much lower transaction fees, that we do not back charge to the local congregation. (Cheques do not have a transaction fee). A person can send E-transfers to [khorwood@goccanada.ca](mailto:khorwood@goccanada.ca) if their bank uses INTERACT. In the subject or message line, write the name of your church and your member number. If your bank permits, you can also write your name and address. If you do not know your member number, please write to Mr. Vautour at the email address below. You can send your offering directly to the following address: **Grace Communion International- Canada, Suite 203A, 2121 Airport Dr., Saskatoon, SK 7SL 6W5.** If you prefer, you can also call **1-306-653-2705.** You can also donate via phone using a credit card, or via Canada Helps using **the donate button** on our website at <https://www.canadahelps.org/en/dn/7735> . We will credit all donations received via Canada Helps to a member's local congregation, if we can identify where they attend.”

### On A Trinitarian Approach To Liturgy

Posted: 15 Jan 2021 06:20 PM PST – GCI Surprising God blog.

(Note: this post draws from *The trinitarian DNA of Christian Worship*, an essay by John D. Witvliet.)

If the corporate worship of the church were fully grounded in and shaped by the doctrine of the Trinity, what would it look like? In answer, consider this definition of Christian worship from T. F. Torrance:

***In our worship the Holy Spirit comes forth from God, uniting us to the response and obedience and faith and prayer of Jesus, and returns to God, raising us up in Jesus to participate in the worship of heaven and in the eternal communion of the Holy Trinity.***

For T.F. (and other trinitarian theologians), worship has *two directional movements*—God's coming to the church, and the church's response to God. Both of these movements involve the action of each member of the Trinity: Father, Son and Spirit. The agents that enable God's coming to us and our response back to God are not less than divine persons, whose work can be trusted to be efficacious. Trinitarian theologian Colin Gunton put it this way:

***The first and last thing we have to say about God the Trinity is that he is a God who enables us to worship him.***

A trinitarian theology of worship helps us view our worship as a real sharing (participation) in the worship of Jesus toward the Father, by the Spirit. Jesus' whole life on earth was an act of worship to God and that worship continues now in heaven. Both Jesus' earthly life and his ongoing life in heaven are priestly.

Our participation in Christ's ongoing worship is possible only because of the ongoing ministry of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is a "liturgical agent" who makes possible and effects the worship of God. Christian worship is born of the outpouring of the Spirit. For example, the Lord's Supper is only effectual because of the presence of the Holy Spirit who brings us into communion with Christ.

Worship, viewed from this trinitarian lens, consists in proclamation from the Father in Christ through the Spirit, and response in the Spirit through Christ back to the Father—a pattern that is a *doxological summary of the history of salvation*. We thus understand that revelation and response, which are both fundamental to worship, are gifts of divine grace—gifts to be received rather than accomplishments to be sought. This truth has been strongly articulated by James B. (J.B.) Torrance in stressing the God-humanward movement in Christ and in warning against seeing that movement as something that we somehow achieve, thus ignoring the priesthood of Christ and throwing us back upon ourselves to make our response, ignoring the reality that God has already provided for us that Response which alone is acceptable to him—the offering made for the whole human race in the life, obedience, passion and continuing high priestly intercession of Jesus Christ.

J.B. argues that a distorted view of worship is functionally *unitarian*, operating apart from the work of the Holy Spirit and the mediatorship of Christ. Even though we might sing trinitarian hymns and observe Trinity Sunday, many Christians tend to approach God more like the pristine, isolated God of deism than like the active, mediating Presence that God truly is. For J.B., the key understanding of worship is that both the God-humanward movement and the human-Godward relationship are freely given to us by and in Jesus Christ. A trinitarian theology of worship thus emphasizes that worship is a gift of divine grace. This theological understanding has multiple significant consequences for how the corporate worship (liturgy) of the church is structured. Here are three:

- A trinitarian theology of worship means beginning the worship service with prayers that express our longing for the Holy Spirit to work through liturgical actions to nurture and inspire faith—prayers for illumination that precede proclamation, and even prayers prior to our acts of praise. Such prayers demonstrate that the church is appearing before God to worship with empty, upturned hands.

- A trinitarian theology of worship calls for liturgical proclamation that is explicitly rooted in God's revelation in Jesus Christ through the Spirit. Just as the praise and prayer of the church is an act of acknowledgment, recognition, reception, and participation in the mediation of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, so too liturgical proclamation is best conceived as participation in, and grateful reception of the gift of the Word of God. Liturgical proclamation does not require generating a new message, a new Word, a new gospel—it simply requires rehearsing the gospel given in Christ. We do not have to invent what we are to say, we have only to listen and pass it on. This has to do with preaching that calls attention to God's work in Christ—preaching that is focused on none other than the preaching of Jesus himself who comes to us clothed in his gospel. Preaching that ignores what God has done already in Christ brings about despair rather than hope.
- A trinitarian theology of worship calls for acts that acknowledge the mediation of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. This occurs explicitly in trinitarian formulas at the end of sung psalms or spoken prayers (especially prayers offered to God in the name of Jesus through the Spirit, or through Jesus in the Spirit). Trinitarian doxologies at the end of prayers, sermons, absolutions, and benedictions all attest that the action being completed is accomplished only as a gift of grace. They emphasize that the whole worship service is taking place in the presence, under the authority, and with the power of the Trinity. These liturgical formulas are acts of recognition, reception, and participation—the explicit acknowledgment that worship is a graced event.

The challenge that denominational leaders, church pastors, and worship leaders/planners face in structuring worship in accordance with trinitarian theology is to enact a liturgy that brings the mediation of Son and Spirit into the consciousness of ordinary worshipers—worshipers who otherwise may live with the implicit feeling that the success of a worship service depends either on the prowess of the preacher or musicians or on their own mental efforts to make worship somehow “work.” We who preach or lead music violate this principle every time we unwittingly promote a rather sacramental view of ourselves as the ones who engineer a spiritual experience for people. Instead, our goal should be to help people sense the presence and work of the Triune God in both worship and in life in general. Offering worshipers this an all-encompassing, grace-filled vision to supplant the rather vague and impersonal notions of deity that our culture perpetuates is an act of profound pastoral care.

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### Counting It All Joy

“Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds,” (Jas 1:2 ESV)

How can we be joyful when we go through difficulties whether they may be problems in our relationships, financial hardships, emotional challenges, lost of loved one, health problems, etc.?

- How can we be joyful when we see problems all around us?
- How can we be joyful when we see the Covid-19 pandemic taking so many lives and making so many sick?
- How can we be joyful when we see so many waiting in line to get their food from food banks?
- How can we be joyful when we see people fleeing their countries because of wars, famine, and injustices of all kinds?
- How can we be joyful when we see and are challenged by so many distortions of the gospel in our world?

At first glance, it appears to not make any sense, does it?

The simple answer is that we can give thanks to God the Father who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. We are strengthened in him to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy. (Paraphrase of Colossians 1:11-14)

Certainly, as **Hebrews 12:11** tells us, “**For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it**”.

We can take examples from the Second World War where people were rejoicing knowing that they were liberated and when their liberation was not yet a full reality. Imagine the people living in France and other European countries besieged by the Nazis. They heard of some far-off battle some have called D-Day. Knowing that they were going to be liberated caused them to be joyful. They continued to be under the Nazis in their present but in many ways their situation had changed because the Nazis had been defeated. They knew liberation was at the doorstep.

The same thing happened to prisoners of war who were held captive by the Japanese in their prisoner-of-war camps in Singapore. Horrible places to be! One of the stories goes that in one of those camps, a prisoner who had a shortwave radio heard that the Japanese had been defeated. This was in 1945. They still remained prisoners but as they heard this news and this news was shared in the camps, they rejoiced and celebrated the good news. They would not be

released immediately. They knew their actual liberation was near. When they heard of that news, they began to laugh and to cry. They knew they were free although freedom had not come to them yet.

There are similarities between these prisoner-of-war camps and disciples of Jesus of Nazareth. We know we have been liberated but physically we are still living in the same circumstances which are sometimes exceedingly difficult. We still feel pain, disappointments, and the other difficult emotions.

We rejoice knowing that the time is coming when the liberation secured by Jesus Christ through his life, death, resurrection, and ascension to heaven as the King of Kings will become a full reality when he returns to this earth in triumph to put a complete end to the already defeated enemies which are the devil, evil, sin, and death. In this we rejoice. It is a gift of grace from God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Eric Vautour, GCI Minister



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### No turning back

***“He was teaching in their synagogues, and everyone praised him...All the people in the synagogue were furious when they heard this. They got up, drove him out of the town, and took him to the brow of the hill...in order to throw him off the cliff.”***

**Luke 4:15, 28-29 (NIVUK)**

As Jesus began his public ministry teaching in the synagogues, he gained a certain notoriety and was praised for his teaching. After his first recorded sermon in the synagogue at Nazareth, **‘All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his lips.’ (v. 22)**. Yet by the end of his teaching the people in the synagogue were angry at what they heard and wanted to kill him, but why?

Jesus had just recounted the story of Elijah and the widow of Zarephath implying that salvation is not limited to the children of Abraham, but is for the Gentiles too, for he is the Saviour of the world. When the people grasped the implication of what he was saying their admiration turned to fury and they tried to kill him.

A similar incident happened later in Jesus’s life when he entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, and the crowds were full of praise for him shouting, **‘Hosanna!’ ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!’ (John 12:13)**. Yet by the end of the week the people were yelling ‘crucify him’ and he was put to death.

People at both the beginning of Jesus’s public ministry and in the final days of his life, were fickle. Their cheers soon turned to jeers, because they had only a superficial acceptance and acknowledgement of him. But how about you and me? How committed are we to Jesus?

The Christian chorus, “I have decided to follow Jesus,” thought to have originated in India from the last words of a man called Nokseng, as he and his family were killed for their faith, puts into song the Christian commitment:

*I have decided to follow Jesus...no turning back, no turning back.*

*Though none go with me, I still will follow...no turning back, no turning back.*

*The world behind me, the cross before me...no turning back, no turning back.*

How committed are we to Jesus? Do we share the same commitment as Nokseng? – No turning back!

**Prayer: Father, Jesus was faithful to death, even death on a cross. May his faithfulness enable us to remain faithful and to never turn back from him. Amen.**

**GCI principle website and Moncton Websites**—a) [www.gci.org](http://www.gci.org), b) [www.gcinewbrunswick.org](http://www.gcinewbrunswick.org), c) [www.gcicanada.ca](http://www.gcicanada.ca); d) [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—[evautour47@outlook.com](mailto:evautour47@outlook.com)