



# CAYMAN ISLANDS REGIONAL MISSION COUNCIL

WEEKLY UPDATE

**Easter Sunday**

April 06, 2023

VOLUME 8 ISSUE 14

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



## WORLD COMMUNION OF REFORMED CHURCHES

### EASTER MESSAGE 2023: THINKING OUTSIDE THE TOMB

*Philip Vinod Peacock  
Executive for Justice and Witness  
on behalf of the Collegial General Secretariat*



*("Ta Da!" by Joel Schoon-Tanis)*

As the world limps out of the COVID pandemic, the ravages of the pandemic have prised open already existing, deeply embedded injustices. Globally, we are acutely aware of the deep inequalities of class, gender, and race that divide humanity and prevent us from living the abundant life that God calls us into. As we resist the urge to return to what was “normal,” we instead try to re-create a world that is founded on justice. It is in this context of not returning to normal that we are called to think outside the tomb.

This Easter calls us into a fresh start. While the women in the life of Jesus never deserted him the disciples have a different story to tell. In the gospel according to John, the first man to reach the empty tomb in this story does not have his name mentioned, but we can make a fairly good guess is the disciple John; being a younger man he was able to outrun Peter and reach the tomb first. We must remember that this was the same John who along with his brother James asked Jesus whether they would be allowed to sit at the right and left hand of Jesus when he entered into his “glory.” At that time Jesus had asked the both of them whether they would be willing to drink the cup that he was going to drink from and whether they would be willing to be baptized with his baptism. Both had willingly agreed at that time but, when the time of trial had come both

disciples had shrunk from the task that they had promised. And what of Peter? His story is even more familiar, not only did he desert Jesus in his time of need but also was the one who openly denied Jesus.

One can't help but wonder what these two disciples were thinking when they were running to that tomb; no doubt their minds were filled with disbelief, expectation, and excitement. But I also believe that they must have had that dread of having to now confront the person who they let down. It is significant though that in all the recorded meetings that they had with Jesus after his resurrection this is never an issue. In their meetings with the risen Christ the disciples and Peter and John in particular are offered a new beginning, a fresh start.

As a global community we have made bad choices, choices that have ruined our environment and have made the planet unlivable for vulnerable groups and future generations, or as we say in the confession, we do things we ought not to have done and don't do things we ought to have done. But the beautiful message of Easter—and the message of this Easter in particular—is that in the risen Christ we have been offered a second chance, an opportunity to make a new beginning and a fresh start. Yet the time for making things anew is ticking down, especially in our efforts to reverse climate change.

Making a fresh start requires a complete reorienting of our society. Easter is about the first becoming last and the last becoming first. It is significant in the resurrection story that Mary of Magdalene—a woman—was the first to be a witness to the resurrected Lord. And not only a witness, but also the first apostle as she is sent to go and tell the others. The gospels show us clearly that it is only women who are capable of fulfilling the role and responsibility of discipleship. For it is a woman who was the first to learn of the birth of Jesus, and it was a woman through whom this child was born; it was women who were at the cross of Jesus when all the men had run away, and it was also to a woman that the good news of his resurrection was revealed. The very life of Jesus shows us that the social order has been overthrown: those who were first have come last and those who were last have now been placed first.

And this is the good news of the Easter message to us even today, that those who society has left out—women, the marginalized, the poor, and the oppressed—Jesus has placed first. Likewise the religious, political, and socially elite are ignorant of the resurrection of Jesus. The Matthean text tells us that they plot a lie to keep down the truth of the resurrection. Yet truth prevails. Thinking outside of the tomb denies the

power of patriarchy, makes nothing of the lies of imperialism, and enables an alternative view of the world.

The message of Easter is that it is the hope for all of humanity. Not only is it the hope that Jesus overturns the social order and that he offers us a chance to make a new beginning but also the hope that even death is not too powerful for us, that even death is not the end. This is not only true in the literal sense that Jesus promises us that those who believe in him will also rise again but also in the metaphorical sense that we have the ability to survive even the most difficult situations and circumstances.

We live in a world where might is right and that righteousness, justice, and peace have no place. Yet it is the power of the resurrection that gives us the hope that even in these times of darkness the truth will prevail. It is the power of the resurrection that offers us the hope that though we walk through the valley of the shadow of death we shall still prevail. This is true not only of large world events but also in our personal and daily struggles of life. It is this hope which gives us the power to resist. It is a subversive hope because it disagrees with what is going on now and offers us an alternative vision of the future. It is a hope which enables us to think outside the tomb.

(Source: <http://wrc.ch/blog/easter-message-2023-thinking-outside-the-tomb>)

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## UCJCI-CIRMC Peace Initiative 2023 Easter Project



On April 5, 2023, the Mission MAT of the CIRMC presented the 'fruits' of the UCJCI-CIRMC Peace Initiative 2023 Easter Project to Ms. Mariasha Spencer of the Cayman Islands Crisis Centre.



(from left: Mrs. Tessa Bodden, Mr. Bernard McGrath, Rev. Dr. Yvette Noble-Bloomfield, Mr. Herbert Crawford, Ms. Melody McLean, Ms. Mariasha Spencer and Mr. Wardley Conolly)

The Mission MAT, under the leadership of Mrs. Tessa Bodden, coordinated the Council-wide campaign that yielded the following:

Gift vouchers - \$2,575  
Cash donation of \$6,547  
Food and household items - \$1,200 (estimated)  
**Total \$10,322**



**Thank you all for your participation and most generous support!**

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## CPHS 2023 Prayer Space

There is an innate curiosity in children and young people about life, the world, the universe, the good and the bad things that are part of human existence. Young minds and hearts are filled with wonder and openness to explore and learn about almost anything. This 'anything' includes what 'meets the eye' (the material) and the things and realities we can access only through the 'eyes of faith'.

The Prayer Spaces in Schools project was officially launched in the UK in 2010, aiming to enable children and young people to explore life's questions, spirituality, and faith in a safe, creative, and interactive way. As of 2023, there are thousands of prayer spaces in more than 30 nations, and over the years, more than a million children and young people have participated in them.

Cayman Prep and High School (CPHS) introduced the Prayer Spaces in Schools project at the Primary School site in 2015, and it became an instant success. Since then, it has become an annual week-long event held just before the Easter holidays. Initially, the school Library and its adjoining rooms provided the space. These were transformed and repurposed to offer several clearly defined areas to explore the spiritual aspects of life and the role prayer can play in that process. In recent years, 'Prayer Spaces' moved from the confines of the Library and its rooms and spread out across the school, using the corridors, the busiest and most frequented places by everyone. The children are encouraged to interact with the Prayer Spaces Boards, to reflect on matters close to their hearts, such as forgiveness, injustice, and thankfulness, to think about questions they want

to ask God, their impact on the environment, to offer prayers of praise, thanksgiving, confession, and petition.



**Forgiveness Fish** - Related to Jonah reflecting on what holds us back from forgiving and a reminder that we, too, need forgiveness.



**Colourful Conversation** - Related to Adam and Eve, reflecting on how we can talk to God about anything as we are no longer separated from God by sin but brought closer through Jesus.



**Hearts of Desire** - Related to Abraham and Sarah, reflecting on how we are instructed to ask and believe God for the desires of our hearts but should trust that God knows best when something is not granted.



**Declare Over Fear** - Related to Daniel, reflecting on not letting fear stop us from doing what is right.

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## Welcoming New Members

On Sunday, April 2, 2023, Mrs. Itza Bodden (nee West) was received into membership at the Gun Bay United Church, and Mr. Eddinton Powell, at the East End United Church. We wish God's plentiful blessings on them and on the Congregations.



Mrs. Itza Bodden



Mr. Eddinton Powell

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**Treasure of Thanks** - Related to Paul, reflecting on how no matter what is taking place in our lives, we can still give God thanks.

## SYNOD BULLETIN #2

*(Issued by the Office of the General Secretary,  
The Rev. Norbert Stephens)*

Let us plan to pray for Synod. On Sunday, April 16, 2023, let us include a time of prayer for our Synod in our services. It is very important that everything we do is guided by prayer.

Our theme for the Synodical period of two years is: Rooted, Resilient – Re-Ignited by the Spirit.

Let us pray for wisdom and discernment as we seek God's leading for purposeful action that reflects a movement which advances the Kingdom of God.

Pray for

- God's Spirit to re-ignite our thoughts and actions so we will be both anchored in the Word and agile in obedience
- Delegates, ministers and lay pastors to thoughtfully and prayerfully participate in the Synod
- The witness of the church to be strengthened by the presence of the Synod in Cayman
- Worship and bible study experiences which will enable the transforming power of the Holy Spirit to impact our whole church

Each congregation is asked to create a space in their order of worship for this purpose.

**Let's pray and prepare for our Synod  
April 23-30, 2023.**

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### *"He Did It For Me"*

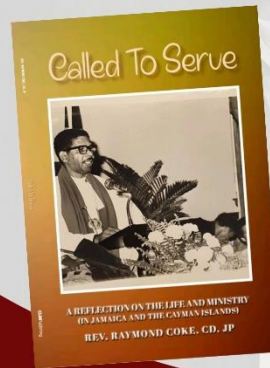
On Sunday, April 2, 2023, the Savannah United Church presented an Easter Cantata, a unique retelling of the Easter Story through the reflections of those who encountered Jesus during his time on Earth. A combination of songs, voice overs, and snippets of Jesus films were brought together for a powerful and moving production!



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**APRIL 25, 2023**  
At 12:30pm  
Savannah United Church

**BOOK LAUNCH &  
PRESENTATION**



# "CALLED TO SERVE"

*"An exciting read on the life of a modern day Moses - called to lead the Church body through change over many decades..."*

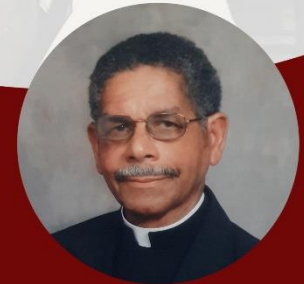
**Prices:**

**\$20** | **\$25** | **\$3,000**  
**KYD** | **USD** | **JMD**

**BOOKS WILL BE AVAILABLE  
THROUGHOUT SYNOD  
(APRIL 25-30)**

**Synod delegates can pay in  
advance, pick up in Cayman!**

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT  
RENEE BARNES | 929-0980 or  
rbarnes720@gmail.com



**Written by**

**REV. RAYMOND COKE, CD, JP**

Former Moderator and  
retired Minister of the  
United Church in Jamaica  
and the Cayman Islands

### 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 the bereaved families of Mr. Frank Conolly and Mr. Marquis McLaughlin.

# HE IS RISEN

CELEBRATE THE RESURRECTION



on Radio Cayman 89.9  
every Sunday at 7:45 am

**April 9, 2023**  
**Rev. Rohan Forrester**

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