



CAYMAN ISLANDS REGIONAL MISSION COUNCIL

WEEKLY UPDATE

December 07, 2022

SEASON OF ADVENT

VOLUME 7 ISSUE 48

UCJCI 42nd SYNOD THEME – **Rooted, Resilient: Responding in HOPE** (Health, Opportunity, Peace, Evangelism)

Advent 2 – PEACE

Re-ignite with the Message of Peace

The Season of Advent reminds us of the importance of spiritual preparedness, of the readying of our hearts and minds for the life-transforming presence of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Rev. Otto Menko

Please read Mark 1:1-8

On the 1st Sunday in Advent, we lit the candle of Hope in our churches as a reminder that as followers of Jesus Christ, we are the people of hope.

Last Sunday, the Church entered into the liturgical season of Advent, the season signalling the coming of Christmas with all the festivities, excitements and joys associated with it. Our sanctuaries are now beautifully decorated for the season. Many of us have already set up our Christmas trees and decorated our homes inside and out. Additionally, there may still be gifts to order online or buy them locally, Christmas cards to send, menus and special meals to plan for, and people to visit.

On the 2nd Sunday in Advent, we light the candle of Peace. Jesus' birth was announced by a great company of angels saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven and on earth peace to those on whom God's favor rests." (Luke 2:14)

But knowing all too well our sinful nature we may wonder if peace is possible at all. Wars, fights, conflicts, anxieties and stresses of all kinds mar our human existence on every possible level and there seems to be no respite from their destructive force.

Yet, amid these outward preparations, Advent calls us to delve deeper and prepare not only our physical surroundings but, more importantly, our hearts and minds. This sacred season invites us to embrace the spiritual dimensions of anticipation, not only for the celebration of Jesus' birth but also for His promised return in glory – a future Advent when He will establish His kingdom, judge His enemies, and reward the faithful, both living and dead.

Today we are reminded that there is peace that transcends all understanding and that it is available to all of us through faith in Jesus Christ (Philippians 4:7). It is the kind of peace that the world cannot give, a peace that is more than simply the absence of conflict, worry and stress. It is God's peace that brings a sense of contentment and gratitude; a sense of clarity and purpose; a sense of responsibility and mission even in the worst of circumstances.

Advent is rich with symbolism, each Sunday unveiling a distinct theme. Last Sunday, we ignited the candle of Hope, signifying our identity as people of Hope. Today, on the second Sunday of Advent, we light the candle of Peace. In the Gospel of Luke (2:14), the angels heralded Jesus' birth with the proclamation, "Glory to God in the highest heaven and on earth peace to those on whom God's favour rests."

Let us open ourselves today for Jesus and for the peace He offers to us. Let us do this for our own sake and for those around us who need it so desperately.

Amidst the noise, frenetic pace and constant barrage of conflicting messages that define our modern existence, the second Sunday of Advent invites us to reflect on the theme of peace. As we navigate a world marked by restlessness, conflict, and the constant hum of anxiety, the promise of peace seems both elusive and desperately needed. How do we, God's children, find inner peace and become agents of peace in a world that seems to thrive on discord?

"And the peace of God,
which transcends all understanding,
will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."
(Philippians 4:7)



Our world has been a place of discord and conflicts since the dawn of time. Hostilities - both disguised and open - persist globally and within the confines of our communities, families, and personal relationships. The uncomfortable truth is that even we, God's children, often contribute to the discord and the lack of peace we moan and complain about. We are not immune to the invasive power of restlessness, anxiety, contention,

animosity or outright hostility that we sometimes feel against others. In our pursuit of personal aspirations, we occasionally find ourselves instigating conflicts, knowingly or unknowingly. Our ambitions and desires for success, recognition, or power also stir tension in our relationships and communities, even in the Church.

But that is not all. The constant demands of work, the pressures of societal expectations, and the pervasive influence of a world that keeps vying for our attention through the endless supply of information from various media outlets, social and traditional ones, drain the last drops of peace from our lives, leaving us in a perpetual state of agitation.

This second Sunday of Advent extends an invitation to seek inner peace, for without it, we cannot become agents of peace. Today's Gospel passage from Mark 1:1-8 presents John the Baptist issuing a call of repentance. This repentance is the changing of hearts and minds, a turning away from everything that robs us of the true peace found only in the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ, God's one and only Son. In John 14:27, Jesus declares, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives."

To receive this peace of God, we must repent, in other words, decisively and resolutely turn away from the influences that rob us of it. We must examine ourselves, our motives, intentions, actions, and words. Maybe we know too well how we contributed to the loss of peace, or perhaps we don't. The bottom line is we must confront the issues, habits and factors that drain peace from our lives. Without conscious and resolute repentance, we cannot receive the peace of God.

Moreover, without inner peace, we cannot become agents of peace. We cannot promote what we don't have. In Matthew 5:9, Jesus says, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God." The ministry of reconciliation lies at the heart of our Christian calling. As agents of peace, we are called to be peacemakers in our families, workplaces, and communities. The Advent season challenges us to mend broken relationships, bridge divides, and serve as instruments of God's reconciliation in our fractured world.

How can we serve as peacemakers? There are many ways of engaging in that capacity, both by actions and words. We must begin with our relationships, families, Congregations and the wider local community. We can apologize, forgive, offer practical assistance, spend time together, listen, and bring healing and hope by encouraging and comforting. The possibilities are endless.

The second Sunday of Advent urges us to pause amid the restlessness of our world and within our hearts. It challenges us to confront the anxieties we carry and the conflicts we may instigate, inviting us to seek the profound peace offered by the Prince of Peace. As we find solace in Christ's presence, the call to become agents of peace beckons us. Philippians 4:7 assures us, "And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." Let us open ourselves today to Jesus and the peace He offers — not only for our sake but also for those around us who desperately need it.

May our lives, shaped by the peace that surpasses understanding, become beacons of hope and reconciliation amidst the world's turmoil. In the quiet anticipation of Advent, let us earnestly embody the transformative message of peace and goodwill to all, right where we are.

Cayman Thanksgiving Service at the Savannah United Church

On Sunday, December 3, 2023, as part of the Cayman Thanksgiving Service, five new members were admitted into membership in the Savannah United Church, under the leadership of the Rev. Euthman Wray. The new members received a heartfelt welcome from the Elders and members of the Congregation. May their joining be a blessing for them and their new spiritual fellowship.



Following the Service, a true Caymankind Lunch was enjoyed by all.



Cayman Islands Girl's Brigade Christmas Carol Service

The Cayman Islands Girl's Brigade Christmas Carol Service was held on Sunday, December 3, 2023, at 4:30 pm at the Savannah United Church, focusing on the theme '2023 Years Later!! – Christmas Then and Now'. The Girl's Brigade Companies from around the Island contributed various items to the Service.



The message, delivered by the Cayman Islands Girl's Brigade National Chaplain, Rev. Dr. Yvette Noble-Bloomfield, emphasized that God's love has brought salvation for everyone, even for those whom we would categorize as bad people in the Bible, e.g. tax collectors, Herod and his court or the innkeeper. Close to the end of the Service those present formed a continuous prayer circle as Mrs. Marisa Crawford, President of the Cayman Islands Girl's Brigade offered a prayer for the Children of the World. A time of fellowship and refreshments followed the Service.



UNITED CHURCH IN JAMAICA AND THE CAYMAN ISLANDS

The United Church Women's Fellowship
By Love Serve

**CAYMAN ISLANDS
REGIONAL MISSION
COUNCIL WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP**

**PATIENCE
IN THE
MIDST OF
CHALLENGES**

Speaker **REV. DONOVAN MYERS**

SATURDAY, JANUARY 27, 2024
TIME: 8AM - 10AM
VENUE: MORRITT'S, EAST END

**FELLOWSHIP
BREAKFAST**

\$35

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 especially those who are

- The bereaved
- The sick and ill
- Those going through a challenging time
- Those before an important decision
- Those needing guidance, support, or encouragement
- Those who feel lost and hopeless,
- Those caught in the middle of armed conflicts, persecuted, mistreated, exploited, disenfranchised, or abused.

**WORSHIP
THE
LORD**

Cayman Islands Regional Mission Council
Members at 7:45 am on Radio Cayman

on Radio Cayman 89.9
every Sunday at 7:45 am

December 10, 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: www.unitedchurch.ky/