

Prayer of Thanksgiving: what good news – Jesus is alive!. “**And he said to them, “Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here. See the place where they laid him.” (Mr 16:6 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.

ACTIVITIES FOR THE MONTH OF April 2019

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

In **Saint John** – April 14 and 28 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.

Easter (The celebration of Jesus’ resurrection is on April 21.

Discipleship Group at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Vautour this coming Thursday, April 25 at 7:30 PM. **Topic: End 1 Peter chapter 3 and chapter 4.**

Jerusalem, Jerusalem

(From <https://update.gci.org/2019/04/jerusalem-jerusalem/>)



Greg and Susan
Williams

When I recently toured the Holy Land nothing was more striking and mind-expanding than standing on the Mount of Olives and imagining the myriad of thoughts racing through the mind of Jesus as he entered Jerusalem in the final week of his earthly ministry.

He expressed this poignant lament – “***O Jerusalem, Jerusalem...! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!***” (**Matthew 23:37 ESV**).

Jesus expresses tremendous sorrow that Israel continually rejects God’s call for repentance and refuses to embrace the Kingdom of God. Even more personal is their rejection of him as their promised, true Messiah – even as he intermingled with them, displaying miraculous acts of incredible kindness, revealing to them the deep teachings of God, and sharing gracefully in all aspects of life.

The metaphor used by Matthew likens the Godhead to a mother hen (a rare biblical use of a feminine image for God). The image of a mother hen whose intent is to gather, nurture and protect her offspring. It fits well with Jesus’s words about his impending crucifixion – “***And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.***” (**John 12:32 ESV**). Uniting all people to himself – in a relationship of total forgiveness and pure love – was his purpose then and for all time.

What did Jesus see from the Mount of Olives that day? Perhaps the temple, the center of worship, with people scurrying about from court to court attending to daily sacrifices? Did he envision through his eyes of deity the days of old with Abraham bringing Isaac to the altar for slaughter? Or was he looking forward in time, to the scenes I saw of the crowds gathered at the Western Wall in a cacophony of prayer? I believe it was all of the above, and more. From our vantage point on the Mount of Olives we located the movement of Jesus from the area of the Last Supper and upper room from the south of the city, down into the Garden of Gethsemane in the Kidron Valley (the garden of “thy will be done”). It was in the garden where Jesus was arrested. He was then taken back to the south of the city to the house of Caiaphas the high priest, where he was tried by the Sanhedrin. There he was, beaten and spent part of the night in a cold, dark dungeon beneath the house. On Friday morning he was sent to Pontius Pilate at the Antonia Fortress on the north side of the temple mount; then he was bounced back to Herod at his palace in the city, and then back to Pilate before he was taken outside the city wall to hang on the cross from noon until 3:00 pm.

We could take in the geography of the events from the Last Supper, the kangaroo trial, the agony and eventual execution of Jesus from our vantage point on the Mount of Olives, and yet our view didn't compare to what Jesus must have taken in from that same spot. The moment of his melting heart for Jerusalem signaled his passion and the salvific events that would unfold. Our moment at the mount was a restored heart that signaled our strong, uncontrollable emotion for acceptance – to embrace and worship the Jesus that has been drawing us all along.

May your Holy Week services and your celebration of Easter join your heart even closer to the one who conquered death and the grave, and who continues to draw all people to himself.

From Mr. Bill Hall, Canadian Director of GCI (April 4, 2019) I'm just waiting to hear from Kalengule, our African director, of how Canadian members can help.

Unlike the US we do not have a disaster fund, Canadian regulations require that we fund specific causes and require us to create an agency agreement with those receiving funds to act as an agent for us in a foreign country.

Members can send us funds for our **International Missions Fund**, and we will use funds that are contributed up to the end of April to assist those who affected by the cyclone.

If you want to direct some of your local church budget for this purpose, please let me know how much you want to contribute, and we will combine those totals with the contributions we get from the membership.

Once I have the total amounts, I will Kalengule know the dollar figure that we can send for this purpose.

Thanks for your help in this endeavor. Bill

*The NB churches will send \$500.00 from the general fund. If you want to add to this donation, there is still time. On a separate envelope, indicate on the outside of the envelope, **International Missions Fund**. These envelopes will be sent to our Canadian head office with the regular offering at the end of the month. The date of April 26 has been extended. You can contribute until our last April service which will be on Sunday, April 28. GCI head office will send the money through Mr. Kalengule, GCI director for Africa. The money will be given directly to help the affected people.*

The devastation is extensive. **Cyclone Idai** - March 14, 2019 - has caused over \$2 billion in damages in the most affected area. It caused damage in Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe. We have a number of GCI churches in those countries. Some of the church areas could not be reached according to the last news received from GCI headquarters. The infrastructure of those countries have been badly damaged and/or destroyed. This cyclone will cause sufferings for years to come. Crops are affected accompanied by the threat of illness due to contaminated water, lack of food, etc. The money send will go directly to help our brothers and sisters in GCI. (See 2 Corinthians 9).

Prayer request from the Montréal GCI French congregation: to find a suitable place to meet on Sundays for worship services.

Prayer request for all who are affected by the rising floodwaters both in New Brunswick and in Québec.

Please pray for people in our own New Brunswick communities that more will come to saving faith in Christ as the response to God's calling on their life.

Monthly GCI prayer guide is now posted in featured articles on our www.worshipim.ca website.

JESUS CHRIST: THE POWER OF THE RESURRECTION
(from <https://www.gci.org/articles/the-power-of-the-resurrection/>)

Christians accept the resurrection accounts on faith, but it is a faith sealed by the inward testimony of the Holy Spirit. Faith is not blind, unintelligent trust. Theology has been defined as "faith seeking understanding." Christians worship God with their minds as well as their hearts.

The four Gospels record an event hard to explain away in face of the most obvious evidence – the existence of the Christian church. Something unprecedented happened in Jerusalem in the first century. This forces the question: What kind of history do we encounter in Scripture?

Arthur Glasser calls the Bible "interpreted history." He said, "**Its great truths [come] enfolded in historical events, human experience, and prophetic exposition**" (*Kingdom and Mission*, pages 18, 16). Hugh Anderson sheds more light:

We expect the historian today to be as scientifically accurate as possible in his reporting of facts.... By contrast the historians of Israel viewed history as the sphere of God's activity. Their purpose in telling the story of Israel was to confront men with the sovereign authority of a high and holy God, calling upon them to surrender their lives to Him. (*Historians of Israel*, Vol. 2, pages 26, 28)

The Gospel writers were in that tradition: They were concerned with spiritual meaning and eternal life. Their writings give us history plus interpretation. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John were preachers before they were historians. Nevertheless, the resurrection accounts provide a compelling example of faith meeting understanding. They make sense once the Holy Spirit enables us to believe.

1. First, there is the almost embarrassing honesty of the resurrection accounts. The doubts of Thomas, Peter and the other apostles are freely admitted (Mark 16:9-14). The New Testament is hard on its heroes. Who in the early church could have written such things about prominent church leaders still alive unless those things were true? The transformed lives of the apostles are exactly what we would expect if Christ was resurrected (Acts 4:13).

2. Who among the disciples could invent such a story as that of Jesus of Nazareth? The disciples were often chided for their slowness to believe and their lack of spiritual imagination (Matthew 16:5-12). Could they invent such challenging phrases as: "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6)?

British Bible scholar C.H. Dodd recorded that as a young man he fretted about the time interval between the events mentioned in the Gospels and when those events were written several decades later. He later changed his mind: ***When Mark was writing...there must have been many people [alive] who were in their prime under Pontius Pilate, and they must have remembered the stirring and tragic events of that time.... If anyone had tried to put over an entirely imaginary or fictitious account of them, there would have been middle-aged or elderly people who would have said... "You are wasting your breath: I remember it as if it were yesterday"*** (*Tradition: Old and New*, page 41)

Those are wise words. The complexity of the Gospels is part of their fascination.

3. It is hard to account for the Christian faith's sweep across the Roman Empire without a spectacular primary cause. The resurrection was that catalyst.

One of the compelling proofs of the resurrection is that the crucifixion left the disciples in despair and that, hopeless, they were transformed by their experience of the risen Jesus.... Even more important was the conviction nourished in Christians that by the resurrection Jesus had been vindicated and had been shown to be the Son of God with power. (Kenneth Latourette, *A History of Christianity*, volume 1, pages 58-59)

That power proved invincible. It still is.

The Message of Jesus: Our Resurrection With Christ **(<https://www.gci.org/articles/our-resurrection-with-christ/>)**

Each year, we celebrate that Christ our Lord has risen — and he is alive forevermore as our Savior, our Intercessor and our King. When we celebrate Jesus' resurrection, we are also reminded of the promise of our own resurrection. When we by faith are united to Christ, then we share in his life, in his death, in his resurrection and in his glory. This is our *identity*. Notice how often Paul says that we are *with* Christ:

- **Rom. 6:4-8** We were crucified with him, died with him, buried with him and united with him in his death.
- **Rom. 6:5, 8** We will live with him, united with him in his resurrection.
- **Rom. 8:17** We are heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ.
- **Rom. 8:17** If we share in his sufferings, we will also share in his glory.
- **Gal. 2:20** We have been crucified with Christ, and he lives in us.
- **Eph. 2:5-6** God made us alive with Christ, God raised us up with Christ, and seated us with him in the heavenly realms.
- **Col. 2:12** We have been buried with him in baptism.
- **Col. 2:12-13** God raised us and made us alive with Christ, through faith.
- **Col. 2:20** We died with Christ to the basic principles of this world.
- **Col. 3:1** We have been raised with Christ.
- **Col. 3:3** Our life is now hidden with Christ in God.
- **Col. 3:4** When Christ appears, we will appear with him in glory.
- **1 Thess. 5:10** He died for us so that we may live together with him.
- **2 Tim. 2:11** If we died with him, we will also live with him.

- **2 Tim. 2:12** If we endure, we will also reign with him.

When we accept Christ as our Lord and Savior, our lives become hidden in him, and we are with him — where he was, where he is now, and where he will be in the future. When he appears, we will be with him. We will be united with him in his resurrection, and we will reign with him in his glory. We participate with him, share with him in his life, as pictured in the Lord's Supper.

This way of speaking may sound strange today. The scientific worldview trains people to look for things that can be seen and measured with physical instruments. But Paul is speaking of unseen realities, of spiritual truths that are beyond physical investigation. He is saying that there is more to our existence, and more to our identity, than can be seen with the eyes.

Although human eyes could not see us being buried with Christ, the reality is that we were. And human eyes did not see us in the resurrection of Christ, but the reality is that we were resurrected in him. Though our eyes cannot see the future, we know that it is also a reality: we will be resurrected, reigning with Christ, living with Christ forever, sharing in his glory, being served by the angels!

Christ is the firstfruits, and *in him* everyone will be made alive (**1 Cor. 15:22**). Christ is the forerunner, the proof that the promise will be fulfilled for each of us who are united to him. The resurrection is indeed wonderful news for each of us — a central plank of the gospel message itself. If there is no future life, if there is no reward in store for our troubles, then our faith is fraudulent, our message is a mistake. But it is not a mistake — Christ indeed has risen. He is reigning in glory, and he will come again, and we will be with him in glory.

But notice in the verses above that there is a price that must be paid. We must be with Christ in his sufferings, too. We must endure in order to reign. Paul put it this way: "I want to know Christ...and the fellowship of *sharing in his sufferings*, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead" (**Phil. 3:10-11**).

Press on toward the goal, Paul exhorts (**vs. 14-15**). "Our citizenship is in heaven," he reminds us. "And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who...will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body. Therefore, my brothers, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, that is how you should stand firm in the Lord, dear friends!" (**vs. 20-21**).

My friends, I also love you. Press onward, knowing that our reward is being prepared for us in heaven! When the Lord Jesus returns, we will rise to be with him forever — in glory we can only *begin* to imagine. Stand firm in the Lord, dear friends! Pressing on requires us to have patience, but it is difficult to be patient in the "fast lane, instant food, expressway" society in which we live. But let's remember that God's Spirit grants us patience when we draw closer to him.

Jesus commands, "Go and make disciples...and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you" (**Matt. 28:19-20**). Disciples of Jesus are followers of Jesus, people who have made a decisive commitment to learn from him and be like him. That is why teaching and learning plays such a vital role in the church. Leaders are entrusted to teach the church what Jesus taught and how it applies to us all, so that we might become increasingly more apt and faithful disciples of Jesus.

Evangelism comes naturally from a body of faithful, devoted, committed and worshipping disciples. Being the people God has called us to be — brothers and sisters of Jesus, led and motivated by his love — is the primary way the good news is spread. It is far more effective for people to come to know and see Jesus at work in his people than it is to merely hear a message from a relative stranger with no concrete demonstration of its real power to bring the joy and peace of God. That is why we continue to emphasize the need for Christ's love among us.

I know that our brethren want to love God and work together for the kingdom. The devil would like for us to believe that we are defeated, but he is only a liar. God has given us the victory, and we do not have to feel like all is lost. Jesus is risen! He is on his throne, and he loves us as much today as he ever has. He will do his work in us.

Let us stand together with him, and trust him to lead us into knowing God more, loving God more and loving one another more. Our true reward lies beyond the present moment, but we can experience more and more the blessings of the kingdom even now, as we commit to be Jesus' disciples and walk in his love for the Father and for one another.

Author: Joseph Tkach

Devotional – Peace Be With You

(<https://update.gci.org/2019/04/devotional/>)



Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid (John 14:27).

In what is commonly known as the “farewell discourse,” Jesus tells his followers what they should expect to transpire in the near future. But he tells them—as well as his followers in the 21st century, to not be discouraged, for he will give them Comforter, who will dwell with them (**verses 16-17**). The “peace” he mentions is a rendering of Shalom, which was used as a greeting and as a farewell. But more than a greeting it gives a sense of wholeness or completeness.



By Bill Hall, Canadian
Director, Canada

*This Shalom/Peace was again mentioned by Jesus when he appeared to his disciples behind the locked doors after his crucifixion. He then breathed on them and they received the Holy Spirit (**John 20:19-22**).*

Like those disciples, we are often confronted by stress, fear or simply overwhelmed by our day-to-day lives. That’s when we need to turn those moments over to the Holy Spirit, and live in this Shalom/Peace. It is that shalom/peace that wraps around us like a young child wrapped up tightly in her baby blanket when the night is cold or she is in need of comforting.

Prayer: Jesus and Spirit, help us to give our stresses and fears over to you. Surround us with your wholeness and may we feel your comfort to be able to weather the storms of life.

Food for thought: *But when he said that he himself would rise again from the dead, the third day after he was crucified, he said something that only a fool with dare say, if he expected longer the devotion of any disciples – unless he was sure he was going to rise. No founder of any world religion known to man ever dared to say such a thing like that! Wilbur Smith (from THE NEW EVIDENCE THAT DEMANDS A VERDICT, Evidence I & II Fully Updated in One Volume to Answer Questions Challenging Christians in the 21st Century, Josh McDowell page 219)*

GCI principle website and Moncton Websites—www.gci.org, www.worshipim.ca, 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*