



Reconnect in Faith

Rev. Dr. Yvette Noble-Bloomfield

The call to **Reconnect in Faith** is the theme for reflection this week. The scriptural reference is John 20:19-30. This final pericope in the Gospel of John provides us with the struggles of Thomas who, when told that Christ was raised from the dead, simply did not believe. He doubted the credibility of his fellow Disciples and declared that until he could see, touch and handle Jesus, he would not believe that He was raised from death.

Following the disaster the Disciples faced on Good Friday, Thomas' response could be seen as plausible. After all, Christ proclaimed the Kingdom of God, He performed many miracles that proved His divinity, and He was clearly the Messianic figure they anticipated, yet He had died and was buried. How then, having been defeated by death, He could rise from the dead?

Thomas was comfortable and justified in his doubt concerning the resurrection of Christ and he knew that the possibility of Christ's immediate return was remote. Yet, Jesus interrupted Thomas's state of disbelief in a powerful and distinguished way. Whereas Mary was told, "Do not touch me" – John 20:17, in John 20: 27, Thomas is invited to place his hand in Jesus' palms and side. Jesus had to ensure that Thomas would have a faith-transforming experience that would enable him to proclaim the power of the resurrection to those who would believe.

The encounter between Jesus and Thomas in this Johannine text must receive our attention for the following reasons as we seek to understand the underlying call to reconnect in faith.

1. The encounter is a juxtaposition of doubt and faith
2. This is a moment of discovery and reconnection with the Master
3. It is a state of joyful proclamation.
4. It is a declaration of blessing for those who will not see yet believe in Jesus Christ.

The juxtaposition of doubt and faith

Thomas was absent without explanation from the initial gathering of the Disciples when Jesus appeared to them. This would suggest that he had started to seek a life without the

group, now that Good Friday suggested the end of Jesus' leadership and presence. Thomas was always the questioning Disciple. "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" (John 14:6). Perhaps, if Thomas had done the Myers Briggs Personality test, at this stage, he would be ISTP (Introvert Sensing Thinking Perceiving). He needed details. He wanted the road map for the journey Jesus referred to in the John 14 text. Yet, Jesus responded with one of the greatest affirmations of the Christian faith, "I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through/by me" (John 14:6).

Jesus in this response, joined the pathway to God with the profundity of truth and pointed to the ultimate reality that human life only finds value in God. And even with that response from Jesus in John 14, doubt still lingered in Thomas' mind, hence his disbelief when told of the reality of the resurrection. His doubt only gave way to faith when he was offered the possibility of placing his hand in the wounded hands and side of Jesus.



We too will have our moments of doubt and even fear when we ponder the power of the resurrection. Could Jesus really die for my sins and has He risen from the dead to provide the path of salvation for me? Yes, like Thomas we can have these moments, but we can know with assurance that we can anchor our hope in He who remains faithful, Christ Jesus, our Lord.

It is a moment of discovery and reconnection with the Master

When all else seemed lost, Thomas perhaps drifted from the group in order to reconnect with his life before Christ. The Thomas of John 11:5-16 seems like a distant past. Where was the Thomas who encouraged the Disciples "to also go, that we may die with him"?

Throughout our own lives, maybe we have made promises to Jesus. We have sung and prayed "All to Jesus, I surrender" or "Take my life and let it be consecrated Lord to thee", yet we retain full possession and, in a hoard-like fashion, cling to the very perishable things of this life.

Thomas discovered the need to change his relationship with Jesus. He realized that Jesus had spoken the truth and had power over death and the grave. This was a Jesus that Thomas had to discover anew. He had to abandon his disappointment and hopelessness and breathe anew 'My Lord and My God'. Jesus

was no longer just the leader on a pathless journey (how can we know the way?), Jesus was now truly the way and the life for Thomas. Finally, he discovered and reconnected with the Master.

How about you and me?

Have we drifted from the Christ of our faith? Are we wanting to touch His hands and side in order to believe? Let us be assured that Jesus awaits us and longs to forgive and reconnect with us.

It is a state of joyful proclamation.

“My Lord and My God”, the joyful cry of Thomas should resonate with us daily. Thomas no longer needed to touch and poke, he saw and rejoiced! Indeed, he stopped doubting and instead believed, and his joy was full. (John 15:11)

Perhaps, the cruel realities of the world, compounded with personal disappointment, loss and pain, may steal our faith and joy. Some might be experiencing the darkest moments and the loneliest journey. The ravages of life’s disasters may be attending to our families and our loved ones, over and again. But hope is not lost, hear Jesus to Thomas, “You have seen and believed, blessed are those who have not seen, yet believed” (John 20:29). We can endure this world knowing that we can depend on the credibility of the eyewitnesses and on the presence of the Spirit in our lives.

This is indeed a powerful benediction that Jesus offered to future believers. The same joy Thomas experienced can and is therefore ours when we believe. It is joy unspeakable and full of glory.

It is a declaration of blessing for those who will not see yet believe in Jesus Christ.

We are reminded in 1 Peter 1:6-9,

“ In this, you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been [a]grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, whom you have not seen, you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls”.

The anticipated blessing is found in the promise of salvation which comes to those who place their lives and faith in Jesus. The truth is that many believe that this life is all there is in human existence. The ‘ride and die’ with the latest fad, culture or individual is a strong attitude for many people. Some cling to their own power and glory, neglecting the weightier matters of life such as the eternal destiny of their soul.

Jesus, however, provided a promise for the faithful, and Peter reminds us that “The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.” (2Peter 3:9)

We who believe in the gospel of Christ, the power of His love and the glory of His resurrection, can be assured that His love for us knows no measure and that there is an abundance of blessings in store for us. There is no crevice or corner of our lives unknown to Jesus, and He accepts and loves us as if we were perfect. And that’s the nature of God’s blessing to us in Christ Jesus- even while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:8)

In this season of Easter, let us move beyond our doubt and uncertainty and cleave to the One who promises us life in all its fullness and the powerful benediction for our belief.

Looking Back at Holy Week and Easter Sunday

Maundy Thursday Gathering in Savannah



On April 6, 2023, congregants of the North-East Charge (East End, Gun Bay, North Side) and the Savannah-Bodden Town Charge gathered for the first time for a Maundy Thursday Service. The event provided an opportunity for those attending in-person and those via Zoom to remember and reflect on the Last Supper, Jesus' teachings of love, humility and service, and the events leading up to His crucifixion and resurrection.

Good Friday Concert at Elmslie Memorial

In celebration of Jesus’ sacrifice on the Cross of Calvary, the Cayman Islands Male Voice Choir presented a Good Friday Concert on April 7, 2023, at Elmslie Memorial United Church, in the heart of George Town. The Male Voice Choir has been in existence for 49 years. Among other appearances, they regularly participate in the annual Christmas and Easter celebrations at this central location. The members of the choir are hailed from various denominations and congregations across the Cayman Islands. The concert featured a mix of contemporary and traditional choir music. Special mention was made of two still active founding members of the choir, Mr. Neals Godfrey and Mr. Ransford Terry. Local soloist Mr. Rudy Myles took on the role of Master of Ceremonies, and the Minister of the host Congregation, Rev. L. Christopher Mason,

offered words of thanks at the end of the event. Mr. Denver Bloomfield and Mr. Antonio Sanchez served as accompanists of the choir. The concert was broadcasted by Radio Cayman and can be viewed on the YouTube channel of Elmslie Memorial Church.



Easter Sunrise Service

Worshippers of the Eastern Districts (Bodden Town, East End, North Side), representing various Churches gathered for the annual Easter Sunday Sunrise Service held this year at the Coe Wood Beach in Bodden Town.



Happy Easter!



Children at the East End United Church wishing all a Happy Easter!

THE UNITED CHURCH IN JAMAICA AND THE CAYMAN ISLANDS
presents

43RD SYNOD

SYNOD BULLETIN #3

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

Preparations are in high gear for the upcoming 43rd Synod of The United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands which will take place this year, April 23-30. During services this weekend, please remember to pray for the Synod, the Delegates, the Ministers, and Lay Pastors who will participate in the decision-making and discussions.

Guided by the theme: **Rooted, Resilient – Reignited by the Spirit**, Bible studies will provide opportunities to search the Scriptures and better understand God’s call to us to do God’s work. Rise early and join in the Bible studies via the United Church YouTube channel at 6:00 am each morning, Monday to Thursday. Various aspects of the theme will be explored.

Our Synod will be physically located in the Cayman Islands Regional Mission Council and will combine virtual participation and face-to-face interaction.

Please pray for our Synod **every Wednesday at midday** as together we seek God’s guidance for our planning to do God’s work in the world.

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

THE UNITED CHURCH IN JAMAICA AND THE CAYMAN ISLANDS



43rd SYNOD
April 23 – 30, 2023

Hosted by the
CAYMAN ISLANDS REGIONAL MISSION COUNCIL

Public Events Held at Elmslie Memorial United Church

Sunday, April 23, 2023 at 4:00 PM
Opening Service

Monday, April 24, 2023 at 6:00 PM
Moderator’s Reception

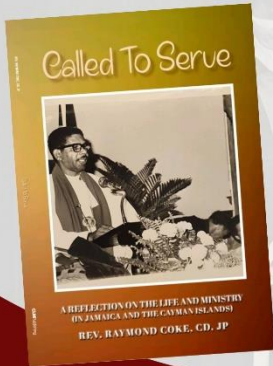
Tuesday, April 25, 2023 at 6:00 PM
Celebration of Life and Witness

Wednesday, April 26, 2023 at 6:00 PM
Public Lecture

Sunday, April 30, 2023 at 4:00 PM
Closing Service

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..."

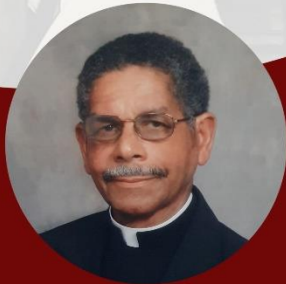
Prices:

\$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 RENEÉ BARNES | 929-0980 or rbarnes720@gmail.com



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



**Bodden Town / Savannah
Charge of United Churches**



Dave Ransey's Theory on How to Win with Money

A Special Presentation by
Carol Bennett

Thursday May 4, 2023

on
**Money
Management**

Zoom on to our usual Bible Study
Link Passcode:

Meeting ID: 889 2252 1043

Passcode: 230341

HE IS RISEN

CELEBRATE THE RESURRECTION

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

1 Peter 1:3

Remember in your prayers!

All those God has placed on your heart and those brought to your attention in some way.



on Radio Cayman 89.9
every Sunday at 7:45 am

April 16, 2023

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**ELMSLIE MEMORIAL UNITED CHURCH'S
YOUTH MINISTRY PRESENTS A**

FISH FRY

Menu:

Mahi Mahi (fillet) \$15
Whole Snapper \$12
Sides: Fried Breadfruit,
Plantain & Fritters
Pastries, water and
soft drinks available for
purchase, too.

Saturday,

May 6, 2023

7am - until ...

ELMSLIE CHURCH HALL
108 Seafarers Way
George Town



Tickets available for purchase after Sunday services in the belfry or contact Jennelle McLaughlin or Roy McGregor.