



# CAYMAN ISLANDS REGIONAL MISSION COUNCIL

## WEEKLY UPDATE

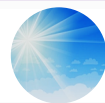
ADVENT: The Centrality of Christ in the Season

December 01, 2021

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

### Advent 2 - The Sunday of Peace



Coming Sunday's focus:  
**Jesus the Shining Light**

The **Season of Advent** reminds us of the importance of spiritual preparedness, of the readying of our hearts and minds for the life transforming presence of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

On the 1st Sunday in Advent we lit the candle of Hope in our churches as a reminder that as followers of Jesus Christ we are the people of hope.

On the 2nd Sunday in Advent we light the candle of Peace. Jesus' birth was announced by a great company of angels saying "Glory to God in the highest heaven and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests." (Luke 2:14)

But knowing all too well our sinful nature we may wonder if peace is possible at all. Wars, fights, conflicts, anxieties and stresses of all kinds mar our human existence on every possible level and there seems to be no respite from their destructive force.

Today we are reminded that there is peace that transcends all understanding and that it is available to all of us through faith in Jesus Christ (Philippians 4:7). It is the kind of peace that the world cannot give, a peace that is more than simply the absence of conflict, worry and stress. It is God's peace that brings a sense of contentment and gratitude; a sense of clarity and purpose; a sense of responsibility and mission even in the worst of circumstances.

Let us open ourselves today for Jesus and for the peace He offers to us. Let us do this for our own sake and for those around us who need it so desperately.

"And the peace of God,  
which transcends all understanding,  
will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."  
(Philippians 4:7)



The song and prophesy of Zechariah concerning the purpose behind the coming of Jesus, speaks volumes and forms part of the central message of advent. He came to shine His light on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death and guide our feet in the path of peace.

### The Path of Peace

*By Rev. Dr. Yvette Noble-Bloomfield*

Please read Luke 1: 76-79

On the second Sunday of this Advent Season, the theme for reflection is Peace. This Sunday, December 5, 2021, is also celebrated as Union Sunday in the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands. In addition, it will be a time of thanksgiving in the Cayman Islands in recognition of the fact that although we experienced Tropical Storm Grace, God has been gracious and spared us from devastation during the hurricane season.

One can with confidence proclaim that creation and nature offered us peace during the past Hurricane Season despite the challenges some persons faced during the passage of the tropical storm. Some persons were inconvenienced, and some were left with feelings of uncertainty, but with God's help, the Cayman Islands were spared what could have been utter devastation. For this, we are truly grateful.

The call this Sunday for peace as we journey through the Advent season indicates the need for peace which is internal and can last through to eternity. It is true that sometimes even when there is external tranquility there may inner turmoil in the soul and spirit. Are you at peace or are you fearful and troubled? The Song of Zacharias in Luke 1: 68-79, is a constant reminder of the peace of God given to humanity. This peace has been made manifest in our salvation which was accomplished by Jesus on the Cross. The darkness and chaos in our lives because of sin, the pain of sickness, and the dread of death can be eradicated by the light of the world, Jesus.

In these tumultuous and uncertain days when the COVID-19 variant, Omicron has crept onto the world's stage when economies are struggling when governments are forced to change regulations and introduce new travel restrictions when each day there are vicissitudes beyond our control, we need to know the God of peace and the Christ of salvation.

The Greek word 'eirene', which is translated as peace, describes precisely what God has done for humanity through Jesus the Messiah. This peace is characterized by the good news or Gospel message, which often is about the personal peace that can be experienced when we are in a dynamic relationship with the God of peace. It echoes the peace which comes from God and the peace for which God is known.

The peace we are seeking, therefore, comes when we can know with certainty that once we confess our sins, they are forgiven. Jesus can reign in our hearts and lives once we accept Him as our personal Saviour and Lord. This is the peace that brings the inner, quiet assurance that all is well with our soul. This peace signifies that God is with us and it is therefore personal and hence redemptive. We are free to live without the anxiety and hopelessness which can easily beset persons who have not yet given their hearts and lives to Jesus.

People need this inner peace and blessed assurance in order to live harmoniously with family members and with the wider community. Inner peace enables us to be the peacemakers Jesus identified in the Beatitudes in Matthew 5. The Peacemakers are called the children of God and they receive the benediction of Christ in the Sermon on the Mount. Are you a Peacemaker?

Peacemakers have enabled the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands to become one of the fifty known United and Uniting Churches worldwide. To exist as a United Church, particularly in two nations is a clear sign that the God of peace is with us and that we strive to maintain the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace ( Ephesians 4:3).

“United churches are those which have been formed through the fusion of two or more separate churches of different or the same confession. They have arisen over the past two centuries as churches have sought to make the unity given them in Christ fully visible. In union, churches move beyond cooperation and partnership to a degree of mutual accountability which can adequately be expressed only by life within a single ecclesial structure. There are some 50 united churches today, found in all regions of the world.” ( World Council of Churches- website)

This Sunday, December 5, 2021, we celebrate twenty-nine years of union as the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands. Some persons can remember the Union Service, which was held at Sabina Park, Kingston, Jamaica when the then United Church of Jamaica and Grand Cayman joined with the Disciples of Christ to form the present denomination. The history of union talks dates back to the late 1950s when the Presbyterians, Methodists, Moravians, Disciples of Christ, and the Congregationalists pondered their unity in Christ and how to make this manifest in their ministry and mission. From those initial talks, the Presbyterians and Congregationalists formed the United Church of Jamaica and Grand Cayman. The

continuity of seeking peace and unity led to the second union in 1992.

Peace undoubtedly leads to the ability to be united as a Church, and we need to be relentless in seeking to maintain a polity and ethos of unity, rather than a separatist position that breathes disunity.

The Mission Statement of the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands states,

“The United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands (UCJCI) exists to bear holistic development of all persons and God's creation through life-giving worship and evangelism, social and educational engagement, personal empowerment, advocacy and faith formation toward a just and peaceful society and the ultimate experience of God's Kingdom.”

So yes, there is much to celebrate on this Advent Sunday when the theme is peace, on this Union Sunday when we thank God for doctrinal and theological unity, and on this Cayman Thanksgiving Sunday when we thank God that nature remained peaceful during the past six months.

May the God of peace attend to us. Amen.

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Union Sunday is the celebration of the formation of the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands. On December 1, 1965, Congregationalists and Presbyterians joined and formed the United Church of Jamaica and Grand Cayman. In December 1992, the Disciples of Christ followed suit, and the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands was born. Union Sunday is observed annually on the first Sunday in December.

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Cayman Thanksgiving is a weekend-long national celebration honoring Caymanian heritage, culture, way of life and everything Caymanian. Observed annually on the first Sunday in December -marking the end of hurricane season- it is also an opportunity to stop and express gratitude.

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

December 04. (Saturday)

**Men's Fell. Breakfast** – 7:30am – Elmslie church hall

December 05. (Sunday) **2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent (PEACE)**

Also **Union Sunday** and **Cayman Thanksgiving**

December 12. (Sunday) **3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent (JOY)**

### **CENTRE FOR THEOLOGICAL LEADERSHIP TRAINING (CTLT) CAYMAN ISLANDS**

NON-DENOMINATIONAL THEOLOGICAL EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME PROVIDER

#### **A CHRISTMAS SPECIAL SEMINAR ON**

**"THE UNIQUENESS OF JESUS IN THE CONTEXT OF PLURALISM"**



WELCOME: **REV. DR. PJ LAWRENCE**,  
DIRECTOR, CTLT -CAYMAN ISLANDS

MODERATOR: **MS. SANDRA LEE SAMUEL**

GUEST SPEAKER: **REV. DR. STEVEN JENNINGS**,  
PASTOR, JAMAICA BAPTIST UNION, KINGSTON, JAMAICA.

RESPONDER: **REV. DR. GARY GARDNER**,  
SENIOR LECTURES, CTLT CAYMAN

DATE: SATURDAY 5 DECEMBER 2021  
TIME: 10AM TO 11:30 AM  
VIA ZOOM

MEETING ID: 2485559547  
PASSCODE: 5SZPSI



on Radio Cayman 89.9  
every Sunday at 7:45 am

**December 05, 2021**  
Rev. Norbert Stephens  
(General Secretary - UCJCI)

"I trust that as you read this book of prayers, you will find it a blessing to you and your families and trust that you will pass from simply reading these prayers to praying." –  
*Herbert Crawford*

**366 PRAYERS  
FOR  
ALL SEASONS**



HERBERT CRAWFORD

Available by the end of  
November early December.  
Further details to follow.  
(Hardcover and digital).

**TO SLOW THE SPREAD OF THE NOVEL CORONAVIRUS,  
PLEASE FOLLOW THESE PRECAUTIONS**

## FACE MASKS

Wear non-medical face coverings

## SOCIAL DISTANCING

Keep 6 feet away from others wherever possible and respect others' space.

## HAND HYGIENE

Wash your hands frequently with soap, scrubbing for at least 20 seconds and rinsing well.



The **John Gray Memorial United Church (West Bay)** is seeking to fill the position of Youth Minister and invites dynamic, highly motivated and qualified candidates to tender their applications.

For more details (job description and remuneration) please contact [jgmcminister@gmail.com](mailto:jgmcminister@gmail.com)

If you are sensing a call to this ministry, we invite you to submit your letter of application, curriculum vitae and a brief statement of your faith journey to [jgmcminister@gmail.com](mailto:jgmcminister@gmail.com)

**WE NEED YOU!!!**



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