



A WEEKLY NEWSLETTER OF
THE UNITED CHURCH IN JAMAICA AND THE CAYMAN ISLANDS

March 17, 2021

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NOW IS THE TIME TO SERVE

A Call to Ministry

THE WAY OF
HEALING

THE INTIMACY
OF PRAYER

VOLUME 7
ISSUE 11

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

Now is the time to Serve



Lay Pastors serve alongside ordained ministers.

“Whether ordained or commissioned, each person is called to fulfil a role that serves to make the witness of the church effective, without which, the impact of the church could be deemed less effective or even ineffective”.

The United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands (UCJCI), as part of the worldwide family of Reformed Churches, subscribes to the ‘priesthood of all believers’. By this, we believe that everyone who embraces salvation through Jesus Christ is automatically enlisted in the service of God. In other words, the mission given to the Church by Jesus Christ is the personal responsibility of each Christian and the collective business of all of the people of God.

Every UCJCI member belongs to a local congregation. It is here that our service must begin. Each member is invited to use the abilities, gifts, and other resources entrusted by God to enrich and expand the witness of the congregation to which she or he belongs.

The UCJCI is currently making a more concerted effort to assist every member to become more actively involved in the life and witness of the church, beginning but not ending at the level of the local congregation.

Through its Lay Training Institute, the UCJCI strives to assist all members to have a better understanding of these beliefs and practices and to equip them with increased

knowledge, skills and approaches to service and leadership at the local level.

WHAT TASK CAN I DO?

Each member is challenged to discover ways in which he or she may contribute meaningfully and effectively to the task that faces your faith community. The question should always be ‘how may I do my part, perhaps what no one else can do to advance the cause of Christ?’ What task is there that needs to be done that may remain undone unless I undertake to do it? Having asked the question and determined an answer, each member must be careful and committed to making that response real in the life of the church, endeavouring at all times to do so in the best way that they are capable.

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One of the benefits of faithful, quality service rendered at the local level is that it places one in a better position to be supportive of the work of other congregations within the Charge of which one is a member, or in the wider Regional Mission Council.

UCJCI COMMITS TO PREPARING PEOPLE TO SERVE

The UCJCI is committed to offering the kind of exposure and facilitating the kind of experience that will ensure the optimal effectiveness of each member. This training and practice provide the member with invaluable experience that will prove extremely helpful to those who may sense a call to engage in more intensive preparation for participation in the commissioned or ordained ministries within the UCJCI. As a matter of fact, such a possibility should never be excluded from any response to the invitation to serve at the local level.

ORDAINED AND COMMISSIONED MINISTRY

What are these and how may a UCJCI member become involved?

The general Christian understanding is that a minister, being essentially a servant, is anyone who engages in action that seeks to fulfil the mission of Jesus Christ in the world. Within the UCJCI, a Commissioned or Ordained Minister is one for whom this engagement is her or his primary vocation. It is from this engagement that she/he makes a livelihood.

What do Ordained and Commissioned Ministers within the UCJCI do?

Both groups of persons combine to ensure that the UCJCI's vision and programme of mission expression are executed efficiently and effectively through all the various avenues established by the Synod. The **ordained ministers** have



Clergy are ordained to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament.

local congregations and Charges as their primary sphere of operation. Accordingly, they perform pastoral/spiritual functions in keeping with the ethos of the UCJCI, provide leadership, guidance, motivation and training for the local congregation to fulfil its missional role and seek to maintain the unity of the Church. There are some ordained ministers who function in administration at the regional or denominational level or in such other areas as public and theological education.

Commissioned ministers, while being sometimes exposed to similar training as the ordained, often times have additional specialist training and function primarily in or through church affiliated institutions in largely administrative and/or service delivery capacities. Unlike the ordained, the commissioned are not normally authorized to administer the sacraments.

Whether ordained or commissioned, each person is called to fulfil a role that serves to make the witness of the church effective and without which action, the impact of the church could be deemed less effective or even ineffective.

In the final analysis, it is not whether or not each member has been called to serve, but how and where that service may be best expressed. If you are convinced that your call includes serving beyond your local congregation, have a conversation with your minister or send us an e-mail at minform.ucjci@gmail.com.

Let us hear from you!

**- Rev. Henley Bernard, UCJCI,
Director of Ministerial Formation**



Lay leaders serve in various ministries and roles.

NEWS FROM CAYMAN REGION



A FESTIVAL OF LOVE

On February 12, 2021, a Pre-Valentines Celebration was held at Elmslie Memorial Church organized by the Elmslie Youth Ministry. Over forty (40) children were in attendance, and many parents also joined the evening that was filled with much fun, games, and refreshments (Popcorn, Hot dog, Snowcone, Burger, Machine candy).



COVID-19 VACCINE

Since the arrival of the first batch of Pfizer/BioNTech vaccines, the Government of the Cayman Islands has gone into full gear with its national vaccination plan. The arrival of the 9,750 doses of the vaccine is enough to inoculate 4,875 people across the three islands. Trials have shown the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine will offer up to 95% protection against COVID-19, with just two doses taken 21 days apart. Rev. Rohan Forrester (see photo) was among the number of persons who have already taken the vaccine.

THE WAY OF HEALING

- Rev. Otto Menko

One of the deadliest natural poisons known to humankind is the venom of a snake called Black Mamba. The Black Mamba lives in Africa. According to records, the bite of the Black Mamba first feels like almost nothing, just a slight sting. The sensation soon turns into a tingling. Unfortunately, it is just the beginning of a very swift end for many. Within less than a minute, the special chemical compound of the venom travels through the bloodstream in the entire body and begins to exert its power. By attacking the central nervous system, it shuts it down in just a few minutes, leading to paralysis, convulsions, and death by suffocation.

The Scripture passage in Numbers 21:4-9 tells about an incident in the desert, during the journey of the people of Israel from Egypt to Canaan. The people became impatient and began to grumble and complain against God and Moses. They said, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt, to die in the wilderness? There is no bread! There is no water! And we detest this miserable food [manna]!" These were serious complaints and in effect, hidden accusations against both God and Moses. The momentary hardships that they experienced during their journey led them to believe that God and Moses did not care about them. They were looking at their immediate situation and lost sight of the bigger picture: God saved them, entered into a covenantal relationship with them, is leading them, and taking them to the Promised Land.

In response to their rebellion the "Lord sent venomous snakes among them", in essence, withdrew divine protection from them – of which they were completely oblivious prior to this. As a result, many Israelites died from snake bites. This tragic outcome made the Israelites realize that God had been protecting them all along and they were foolish to assume that God didn't care. They came to Moses in repentance saying, "We sinned when we spoke against the Lord and against you. Pray that the Lord will take the snakes away from us."



So Moses made a bronze snake and put it up on a pole. Then when anyone was bitten by a snake and looked at the bronze snake, they lived. (Numbers 21:9)

Moses prayed for them and received instructions from God

to make a bronze snake and display it in the camp on a pole so that those who were bitten could look upon it and be healed. As the Scripture says, "...when anyone was bitten by a snake and looked at the bronze snake, they lived" (Num. 21:9). The source of their healing in the desert that brought the cure was not the bronze snake itself, though. That edifice didn't have any magical power, nor some special mysterious force emanating from it. It was

merely a sign. A sign giving assurance of a very present help, a guarantee of God's goodness and mercy in a world, where death was lurking not only physically, behind any bush or under any rock, but also spiritually, behind their disbelief, lack of trust and arrogance. The source of their healing was God and the only way to access God's restoring power was through faith, by believing that if they looked upon that bronze snake on the pole, they would be healed. Faith was the key element in the process of their healing.

It is important to note that the snakes remained for the rest of the journey to the Promised Land. They became poignant reminders of their rebellion against God, of how fickle and small-minded they were, and of how brazenly they turned against the One who saved them from bondage. The bronze serpent on a pole also became part

(Cont'd on page 11)



The cross is a sign, an emblem, pointing to the depth of God's love towards us, to the length God was willing to go to save us. The only way to access our salvation is by repentance and faith, by reaching out and placing our trust in God, through Jesus Christ.

The Intimacy of Prayer

It is little surprise to most of us that the key to building intimacy in a relationship is communication. Why is intimacy important in a relationship? It is the means by which we get to know the other and the other gets to know us. This mutual understanding helps to cement the relationship as day to day and moment by moment decisions are made and behaviours carried out within the context of that relationship. These decisions and behaviours either strengthen or damage relationship. Communication, as a vital component of building intimacy, involves listening and disclosing. As for human relationships, so it is for our relationship with God—building intimacy is important to deeper relationship. Communication which aids that deeper relationship involves prayer. During Lent, a season for seeking deeper relationship with God, let us seek greater intimacy, with God through prayer.

But what is the content of prayer which facilitates intimacy with God? If we pay careful attention to listening and disclosing in prayer, we can know more of God and learn more about ourselves in relationship with God.

Disclosing

Here is a common question about prayer, 'Why tell God what God already knows, since God is Omniscient (God knows all things). Wouldn't God already know what I am about to say? Yes, God already knows. So what is the value in telling God again? Think of yourself in the place of a parent, who is aware of something which has happened to your child, or you are aware of something which has happened to your good friend—something good, or something not so good. You look forward to hearing it from the child or friend—to hear the expressions of joy or struggle spoken from their mouth. They value your opinion, value your accompanying in the experience, but it is never spoken. Can you see how disclosure deepens relationship, expresses trust and the value of the relationship? Disclosure also signals dependence—the need for God. Our expressions to God are not to provide God with information. God already knows. Our expressions signal to God that we value God and want to bring to God our joys and our pains, our questions and our doubts.

Let's also think for a moment, what do we disclose when we talk with God? Is our conversation limited to petition and intercession, both of which we are encouraged to take to God (Philippians 4:6; Galatians 6:2)? It would seem to me that without spending time acknowledging who God is and what God has done in our lives and in the world, we miss an opportunity to build intimacy. When we praise and thank God, when we express our adoration, respect for God, we remind ourselves of God's character and celebrate God's greatness; this God with whom we seek deeper relationship.

Listening

Another important component of communication is listening. It is a vital element of prayer. So often when we go to prayer we are pre-occupied with telling God everything—how we feel, what we want, what happened, asking why it happened, even giving thanks, praising and praying—but we don't pause to listen to what God is saying to us. In any relationship, we must be willing to stop speaking and listen to the other. Silence is a vital component in prayer, because often it is in the space that we hear the still, small voice. In those moments we experience peace, we focus or re-focus and obtain clarity.

Brothers and sisters, none of this is achieved without the investment of time. Let's spend the time which will undoubtedly lead to an enjoyment of God's presence. That enjoyment and greater awareness through communication makes for better and deeper relationship with God. Try it nuh?

- Mrs. Karen Francis

WORSHIP DURING LENT

THEMES FOR HOUSE WORSHIP LITURGY

THEME FOR MARCH:

Rooting our Spiritual Health in God brings us Hope

MARCH 21

The importance of confession and repentance on the
journey to spiritual health

Jeremiah 31:31-34 □ Hebrews 5:5-10 □ John 12:20-33 □ Psalm 51:1-13 □ or Psalm
119:9-16

MARCH 28

Palm Sunday

Are you available to be used by God?

Mark 11:1-11* □ or John 12:12-16 □ Psalm 118:1-2, 19- 29

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

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



OPENING SERVICE

SUNDAY APRIL 11, 2021—4:00 p.m.



SYNODICAL SYMBOL: THE BAMBOO PLANT

<https://www.youtube.com/user/UCJCI> and you should be directed to the channel You should then see the page for the Opening Service.

Historically, the Opening Service of Synod, has been an occasion of grand celebration and colourful ceremony. This 42nd Synod will not see a grand physical gathering but true to the theme we have embraced for the Synod—**ROOTED, RESILIENT, RESPONDING IN HOPE**— we are determined to worship as God's church and utilize tools of technology which God has enabled human beings to discover and develop. The service will be streamed live on the United Church You Tube channel which can be accessed through an internet search engine by going to YouTube, typing UCJCI or use

What will happen in the service?

We will worship through HYMNS and SONGS OF PRAISE.

We will pray together for our world, our nations, our church, our families, ourselves in THANKSGIVING and PRAISE, CONFESSION, INTERCESSION AND PETITION.

We will worship through art forms—dance, musical ministry, poetry and art

We will share fellowship with Greetings from our Partners

Special features of the service

The Induction of the Moderator—Rev. Gary Harriott

Prophetic Proclamation through a Sermon by outgoing Moderator—Rt. Rev. Dr. Gordon Cowans

ALL ARE INVITED TO JOIN IN WORSHIP. DON'T MISS OUT.



COVID-19

UPDATE

The UCJCI COVID-19 Response Team now meets every month. Consequently, updates will follow the scheduled meetings. The following are decisions and reminders taken by the Team which met on March 2, 2021 in relation to Congregational Life..

Congregational Life

Given the rise in cases in Jamaica, the Government has issued new regulations under The Disaster Management Act, which will affect churches as under:

- ◆ **For the period March 1-22, 2021, only online worship services are permitted.**

A maximum of 10 persons are allowed in the sanctuary to facilitate the execution of the online worship service. We encourage you to use other means, such as recorded worship/sermons/studies using social media or the weekly House Church Liturgy to meet the worship and nurture needs of your congregation(s).

- ◆ **Funeral Services and burials are not permitted** from March 8-22, 2021.
- ◆ **Weddings are permitted with a maximum of 25 persons.**
- ◆ **Public gatherings are restricted to 10 persons.**
- ◆ **Persons 60 years and older are to stay at home.**

We expect you to comply with these regulations as we seek to play our part in seeking to reduce the number of infections on the island. Let us set an example for others to follow.

We encourage you to listen for updates or amendments to these regulations from the legitimate state authorities.

May we together continue to depend on God, *who has not given us a spirit of fear, but of love and of power and of a sound mind* (2 Timothy 1:7).

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

- ◆ Pre-Synod Consultations and the 42nd Synod of the United Church
- ◆ The upcoming general elections in Cayman on April 14.
- ◆ Bereaved persons in Jamaica contending with the loss of loved ones and the challenges of adjusted burial protocols.
- ◆ Prayerful discernment, good judgement and decision-making at national, community, organizational and personal levels in relation to the COVID-19 vaccine.
- ◆ Increasing crime and instances of civil disobedience in Jamaica
- ◆ **Members of the United Church leadership who are bereaved—Mrs. Shernett Smith (brother), Pastor Heather Fray (mother—Olive Jones), Jeanette Rose Bryan (son) Rev. Danny Russell (aunt), Mrs. Doreen Barnett (brother), Rev. Chris Mason (brother).**
- ◆ Healing and help for Rev. Dr. Elsa Clarke
- ◆ Healing for members of the United Church and the wider community who have contracted COVID 19.



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)



A Prayer for the People of Myanmar

Heavenly Father, as members of the worldwide family we pray for places across our world where there is conflict; where innocent people suffer because of the abuse of power. God, our refuge, and strength, we pray a special prayer for the people of Myanmar; that the military government will exercise restraint, and for Myanmar to be fully returned into the hands of a duly elected civilian government.

God of justice, we pray for a quick end to the people's struggle and suffering, for peace and order to be restored soon and for justice to crowd out oppression and cruelty. Give to the leaders the gift of wisdom to make the right decisions in the interest of all the people. We pray for those who speak truth to power. God of all comfort, we pray for the dozens who have lost their lives and for the families that have been displaced. Bring comfort and hope where the pain of bereavement is felt. God of liberty, we pray for those whose freedom has been taken away and those who are separated from loved ones; for those enduring emotional, physical, and spiritual turmoil because of the situation. In this Lenten season, may they know that you are able to make a way in the wilderness. Saviour of the world, we pray for the Church community, remembering especially the Presbyterian Church of Myanmar, our partner in mission through the Council for World Mission. We pray that in this period of darkness, the Church may be a shining beacon of hope to all and continue to proclaim your Word boldly. May the light of Your glory and grace shine upon your people. We pray all these things in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

Markel Virgo & Rose Wedderburn—CWM Board Members from the Caribbean Region



(Cont'd from page 5)

of their daily existence, of their lives, as a reminder of God's goodness, love, and care, as a sign of healing and restoration.

This story – and all the others recorded in the Old Testament – were recalled and retold by the people of Israel throughout their history, from generation to generation. The gospel of John tells us that well over a thousand years later, one evening, a member of the Jewish high council, the Sanhedrin, went to see Jesus. His name was Nicodemus. At some point during their conversation Jesus made a statement about Himself and His mission by referring to the bronze serpent in our story (John 3:14-15). Jesus drew a direct line, a link, between the image of the bronze snake on the pole and His crucified body on the Cross as He presented the gospel in a nutshell: "For God so loved the world that he gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life". (John 3:16) Just like the bronze snake on the pole didn't have any magical, mysterious power, neither does the Cross. It is a sign, an emblem, pointing to the depth of God's love towards us, to the length God was willing to go to save us. The only way to access our salvation is by repentance and faith, by reaching out and placing our trust in God, through Jesus Christ. As Eph. 2:8 says, "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith— and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God." Poisonous snakes are still around, literally, they can be found in many parts of the world. They are also around figuratively, in many forms. Time and time again we are bitten by them, we lose faith, we follow our own ways, or we are beset by hardships of many kinds - but even if we are not – we are reminded by the Scriptures that we are loved by God, and as Hebrews 12:2 says, we must "fix our eyes on Jesus, the author, and finisher of our faith"

Upcoming Events



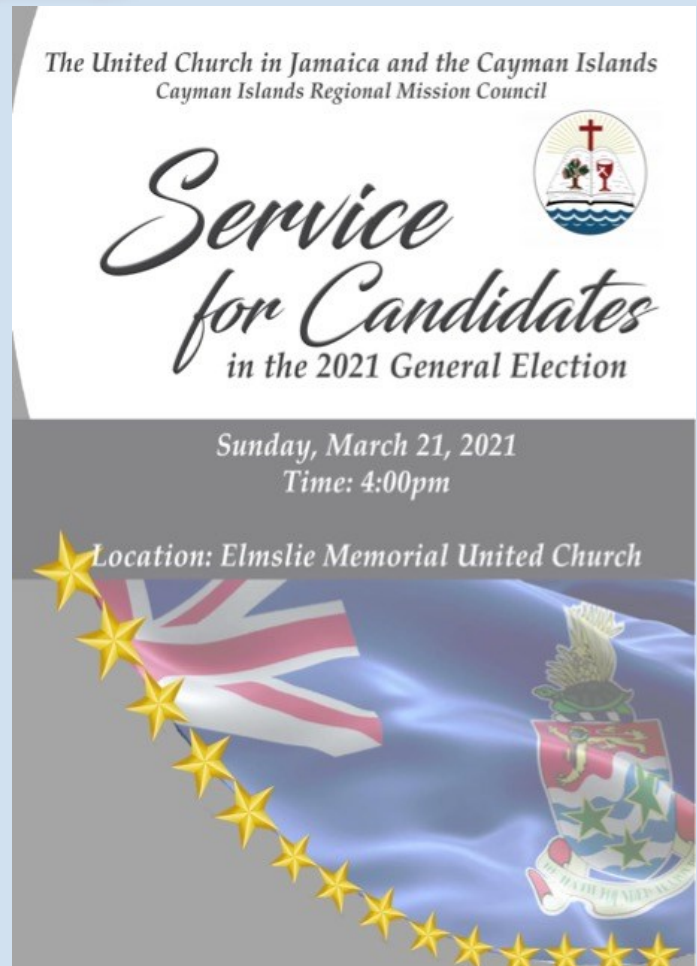
UNITED CHURCH IN JAMAICA AND THE CAYMAN ISLANDS

CAYMAN ISLANDS REGIONAL MISSION COUNCIL

CHILDREN & YOUTH SYNODICAL RALLY!

SUNDAY,
MARCH 28, 2021
Savannah United Church
5:00pm to 7:00pm

Refreshments will be provided



The United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands
Cayman Islands Regional Mission Council

Service for Candidates in the 2021 General Election

Sunday, March 21, 2021
Time: 4:00pm

Location: Elmslie Memorial United Church

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

March 17

March 23



Rev. Herbert Redway Jr.



Rev. Jane Kaluba



Meadowrest Memorial Gardens is located in Whittaker Mountain off the St. John's Road in St. Catherine. The Gardens has been developed on 55 acres of rolling countryside and magnificent views which serve as a perfect final resting place.

Applications are invited for the post of **ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT**

Core Functions:

The Assistant Superintendent is responsible for planning and supervision of the daily operations, the maintenance of the Gardens and the management of the workforce.

SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE:

- * Cemetery Operations
- * Cost Management
- * Proficient in use of Computer Applications

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE:

- * Bachelor's Degree in Operations Management
- * 3-5 years' leadership experience

Meadowrest Memorial Gardens is committed to providing equitable opportunities to all qualified persons.

Applicants are requested to email their resume with a cover letter identifying strengths relative to the requirements no later than March 19, 2021 to: humanresource@ucmeja.com

Follow us on



@ucjci

UCJCI VALUE S

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

Spiritual Disciplines (Prayer, Fasting, Worship, etc.):

Personally and corporately communing with the Triune God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, attributing honour and seeking after God’s heart, to be empowered for ministry
(Psalm 95:1-6, Matthew 6:5-18).

IN THE COMING ISSUE...

**TACKLING
DOMESTIC
VIOLENCE**

THE UNITED CHURCH IN JAMAICA

Congregational, Disciples of Christ ,Presbyterian

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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”