

March 3, 2021



U
P
D
A
T
E



THE PATH TO
A RESPONSE OF
HOPE

Exploring the Theme of the 42nd
Synod



NEWS FROM
CONGREGATIONS

THE PURPOSE
OF LENT

VOLUME 7
ISSUE 9

Our Vision: Touching Lives, Nurturing Disciples, Seeking Transformation through Christ

THE PATH TO A RESPONSE OF H.O.P.E.



The elusive nature of COVID-19 has left us no choice, but to emerge from our places of fear, doubt and anxiety to a place of HOPE

In offering the theme—Rooted, Resilient, Responding in H.O.P.E. (Hope, Opportunity, Peace and Evangelism) the United Church recognizes that the journey to responding in HOPE should be traced back to the beginning of the Renewal and Transformation strategic agenda of UCJCI. The theme paper, 'The Road Map to the Synodical Theme' states the following:

As a Church we started a process fifteen years ago (2005) of rereading our context and discerning the signs of the time, towards meeting the spiritual (wholistic) needs of the people we serve. This led to the *Renewal and Transformation (R&T) Agenda* of the United Church.

At our Synod in 2009 the R& T agenda was enacted and the process has been one of mixed engagement/s and mixed review/s for the most part, for varying reasons. However, what cannot be denied is, given where we found ourselves 12 years ago, it would have been very unproductive and disheartening to remain there.

In 2020, we have all experienced and are experiencing what no one in this present generation (the last 50 years) has

IN THIS ISSUE

The Path to a Response of HOPE	2
Hope Memorial Garden Dedicated	4
The Purpose of Lent	6
Themes for Worship at Home	9
Upcoming Events	9

experienced before – the COVID-19 pandemic. We had and still have no choice, but to find new and innovative ways to live, connect and above all engage ministry and mission, while restricted by the protocols given by our 2 Governments (The Cayman Islands and Jamaica). With our best efforts and best intentions, many persons became disturbed, distressed and discontented. Some persons were disillusioned into thinking that COVID-19 would have disappeared in short order and that our lives would have gone back to what we call normal. Nevertheless, the elusive nature of COVID-19 is teaching us to live with it and has left us no choice, but to emerge from our places of fear, doubt and anxiety to a place of HOPE – health, opportunities, peace and evangelism by being/remaining rooted and resilient.

THE UNITED CHURCH IN JAMAICA AND THE CAYMAN ISLANDS

42ND SYNOD

APRIL 11-18, 2021

Rooted, Resilient, Responding in HOPE

(Health, Opportunities, Peace , Evangelism)

SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

PRE-SYNOD ACTIVITIES

- ◆ Pre-Synod Consultation
- ◆ Pre-synod Events/Rally
- ◆ Thematic Expressions (Art, craft etc.)

More information will be available soon

OPENING SERVICE

Sunday April 11

4:00 pm—Webster Memorial in Kingston, Jamaica

- ◆ Constitution of Synod
- ◆ Induction of Moderator—Rev. Gary Harriott
- ◆ Introduction of the theme for the 42nd Synod

BIBLE STUDIES

Monday to Thursday

6:00 a.m. each morning

Bible Studies will explore the theme components

Monday - Health

Tuesday - Opportunities

Wednesday— Peace

Thursday April 1—Evangelism

BUSINESS SESSIONS

Monday to Thursday

10 am each day

- ◆ Reports from committees, commissions and regions
- ◆ Interaction with UCJCI Institutions
 - ◆ Youth Synod report
 - ◆ Workshop on Evangelism
 - ◆ Group/regional work
 - ◆ Resolutions

EVENING EVENTS

Monday April 12

4.30 pm— Celebration of Life and Witness

Tuesday April 13

6 pm Meet the Moderator

Wednesday April 14

5 p.m. Public Lecture/Webinar on Pastoral Care
in recognition of Rev. Raymond Coke

Sunday April 18

- 4 p.m.—Closing Service
- ◆ Highlights of the week
 - ◆ Challenge

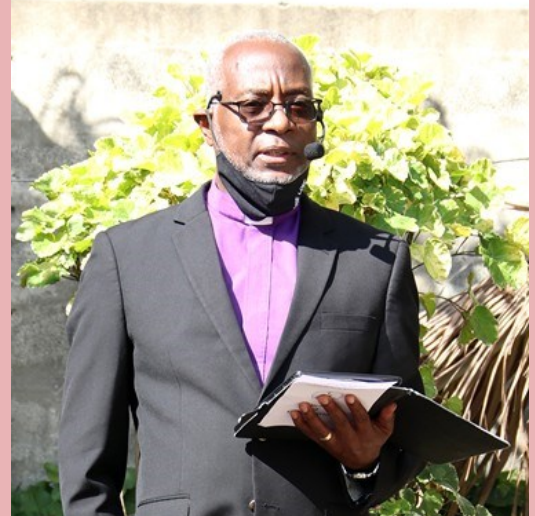
HOPE MEMORIAL GARDEN DEDICATED

Hope United Church in North Eastern Regional Mission Council has constructed a columbarium and created Hope Memorial Garden which were both dedicated on Sunday February 21, 2021 by Interim Minister, Rev. Dr. Henroy Samuels.

The Garden is totally powered by Solar generated electricity and lit at night by photo cell controlled LED bulbs. This feature which is facilitated at no additional cost to the church's electricity bill and is energy efficient and environmentally friendly. The concept of 24/7 access to the Hope Memorial Garden is a unique feature and offers seating capacity at present for up to 6 visitors.

The project to construct a Columbarium at Hope United began over 12 years ago but encountered challenges. Efforts to complete the project were revived in 2017 at the instigation of the late Rev. Dr. Margaret Fowler, former minister. The project is intended to be a source of income that could support the programmes of Hope United.

The vision is to construct four (4) towers each with a capacity of 64 URNS, which could be implemented in phases. The final capacity



Interim Minister, Rev. Dr. Henroy Samuels



A section of a columbarium tower fitted with solar panels.



Mr. Stephan Wright, elder shows the features of this section of the columbarium to Chairman, NERMC, Mrs. Jennifer Martin, General Secretary, UCJCI—Rev. Norbert Stephens and Interim Minister, Rev. Dr. Henroy Samuels.

would be for 256 inurnments when the construction and installation of the 4 towers are completed.

Hope United has benefitted from the dedication, skills and kindness of many of their members and friends. Mrs. Doris Cross, architect undertook the drawings as a gift to the church and went beyond that initial commitment doing fundamental work towards securing the approval of the Kingston and St. Andrew Metropolitan Corporation (KSAMC) and National Environmental Planning Agency (NEPA). The phased approach allowed them to undertake the first two columns from pre-sales.

Construction begun in late August 2020, and by January 2021 the first column was constructed and the internal cavity for inurnment installed with face plates and numbered cavities ready for use. Hope is proud that the inside compartments of the columbarium were constructed locally and cost far less than had material been sourced from overseas. Not only were the columns totally manufactured locally, with local expertise, controlled project management resulted in a much lower cost to the church and as a result lower price to members and competitive to the price at older constructions.

The first inurnment was the ashes of Rev. Dr. Margaret Fowler which was done by Rev. Norbert Stephens, General Secretary of UCJCI. The event was also attended by the Chairman of Council, Mrs. Jennifer Martin.



Contractor, Mr. John Jameson.



Interim Minister, Rev. Dr. Henry Samuels and Winsome Johns Gayle, Chair of the Columbarium Project.



Platform party proceeds to the Memorial Garden.



Members participate in the dedication.

The Purpose of Lent

Rev. Everton Brissett

Introduction

Christianity, like Judaism, from which it is a natural outgrowth, is a composite of a number of sects. These "sects" or "divisions" have a diversity of doctrinal beliefs but are united basically by the underlying fact of the object of their worship: except for an extremely small minority, they all acknowledge the triunity of the God-head. However, the observance and utility of festivals have become polemical.

The name 'Lent' is said to be derived from an Old English word for Spring. The Western Church currently observes forty days because Ash-Wednesday and the following three days were added.

The Primitive Purpose of the Fast

The primary reason for the institution of Lent is the mourning of the death and burial of Jesus. As the Early Church prepared for the feast of the resurrection it remembered the death and burial. Lent has become the perpetual reminder.

Some feel fasting is the agitating element that gets God moving on their behalf. To have that view is to treat fasting like a talisman, a good luck charm.

Secondly, the Early Church began to lose a postolic fervour soon after it became aligned with the State. The historian Cassian states

that the loss of fervour was evidenced in a lust for the things of the world.

When Emperor Constantine showed favour to Christianity, preventing persecution, many made haste to join the Church; yet they were void of inward conviction, moral necessity, and devotion to Christ. They joined because of the possibility of imperial favour, worldly prosperity and political honour, among other things.

The authorities of the church imposed a season of self-discipline on all Christians. This was to purify the church

as persecution had kept it pure during the time before Emperor Constantine's intervention. The result was a lengthened Lenten fast.

Current Uses of the Fast

On a whole fasting is misconstrued by many. Some felt it is the agitating element that gets God moving on their

behalf. To have that view is to treat it like a talisman, a good luck charm.

The purpose of this fast is not dissimilar to fasting at other times. The purpose is to meet the spiritual needs and wants of our nature - needs and wants that are most certain to be neglected if we are not specially called to take note of our ways.

It follows that, contrary to the erroneous perception, the fast is not 'for God' but for us. It is a call to repentance. A call of self-denial and sacrifice.

The discipline of self-denial and the benefits that are derived from it are invaluable in the life of the people of God. In fasting, the Christian deprives himself/herself from the usual necessary nutritional sustenance. This same principle is employed when he or she faces the tempting stimuli that lead to sin (James 1:15)

On the other hand, the brokenness, self-sacrifice and abandonment that result from fasting get the practitioner to a

place where he/she recognizes the sovereignty of God and puts him/her at a place where his/her desires are aligned to God's will. When that union is achieved the results are always in line with the requests (Matt. 17:19-21).

This designated time set aside is therefore a call to repentance both for the people of God and for the

Fasting is not 'for God' but for us. It is a call to repentance. A call of self-denial and sacrifice.

“whosoever” will.

This call then, goes beyond the abstinence from food. It is always aligned with prayer.

Self-denial

The Christian faith is founded on sacrifice: The sacrifice of God in the offering of His “only begotten” Son (Jn. 3:16); the sacrifice of Jesus by the offering of His life, and the participation of the Holy Spirit in making the believer His temple.

In like manner the practising of the faith must be lived out through sacrifice – the sacrificing of the believer’s autonomy, the lordship over his/her life to the Lordship of Christ (Philippians 2: 5-11). In short, the believer must lose identity in self and find it in Christ. It is a process of dying to self that Jesus might live in and through the individual.

Lent, as a time “set apart for a special season of fasting, penitence, prayer and almsgiving” is a call for such self-denial and is a time that God has always blessed over the many centuries as a time of conviction, devotion and repentance.

Prayer

In Jesus’ admonition to the disciples after their failure to cast out/ exorcize demons, He told them that fasting and prayer were necessary (Matt. 17:19-21). The significance of the twinning goes without saying. One can pray without fasting and achieve significant spiritual benefits, but the reverse is inconceivable.

Prayer is conversation with God, a practice which is courted by God Himself (Isaiah 1:18) “come let us reason together,” He says.

Lent calls us to this ‘place’ to have a dialogue with God. Under ‘normal’ circumstances what often passes for prayer is a monologue that rarely, if at all, gives place for listening to what God has to say in response to our arguments, petitions and observances.

Lent’s call is tantamount to the conscience call of the seers or prophets of the Old Testament who called to the nation to repent and be brought back to a right relationship with God.

WORSHIP DURING LENT

THEMES FOR HOUSE WORSHIP LITURGY

THEME FOR MARCH:
**Rooting our Spiritual Health in
God brings us Hope**

MARCH 7

**How faithful are we to God’s
commandments?**

Exodus 20:1-17 □ 1 Corinthians 1:18-25 □ John
2:13-22 □ Psalm 19

MARCH 14

**How do we nurture the spiritual health of
those who belong to the Church?**

Numbers 21:4-9 □ Ephesians 2:1-10 □ John
3:14-21 □ Psalm 107:1-3, 17- 22

**Liturgies are available from the Minister/Lay
Pastor, Communication Officer of your
congregation and from your Regional
Mission Council Office.**

**The liturgies developed by the House Worship
Team reflect the
Synodical worship themes.**

PRAY PRAY PRAY PRAY

Look to the LORD and his strength; seek his face always.- 1 Chronicles 16:11

LET US BE DILIGENT IN PRAYER

- ◆ Mrs. Jeanette Rose-Bryan and her family at the loss of her only son.
- ◆ Miss Ceta Rose who lost her brother recently
- ◆ Rev. Christopher Mason and family at the passing of family member Raphael Mason.
- ◆ Mrs. Doreen Barnett and family at the passing of a family member and as they grapple with the health challenges of Doreen's brother Leithland
- ◆ Preparation for the 42nd Synod of the United Church
- ◆ Health workers and other frontline personnel who contend with duties related to COVID-19
- ◆ Healing for members of the United Church and the wider community who have contracted COVID 19.
- ◆ Seniors who are not coping well with the challenges of isolation and reduced social engagement.
- ◆ Good judgement and decision-making in relation to the COVID-19 vaccine.
- ◆ Individuals and families as households, work-places, churches, other organisations and persons in public spaces comply with the new orders from the Jamaican Government.
- ◆ The recovery and healing of Mrs. Ruth Coke
- ◆ Healing for Rev. Dr. Elsa Clarke



UCJCI responds to the
COVID-19 pandemic as a
community of faith

A Call to Prayer

**Every Wednesday
12 noon—1:00 pm**

**"Do not be anxious about
anything, but in everything,
by prayer and petition, with
thanksgiving, present your
requests to God."**

Philippians 4: 7 (NIV)

HAPPY BIRTHDAY



**MARCH 8
REV. DR. YVETTE NOBLE
BLOOMFIELD**



**MARCH 9
MRS. JENNIFER MARTIN**

Upcoming Events

**The International
University
of the Caribbean
invites you to**
*The Installation Ceremony
for
Mrs. Irene Walter O.D.
The Chancellor
&
Prof. Rev. Roderick
Hewitt
The President*
**on Thursday March 11,
2021
at 2:00 p.m.**

RSVP 876 3601120

The link will be sent later.



UNITED THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE OF THE WEST INDIES

PRESENTS

FOUNDERS' WEEK 2021



**MAR
1**

Worship Service, UTCWI Chapel

6:00 p.m. JA time

Theme: Ministry in Changing Times
Preacher: Rev. Dr. Adrian Smith
Alumni, Moravian Minister, Barbados



**MAR
2**

Founders' Day Lectures 1 & 2

9:00 a.m. JA time

Theme: Prophetic Hope & Engaged Love: God talk in a time of pandemic

Speaker: Rev. Dr. Brian Blount, President
Union Presbyterian Seminary, Richmond, VA, USA



&
4:00 p.m. JA time

**MAR
3**

Conference: Opening Session

6:00 p.m. JA time

Keynote Address:
The Most Rev. Dr. Howard K. A. Gregory
Bishop of Jamaica & the Cayman Islands
Archbishop of the W.I. Primate & Metropolitan



to
8:00 p.m. JA time

**MAR
4**

Conference: Setting the Stage for the Conversation

9:00 a.m. JA time

Presentation: Dr. Allthea Spencer-Miller
Assistant Professor, Drew University School of Theology



to
1:00 p.m. JA time

**MAR
5**

Conference: The Way Forward

9:00 a.m. JA time

Panel Discussion:
- Rev. Dr. Cuthbert Edwards - Rev. Norbert Stephens
- Rev. Germaine Lovelace - Rev. Canon Grace Jervis
- Rev. Norva Rodney - Rev. Daniella Dockman
- Rev. Patricia Sheerattan-Bisnauth

to
1:00 p.m. JA time

Further information will be provided via WhatsApp# 876-289-1121 or please call 876-927-1123

Made with PosterMyWall.com

Follow us on



@ucjci

UCJCI VALUE S

“In seeking to live out our calling, we particularly value and are committed to:

A Loving Fellowship and Unity

Strengthening our community of believers in a Christ-like manner, by affirming each other and responding to each other's needs with understanding and compassion, so as to encourage others to be drawn to a life in Christ (Romans 14:19) constantly acting in love towards one another, while acknowledging our diversity, but always seeking the unity of the Church for the building of the kingdom

(Romans 14: 19; Acts 2:42-47;
Ephesians 2:11-22, 4:1-16)

**IN THE COMING
ISSUE...**

**MEN ON A
MISSION**

THE UNITED CHURCH IN JAMAICA

Congregational, Disciples of Christ ,Presbyterian

12 Carlton Crescent, Kingston 10

Tel: 876 926-8734

E-mail: synod@ucjci.com ♦ Website: www.ucjci.com

Moderator

Rt. Rev. Dr. Gordon Cowans

General Secretary

Rev. Norbert Stephens

Regional Deputy General Secretaries

Cayman Regional Mission Council
Rev. Dr. Yvette Noble Bloomfield

Southern Regional Mission Council
Mrs. Rose Wedderburn

North Eastern Regional Mission Council
(Interim)
Rev. Norbert Stephens

Western Regional Mission Council
Mrs. Mauleen Henry

SYNODICAL THEME:

“Renewal and Transformation: Discipleship for Life”