



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

March 31, 2021

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HARD-PRESSED AND NOT CRUSHED

A Resilient Church

PUBLIC LECTURE ON
PASTORAL CARE

LENTEN
REFLECTION

'Take Up Your Cross'

VOLUME 7
ISSUE 13

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

A RESILIENT CHURCH

- *Hard-pressed but not crushed*

As we approach the 42nd Synod of The United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands (UCJI) it is important for every member of our church to understand the theme—Rooted, Resilient: Responding in H.O.P.E. (Health, Opportunity, Peace and Evangelism). Engagement of the theme will certainly be demonstrated in understanding and action which offer to the wider community witness to the love of God and the invitation to a saving and life-giving relationship with God.

In January 2021, UCJCI *Update* published excerpts from the document, *The Road Map*, which outlines the theological underpinning of the theme of the 42nd Synod.

Here is the full text of the section related to the word, 'Resilient'.

To be "resilient" [returning to the original form or position after being bent, compressed or stretched], speaks to what 2 Corinthians 4:8 & 9 declares as our way of being:

"We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed." (NIV)

Resilience and hope are directly connected. To be resilient is to have hope and to have hope is to be resilient. Paul writes to

encourage the Church in Corinth to see beyond their physical and present circumstances and to see through spiritual eyes that whatever it is and how it may appear to be, God has not abandoned them.

The same is true for us. In other words, our present situation be it:

- ◆ COVID-19;
 - ◆ all the other ills and vices in the two societies;
 - ◆ our personal struggles and trials;
 - ◆ spiritual apathy, dullness and dryness,
- positions us to harness new opportunities for God's power and presence to be manifested in our lives, Church, Communities and the world at large. **The difficulties and hardships of the day are a test of our faith and will in Christ, therefore we must press on.**

In this issue's feature, **NEWS FROM CONGREGATIONS**, there are stories of two ways in which congregations are demonstrating resilience. Be sure to read them.

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SPALDING UNITED CHURCH— RESILIENT IN SERVING

Spalding United Church continues to play its part in the fight against the effects of the COVID 19 pandemic, in terms of assisting families through our outreach programme. Since the pandemic began in 2020, we have engaged the surrounding communities in providing assistance to over 20 families in each quarter through care packages. Our first such activity for 2021 was held on March 22 when we supplied 19 families in this instance, with basic food items. It was well received and we give God thanks that in a time such as this, when everyone has been affected by the pandemic, we can support families. We continue to be inspired and driven by St. Matthew 25:40b... ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family you did it to me.’

- Contributed by Rev. Rohan Kong

Pictured above:

- 1) Rev. Rohan Kong, Minister of the Mount Olivet charge which includes Spalding, Mount Olivet and Bailleston, works side by side with the Women’s Fellowship.
- 2) Elder Maxine Joseph-Platt, one of the members of Spalding helping to package the items.
- 3) A beneficiary from the community receives a care package presented by Elder Maxine Joseph-Platt.





Rev. Tara Tyme, Minister of St. Paul's/Norwood charge connects with the children in the open space of the Gordon Evans Hall.

CREATIVELY CONNECTING WITH CHILDREN

—St. Paul's United, Montego Bay

The Covid-19 pandemic has disrupted the worship/congregational life at St. Paul's. This has caused many of our members to feel disconnected from their church. Despite our best efforts to connect using technology, we are aware that some persons are yet to get on board. The ministry of presence has been reduced to little or nothing.

Target Groups Were Disconnected

As a Church we are challenged to find creative ways to connect with and to assure our members, adherents, children and young people that they are not forgotten. At the centre of this disconnection are our elderly members, children and young people. Our elderly members are the most vulnerable in this pandemic, which makes it even more challenging for us as a Church to be present in their lives. They are vulnerable because they are highly likely to contract the Covid-19 virus quicker than anyone other age group, which can result in fatality; the use of technology is not necessarily their thing; their movement is being restricted and those who are able to visit with them are restricted. Our children and young people, on the other hand, are able to move around, following the safety protocols.

Children's Church Visualized

In May 2020 when churches were allowed to gather as the order from the Jamaican Government permitted, Sunday after Sunday we observed that some of our children would attend Church with their parent/s and/or guardian. We tried our best with the "time with the children" in the service, but felt that more was needed. As the Board of Elders wrestled with ministry to our children and young people in this pandemic, the vision of having a Children's Church found its way into our discussions. We are very conscious that our children and young people, were averse to having Church School online, given the fact that they attended school online and they

have become weary with online activities. As the Board discussed the concept of the Children's Church, we were inspired and made the decision to get the wheel moving, by providing this ministry to children 3-15 years of age. The minister was tasked with identifying the team to facilitate this ministry; work through the concept with team, prepare the space (observing all the protocols) and execute.

At St. Paul's even though we find ourselves in the city, with very little or no parking at times, we have a lot of space to do many and varied activities. We thank God for the vision of the Rev. Dr. Gordon Evans in building the new Church Hall, approximately 9 years ago that consists of three floors. The 1st floor is dedicated to our children and youth ministry, however, given that the regulations dictate that we should be 6ft apart, the Board decided that we would host our Children's Church on the 2nd floor, which is an open space used for various functions.

The intent of Children's Church is to first be children friendly, using technology and the creative arts to minister to our children, even as we seek to affirm their gifts and talents for ministry. An interactive sermon is shared with our children, and those involved in delivering the content, use various props to bring home the message.

Launched in Church School Month

It was our plan to launch the Children's Church on Sunday, October 25, 2020 – Reformation Sunday, but it rained and not many persons came to church. We launched the Children's Church on November 22, 2020. Our children were very excited; we had 16 children in attendance. From there on we saw up to 25 children in attendance. The space actually can facilitate 35 children. Initially we had decided to do this ministry on the 4th Sundays of each month, but after

January's Children's Church and our children indicating their love for it, the decision was made to host it on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of each month. It continues to be a work in progress.

The Challenge to Evolve and Emerge

Just as we were getting ready to launch our ministry to our young people, 16-21 years of age, there came the spike in the Covid-19 virus cases, thus a new order for movement, affecting physical worship life.

At St. Paul's we are not oblivious to the necessity to evolve and emerge as it relates to our ministry needs. We continue to discern, listen and plan. We are cognizant of the fact that, after the pandemic has passed, the way we are accustomed to doing ministry will be no more. Covid-19 has opened our eyes to many things and has certainly reminded us that Church does not only exist for those who are already there, but even more for those who are yet to come. Therefore, we have no choice but to evolve and emerge.

- Contributed by Rev. Tara Tyme Minister, St. Paul's/ Norwood Charge.



The Gordon Evans Church hall had the space on the second floor to allow for gathering while physically distanced in observance of the safety protocols.

United Church Young People's Fellowship

LENTEN SEASON CLERGY REFLECTION

"SAYINGS FROM THE CROSS"

HOSTED BY
REV. LADDIA YOUNG



MARCH 27
REV. ROHAN KONG



MARCH 28
REV. TARA TYME



MARCH 29
REV. GLENROY CLARKE



MARCH 30
REV. JOEL DOWNER



MARCH 31
REV. L. CHRISTOPHER MASON



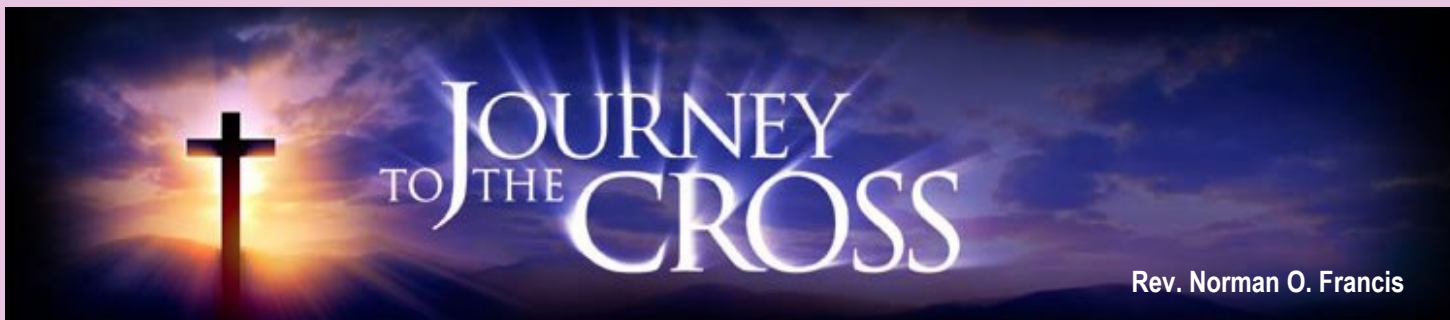
APRIL 1
REV. NEVROY FRANCIS



APRIL 2
REV. NICQI ASHWOOD



UCYPF
8 PM NIGHTLY



"Take Up Your Cross"

It's now Holy Week, and Good Friday fast approaches, the end of which will see Christ's bloodied body hanging lifelessly from a rough-hewn piece of timber. As Jesus hung on the cross, the cesspool of human transgressions – all the hatred ever expressed, all the violence ever perpetrated, all the abuse ever inflicted, all the oppression ever executed, all the lies ever told – were poured out upon this **one** man.

If we're honest, we'll have to admit that there's something about this picture that makes spectators out of us all. We know ourselves to be sinners; we also know we cannot save ourselves, and so, we simply stand by, wringing our hands helplessly, as we watch Christ experience "the most cruel and shameful of all punishments" (Cicero) *all because of us*. Many of us therefore see Good Friday as an event that stirs us, but which doesn't really involve us. We just look on as spectators without ever seeing ourselves as a part of the unfolding narrative. However, Christ's journey with the Cross is a journey that beckons us to participate. Christianity is not a spectator sport.

In Matthew 16:24b-25, Jesus asserts: "... *If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.*" These words would no doubt have been met with raised eyebrows and gasps of disbelief and horror from those who first heard them, for this demand now placed before all would-be followers of Christ would have shocked them to the core. But why? As modern readers who are separated from the world of the biblical text by such great lengths in time (thousands of years) and space (thousands of miles), we will likely miss the full impact of Jesus' words. Today, we have domesticated the image of the cross, and we proudly adorn ourselves with diamond-studded crosses made of gold or silver worn as necklaces and bracelets. But for Jesus' first audience, the cross was seen instead as an instrument of humiliation and excruciating torture! In fact, the word "excruciating" is derived from the Latin words, which mean "from the cross."

So, let's be clear, when Jesus says, "take up your cross," he isn't talking about the things we normally refer to as "crosses" in our lives; things like the burdens we bear or the setbacks we suffer, such as losing one's job, one's health, or one's friends. Burdens and setbacks are the stuff of everyday life that we all

must face, whether we are Christians or not. If that's the case, then Jesus, in telling us to "take up our cross," couldn't possibly be talking about the trials and troubles we *already* have to face in the normal course of everyday life. He must be referring to something else. But what?

Jesus' listeners knew that the prisoner to be crucified had to carry his own cross to the place of crucifixion ... in full public view. This made the prisoner a public spectacle which signified that he, formerly a dangerous criminal, was now broken and under complete submission to the power of Rome. Thus, the

image of one carrying one's own cross to the place of execution is a picture of one who has no will of his own, but who, now broken, submits to the bidding of a greater power. The picture of taking up our cross allows us to understand clearly what it means to be a follower of Christ.



When Jesus says, "take up your cross," he isn't talking about the things we normally refer to as "crosses".

We who choose to follow Jesus Christ are challenged to live in absolute submission to the Lordship of Jesus Christ and resist the self-gratifying urge so common in today's consumer-oriented culture, in which convenience and comfort are given top priority. Jesus' crucifixion is more than a spectator event, for it calls and challenges us to walk a similar road of being willing to be broken of the natural tendency of seeking after our own safety, comfort, and welfare and to show the world that we publicly submit to the supreme Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Are you willing, this Easter, to bear your cross, and journey with Jesus into the unknown?

THEMES FOR HOUSE WORSHIP LITURGY

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

SUNDAY APRIL 11

Theme:

Believing, but not seeing...

Doubt can stand in the way of us not
believing what God is about to do.

Isaiah 12; Psalm 33;

St. John 20: 19- 31

SUNDAY APRIL 18

Theme:

The Power of Christ's Presence

Knowing that God is with us can be so
reassuring in chaos and confusion.

Isaiah 55: 1-11; Psalm 4;

St. Luke 24: 36-50

SUNDAY APRIL 25

Theme:

Whose voice do I listen to?

Knowing the Shepherd's voice makes the
difference between life and death.

Zechariah 11: 4-17; Psalm 23;

St. John 10: 11-18

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

HAPPY BIRTHDAY



APRIL 2

- REV. EVERTON BRISSETT



APRIL 2

REV. DR. JAMES GIBBS



APRIL 4

REV. KHEREEN WILSON BAILEY



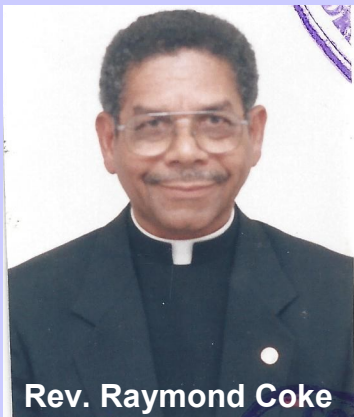
Spotlight on UCJCI 42nd Synod

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

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**The 42nd Synod of The United Church in Jamaica
and the Cayman Islands**

April 11-18, 2021



Rev. Raymond Coke

**All are invited to tune in to
The Raymond Coke
Public Lecture
on PASTORAL CARE**

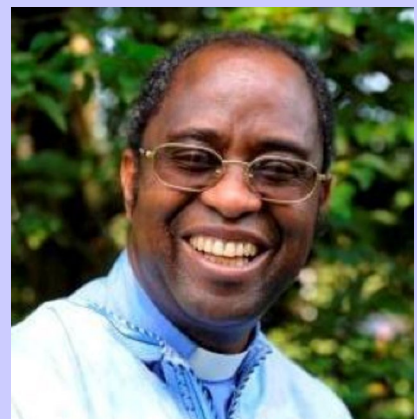
**Wednesday April 14, 2021
at 5:00 p.m.**

Join in on the UCJCI YouTube channel

Lecturer:

Rev. Dr. Setri Nyomi

Chairman of the University Council for
the Evangelical Presbyterian Church
University College in Ghana



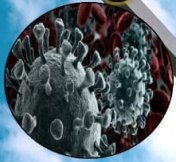
Please remember to pray for our Synod

Children's Synodical Rallies

WESTERN REGIONAL MISSION COUNCIL CHURCH SCHOOL RALLY

Holy Thursday
April 1, 2021 10:00am - 11:00am

Theme:
Contagious Carriers Of Hope



Preacher: Master Akim Bowen

Liturgists: Nia Brissett & Brandan Roberts

Features Of Worship:

- *Poster Presentation _____ First Hill United
- *Dance _____ Discovery Bay United
- *Solo _____ Brownsille United
- *Drama _____ Perth Town United
- *Praise & Worship _____ Stirling United
- *Video Contributions on the word "HOPE"

*The Worship will be pre-recorded & then streamed
live on WRMC YouTube Channel!*

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

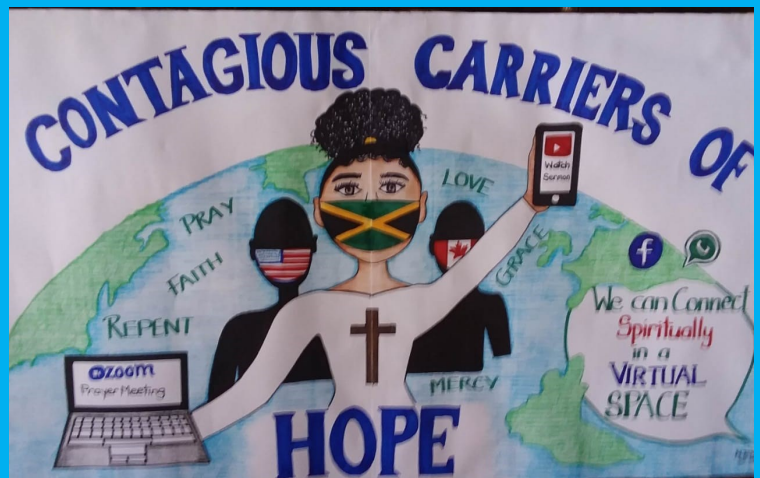
CELEBRATIONS:

- DANCE
- DRAMA
- PRAISE TEAM
- SONG

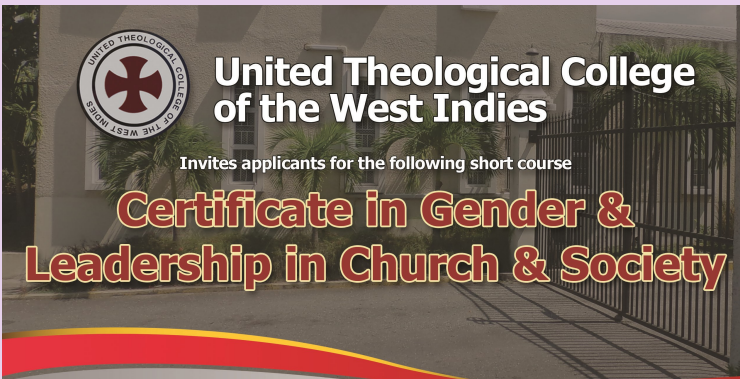
SPEAKER
REV. SYLVAN
HINDS

Theme poster for
the WRMC
Children's
Synodical Rally.

Artist: Naedine Dawson, First Hill
United Church



UPCOMING EVENTS



PURPOSE?

This course proposes that leadership competence transcends gender and that people of any gender, appropriately qualified and trained can provide quality leadership in church and community towards disciple-making.

The programme is relevant and will challenge participants to interrogate practices and beliefs which exclude women from leadership and encourage them to envision and work towards an alternative reality of a partnership of equals.

WHO CAN APPLY?

- Ministerial students preparing for ordination.
- Lay leadership in congregations
- Graduates of UTCWI and other theological institutions - clergy and lay.

Duration of Course: 9 Weeks

Start Date: Thursday, April 15, 2021

Time: 5:00 pm – 8:00 pm (Jamaican time)

APPLY NOW

CONTACT US FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
 TEL - (876) 927-2868/1724 | EMAIL - unitheol@cwjamaica.com
 WEBSITE - www.utcwi.edu.jm | CONNECT WITH US - @utcwicconnect

United Theological College & Students Christian Fellowship & Scripture Union Presents The AMAA Awarding Winning Film

April 15th, 6pm JAM

Donations: Students min \$2.50US with Student ID, non-Students min \$15US

Transfers to SCFSU, NCB Halfway Tree Acct#: 302737541
 Online @ <http://www.UTC-SCFSU-Joseph.eventbrite.com>

"Is the Caribbean Church today as Afro-Centric as it should be"

Panelist: Rev. Stephen Jennings, Director Marcia Weekes

Made with PosterMyWall.com

Congratulations!

Renita Barnes has become the first young Caymanian to start a new employment initiative inside the Governor's Office as she recently began a six-month to one-year secondment working as corporate services and media officer. Renita is an active member of the Savannah United Church. Before joining the Cayman Islands Government Civil Service in July 2019 as an assistant in the Protocol Office she worked in the CIRMCO Office as Programme Secretary and Communication Officer from 2016.

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*

- ♦ Delegates, Ministers, Lay Pastors who will participate in the 42nd Synod of the United Church
- ♦ The upcoming general elections in Cayman on April 14
- ♦ The family, colleagues and friends of Rev. Lloyd Reid, who passed on
- ♦ Healing and help for Rev. Dr. Elsa Clarke
- ♦ Members of the United Church leadership who are bereaved.
- ♦ Healing for members of the United Church and the wider community who have contracted COVID 19.
- ♦ Persons struggling with the mental, emotional and physical stress of 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/UC7q0bdsF1LhAWzqBkJU5_n0Q

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/UCFXOgl5m2ALh7XwwTHkA9CQ>

UCJCI VALUE S

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

Family:

Family is a gift from God. As we grow in relationships, we encounter God through each other, and are strengthened to live for God in the world.
(Psalm 127:3-5, 128:3-4, Ephesians 5:22-33, 6:1-4).

IN THE COMING ISSUE...

Conflicting authorities...Church and State?

THE UNITED CHURCH IN JAMAICA

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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”