



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

Reconnect with Anticipation

Rev. Otto Menko

Please read Acts 1:6-11



In Acts 1:6-11, Jesus was about to ascend to heaven, and the disciples were gathered with Him. They asked if He would restore the kingdom to Israel at that time to which Jesus responded that it is not for them to know the times or seasons set by the Father. He then told them that they would receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon them, and they will be His witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea,

Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. After speaking these words, Jesus was taken up into heaven before the very eyes of the disciples.

Based on this passage, let us consider four aspects of the ascension of Jesus Christ in light of the theme, ‘Reconnecting with Anticipation’. How can we reconnect to Christ, to the Church, to our calling and to each other?

1. By trusting in God's plan and timing

The disciples were anxious to know how God's plan would unfold and be brought to a successful and victorious conclusion. Jesus' response to their question was clear and explicit, *“It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority”* (v.7). Simply put, He said, ‘It's none of your business’. Jesus' statement clearly did not deter believers throughout the ages from trying to calculate and announce with full conviction the actual date of His return. Naturally, none of the predictions made in the past proved to be accurate and we can say with certainty that they won't work in the future either.

Jesus' response may seem harsh to us, but it was pragmatic and practical. He wanted to shift the disciples' focus from the future to the present. Their concern must be for the ‘here and now’ and leave the rest to God. Jesus expects us to trust in God's sovereign plan and timing. How? By surrendering our desire for control and having faith that God's purposes will be fulfilled in God's own time and according to God's wisdom. Until then, using our personal and collective talents and resources, we must

engage faithfully and persistently in the mission we received. This is ‘our business’.

2. By receiving the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit

The disciples' shocking and traumatizing experience of loss on Good Friday was remedied only by Jesus' Resurrection. But once again, they had to face the prospect of becoming separated from their beloved Lord, and this time, for ‘good’. They would not see Jesus again in person for the rest of their lives. How will they manage without Him?

In response to their apprehension, Jesus reiterated His promise of assurance recorded in John 14:16-20, *“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you.”*

In Acts 1:8 Jesus says, *“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you”*. The emphasis of this promise is on the presence of the Holy Spirit in the disciples' and the believers' life, which, first and foremost, guarantees a reconnection, a real, living, vibrant, and powerful inner bond, a spiritual communion with the living Jesus Christ. Living daily in the actual spiritual presence of the Lord (through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit) is empowering. This ‘dynamis’ (power) enables us to live by faith and not by sight; to do the things we never thought we would be able to do; to go boldly in the face of uncertainty or danger; to give, to forgive, to love, to rely on God for guidance, strength, and wisdom, and to live out our faith and be effective witnesses for Christ individually and collectively as People of God.

3. By embracing the mission of being witnesses

Next, Jesus reminded the disciples of the primary purpose and goal of their lives, *“and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”* (v.8) This commission is in line with the ‘Great Commission’ recorded in Matthew 28:16-20. The commission, the mandate changed the trajectory of their lives, and it should do the same to ours.

We are called to share the message of Jesus Christ actively and intentionally with others and demonstrate His life and teachings through our words, actions, and lifestyle. Our actions, attitudes,

and relationships must be aligned with the values and principles taught by Jesus.

To be a witness means to participate in God's redemptive work by pointing others to Jesus and inviting them into a life-transforming relationship with Him. We are called to present the Gospel, the good news of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ by telling others how Jesus' life, death, and resurrection provide forgiveness of sins and offer eternal life. We are also expected to go beyond mere words and live as a reflection of Jesus Christ, His character, love and teachings at home, at work, everywhere and all the time. We must continue to invite others to experience God's love and grace in our churches or small groups, where they can encounter Jesus through worship, fellowship, and discipleship. Indeed, we, ourselves, must be actively involved and participate in the life of our Congregations, as our Church continues its involvement in social outreach and advocacy and explores and responds to new opportunities and challenges presented by our times in our contextual realities.

4. By anticipating the return of the Lord

After witnessing the ascension of Jesus, the disciples were left looking up into the sky, as two angels appeared and assured them that Jesus will return in the same way they saw him go into heaven.

Even though we personally and collectively are empowered to live and serve in the spiritual presence of our Lord (by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit) and embrace our calling to be His witnesses and although we don't know the 'times and dates', we are anticipating and living in the hope of the second coming of Jesus Christ.

Embracing the mission of being witnesses of Jesus is becoming more and more difficult. It requires perseverance and resilience in the midst of challenges, rejection, and opposition coming from many directions. As the Church of Jesus Christ faces increasing challenges worldwide and locally, we are reminded to live and serve with an awareness of an eternal perspective, knowing that Christ will return at the fullness of time to establish His kingdom. The promise and assurance of His coming again must encourage us to remain steadfast in our commitment to share the truth of Jesus' love and salvation, trusting that God is at work even when everything seems to be against us and when we may not see immediate results.

Let us then trust in God's plan and timing, be filled with the power of the Holy Spirit, embrace the mission of being witnesses, and live in anticipation of Christ's return. Ours is a call to active faith, obedience, and hope as we follow and serve the risen and ascended Lord Jesus Christ.

**Our reconnection is charged
with the anticipation,
the certain expectation,
of power to be and to do all
that God wants and expects of us.**

Mother's Day Celebrations in our Congregations

Webster Memorial United Church, Boddien Town

On Sunday, May 14, 2023, during the Mother's Day Worship Service, members of the Webster Memorial United Church, presented tokens of appreciation to Mrs. Evie Solomon and Mrs. Olsie Dixon, in recognition of their dedicated and faithful service to their Church.



Mrs. Carol Stephens, Mr. Harwell McCoy Jr. and Mrs. Olsie Dixon (right)



Mrs. Evie Solomon (center)

John Gray Memorial Church, West Bay

On Saturday, May 13, 2023, a special Mother's Day treat awaited the participants of the Young Families Program, operated by the John Gray Memorial United Church (West Bay) in partnership with the South Sound United Church. On average, 25-30 young families benefit from this initiative, introduced five years ago.



The twice-monthly meetings include devotions, pantry ministry, soup kitchen, and providing supplies much needed by those raising young children. The Congregation also partners with the Family Resource Centre of the Cayman Islands Government, assisting young parents in accessing information, resources, training, and essential tools to navigate the challenges of young parenting.



Savannah United Church

At the Savannah United Church, the men of the Congregation took charge of the Mother's Day Service, not only to afford the mothers a much-deserved rest but also as an expression of their gratitude to the mothers, grandmothers, and all those offering motherly love and presence, acknowledging the immeasurable impact made on their lives.





CIRMC 2023 Summer Camps

The Annual Summer Camps of UCJCI are one of those extra special times our children and youth look forward to with eager anticipation and much excitement. The combination of wholesome activities and fun under the supervision of dedicated and capable leadership in a perfect setting creates what our camps are known for: memories, friendships, and commitment to Christ that last a lifetime.

This year's Summer Camps will focus on the new Synodical Theme of the UCJCI with special emphasis on the spiritual message of the motifs: oil, fire, water, and wind.

Registrations are now open! **Registration Forms** are available in each Congregation from the Youth Ministers, Youth Leaders, or Church Offices. The fee is CI\$125. The space is limited and fills up very quickly, so don't hesitate! You don't want to be left out of this great experience.



The United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands

SUMMER DAY CAMP

Cayman Islands

Children's Camp July 12-16
Teens' Camp July 19-23
8am - 6pm

"Ketch Di Fyah"

Cost: CI\$125
Venue: Prospect Youth Centre
Submit forms to cirmc.summercamps@gmail.com

Mission News!

We welcome Baby Gansuud and her Grandmother Oyundulam, from Mongolia. Baby Gansuud will have surgery on Friday, May 19, 2023. Enkeelei who is their interpreter is also with them. The group is currently at the Health City Hospital and post-surgery she is well enough, they will relocate to the Beth Shalom Mission House. Thanks to Mrs Olga Gourzong and Ms Angela Martins for hosting Baby Gansuud. The RDGS is the Chaplain for the group. Please keep Gansuud in your prayers.






INTERSCHOOL/INTERVARSITY
CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP



**PRAYER
BREAKFAST**

8:00AM-10:00AM  20 May 2023

John Gray High School
(New Building)

isivcfky@gmail.com 
345-929-5111 
www.isivcfky.com 

THE INTER-SCHOOL INTER-VARSITY CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP
OF THE CAYMAN ISLANDS



CELEBRATE 10 YEARS WITH US

THE SUNSET CRUISE TO NOSTALGIA

SATURDAY MAY 27, 2023
Time 4:00 to 8:00 PM
Departure Location: The West Bay Yacht Club

INCLUDES HORS D'OEUVRES, ENTERTAINMENT, SWIMMING
AT STINGRAY CITY OR STARFISH POINT.



\$75
EACH
2 OR MORE FOR
\$60 EACH
STUDENTS \$50
EACH



FOOD
FUN
FELLOWSHIP
GAMES
MUSIC
ENTERTAINMENT

**MUCH
MORE!**

Savannah United Church
invites you to our

**27th
May**

**International
Fun Day!** 3pm - 6pm



on Radio Cayman 89.9
every Sunday at 7:45 am

May 21, 2023
Rev. Otto Menko

Published by the Cayman Islands Regional Mission Council of the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands
292 Prospect Point Road
P.O. Box 1700 Grand Cayman KY1-1109 CAYMAN ISLANDS
Tel: 1 345 947-1963 Email: rdgs@cicucjci.com or cirmcinfo@gmail.com
Website: unitedchurch.org.ky