



# UCJCI UPDATE

JUNE 7, 2023 VOL.10 ISSUE 17

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



YOUTH FROM ASKENISH UNITED ARE ALL SMILES AFTER YOUTH SUNDAY SERVICE.

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- ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE - A TOOL FOR GOOD OR EVIL?
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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 - IS AI A TOOL FOR GOOD OR EVIL?

IN APRIL 2023 A FIRESTORM ERUPTED OVER DISCUSSIONS OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) BEING USED BY STUDENTS IN THEIR ASSIGNMENTS. MANY CONSIDER IT TO BE CHEATING, SPECIFICALLY PLAGIARISM. SOME CONSIDER IT ALL DISHONESTY BELIEVING THAT STUDENTS ARE PRESENTING SOMEONE ELSE'S WORK. QUESTIONS AROSE: ARE STUDENTS SIMPLY BEING LAZY? DOES AI CHALLENGE FAITHFUL DISCIPLESHIP? WHAT'S THE FUSS ABOUT? READ A PERSPECTIVE ON **PAGE 2**





## IS ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) A TOOL FOR GOOD OR EVIL?

Contributed by Rev. Kraig DeLeon Diedrick

**Many people have bought into the narrative that computers are taking or have taken over the world. Well, the narrative is true. THEY HAVE TAKEN OVER THE WORLD.**

**Computers are at the core of almost everything we do as a society from banking to education, even our very transportation. There seems to be a new kid on block called AI or Artificial Intelligence. It really is not as new as we may think. Let's check it out.**

Artificial intelligence is an advanced technology, typically run by a series of algorithms, computers, or robots, that use real-time data to simulate human intelligence. In simplest terms, it is a series of complex instructions that receive a request and output a response based on the request and the complex instructions or algorithms (logic). Essentially, it is Adam's intended Eve... "a help meet". AI dates as far back as the early 1950's. According to Britannica,

**While AI has brought significant advancements and benefits to various industries, it is important to acknowledge that there can be negative implications and risks associated with its use.**

the earliest successful AI program was developed in 1951 by Christopher Strachey from the University of Oxford. The application was used to play checkers and by the following year, it could play a complete checkers game at a reasonable pace.

It must be understood that its efficacy ranges from the very simple to the incredibly complex and advanced. It can help us to do some basic tasks like summarize a document, generate minutes from meeting notes or send emails. It does more complex functions such as predicting stock market trends, diagnosing medical conditions, creating personalized recommendations

for online shopping, and even driving autonomous vehicles. Persons may be familiar with personal assistant technology such as Alexa, Cortana and Siri which are powered by AI. So also are Chatbots used on websites by various businesses to engage customer questions.

AI has become an integral part of various industries, revolutionizing the way we live and work. One of the key aspects of AI is its ability to process and analyze voluminous amounts of data. With access to vast databases and the power of machine learning, AI systems can detect patterns, make predictions, and provide insights that humans may not be able to uncover on their own. This has proven particularly beneficial in fields like finance, where AI algorithms can analyze market trends and make faster and more accurate investment decisions.



While AI has brought significant advancements and benefits to various industries, it is important to acknowledge that there can be negative implications and risks associated with its use. Just as any powerful technology, AI can be misused or exploited by individuals with malicious intent. One concern is the potential for AI to be used in cyberattacks and hacking activities. As AI systems become more sophisticated, they can be utilized to launch automated and targeted attacks, bypass security measures, and exploit

vulnerabilities in computer systems. This poses a significant threat to data privacy and cybersecurity.

Another concern is its misuse by students. It has been used by students to generate answer sheets for coursework scripts and graded assignments. This leads to students' integrity being questioned and the potential for them to fail and must redo their coursework and graded assignments. Alongside this has been the development of systems to check for the potential of AI usage in assignments.

We should not shy away from harnessing the power of AI as we did with the internet. It can help us in generating board meeting and committee meeting minutes thus allowing us to spend more time on the things that matter. It can further assist us in generating strategic plans for our congregation, or even more granular, strategic plans for the various ministries within the congregation/charge.

Rev. Kraig DeLeon Diedrick is the Minister of St. Paul's United Church (Lockett Avenue) and formerly UCJCI's Communication and Technology Support Officer

## FAQs About Artificial Intelligence

### **Would artificial intelligence replace human intelligence so people would no longer be needed for tasks?**

That could happen for some tasks. However, AI does not currently operate independently of human intelligence. The latter is needed to develop the machinery and instructions to make AI workable. Consider a creation analogy.

God created human beings. It was God who then blew breath into God's human creation so there would be life. Breath could not exist unless God put it there. AI currently exists because human beings created it.



### **Is AI a ploy of the devil and therefore goes against the Christian faith?**

AI is amoral. Morality is imposed on it by what it is used to do. In the same way that computers, the internet and social media are not themselves immoral but can be used for malicious intent, AI can be harnessed and used to advance the agenda of the enemy or the mission of our Lord.

### **What should Christians be wary of in terms of the truth of matters of faith?**

The fact that AI can be used to generate false information. The advent of 'deep fake' videos to advance untruth, seemingly from the mouths of respected persons indicates the negative potential of which Christians should be aware. Simply put, the AI technology learns from its environment. If it is fed data which is erroneous, the outcome will reflect the input. AI can create misinformation. Conversely AI can be used to propagate the Gospel through various platforms e.g. YouTube.

### **In light of this, what should Christians do?**

Test information, go back to the Word of God. Seek guidance from credible authority. Be critical in your consumption of information.

# MISSION INITIATIVE

## YOUNG MEN IN ASKENISH INTRODUCED TO A BETTER ALTERNATIVE TO A LIFE OF CRIME

*UCJCI Update has followed up on one of the stories from Synod of mission initiatives in congregations. Rev. Laddia Young, Minister of the Askenish charge, shares the story of efforts to reach out to young men.*



The young men are interested in sports and attended the Western Region Mission Council Sports Day in February.

**introducing the Askenish United Church Youth Fellowship.** The Youth Fellowship was started nine months ago as a response to the number of unattached youths in the community. I am happy to report that, on average, there are twelve young men being ministered to on Saturday afternoons (There are no girls).

It is the hope that this ministry will meet the spiritual and social needs of the youths by teaching them about God as well as how to be positive contributors to society. One of the goals of this ministry is to combat the growing numbers of lottery scammers in the community by showing the youths better alternatives to a life of crime.

When the youths gather on a Saturday afternoon time is spent on conversations about their week. It is an open and vulnerable space where they are affirmed, celebrated and corrected. We proceed with devotion and then the activity for the day including Bible study, games, discussions and preparation for leading worship which they do bi-monthly.



The young men are involved in worship on Youth Sundays at Askenish United. They are captured here at a Youth Sunday service.



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# Young men are affirmed, celebrated and guided.



The youths enjoy coming to youth fellowship as they get a chance to gather together. It offers a safe space for them to grow, be vulnerable and encounter themselves and God.

The young men attended UCJCI National Sports Day in February and, with other players from the region secured third place in football.

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Some of the young men attended UCJCI Discovery Teens Camp last year and are seen here with Rev. Laddia Young.

## PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

- In order to facilitate the personal growth and development of the youths, we are hosting a **Career Day** on June 10, 2023 at 3:30 pm. The aim of this career day is to expose the youths to various career paths in order to become positive contributors to society.
- In order to meet the spiritual needs of the youths, they will be attending the various **UCJCI Camps** this summer. Four of the youths attended camp last year and shared their experiences with the others who are now excited to go.
- **Man talk Saturdays**- It is the hope that on the second Saturdays Christian men will come to Youth fellowship and share with boys.

# COUNCIL NEWS - NERMC

## CELEBRATING TEACHERS IN NERMC

Opportunity was taken during May, Child Month in Jamaica, to celebrate teachers in schools within the region. Mrs. Audrey Francis Vice chair of Missions for NERMC and her Team (Janet Henry & Sharon Muthra) accompanied by Joy Williams, Programme Secretary, NERMC visited the Brainerd Primary School. The Team presented Teacher's Day Mugs and Pens to Principal Schleifer and also treated the Teachers and Students to a scrumptious meal.



A delectable meal being prepared.



Grades 2 and 3 celebrating their treat.



Principal Scheliefer and his team.

## MISS ST. MARY FESTIVAL QUEEN 2023 FROM IMMANUEL UNITED

"The Jamaican Woman - Strong, Dignified, Creative"

Sherai Campbell is one of the bright and shining stars of the Immanuel United Church. Currently she serves as President of the Youth Fellowship. She is a lay preacher, praise team leader and a teacher/leader of the annual Vacation Bible School. She's fully involved in the church's life and holds great promise for its future leadership. The Immanuel United Church is proud of her accomplishments and of her commitment to Christ and his mission.





# COUNCIL NEWS - CIRMC

## CPHS PRIMARY SCHOOL LEADERS' RETREAT



In keeping with the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands' historical commitment to education, the Cayman Islands Regional Mission Council and the Cayman Prep and High School (CPHS) continue to work together to ensure the highest quality education, social development, and spiritual undergirding for the students.

The Council Office has, in recent months, become the venue for planning retreats for the leadership team from both the High and Primary Schools. The RDGS is delighted to share in this partnership with the school by providing this space for the school leaders to engage in retreat as they prepare for the 2023- 2024 academic year.

## CRISIS PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE CAPABILITY GUIDELINES FOR CONGREGATIONS AND COUNCIL

Another hurricane season is upon us and although we hope and pray that we will be spared once again, it is time for all of us and our congregations to take the necessary steps to be ready for all eventualities. In addition to the annual, government-issued hurricane preparedness guidelines to aid us, we also have the 'Crisis Preparedness and Response Capability Guidelines for Congregations and Council' document prepared by the UCJCI to assist us in this process. The leadership and membership of the CIRMC are strongly encouraged to make every effort necessary in their local context to satisfy the requirements outlined in the document. "Be Storm Ready! Make a Plan!"



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# UCJCI DOING THE WORK OF MINISTRY

Over the past weeks UCJCI Update has featured the priorities identified at Synod in order to communicate with the wider church that which will guide our agenda in ministry and mission. The Priorities of Worship, Witness and Work have been shared, while identifying the areas of responsibility for congregations, regions and the Synodical leadership within each priority. In the coming issues, we focus on aspects of work which is already being undertaken. In this issue we share vital statistics in relation to CAMP MINISTRY.

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## CAMP MINISTRY



- **261 Campers attended Summer Camps**
- **99 Campers responded to Altar Calls**
- **19 Commitment to having a relationship with God**
- **14 Recommitted to having a relationship with God**





THE UNITED CHURCH IN JAMAICA AND THE CAYMAN ISLANDS  
(PRESBYTERIAN, CONGREGATIONAL AND DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)

## CAMP MINISTRY

presents

# CAMP 2023

VENUE:

MADGE SAUNDERS CONFERENCE CENTRE

THEME:  
"DEEPA INNA  
CHRIST... FIRMA  
INNA FAITH...  
RESILIENT!"

GET READY!  
GET READY!!  
GET READY!!!

### SCHEDULE:

Children's Camp (Ages 8 - 10)

- Saturday July 8 - Thursday July 13, 2023

Junior Camp (Ages 11 - 13)

- Saturday July 15 - Thursday July 20, 2023

Pacesetter Teens (Teens 1) (Ages 14 - 17)

- Saturday July 22 - Thursday July 27, 2023

Discovery Teens (Teens 2) (Ages 14 - 17)

- Saturday July 29 - Thursday August 3, 2023



COST PER  
CAMPER:  
\$10,500



# HAPPY BIRTHDAY!



JUNE 2  
REV. NORLENE JACKSON

## Belated Greetings



JUNE 5  
REV. MARGARET DOWNER-MESSIAS



JUNE 6  
REV. DR. RALPH HOYTE



JUNE 8  
DR. JANE DODMAN



Certificate in  
**DIGITAL  
DISCIPLESHIP**

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course is designed to offer participants opportunities to learn about the vast potential of social media as a teaching and instructional tool for influencing a digital audience with appropriately designed social media content amidst the continuous changes in teaching and learning globally.

COURSE GOAL:

Participants will become familiar with the concept of digital discipleship, be able to assess the advantages and disadvantages of various social media platforms with respect to their intended audience, and successfully implement a programme of nurturing disciples digitally.

**June 24 - July 29, 2023**

(Saturdays Only)

**9AM - 12PM**

**Duration: 6 Weeks**

**Delivery: Online**

**Registration:**

Early Bird (ends June 2)

JMD 15,000

Regular:

JMD 17,000

**TARGET AUDIENCES**


All levels of congregational leaders (including clergy)

Information Technology specialists within the congregation.

General church membership interested in exploring the possibilities of digital media as a tool for discipleship.



**SUMMER  
SHORT  
COURSE**

 @UTCWConnect

Call us at 876-927-1724 / 2868



**LOADING...**



**UCJCI MAN-FEST  
REAL MEN...REAL VIBZ!**

Knox College, Spalding

**SATURDAY JULY 1, 2023**

Music, Fun, Food and Fellowship

Prizes and Surprizes for the Council with the highest attendance of men

**REGISTRATION opens soon.**

# THEME FOR WORSHIP AT HOME

## DIVINE RECONNECTION

Abraham was living an uneventful life in Babylonian territory. Nothing to write about in the tabloids. But God determined that He would use him to start the process of reconnecting God with His lost and wayward people. Abraham's obedience made our own reconnection possible. We too, need to avail ourselves by saying like the songwriter, *"Here I am, Lord; it is I, Lord. I have heard You calling in the night. I will go, Lord, if You lead me; I will hold Your people in my heart"*.

**SUGGESTED SCRIPTURES:  
GENESIS 12:1-9**

## LET US PRAY FOR...

- Safety during the current hurricane season, for our preparedness and safety.
- Camp ministry in the United Church, for wisdom and thoroughness in planning, success in execution and a harvest of souls for commitment and service in the church..
- Efforts in reaching men for Christ.
- That ministers, lay pastors and administrators will experience restful and refreshing times away from work.





## EMPLOYMENT & MINISTRY OPPORTUNITY

# DIRECTOR MOUNT OLIVET BOYS' HOME

If you have provided leadership and management for the delivery of care and protection for children then this could be the position for you.

**Send your resume to: [synodhr@ucjci.com](mailto:synodhr@ucjci.com)**

### QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE:

- Bachelor of Science (BSc.) in Social Sciences (Social Work/Psychology, Guidance and Counselling, etc.)
- Three (3) years' experience in managing a residential child care institution

**Only short-listed applicants will be interviewed  
DEADLINE: FRIDAY, JUNE 16, 2023.**



**Remember to wear black on  
Thursday.  
Take a Stand! Work for a world  
without violence.**



## SYNODICAL THEME:

# Rooted, Resilient: Re-ignited by the Spirit

(Return, Reconnect, Realign, Re-ignite)

## OUR VISION

*Touching Lives, Nurturing Disciples, Seeking Transformation  
through Christ*

# The United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands (Congregational, Disciples of Christ, Presbyterian)

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Tel: 876 9268734; ♦ E-mail: [synod@ucjci.com](mailto:synod@ucjci.com) ♦ Website: [www.ucjci.com](http://www.ucjci.com)

### MODERATOR

**Rt. Rev. Gary Harriott**

### GENERAL SECRETARY

**Rev. Norbert Stephens**

### REGIONAL DEPUTY GENERAL SECRETARIES

Cayman Regional Mission Council  
**Rev. Dr. Yvette Noble Bloomfield**

North Eastern Regional Mission Council  
**Mrs. Rose Wedderburn**

Southern Regional Mission Council  
**Mrs. Janet McConnell**

Western Regional Mission Council  
**Mrs. Mauleen Henry**