



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

March 24, 2021

**U
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GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

Recognise
and Re-position



LENT LEADS US
INTO THE WORD

- **SYNODICAL
CHILDREN'S
RALLIES**

VOLUME 7
ISSUE 12

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

Gender-based Violence

Time for the church to Recognise and Re-position



My earliest recollection of violence within families is an incident that I observed one Sunday afternoon when I was about nine years old. The commotion caused by the shouting and crying that emanated from my neighbours, alerted others in the community to peek through their windows or congregate on their verandas to get a first-hand view of Terrence and Wanda (not their real names) 'at it again'. I was just in time to see him pulling her by the arm down the forty-five-degree gravel driveway to the sounds of her pleading with him to let her go. She grabbed on to an overhanging tree limb (about the size of her arm) that gave way to the force of him pulling her. Halfway down the incline he suddenly let go of her, causing her to fall and skate a few feet before coming to a stop. Bruised and crying, she limped away. I couldn't understand why no one went over to assist her. A few weeks later I overheard two adults saying that they were back together again, and that Wanda had reported that Terrence only hits her because he loves her.

As I got older, I sadly learned that that kind of violence was not uncommon in domestic situations. There are far too many circumstances in which violence is meted out to one partner or the other or is used as a way of 'resolving' conflicts. Both men and women are victims of this kind of violence. However, women are disproportionately affected and are often the victims of violence in relationships simply by virtue of their gender and the beliefs and stereotypes associated with the power dynamics between men and women. Gender based violence is also distinguished from other types of domestic violence basically by what motivates it and the goals it aims to obtain. Hence, there are three basic elements that differentiate it from other forms of violence: its structural component, the goal of control and the isolation which it involves.

Gender-based violence is a form of 'structural violence' because it takes place under the construction of gender roles and sexual stereotypes. It is often fuelled by the notion that the man is inherently stronger, the leader and has the final word – that he has a 'right' to exert dominance over the woman.

It appears that the main aim of gender-based violence is to control and subject women to the dictates and references imposed by the aggressor based on structural elements of society and culture.

As part of the strategy of control, the aggressor uses structural elements at a social level as well as individual control to isolate the women from her sources of external support (e.g., family, friends and other support systems).

The end result of gender-based violence is usually physical, sexual, psychological, or economic harm and suffering to

Lockdown traps women in violence and frees their attackers to use it against them.

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women. No doubt, the lockdown (as a consequence of COVID-19 restrictions) has created the ideal conditions for the escalation of this kind of violence as women have experienced greater isolation (because of the formal confinement) making it more difficult for them to escape the violence. You might say, then, that the lockdown traps women in violence and frees their attackers to use it against them.

Unfortunately, the Church is not exempt from this experience of violence. Within our membership are victims, perpetrators and bystanders. The story of Jacob's Daughter, Dinah (in Genesis 34) gives us a glimpse into the age-old experience of gender-based violence. She is violently raped by Shechem ("the prince of the land") who uses his position of power to impose himself on her. When her father learned of the rape, although he was disturbed, he did not say anything for fear of his own safety. The rapist's father then went to her father and negotiated a dowry ("bride-price") to have her married off to her rapist. Sadly, her father accepts this proposition which was legally allowed for a rapist to make such a request (Deuteronomy 22:28-29; Exodus 22:16-17). Here we see a structure that allowed for and perpetuated this kind of violence against women, the exertion of control over a woman by a man by virtue of his gender and position and the further imposition of isolation by marrying her and placing her in the ambit of his greater control. In this story we see victim, aggressor and bystander. As in my first intro to this form of violence, there was a structure that gave support, there was control that was inflicted and isolation that was employed. And there was a victim, an aggressor and bystanders. The ministry of the Church must be geared towards victims, perpetrators and spectators for within our walls, all three are present.

Here are some issues to be considered.

To what extent are we perpetuating different standards for women than those expected of men? When women and girls are raped, there are many who pose ridiculous questions as, 'What was she doing alone in the night, why did she have to go out at that time?' or 'Why was she wearing that outfit?' as though she deserved

to be raped because of the crime of going out alone or wearing short shorts. Like in the story of the woman caught in the act of adultery, we must confront the propensity to place greater expectations of women in relationships. Where was the man with whom she was engaged in this act of adultery?

How can we help to break the cycles of violence by removing the stigma that encourages silence? Many persons remain in the shadows because they are embarrassed or ashamed and do not seek out help. Many bruises are masked with 'make-up' or stories of accidental 'tripping over a broom'. The story of Abigail

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(in 1 Samuel 25: 1-38) is an example of forbearing in silence and eventual speaking up. How do we empower victims and bystanders to do this important work?

What is the lesson to be learned from the inbuilt sense of balance and equality in the creation story? Unfortunately, the Church continues to be part of the problem in gender inequality by the beliefs and stereotypes we support. We must take note of the detail in the creation story where God created human beings -- male and female -- in God's 'own image' (Genesis 1:27). How will we care for each other so that she or he is treated as a beloved child of God, made in the image of the Creator?

The reality of gender-based violence is old and ongoing. The responsibility of Christians is to recognize its existence and reposition ourselves to become part of the solution by examining our beliefs, opening ourselves to others and living out our partnership with our sisters and brothers in Christ.

Rev. Donovan Myers



Portmore United Celebrates Girls' Brigade Month



On Sunday March 21, Portmore United Church celebrated Girls' Brigade month. The month of March is designated as Girls' Brigade month around the world. This year's theme is "*Fruitful and overflowing, Be Faithful!*"



Launching of Girls' Brigade Rally Drive

The Girls' Brigade Company at Portmore United Church is the 5th St. Catherine Company in Jamaica.



Vanessa Blissett read the second lesson.

The Captain is Sis June Gordon and Chaplain and National Chaplain- Rev'd Nevroy Francis. As is customary, girls participate in the worship experience, this year was no different even with the Covid-19 restrictions we continue to live out our motto as we "*Seek, Serve and Follow Christ.*"



Jada Adia Mignott reads 1st lesson.



Tagging of the National Girls' Brigade Chaplain, Rev. Nevroy Francis.

GB Service at Elmslie United in Cayman



The Cayman Islands Girls' Brigade began Girls' Brigade week at Elmslie Memorial United Church on Sunday under the theme "Fruitful and Overflowing: Be Faithful". Approximately 80-90 Girls and leaders from companies across the island attended the service which was a blessing to all. We give thanks that we were able to begin our GB week together at Elmslie. GB week continues throughout the week with the George Town and West Bay companies. - Ms. Debbie McLaughlin (Chairman, Cayman Islands Girls' Brigade)

Youth Service at South Sound

The South Sound United Church held its Youth Service on March 14, 2021 before a full congregation, focusing on the theme 'Do Not Fear for I Am with You'. 'Jesus and the disciples in the boat' The story of Jesus and Peter walking on water in a storm - based on Matthew 14:22-32 - was brought 'alive' by a short drama and highlighted in the reflection given by Mr. Roy McGregor, Youth Minister for the George Town Charge.



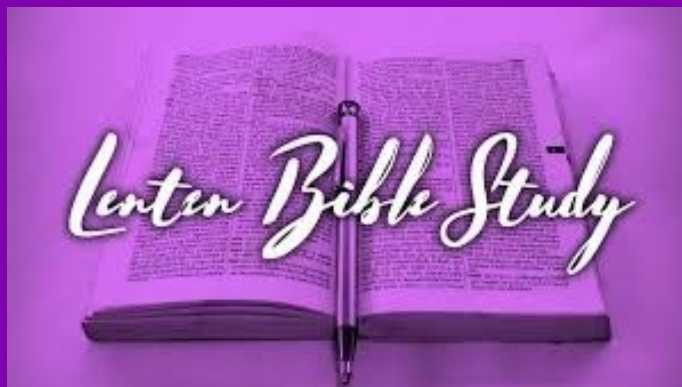
International Service at Savannah



Many Branches, One Tree:
Rooted, Resilient, Responding
in H.O.P.E.

Fourteen (14) countries represented in our congregation were celebrated during our International Service which was held on Sunday, March 14. Country representatives read the scripture in their country's language/dialect

Let LENT Lead Us into The Word



Rev. Jane Kaluba

When I came to Jamaica, I was always being encouraged to use the navigation system in the Nissan Toyota Tiida when driving to Kingston. Now, every time I drive to Kingston, I am reminded of how important it means to intentionally and seriously study the scriptures to keep us heading in the right direction. The scriptures help us to make corrections when we unintentionally, unconsciously lose our way.

The Lenten season is a very important time in the life of a Christian which pointedly directs believers to the redemptive works of Jesus Christ. It is a reflective prelude to the two most important celebrations on the Christian Liturgical Calendar - Good Friday and Easter.

During this time, attention is given to individual self-examination, penitence, devotion and spiritual renewal. The scriptures gives us the only glimpse available of Jesus as a child, as a 12 year old in the temple in Jerusalem, "sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking questions" (Luke 2:46). The crowd was amazed at Jesus' knowledge of the Scriptures.

Jesus studied the Old Testament long before the New Testament came into effect. When the time came for him to be crucified, years later, he was ready as the Holy Spirit led him into the Wilderness to be tempted by Satan. Jesus had a storehouse of Holy Scriptures to strike and fight off every evil arrow Satan threw at him.

When the time came for him to leave his earthly life, while painfully and courageously enduring the agony of the crucifixion, Jesus' final words (Luke 23:46) came from a portion of Psalm 31:5: "Into your hands I commit my

spirit."

Jesus knew every part of the scripture and used it when the right time came. Many of us Christians (confessed believers) struggle to quote even a single scripture when we are faced with serious issues or asked to pray in church. Many fall short when it comes to serious and disciplined Bible study. The Bible is very central to our Christianity, but do we study it? Is it really our "mandate for faith and practice"?

You and I are disciples of Jesus Christ and its incumbent upon each one of us to follow the teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ and earnestly try to live the life He led while on earth. This means disciplined study of the Holy Scriptures and a disciplined life, adherence to Bible study times individually and with other Christians so that there is spiritual growth in our lives and this will help us leave the elementary teachings (Hebrews 6:1). The more we study the Holy Scriptures, the more transformed we become into his image (2 Corinthians 3:18).

Plan and concentrate on reading and studying of the Holy Scriptures this Lenten season. Take full advantage of the learning opportunities in your congregation and grow to maturity!!!! After Lenten Season, make studying the Holy Scriptures a lifestyle!!

Lesamipale - Bemba (Zambia)
God bless you - English
Jah bless - Patwa (Jamaica)

THEMES FOR HOUSE WORSHIP LITURGY

THEME FOR MARCH:

**Rooting our Spiritual
Health in God Brings us Hope**

MARCH 28



Are you available to be used by God?

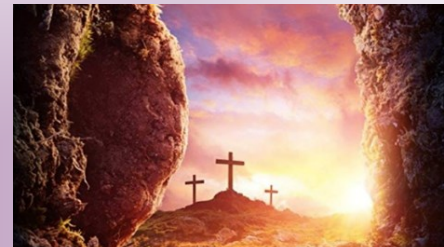
Mark 11:1-11* ☐ or John 12:12-16

☐ Psalm 118:1-2, 19- 29

SUNDAY APRIL 4

Easter

Theme: **Resurrection Power!**



**Christ rising from dead, speaks
to new life, new possibilities.**

Isaiah 25: 6-9; Psalm 118: 1-2; 14-24; St. Mark 16: 1-8

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



Rev. Donald Williams

March 28, 2021





Spotlight on UCJCI 42nd Synod

Rooted, Resilient, Responding in H.O.P.E.

SYNOD BIBLE STUDIES **APRIL 11-15, 2021**

6:00 a.m. each day

Here's a personal invitation to you to spend your mornings' reflection times with other members of the United Church family. **BIBLE STUDIES** will be held at 6:00 a.m. each day—Monday to Thursday—during the week of Synod.

Each day we focus on one aspect of the theme. Our studies will be enriched by practical perspectives for the application of the Word aided by clergy and practitioners in various disciplines. Join us for a refreshing approach to unpacking the Word of God.

Bible studies will be streamed on the United Church YouTube channel.

BIBLE STUDY THEMES

**Monday April 12
HOPE**

**Tuesday April 13
OPPORTUNITY**

**Wednesday April 14
PEACE**

**Thursday April 15
EVANGELISM**

Please join in the worship.

Psalm 5:3

*O Lord, in the morning you hear my voice;
in the morning I plead my case
to you, and watch.*



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

NERMC CHILDREN'S SYNODICAL RALLY

SATURDAY, APRIL 3, 2021
9:00-10:30am

THEME: "CHILDREN; LITTLE
AMBASSADORS OF H.O.P.E."

facebook

VIA
LIVESTREAM

VIA

YouTube

CELEBRATIONS:

- DANCE
- DRAMA
- PRAISE TEAM
- SONG

SPEAKER
REV. SYLVAN
HINDS

Write with PosterMyWall.com



THE UNITED CHURCH IN JAMAICA
AND THE CAYMAN ISLANDS

Southern Regional Mission Council



CHILDREN'S SYNODICAL RALLY

Sunday March 28, 2021 at 3:00PM

THEME: Rooted, Resilient,
Responding in HOPE

Health | Oppourtunity | Peace | Evangelism



Join Us

www.youtube.com/ucjchildrensministrycommission

WESTERN REGION

Holy Thursday—April 1, 2021

Theme: *Contagious Carriers of Hope*

10:00 a.m.—11:00 a.m.

Preacher: Master Akim Bowen
(Church Schools student, Lilliput United)

Features of Worship:

- ◆ Poster presentation—First Hill United
- ◆ Dance—Discovery Bay United
- ◆ Solo—Brownsville United
- ◆ Drama—Perth Town United
- ◆ Praise and Worship—Stirling United
- ◆ Video contributions on the word 'HOPE'

The worship will be pre-recorded and then
streamed live on WRMC YouTube channel



MEADOWBROOK UNITED CHURCH

PRESENTS

FORUM 2 ON COVID-19


**WEDNESDAY
MARCH 24, 2021**

7:00 PM


Hear informed persons from
the public and private health
sectors address:


 State of COVID-19 locally

 Concerns about vaccines

 Psychological impacts on
the elderly and children

JOIN US ONLINE VIA

 **zoom** Will be sent by eMail

 **YouTube** <https://youtu.be/5kkWE82-DE4>

A joint project by the Men and Women's Fellowships

PRAY ♦ PRAY ♦ PRAY ♦ PRAY

LET US BE DILIGENT IN PRAYER

Look to the LORD and his strength; seek his face always.-

1 Chronicles 16:11

- ♦ The Synodical Children's Rallies 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)



Given the government restriction, which allows only online worship services in Jamaica, many congregations are without the means to stream their worship and consequently are unable to have physical services. Here are online links to some of the congregations that stream their worship in the Jamaican regions. Please share the links below with those who may wish to join an online worship service.

SRMC

Andrews Memorial at 9:30 a.m.

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCmoXgjifqRK8WGoKfoTt_hnw

Bryce United Church at 10:00 a.m.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC7q0bdsF1LhAWzqBkU5n0Q>

Lowe River United at 9:00 a.m.

<https://www.facebook.com/loweriver.unitedchurch>

Mt. Olivet Charge of United Churches at 10:00 a.m.

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC8eas0rJhdRTtThXHn3h_zgQ

Ridgemount United at 9:00 a.m.

<https://www.youtube.com/ridgemountunitedchurch>

NERMC

Greendale United Church 8:30 a.m.

<https://youtu.be/73pUumUZyZg>

Hope United Church 8:00 a.m.

<https://youtu.be/o-Wnb0itWwA>

Immanuel/Boscobel Service 9:00 a.m.

<https://youtu.be/ojxHnli27nU>

Portmore United Church 8:30 a.m.

<https://youtu.be/SUWJOSWYy1s>

St. Andrew's Scots Kirk 10:00 a.m.

<https://www.facebook.com/scotskirkja/videos/479718479726110/>

Webster Memorial 8:00 a.m.

<https://youtube.com/c/WebsterMemorialUnitedChurch>

WRMC

Discovery Bay United 9:00 a.m.

<https://fb.watch/44BLFjKSYt/>

Lucea United Church, 10:00 a.m.

<https://youtube.com/channel/UCByawodzU5wkov4QpLd6chA>

Savanna la mar United Church 10:00 a.m.

<https://www.facebook.com/SavUnited/videos/262609478664214/>

St. Paul's United Church, Montego Bay 8:30 a.m.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCFXOgl5m2ALh7XwvTHkA9CQ>

UCJCI VALUE S

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

Mission and Outreach:

Seeking always to respond to the hurts and needs of people, giving them hope; always acting justly and being advocates of justice

(James 2:15-16, Deuteronomy 16:18-20, Zechariah 7:8-10, Luke 11:42, Luke 4:17-19).

**IN THE COMING
ISSUE...**

**Journey to the
Cross**

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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”