



# CAYMAN ISLANDS REGIONAL MISSION COUNCIL

WEEKLY UPDATE

## Jesus, the Source of Complete Joy

December 22, 2021

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

### Christmas Message 2021

By Rev. Dr. Yvette Noble-Bloomfield  
(RDGS-CIRMC)

Warm Christmas Greetings,

As we enter into the Christmas Season, we are invited to reflect on the words the Apostle Paul wrote to the Colossians. Colossae was a thriving town in Asia Minor and was famous for the quality of the wool produced there. Although Paul may not have visited Colossae, he earnestly wrote to them while he was in prison in Rome.



This was occasioned because of the false doctrine being taught by some persons regarding the incarnation of Christ, particularly that God was too holy to make contact with human flesh and remain undefiled. Further, it was being taught in the Church in Colossae that salvation would only be for those who completely observed the Mosaic law. Of particular interest to us is the pericope in Colossians 3:12-17 in which Paul enjoined the Colossian Christians to live according to God's expectation.

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

These words to the Colossians ought to remind us of our calling as a holy people and provide for us the guardrails for our faith. We are called to be a people filled with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience, forgiveness and love. The call is also one of unity, peace, wise teachings, and grateful hearts. This is a calling and requirement for the individual, the institutions of the family and church and the nation and especially so at this Christmas time.

The incarnational presence of Christ amid our human condition is the signal for us to live according to the divine example and precept. Christ's presence with us as the Babe in the Manger, His life and ministry and His death and resurrection provide for us the assurance of God's gracious favor and love for us as human beings.

Yet so often we tend to forget our high calling in Christ Jesus our Lord outlined in the text and if we are not careful we can easily plummet into thoughts and behavioral patterns that are contrary to this Pauline indication.

It is true that during 2021, as a nation, in the faith community, in our families and as individuals we all experienced moments of great blessings and simultaneously moments of deep concerns. In general, the context of our existence is still being viewed through the lens of the COVID-19 pandemic. For the first eight months of the year in the Cayman Islands, the COVID-19 pandemic was kept at bay and life appeared to be normal for most persons. Even for persons who were unemployed due to the pandemic, there was a sense of hope and persons were seeming to cope with their realities.

However, in the past four months with the increased community spread of the Delta variant and the introduction and rapid spread of the Omicron variant, some persons have become challenged by the realities of the disease, the isolation, the bereavement, and the uncertainty of the future direction of the pandemic. Our sincere prayers are for the persons who have contracted the disease and with the families who have lost loved ones due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Beyond the general pandemic concerns, there are also some concerns being faced in the socio-religious context where the Church, and particularly our United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands is having to pivot in the way we understand and undertake our ministry and mission. Congregational life has changed and will continue to change, and unfortunately, some persons have become disenchanted and as such, they have become reticent in attending worship services in person and online.

This change in the nature of our faith response, coupled with the exigencies of COVID-19 protocols have caused us to look long and hard at who we are as a community of believers and how we discern God's will and purpose for us as we exercise our faith and belief in God and as we exercise our ministry and mission here in the Cayman Islands.

This call from the Apostle Paul should serve as a reminder to

us that we are God’s chosen people, and that the peace of Christ should reign in our hearts. The essence of the theology Paul expounded in the letter to the Church in Colossae included Christ’s supremacy, His sufficiency and the need for Christians to be in service to Christ. This Christmas, more than ever, we need to underscore that we are committed to serving Christ and Christ alone, even as we respond to the realities around us.

Some of us may feel uncertain about how to serve with the new reality and tasks around us. Many feel inadequate to start afresh in responding to what the Lord demands of us today. So often the desire to “serve” God is according to our will and in our time rather than discerning God’s time. God can and does interrupt our desires and comforts with new visions. We are reminded and encouraged to increase the trust we have and be assured that God is with us, Emanuel is with us, and today is God’s time.

In the Cayman Islands Regional Mission Council, the expected changes being proposed in the realignment of the Charges may bring some discomfort but remember, we are serving Christ, not ourselves or those in ministry.

Changes are never easy or comfortable but, when we take into consideration the fact that we can no longer continue with a ‘business as usual’ mentality or seek to preserve our personal preferences, then let us prayerfully allow the Spirit of God to guide us in all our undertakings.

Let us at this Christmas time allow our fellowship with Christ to cause us to be faithful and fruitful as we bear each other up in prayer, with charitable deeds and kind words. May the words of Paul resonate with us this Christmas, ‘Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace.’

The Cayman Islands Regional Mission Council is appreciative of the commitment, diligence and faithfulness with which the Congregants, Elders, Lay Pastors and Ministers have conducted the mission and ministry during 2021. May God continue to give to all servants grace, peace, good health and joy as you continue to share Christ’s love in all you do.

May this Christmas be one of hope, peace, joy and love and may 2022 be a year of blessing for all of us.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

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**News from the East**  
**(Gun Bay, North Side, Bodden Town)**

*by Rev. Rohan Forrester*

Members of the Youth Group at the Gun Bay United Church turned out on December 19 to share a skit on “The True Meaning of Christmas”. The skit gave different perspectives of the Christmas story and portrayed an ordinary family waiting on Jesus to share a meal with him. The story awakened in us the reality that amidst the noise and distractions of everyday life, there are families today who miss the opportunity to welcome

Jesus Christ into their homes. The story, however, moves away from the traditional nativity scene and reminds us that Jesus Christ is with us in the presence of the Holy Spirit who is manifested in the lives of ordinary people in everyday life. We’re also reminded that being compassionate and generous to those around us is showing that Jesus Christ lives in us. The congregation was also invited to join the Youth Group members in song and reflection. Before the skit Ms. Itza West, Youth Worker/ Admin. Asst. of the East End/ Gun Bay Charge sharing a brief reflection on “God’s Love”.



*Members of the Gun Bay Youth group with Ms. Itza West*

On December 19, 2021 the William Pouchie United Church and the Webster Memorial United Church presented a Christmas musical titled “Christmas is for everyone”.



*The William Pouchie Memorial United Church choir with the Three Kings/Wise Men*



*The Webster Memorial United Church choir*

## Savannah United Church

*by Ms. Camile Watt*



On Saturday, December 18, 2021, The Savannah United Church Young Adults Group prepared special packages for their annual Christmas Pantry Distribution. In all, fifteen families in the Savannah Community were blessed with grocery bags.

On Sunday, December 19, 2021, the Young Voices in Praise in collaboration with the Youth Department of the Savannah United Church presented a wonderful Christmas Musical entitled Backstage the Christmas Pageant, featuring a special dance item from the Girls' Brigade Group.



## John Gray Memorial United Church

*By Rev. Donovan Myers*

In what has become a missional tradition for John Gray Memorial Church, our congregation came together to demonstrate, in a simple and practical way, the loving care of Christ. On Saturday, December 18, it took a team of disciples (children included) to provide, prepare, serve and deliver 195 hot Christmas meals to members of our community. The turkey, ham, and trimmings (and don't forget the dessert) were joyfully and lovingly prepared by an army of cooks, servers, and delivery drivers, all led by Mission Outreach Chair, Ms. Jeana Ebanks. We express thanks to all who took the time of fellowship and service. Of course, we celebrate the anonymous

donor, whose gift made this possible. We applaud the continued faithfulness to this mission.



## Elmslie Memorial United Church

*By Mr. Roy McGregor*



The Elmslie Memorial United Church Youth Ministry held its Annual Sunday School Christmas Production titled "Caymanian Christmas" on Sunday, December 19, 2021, and for the very first time it was held in the court yard under the stars.



## UPCOMING EVENTS

### December 24. (Friday) Christmas Eve

6:30 pm - John Gray Memorial **Carol Service** in the Car park with Light Refreshments

6:30 pm - Elmslie **Joint Charge Candle Light Service**

7:00 pm - Webster Memorial

### December 25. (Saturday) Christmas Day

8:30 am - William Pouchie Memorial

9:00 am - Elmslie Memorial (Joined Charge service)

### December 26. (Sunday) 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday in Christmas

### December 27. (Monday)

Public Holiday for Christmas Day

### December 28. (Tuesday)

Public Holiday for Boxing Day

### December 31. (Friday) Watch Night

10:30 pm - Elmslie Memorial (Joined Charge service)

10:30 pm - Savannah United (Joined Charge service)

11:00 pm - John Gray Memorial

11:00 pm - Webster Memorial

11:00 pm - William Pouchie Memorial

11:00 pm - East End United (Joined Charge service)

### January 02. (Sunday) 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Christmas

### January 03. (Monday)

Public Holiday for New Year's Day



on Radio Cayman 89.9  
every Sunday at 7:45 am

**December 26, 2021**  
Rev. Dr. Yvette Noble-Bloomfield



## UCJCI Lay Training Institute



## TRAINING FOR LAY LEADERS 2022

Offered in collaboration with The International University of the Caribbean

*Get Ready to Serve!*



**MODULE 1  
BEGINS  
FEBRUARY  
12, 2022**

### TRAINING FEATURES

• Weekend and Weekday classes

Saturdays 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.  
Thursdays 6 - 8 p.m.  
(2nd and 4th Saturdays and Thursday in the immediate week following)

• Combination of Learning in Virtual Classrooms via Zoom and in Learners' own time

**ORIENTATION  
JANUARY 29,  
2022**

**REGISTER NOW**  
through your Regional Mission Council office

For more information :  
nermc@ucjci.com; cirmc.info@gmail.com; wrmc01@yahoo.com; srmc@ucjci.com

Enjoy a safe Christmas...



# Hands

# Face

# Space

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