



CAYMAN ISLANDS REGIONAL MISSION COUNCIL

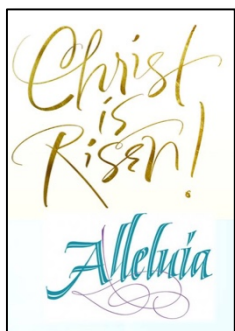
WEEKLY UPDATE

March 31, 2021

VOLUME 6 ISSUE 13

UCJCI 42nd SYNOD THEME 2021 – **Rooted, Resilient: Responding in HOPE** (Health, Opportunity, Peace, Evangelism)

BLESSED EASTER!



Easter Sunday is almost here! It is considered the greatest of all Sundays of the Church's Liturgical Year, and consequently, the Season of Easter the most important of all liturgical times. The entire season is the celebration of Jesus' resurrection from the dead, His ascension to the Father, and the sending of the Holy Spirit 50 days later at Pentecost. It is the most joyful and festive season of the Christian year.

The truth is there's no biblical or Church rule that says we have to celebrate Easter for seven weeks. In fact, there's no suggestion at all in the New Testament that Christians should celebrate the resurrection of Jesus on any particular day. However, the very reason behind the gathering of early Christians on Sundays was the weekly communal remembrance and celebration of the resurrection. This is the reason why we gather for worship on Sunday and not on Saturday (Sabbath). In this sense, every Sunday is a kind of Easter. May we all encounter anew this season the risen and living Jesus in our midst; may this world encounter Him anew through our life and ministry!

Rootedness in Christ

By Jaedon Hanson

Speaker at the CIRM-CIJCI Children & Youth Rally

This evening we reflect on the theme of being rooted in God. The metaphor of being rooted is one which is used often, and we understand why. The roots of a plant are important to its survival. We know that roots keep a plant embedded in the soil so that it cannot be easily moved.

As I prepared for this reflection, I came across a quote that says: "When the roots are deep, there is no reason to fear the wind." At some point, we would have seen the damage that strong winds can cause to plants and vegetation. In fact, only last November, Savannah experienced a tornado-like event that

caused significant damage. But we have seen trees that have withstood the battering and remained grounded.

In addition to keeping plants embedded in the soil, roots are the medium through which the plant receives the nutrients that it needs to survive. The deeper the roots, the greater the plant's access to nutrients and the more the plant will flourish. There are those times when a plant becomes toppled or broken by the wind, but the plant survives or recovers because its roots remain in the soil.

So, we understand that roots are essential to the growth and survival of plants. The Bible uses this understanding to illustrate the relationship that we must have with God if we are to grow and flourish and, importantly, withstand the winds that will seek to destroy us. Colossians 2:7 reminds us: "*Let your roots grow down into him and let your lives be built on him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness.*"

In this scripture, Paul reminds the Colossians that the nutrients that they need to grow are found in Christ alone. In this verse, he is preparing to challenge false teachings that had begun to affect Colossian Christians. There is no doubt that today, we are bombarded with false teachings from a variety of sources. It is important, therefore, especially as young people, that we know the source of that which comes to us as nourishment, and we must remember that the source for our spiritual growth is Jesus. Of course, it is not enough to simply know the source. We must, as Paul encourages us to do, "*Let [our] roots grow down into him.*" How do we do this? I would like to offer three simple and basic recommendations:

1. Commit to daily Bible reading and praying

With the technology we have today, access to the word of God could not be easier for many of us.

If you own a smartphone, please raise your hand? If your phone is the first or one of the first things that you reach for when you wake up, please raise your hand? Finally, if your smartphone has a Bible app on it, please raise your hand.

I know that many of us are so attached to our phones and other gadgets that we may feel like a part of us is missing when it is not in our possession. Let us challenge ourselves to read God's word daily, whether it be from the physical book or the digital book.

Acts 17:11 reads: "*Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness,*

examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.” If we have been reading our Bible daily, let us continue; if we had committed to do so but have fallen off, let us renew our commitment; if we had never been inclined to do, let us make a commitment now. For those of us who reach for our phones as soon as we wake up, how nice it would be if the first thing we do is read God’s word. Let us commit to reading our Bible daily and to praying.

2. Make use of opportunities for Bible study and engage in fasting

2 Timothy 2:15 implores us to *“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman who needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”*

As we read the scriptures daily, we will find that there are some things that we need to discuss or have explained. Let us make use of all the avenues that are available to study God’s word. Some of these may be at our local congregations but others maybe online. Let us engage our pastors, our elders, our youth leaders, and our teachers and dig into the word of God so that our roots can grow deep in Him. And let us remember that fasting is essential for growing our relationship with God. We do not need to wait to be asked to join a fast. In our own time and space, we can make our sacrifices to God.

Mathew 6:16-18 says to us, *“When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.”*



3. Share God’s word

Sharing God’s word is one of the greatest things we can do for those with whom we share as well as for ourselves. I have been told by my parents that one of the best ways to learn a concept is to teach it. Before I can teach a concept, I must understand it, unless I am going to be a bad teacher. Sharing God’s word helps to motivate us to read it daily and to study it. As we share God’s word, we help our roots to grow, we may even help the roots of others to grow, and we seek to generate new seedlings. *“Let [our] roots grow down into him”* through daily Bible reading, Bible study, and sharing of His word.

When our roots grow deep in him, then our faith will grow strong, and we will overflow with thankfulness. There is a popular saying that if we do not stand for something, then we fall for anything. When we are rooted in God, then our faith will grow strong, and we will be able to withstand the winds that blow at us. Let us not forget that winds will blow and sometimes they will come from many directions. The assurance we have is that when we are rooted in God, those winds will not destroy us. Even if we are toppled or broken by the winds, our rootedness will enable us to recover or regrow. And even when we are in the midst of the winds, our faith in God will enable us to be thankful.

The Bible tells the story of a man who was seriously rooted deep in God. He was called Job and was described as a good man who loved God. Satan challenged God, saying that Job was only good because he had a happy life. God allowed Satan to put Job’s faith to the test by causing him to suffer. Job was assailed by many winds from many directions. First, Job lost his livestock, his servants, and all his children. Let me emphasize the extent of the loss. Job 1:2-3 informs us that *“He had seven sons and three daughters, and he owned seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yokes of oxen and five hundred donkeys, and had a large number of servants. He was the greatest man among all the people of the East.”*

Job lost all his children, his servants and all his possessions. That sounds like Job was hit by a category 5 hurricane! He was devastated, but he remained faithful to and praised God, declaring: *“Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked I will depart. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised.”* (Job 1:20)

Then he suffered horrible seeping sores all over his body. Job’s wife told him to reject God and to accept that he was dying, but Job refused. His friends castigated him, but Job remained steadfast in his faith and thankfulness. In Chapter 19 verses 25-27 he declared: *“I know that my redeemer lives and that in the end he will stand on the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes—I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!”*

Such a declaration from a man who has been by hit hurricane-force winds from all directions would have been possible only because of his rootedness in God. The strength that Job displayed was clearly not of his own. We may think that there is no way we could withstand that kind of pressure hitting us from all directions. We may think that we could not even endure far less pressure from a single direction. And we are right. By ourselves, we cannot; but when we are rooted in God, then through him we are strengthened; through him, we can stand; and even if he allows us to be bent or broken, we know that through him we will recover or regrow.

In life, we as children of God, tend to try to face our problems by ourselves. This is especially true for many teenagers and other young people. We go face to face with our obstacles such as insecurity, anxiety and depression, bullying, low self-esteem. 1 Peter 5:7 says, *“Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.”* Psalm 56:3: *“When I am afraid, I put my trust in you. God is such a good God”*. Amen? He allows us to cast our problems and struggles on him for him to go one on one with them. When we are afraid and in doubt, he makes himself available for us to talk to him. These advantages are not just handed to us. We have to root ourselves in Christ and The Word and trust him. When we are rooted in God and our faith has grown then we are able to trust God’s leading even when it seems that things are not going well.

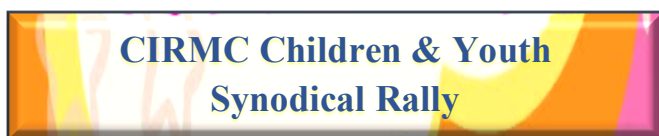
We have reflected on the importance of the roots in ensuring that the plant gets the nutrients that it needs, and we have already established that just like plants need their nutrients, we too need our spiritual food: God’s word, fasting, prayer.

However, there are times when plants do not thrive as expected or as desired in spite of the available supply of nutrients. In order to improve plant health and growth, a gardener sometimes has to prune plants. Pruning is cutting away branches.

It is also true that just as plants sometimes have to be pruned to make them healthier, we too have to be pruned. In order for us to remain rooted and to grow and flourish, God has to remove things from our lives and add things that he wants. Abusive relationships GONE; Horrible friendships (points at them for the following) GONE; social media addictions GONE; low self-esteem GONE.

The truth is that pruning is not always enjoyable and sometimes what we lose may very well be things that we regard as essential. However, rootedness in God enables us, like Job, to trust the one who is our creator, our provider, and our sustainer. Rootedness enables us to trust the one with the master plan for our lives, for his plans are always great. Jeremiah 29:11 states, *“For I KNOW THE PLANS I HAVE FOR YOU SAITH THE LORD PLANS TO PROSPER YOU AND NOT TO HARM YOU. PLANS TO GIVE YOU A hope and a future”*.

When we are rooted in God and pruned by God and growing in God, then we are empowered. The scriptures assure us that with GOD, we can do anything. Philippians 4:13: *“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”* Luke 1:37: *“For nothing will be impossible with God.”* Jeremiah 32:17: *“Ah Lord God! Behold, you have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and by Your outstretched arm! Nothing is too difficult for You.”* Mark 9:23: *“And Jesus said to him, ‘If You can?’ All things are possible to him who believes.”* These scriptures convey the idea that if we trust God and root ourselves in him, we can do anything. Though the process may be hard and painful, we can be victorious if we stay rooted and live lives as children of God. In Christ Alone is anything possible; in Christ alone, there is hope; in Christ Alone can we find compassion; in Christ Alone can we do anything.



On March 28, 2021, the children and youth of the CIRM-UCJCI gathered for their Synodical Rally at the Savannah United Church. The event was a joyful celebration of the life and ministry of the Church in preparation for the 42nd Synod of the UCJCI to be held between April 11-18, 2021. The Chair of

Council Rev. Rohan Forrester extended a special welcome and the RDGS, Rev. Dr. Yvette Noble-Bloomfield brought greetings bringing into focus the theme for the new Synodical period, 'Rooted, Resilient: Responding in H.O.P.E.

The 160 plus persons in attendance enjoyed a programme rich in the display of a wide array of talents and uplifting items through songs, dance, puppetry and instrumental recital. The message of this special evening was brought by one of the youths, Master Jaedon Hanson, a member of the Savannah United Church. At the end of the programme, all were invited to stay back for refreshments provided by the congregations.

We would like to express our gratitude to the YLNE (Youth Leaders National Executive) and all those in our congregations working with the children and youth for their tireless and dedicated work. May God continue to bless and guide them in these particularly challenging times.

UPCOMING EVENTS

April 2 (Friday) GOOD FRIDAY – also Public Holiday

April 4. (Sunday) Easter Sunday

April 5. (Monday) Easter Monday - PUBLIC HOLIDAY

April 7 (Wednesday)
Finance & Property MAT Meeting - via Zoom - 6:30pm

April 11. (Sunday) 2nd Sunday of Easter
42nd Synod of the UCJCI begins – via Zoom – 4:00pm



on Radio Cayman 89.9
every Sunday at 7:45 am

April 4, 2021
Rev. Rohan Forrester

THE 42ND SYNOD OF THE UNITED CHURCH IN JAMAICA AND THE CAYMAN ISLANDS

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

HEALTH, OPPORTUNITY, PEACE, EVANGELISM

OPENING SERVICE

PRAISE, CELEBRATION AND THANKSGIVING

FORMAL CONSTITUTING OF SYNOD

PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD
RT. REV. DR. GORDON COWANS

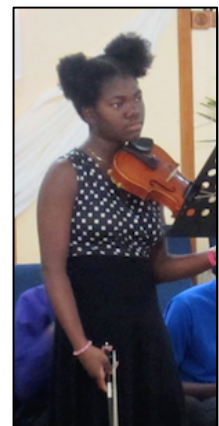
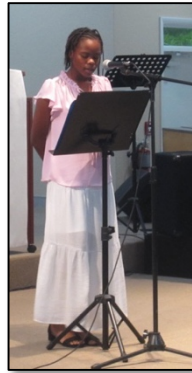
THE CALL AND INDUCTION OF MODERATOR
REV. GARY HARRIOTT

SUNDAY APRIL 11 AT 4PM

Worship will be livestreamed on UCJCI You Tube channel

ALL ARE INVITED TO WORSHIP AND CELEBRATE

**More Photos from the CIRM
Children & Youth Synodical Rally**



North Side United Church



Easter Monday 5th April' 21

11:00am to 3:30pm

Cost: CI\$10.00 – includes:

Wahoo or Mahi-Mahi, (Dolphin) served with Fritters, Fried Sweet potatoes, Plantain & glass of Swanky. – (optional Rice & peas)



WE THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

THE 42ND SYNOD OF THE UNITED CHURCH IN JAMAICA AND THE CAYMAN ISLANDS

APRIL 11- 18, 2021
THEME: ROOTED, RESILIENT, RESPONDING
IN
H.O.P.E
HEALTH , OPPORTUNITY, PEACE, EVANGELISM

APRIL 11th

Opening Service including Installation of Moderator-elect Rev. Gary Harriott
4:00 p.m.

Celebration of Life and Witness
4:30pm

APRIL 12

APRIL 15

Public Lecture (on Pastoral Care in recognition of Rev. Raymond Coke)
5:00pm

Bible Studies
6:00 am each day

APRIL 12-15

APRIL 18

Closing Service
4:00pm

BUSINESS SESSIONS FOR DELEGATES ONLY

All these events will be livestreamed on The United Church YouTube channel
Made with PosterMyWall.com

Monday to Thursday at 10:00 a.m. each day via The United Church Zoom platform



WEBSTER MEMORIAL UNITED CHURCH
 WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Tea Party

APRIL 24, 2021 | 3PM TO 7PM
 266 BODDEN TOWN RD.

Tickets: \$10.00



Jumble Sale

CASH ONLY

PARKING AVAILABLE

All proceeds will be donated to Pringle Home in Jamaica

WHERE:
 Elmslie United Church Hall

48 Harbour Drive, George Town

WHEN:
 Sat 10th April, 2021
 6:30am – 9:30am

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

He is Risen

DEATH COULD NOT HOLD HIM.
 Rejoice in the resurrection of
Jesus Christ.



WISHING YOU A BLESSED AND JOY FILLED EASTER!

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