



UCJCI UPDATE

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



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UCJCI UPDATE

UPDATE IS PUBLISHED BY THE UNITED CHURCH IN JAMAICA AND THE CAYMAN ISLANDS. THE PUBLICATION PROVIDES INFORMATION ABOUT OUR CHURCH, NEWS OF HAPPENINGS IN REGIONS AND LOCAL CONGREGATIONS,, MATERIAL TO FACILITATE WORSHIP AND STUDY OF THE BIBLE, ACTIVITIES FOR PARTICIPATION AND PRAYER AND SPIRITUAL PERSPECTIVES ON ISSUES OF PUBLIC CONCERN.

FEATURE ARTICLE

ARE YOU OKAY?

IN THE COURSE OF LIFE, HUMAN BEINGS STRUGGLE WITH CHALLENGING SITUATIONS. THESE SITUATIONS IMPACT THEIR MENTAL HEALTH. THERE HAVE BEEN STORIES IN THE NEWS OF SELF-HARM, DEPRESSION AND DESPAIR. THE CURSORY ENQUIRY, 'HOW ARE YOU?' IS TOO OFTEN CASUALLY ASKED AND IN SOME INSTANCES WITHOUT EVEN A PAUSE FOR A RESPONSE. REV. DR. DAVE HAZLE PROPOSES THAT MENTAL HEALTH IS A MISSIONAL PRIORITY OF THE CHURCH. SEE PAGE 2



‘ARE YOU OKAY?’ MENTAL HEALTH—A MISSIONAL PRIORITY

In recent years increasing attention has been given in civil society to issues of mental health. This includes the emotional, psychological, and cognitive well-being of persons. This in turn has a bearing on how we think, feel, and act. Increasingly, when we talk of mental health we are not just referring to various classifications of mental illnesses but to things like depression and anxiety, stress management, suicidal ideation, and self-esteem. The truth is that long before one may be diagnosed with a mental illness or disorder, aspects of day-to-day life impact how one thinks, feels, and behaves. All of these factors need to be considered under the rubric of mental health.

It is said that 1 in 4 persons globally is likely to have a mental strain in any given year. Additionally, all of us experience stress, depression, or anxiety to varying degrees at some time or other. Long before the Covid-19 pandemic, the legacies of a post-colonial, post-slavery history have combined themselves with the persistent conditions of poverty, unstable patterns of family, and features of social disharmony to create several mental health concerns in our population. The late Psychiatrist, Freddy Hickling, would often speak of the high percentage of persons in our population living with a mental health issue.

What has become increasingly evident also is that the Covid-19 pandemic has led to an increase in mental health issues. Therefore in this post-pandemic period, mental health could be considered a priority as part of the church's mission. In this regard, we must assess the growing need people have for mental health support. Moreover, we must train and mobilize our people to respond appropriately firstly, to preserve our mental health and secondly, to offer care for those living with a range of mental health concerns.

The need for the church to position itself to respond to this potential crisis must occupy the strategic thinking of the church's pastoral apparatus. Health, after all, is a matter of pastoral care for which the church must be concerned.

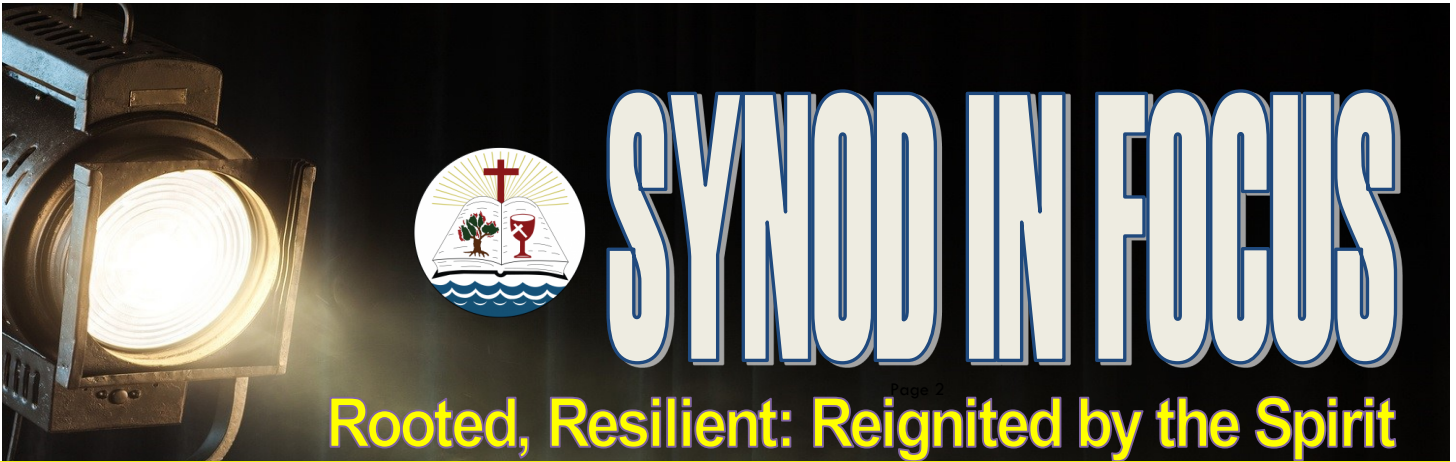
In 3 John, the apostle John greets his readers with these words, "Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well." [3 John 1:2, NIV]. Here John reflects how health in the scriptures carries the connotation of whole person health, Body, mind, soul, and spirit. Every aspect of health, including mental health, is of concern to the church.

The Missional Church builds awareness about lifestyle choices that promote good mental health.

The missional church that we are seeking to become must build awareness about lifestyle choices that promote good mental health while at the same time normalizing views about mental disorders and reducing the tendency to stigmatize persons living with mental illnesses. In addition, we must advocate for care facilities, psychiatric services, and access to medication for persons who are mentally ill.

There is no doubt that there is a need for more counsellors, life coaches, mentors, and spiritual directors all of whom can play a role in what the church offers to society as strategies for improving and preserving optimum mental health. As the church seeks to offer care services to people in the wider community it does so as an expression of God's loving care for all humanity.

<p>Rev. Dr. Dave Hazle, UCJCI Tutor-Warden—The United Theological College of the West Indies</p>	
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**The 43rd Synod of The United Church in Jamaica
and the Cayman Islands
April 23-30, 2023**

THE CHURCH AS A MOVEMENT, NOT A MONUMENT—Rt. Rev. Gary Harriott

We are convinced, through our reading of the signs of the time, that the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands must return to its roots if we are to be an impacting church and force to be reckoned with. We must return to our roots that saw Christians being engrafted or enlisted into a Movement.

Even though monuments can hold significant political, cultural, social, and religious meanings, at the core, a monument by nature is fixed; inflexible, and remains at a static place

or location to be looked upon or admired. Monuments usually represent an experience from the past that deserves remembering and celebrating.



On the other hand, a Movement indicates action; passion; it galvanizes people around an issue; a belief, and a mission. A movement is not static, but alive; dynamic; responsive; on the move – touching, influencing, and actively recruiting others to join in. In Acts Chapter 2, after this Christian Movement was given birth to, we saw the enabling by the Holy Spirit, and as a result, thousands of souls were recruited; the leaders demonstrated boldness, and broken lives were restored. Imprisonment could not stop them. In Thessalonica, the disciples who were on the move were accused of “turning the world upside down.”

In some countries where Christianity was once a vibrant presence, today, some of their sanctuaries have become monuments; tourist attractions, while the voice and life of God’s people have gone silent; having little or no impact on society. Some of these once state-of-the-art edifices have become places of entertainment.

We have read the signs of our time; many of our faithful members have passed on or have become aged. The world has changed and is changing, and so there is the need for a Christian expression that is not locked in or imprisoned by the past, or in how things used to be, but a Christian expression; a church; that is on the move, responding, impacting, and influencing people of every age from all walks of life, in becoming disciples of Jesus Christ.

What is the state of your congregation – a monument or a movement? What would it require for your congregation to become a movement? What would it look like? How different would it be? What would it mean for you to become enlisted in this movement? Who else needs to come under your influence for Christ?

Let us become that Movement again.



Synod Schedule

Date	Event	Time	Platform
April 23	Opening Service	4 p.m.	Physical gathering at Elmslie Memorial in Grand Cayman Streamed on UCJCI YouTube Channel
April 24	Bible Study	6 a.m. – 6.45 a.m.	Streamed - UCJCI YouTube Channel
	Delegates Bible Study discussions	8.00 a.m. – 8.50 a.m.	via Zoom via Zoom
April 25	Bible Study	6 a.m. – 6.45 a.m.	Streamed—UCJCI YouTube Channel
	Delegates Bible Study discussions	8.00 a.m. – 8.50 a.m.	via Zoom
	Business Sessions	Begin at 10:00 a.m	via Zoom
	Celebration of Life	6:00 p.m.	Streamed—UCJCI YouTube Channel
April 26	Bible Study	6 a.m. – 6.45 a.m.	Streamed on UCJCI YouTube Channel
	Delegates Bible Study discussions	8.00 a.m. – 8.50 a.m.	via Zoom
	Business Sessions	Begin at 10:00 a.m	via Zoom
	Public Lecture	6:00 p.m.	

Date	Event	Time	Platform
April 27	Bible Study	6 a.m. – 6.45 a.m.	Streamed - UCJCI YouTube Channel
	Delegates Bible Study discussions	8.00 a.m. – 8.50 a.m	via Zoom
	Business Sessions	Begin at 10:00 a.m.	via Zoom
April 28	CAYMAN IMMERSION EXPERIENCE FOR DELEGATES		
April 30	Closing Service	4:00 p.m.	Physical gathering at Elmslie Memorial United Church Streamed—UCJCI YouTube Channel

OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE WORK OF MINISTRY

End Violence Against Women and Chil-

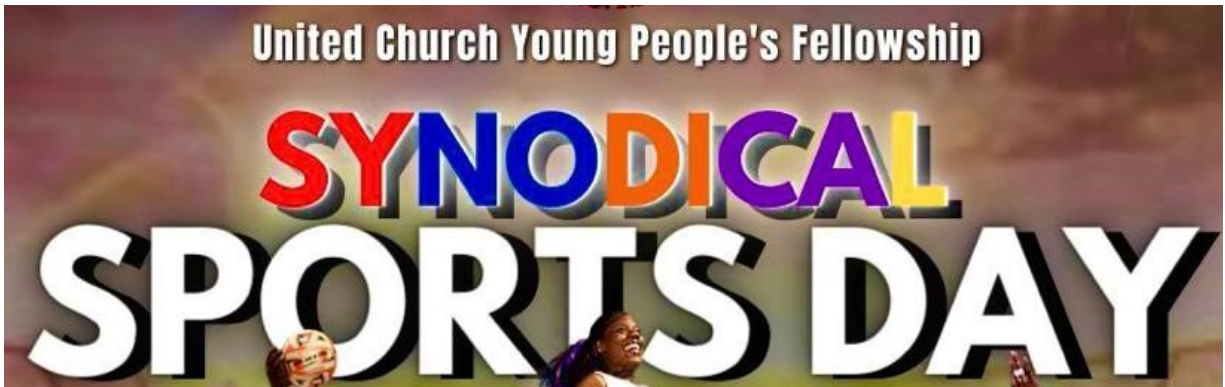


Share your Thursdays in Black photos on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram and tag us @ucjci



*Tune in to United in Faith Sundays on
RJR 94 F.M at 6:30 a.m.*

You can also listen on demand on An-



OVER 1000-STRONG!

On March 18, Synodical Sports Day 2023 was held under the Synodical theme Rooted, Resilient: Reignited by the Spirit.

This event was a 'risk' worth taking, but it was rooted in the Holy Spirit's plans, and we remained committed to the cause even when the weather threatened to be an impediment. The Synodical Executive took a leap of faith by RETURNING to Youth Ministry in order to re-ignite the youthful spark. We, like the bamboo, fought every obstacle that came our way.

Every age group and level of talent have always been welcomed at Sports Day, and we are grateful to have over a thousand attendees after a three-year physical absence. The day included dominoes, wacky events, track and field competitions, volleyball, football, and netball, among other things. We thank God for the warmth of the sun and the growing camaraderie.

We congratulate the Southern Region and would like to thank all of our supporters and officials. All regions did an outstanding job of not only showing up and re-igniting our youth but also participating. We are looking forward to exciting developments in youth ministry.

May we stay rooted in Christ, resilient in both good and bad times, clinging to our faith for guidance, re-ignited at all times as Christ adds fuel to the fire, and may our altars never run dry.

Vanessa Blissett
Synodical Youth President





UCYPF NATIONAL SPORTS DAY AS I SEE IT

The West was put to the test,
Second place within reach
seemed to be our best.
Our relay athletes were few.
A well fought fight, West, third
place, the best we could do.

Cayman put on a good show,
Wow! You should see the go!
Fourth was their portion
As they returned via the ocean.

South was definitely out front
and about.
A win was in store for sure, you
could hear it in the shout.
Nermc in doubt,
Turned around, took second
place behind South.

Mrs. Maureen Henry

SNAPS OF THE DAY



RESTORING A HOUSE OF WORSHIP IN CEDAR VALLEY



CEDAR VALLEY MISSION

Background

Cedar Valley United Church is one of the congregations in the Carron Hall Charge in St Mary. Due to falling numbers it ceased operating over five years ago and no worship service has taken place there since. However, this congregation was not forgotten; both synod and council cherished a desire to revive its ministry. The North Eastern Regional Mission Council (NERMC) has acted on its decision for revival. The process has begun.

Community Visit

The first visit in a process of spiritual mapping took place on February 16, 2022, led by the Council's vice chair for Evangelism, Rev. Lembe Sivile. The team truly felt that God had prepared the community for the visit. The community walk revealed a strong interest in the rebirth of Cedar Valley. Above all, a community member who had grown up in the church, presented the group with the Pulpit Bible which he had protected.

Plans for Restoration

The Council's 2023 Ash Wednesday Day of Fellowship Ingathering was earmarked for the restoration of this mission. Other activities in preparation of a full official launch of the ministry include:

- Community spiritual mapping
- Praying, fasting and interceding for the mission
- Developing a promotional video giving a full picture of the current state of affairs and the strategy going forward.
- Putting mission action teams in place for various aspects of the mission
- Dialoguing with congregations to take an active part in the revival of the ministry
- Identifying resources to clean-up the building while planning for more extensive refurbishing.



Acquiring a tent for ministry activities until the building is refurbished.

The Church is ideally situated in the middle of a community where the potential for ministry exists, with construction of a significant number of houses going on, a primary school adjoining the Church property and with community members excited about the news of the plans to revive the ministry. The Council is planning for an official launch in September 2023.



The NERMC is inviting the whole Council to join this effort to ensure the **RETURN** of this congregation to a place where it offers vital ministry to the community and to the Glory of God.

And everyone who was willing and whose heart moved them came and brought an offering to the LORD for the work on the tent of meeting, for all its service, and for the sacred garments. (Exodus 35:21)

COUNCIL NEWS

CIRMC



CAYMAN YOUTH AT UCYPF SPORTS DAY

Over the weekend of March 17-19, 2023 a group from the Cayman Islands Regional Mission Council (6 leaders and 13 youth) attended the United Church Young People's Fellowship (UCYPF) National Sports Day in Jamaica. A small group that did GREAT things.



HOLY WEEK INSIGHTS

A JOYFUL CELEBRATION LEADING TO A SHOCKING CONCLUSION

With Palm Sunday, the Church begins the annual Holy Week journey. This journey opens with a joyful celebration, but in a few short days takes an unexpected turn and leads to a shocking conclusion.

As we witness the rapidly unfolding drama of the last week of Jesus' earthly life, the events speak volumes not only about God's passionate love for all but also about the sobering reality of sin that plagues humankind both collectively and individually.

Jesus became the new Passover Lamb whose blood was shed for all, so that those who believe in Him may be freed from the slavery of sin and have Life and have it eternally.

At the heart of the story of Jesus' passion is the manifestation of a love unlike any other. The love we confront is so sincere, selfless, and transforming that it is beyond human comprehension. In Jesus' suffering, we witness a love of unprecedented depths. The Son of God voluntarily enters the deepest humiliation ever seen to meet us in our fallenness, sin, and helplessness and raise us to the highest heights imaginable.

As we begin this Holy Week, let us try to walk through it with Jesus every step of the way. As we go about our days this week, fulfilling our daily duties, let us take to heart anew the magnanimity of God's grace, our total dependence on it, and the wonderful possibilities and responsibilities included in it.

- Rev. Otto Menko

A STRATEGIC AND TIMELY MOVE

Jesus entering into Jerusalem on this particular weekend was strategic. You see friends; the message of salvation had to be preached in places where the world was always coming and going so people who heard it could take the message with them where they went. Jerusalem was considered to be centrally located based on its geographical position.

Notice carefully the location: Bethpage was a village located less than a mile from Jerusalem along a slope called the Mount of Olives. This slope overlooked the city of Jerusalem and presented a situation where Jesus and the crowd with Him would be seen as they came into Jerusalem, meaning they could not be missed. As the crowds entered the city gates during Jesus' triumphal entry, their zeal grabbed the attention of all of Jerusalem's citizens. The pilgrims coming to Passover were excited.

Many people believed that Jesus was the Messiah. Pilgrims came to Jerusalem by the hundreds and thousands for the Passover festival. It shows that God was strategic by making sure that this would be the weekend that Jesus would enter Jerusalem.

- Rev. Sandra Collins

THEME FOR WORSHIP AT HOME—EASTER

RECONNECT TO THE RISEN CHRIST

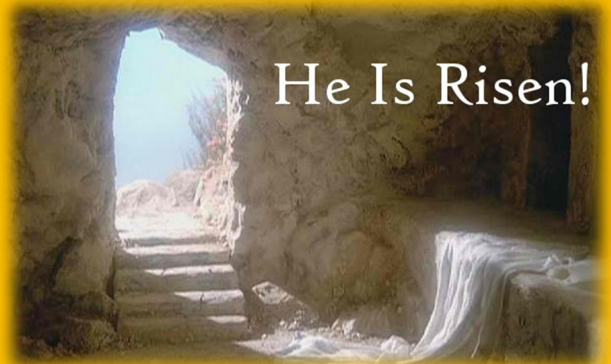
Suggested Scripture—Matthew 28:1–10

Nothing drowns out despair like good news. The disciples, the women, even Jesus' family had given up hope when they saw Jesus die. ***In those moments, they lost connection with Jesus.*** But all was not lost – they still sought to connect with him by properly preparing his body. Journey with the women as they discover new hope and as Mary ***reconnects with Jesus***

Consider the time of day – the darkest hour means dawn is in sight.

Reconnect amidst the struggle, in the sure and ***confident hope that Jesus is Risen*** indeed!

Christ the Lord is Risen Today, Hallelujah!!



**Let us
pray
for...**

- Nedra, the grand-daughter of Ms. Lorraine Howell. She has been hospitalised
- Family and friends of Mrs. Ena Stewart, WRMC Delegate who passed recently
- Those affected by recent earthquakes
- Jerome, the son of Mrs. Sheila Arscott Smith, who is recovering from injuries from a car crash
- People affected by the war and conflict across the world
- The security forces and the Government of Jamaica for wisdom in dealing with crime, violence and indiscipline in Jamaica.



Miss Joy Williams



Rev. Clement Reid



Rev. Alton Clarke



**The United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands
Congregational, Disciples of Christ, Presbyterian**

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Rt. Rev. Gary Harriott

General Secretary:

Rev. Norbert Stephens

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Cayman Regional Mission Council-
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Southern Regional Mission Council-
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