



# CAYMAN ISLANDS REGIONAL MISSION COUNCIL

WEEKLY UPDATE

## Season of Epiphany

January 05, 2023

VOLUME 8 ISSUE 01

UCJCI 43<sup>rd</sup> SYNOD THEME – **Rooted, Resilient: Re-ignited by the Spirit** (Return, Reconnect, Realign, Re-ignite)

## RETURN with Assurance

*Rev. Dr. Yvette Noble-Bloomfield*  
RDGS-CIRMC

### SYNODICAL FOCUS

The theme chosen for the next Synodical period (2023-2025) is Rooted, Resilient: Re-ignited by the Spirit. Four words are connected to the theme which offers a strategic direction, Return, Reconnect, Realign, Re-ignite. These four words currently reflect the ongoing strategic direction for each of the four Regional Mission Councils. Return-NERMC, Reconnect-WRMC, Realign-CIRMC and Re-ignite-SRMC.

This approach allows for continuity and alignment in the direction of the church, which is then supported and reinforced in our worship and study spaces at Synodical, Regional and congregational levels.

Each quarter of 2023 will have a focus on one of the strategic words for use in our worship and study ministries. It is our conviction that this season of the church's ministry and mission should continue to focus on a needs-meeting ministry and mission, which includes but is not limited to, the ministry to Children and Youth, witness and evangelism, worship and stewardship as we seek to flesh out our VISION of "Touching Lives, Nurturing Disciples, Seeking Transformation through Christ."

Between January and March, our focus will be on the word RETURN.

### Matthew 3:13-17

The Baptism of Jesus

*13 Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. 14 But John tried to deter him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" 15 Jesus replied, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfil all righteousness." Then John consented. 16 As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. 17 And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him, I am well pleased."*

On the first Sunday after Epiphany, January 8, 2023, and as we celebrate the Baptism of Jesus by John in the River Jordon, we are invited to recall the act of our baptism and return to the assurance given to us by Christ at our baptism. Baptism is more

than a peak moment in the life of the baptized, it is a moment marked by Christ's very presence and Christ's promise of forgiveness and blessing.

Many parents bring their children for Infant Baptism, some without even a deep understanding of the faith implications in offering the children for baptism. The vows taken by parents at the baptism of their children should not be forgotten. Parents should nurture their children in the faith and encourage them in worship and devotion. The Church should also provide nurture and support for the children through Sunday School and other age-appropriate Discipleship opportunities.

Believer's Baptism is a holy experience, which makes us whole as we live our lives in a broken and uncertain world. Baptism is a reminder of the presence of the divine in the midst of our humanity and it is a sincere promise of blessing and a sign of God's grace.

There is a call to **return** not only to our baptism but also to Christ, **with assurance**. When we return to our baptismal vows, we recall that we confessed our sins and that we have received the assurance of forgiveness.

**As a Confessional Church**, we hold dearly the Apostles Creed which reminds us of what constitutes our faith.

Let us read again the **Apostles Creed**:

**I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and was buried; he descended to hell. On the third day, he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty. From there he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

Our faith in Christ, exhibited by our baptism provides us with three key assurances which sustain us in this life and in the life to come.

1. We receive the **Assurance of Pardon**, which reminds us that our sins are forgiven when we sincerely confess that we have failed to do that which is right and pleasing in the sight of God. We sin in thought, in word, and in deed. Scripture reminds us that if we say we have not sinned, we are self-deceived, and hence there is a constant need to seek

forgiveness. When there is dysfunction and chaos in our lives, we need to pause, repent and return to Christ for forgiveness and pardon. The Bible is replete with verses which indicate the depth of Christ's willingness and capacity to forgive us and cleanse us of our sins. Psalm 103: 8-12 reminds us:

*'The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in love. 9 He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor His anger forever; 10 He does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. 11 For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His love for those who fear Him; 12 as far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.'*

2. **Assurance of hope-** life and life more abundantly – John 10: 10 – *I have come that you might have life and have it more abundantly.*

Abundant life means that we are **accepted**, (**Isaiah 42:1** - *My chosen one in whom I delight*). It means we are anointed (**Isaiah 42:1** – *here is my servant, I will put my spirit on him*) It also enables us to be optimistic – (**Isaiah 42:4** – *He will not falter or be discouraged till he establishes justice on the earth*).

Our hope is also rooted in God's promise found in **Jeremiah 29:11** *'For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.'*

3. **Assurance of life eternal-** **1 John 5:13** reminds us *'I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life'*. Eternal life is our goal as Christians. It speaks of the quality and quantity of our life on earth and beyond.

One of the most precious pericopes in the Bible is found in **2 Timothy 4:6-8**, *'For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 From now on there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day and not only to me but to all who crave His appearing'*.

Once we have received these assurances we can:

1. Live rejoicing with the capacity to love and be loved, to forgive and receive forgiveness, live a godly and peaceable life, live faithfully, and bring honor and glory to God in all that we do
2. Live generously- charity to all, offer to those around us gifts that stir the soul, and serve the Church and others with love and thoughts of kindness.
3. Live knowing that our future is secured in Christ as He will receive us in glory.

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## The Season of Epiphany



According to the Church's Liturgical Calendar, on January 6, 2022, we enter into the Season of Epiphany. Epiphany is a special day as well as a season between Christmas and Lent.

The word 'epiphany' means manifestation revelation. It also means a sudden, profound understanding or realization of something. It refers to that assurance of our Christian faith that Jesus is God's self-revelation to the world in human form.

In Western Christianity, Epiphany commemorates the visits of the Magi (Three Kings), who followed the star of Bethlehem across the desert to meet Jesus. Their encounter with Jesus symbolizes the physical manifestation of the Savior of the World to the Gentiles.

In Eastern Christianity, Epiphany is associated with the baptism of Jesus in the River Jordan. This event is seen as His manifestation to the world as the Son of God.

Like the Magi, may we, too, be open to being surprised as we continue on our journey. Like those at the river Jordan, may we have an 'eye' to see Jesus in the common and ordinary. May we also be rooted and resilient as we (Return, Reconnect, Realign, Re-ignite) respond to the many challenges we face in our personal lives and collectively as a Church.

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### Remember in your prayers

All those God has placed on your heart and those brought to your attention in some way. Please also include in your prayers at this time

Lay Pastor John Macmillan (RYMC), Mrs. Itza Bodden, Youth Worker (EE-GB), Mr. Trevor Watler (GB)

### 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday in Epiphany

January 08, 2023

**RETURN with Assurance**

Isaiah 42:1-9 Psalm 29  
Acts 10:34-43 Matthew 3:13-17

**Fear not, for God will not reject us!**

## UPCOMING EVENTS

January 7 (Saturday)

**Girls' Brigade National Council Meeting** - 9:30 am -  
Council Office

**January 08. (Sunday) 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday after the Epiphany**




**United Church Women's Fellowship Council**

**FELLOWSHIP BREAKFAST**

Saturday, January 28, 2023

Time: 8am - 10am

Venue: Morritt's, East End

**Theme: Being a Peace-Maker**

Guest Speaker: Rev. L. Christopher Mason

All Are Invited

Ticket: \$30



(CCPP)

# Child Care & Protection Policy

## WORKSHOP

For all those assisting in Children & Youth Ministry, who have not been trained yet

**Saturday, February 4, 2023**  
9:00 – 11:00 am via Zoom

To register please contact your Minister or the Council office at 947-1963 or [Cirmc.info@gmail.com](mailto:Cirmc.info@gmail.com) by Friday, January 27, 2023

## Child Care & Protection Policy Workshop

Every year our Regional Mission Council conducts the Child Care and Protection Policy Workshop to ensure that both the Children and Youth Ministry in our region satisfies our denominational, national as well as international policy standards. These policies aim to protect not only the children/youth but also the leaders and volunteers who work with them, as well as to bring awareness to the importance of providing a safe overall environment in which these ministries are carried out. Naturally, we expect that all our staff and volunteers who are engaged in these ministries complete the training provided via the Workshop, at the end of which they receive a certification from our Regional Mission Council. This certification is valid across all the regions of the UCJCI and participation in the workshop doesn't need to be repeated.

## IS/IVCF Prayer Breakfast

January 14, 2023 8:00 AM



# Prayer Breakfast

SAVE THE DATE!

SATURDAY  
JANUARY 14, 2023

// AT 8:00 AM //

VENUE: CASCADE ROOM AT UCCI

IS/IVCF CAYMAN INVITES ALL MINISTRY PARTNERS TO JOIN US FOR A TIME OF PRAYER AND FELLOWSHIP



All Students, Christian Teachers, Alumni, Supporters, and other Stakeholders are invited to join us for a time of prayer for our schools.

RSVP!

Contact us: [ISIVCFKY@gmail.com](mailto:ISIVCFKY@gmail.com)  
Tel: 345-929-5111



on Radio Cayman 89.9 every Sunday at 7:45 am

**January 8, 2023**  
**Rev. Dr. Yvette Noble-Bloomfield**

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