



UCJCI UPDATE

DECEMBER 6, 2023 VOL. 10 NO. 29

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

ON THE INSIDE

- OBERLIN UNITED CHILDREN'S PEACE MARCH
- SCOTS KIRK CELEBRATES 210 YEARS
- 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE
- CELEBRATING REV. DR. ELSA CLARKE
- WORSHIP AND PRAYER OPPORTUNITIES
- UPCOMING EVENTS, MINISTRY AND JOB OPPORTUNITIES



CHILDREN FROM BAILLIESTON ARE PROUD OF THEIR ACHIEVEMENT AT SRMC KIDS' QUAKE. (PAGES 8 AND 9)

UCJCI UPDATE

UPDATE IS PUBLISHED BY THE UNITED CHURCH IN JAMAICA AND THE CAYMAN ISLANDS. THE PUBLICATION PROVIDES INFORMATION ABOUT THE DENOMINATION, NEWS OF HAPPENINGS IN REGIONS, MATERIAL TO FACILITATE WORSHIP AND BIBLE STUDY, ACTIVITIES FOR PARTICIPATION AND PRAYER, AND SPIRITUAL PERSPECTIVES ON ISSUES OF PUBLIC CONCERN.

FEATURE ARTICLE

RISE UP MEN OF GOD AS WE CONTINUE IN THE 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN THIS 31ST YEAR OF THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNION WHICH CREATED UCJCI. I AM CONCERNED THAT, IN THE FACE OF DISCRIMINATORY AND OFTEN DISGUSTING SPEECH AND BEHAVIOUR TOWARD WOMEN, THE CALL COMES FOR PROMINENT WOMEN AND WOMEN'S GROUPS TO SPEAK OUT AND DO SOMETHING WITHOUT A SIMILAR RESOUNDING CALL FOR MEN TO BE ADVOCATES. OFTEN THE MESSAGE TO THE MEN IS TO DO BETTER, TREAT WOMEN WITH RESPECT, REFRAIN FROM ABUSE AND IT IS RIGHT THAT SUCH IS THE MESSAGE. HOWEVER THEY ARE ALSO CALLED TO BE ADVOCATES AND ACTIVISTS. GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE WHICH IS MOSTLY AIMED AT WOMEN AND GIRLS IS A DISGRACEFUL PROBLEM FOR ALL, NOT JUST FEMALES. RISE UP, O MEN OF GOD.. (PAGES 6 AND 7)



"JUDGES AT SRMC KIDS' QUAKE REVIEWING THE POSTER SUBMISSIONS. (PAGES 8 AND 9)

Celebrating

REV. DR. ELSA CLARKE

Women worker, deaconess, chaplain, church extension worker, pastoral assistant, Christian educator, programme and institutional administrator, ordained pastor...



“Having given herself first of all to the Lord, by the desire and will of God she gave herself steadfastly to God’s cause and the well-being of the bearers of God’s image beyond herself”.

Words from the tribute of the Synod read by the UCJCI General Secretary, Rev. Norbert Stephens, at the Thanksgiving Service for the late Rev. Dr. Elsa Clarke on November 29, 2023 at Ridgemount United Church. The tribute chronicled Dr. Clarke’s service to people through her church, spanning almost 60 years. The following are excerpts from the tribute which outline the many ways she served.

“Elsa Laneta Clarke graduated from the Union Theological Seminary and became a part of the trained and commissioned workforce witnessing to the Gospel of Jesus Christ through the Presbyterian Church in Jamaica. This event took place on the brink of significant moments of change in the history of both ecclesiastical entities. Within a year of her graduation, her denominational identity was changed from ‘Presbyterian’ to the ‘United Church of Jamaica and Grand Cayman’; and two years later, the seminary was referred to as the United Theological College of the West Indies”.

Serving in a Variety of Roles

“At the onset of her post-seminary service through the church, Elsa Clarke was plunged into a variety of roles, aided and abetted by the fact that whereas the ‘ordained’ were called the ‘commissioned’ were sent. The roles into which she was cast included being Hospital Chaplain through which she served the Victoria Jubilee and the Children’s hospitals, both located in the Corporate Area. At the same time, she was found in the frontline of Church extension causes in Harbour View and Boulevard. Understandably, she was in the frontline because, in those days, church extension began with the establishment of a Sunday School”.

“In 1969, Elsa was assigned to the Cornwall (now Western Regional Mission) Council with the following responsibilities: to work with the Woman’s Guild; to help with Sunday School; to help with the Girls’ Brigade; to help with Youth Fellowships. Suffice it to say that one could only help with what existed. In many instances, she first had to bring into being and thereafter assist.

Her accommodation was to be at the Kelly Lawson Training Centre and “since there would have been a matron in place” at that location, seemingly, in order to earn her keep, she was expected to act as Secretary until a permanent appointment was made”.



Celebrating REV. DR. ELSA CLARKE



"In the course of time, her temporary position at the centre became permanent and she eventually assumed the position of Director, being responsible for its overall administration, including implementation of its programmes."

Contribution to Children's Work

"It should not be forgotten that during all this time, a period spanning twenty-one years, in partnership with Claire Trueman, she made what could be considered her seminal contribution to the work and witness of the United Church through the avenue of Children's Work. Together, they set about defining and directing a curriculum for church schools of the United Church. Their activities included writing syllabuses, setting and marking exams, training teachers and organizing Children's rallies. She was instrumental in the crafting of Fashion Me a People, Church School material produced by Caribbean Conference of Churches".

Preparing God's People for Participation in Ministry

"In the second half of the 1980's, in its efforts to give tangible expression to the Reformed notion of the 'Priesthood of All Believers', the UCJGC embarked upon a thrust designed to rekindle engagement by its members in the work of the church. In light of this thrust dubbed: "Equipping the Church for Ministry and Mission", Elsa's role was changed from that of being primarily focused on Children's Work to that of Personnel Development Centre Coordinator, focused on creating readiness among all God's people for competent participation in work and worship

at the level of the local congregation. She served in this capacity in both the then Cornwall Council (now WRMC) and North Middlesex Council (now part of NERMC). Later, she served as Director of the Madge Saunders Conference Centre and prepared for its official opening".

Ordained to the Ministry of Word and Sacraments

"On April 19, 1995, she was ordained to the Ministry of Word and Sacraments and served as Minister of the Salem Charge in St. Mary for 7 years. It was during these years that she pursued and was awarded the Doctor of Ministry degree from Columbia Theological Seminary in collaboration with the United Theological College of the West Indies. She subsequently returned to the educational ministry when she was appointed to coordinate the Institute for Theological and Leadership Development (now IUC) Learning Centre, Montego Bay. She also served as Interim Minister in Salt Spring congregation in the WRMC for a short period".

"Today we celebrate a truly versatile servant of God".



RESILIENCE IN THE FACE OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

At the start of the 16 Days of Activism, on November 25, 2023, the World Council of Churches hosted a webinar featuring trailblazers in interventions towards justice and equality across the world.



“Non-violence should become a way of life”

Offering opening remarks, Rev. Nicole Ashwood, WCC Programme Executive of Just Community of Women and Men, shared the history of why the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women is observed on 25 November. On that day in 1960, three Dominican political dissidents, the Mirabal sisters, were murdered.

Ashwood commemorated the courage of the three sisters, and invited participants to “be part of the transformation that this world needs.”

Rev. Joy E. Abdul-Mohan, former moderator of the Presbyterian Church of Trinidad and Tobago, shared some best practices in preventing gender-based violence. “It takes place in all racial, socio-economic, and education backgrounds,” she said. “What are we doing or not doing to curb or eliminate gender-based violence? Where have we fallen short?”

She called for educating leaders, educating families, and especially educating pastors and theologians about preventing gender-based violence. “Nonviolence should become a way of life –and violence against women and all creation must stop,” she urged. (CONT'D on page 5)

**Wear black on Thursday
TAKE A STAND**

Work towards a world without rape and violence. Tell someone why you are wearing black and continue the conversation with them.

RESILIENCE IN THE FACE OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE cont'd from p. 4

Women from various countries participated in the webinar.

Dr Fulata Moyo, international activist, discussed how she began growing the Thursdays in Black campaign to its global significance today. She shared best practices, and addressed issues such as child marriage and stigma.

She also discussed the importance of mentorship, and characterized mentorship not as one person imparting knowledge to another, but a more equal relationship. “We forget that the process of mentorship is really a back-to-back thing,” said Moyo.

Dr Aiswarya Rao, a pediatrician, shared how girls with disabilities are denied resources from a very early age—and this make them even more vulnerable to gender-based violence. “If you take all of India, the literacy rate of India is 74%—at least 74% of people in India can read and write,” she said. “But here you have one-third of girl children with disabilities who have no access to school at all.”

Rao also encouraged all to keep advocating. “You have to be tenacious, and you have to go on and on and on about it—and sometimes you have to negotiate and sometimes you have to appeal,” she urged.

Rev. Eneless Chilolo, Reformed Church in Zambia, focused on advocating specifically for prevention of gender-based violence for people with disabilities. “I was forced, and I got the courage to stand up and be speaking for them and because of what they were going through,” she said, adding that her advocacy often occurs on a very personal level.

“On my own I just buy some meals sometimes, just buy some things they need for food,” she said. “We keep elevating the community. I just feel they need to be motivated in various ways.”

The webinar was co-organized by the National Council of Churches in India and the World Council of Churches. The campaign 16 Days Against Gender-Based Violence runs through 10 December, Human Rights Day.

SOURCE:

[HTTPS://WWW.OIKOUMENE.ORG/NEWS/TRAILBLAZERS-KICK-OFF-16-DAYS-AGAINST-GENDER-BASED-VIOLENCE-WITH-STORIES-OF-RESILIENCE](https://www.oikoumene.org/news/trailblazers-kick-off-16-days-against-gender-based-violence-with-stories-of-resilience)

*“Sometimes
advocacy
occurs on a
very
personal
level”*



NEWS FROM NERMC

St. Andrew's Scots Kirk is 210 Years Old

St. Andrew's Scots Kirk celebrated 210 years of ministry in November 2023. Here are a few scenes of Scots Kirk's celebratory activities.



CUTTING THE BIRTHDAY CAKE



HARVEST SUNDAY 2023



MEMORIAL SUNDAY 2023



NEWS FROM CAYMAN

Cayman Council Women's Fellowship Thanksgiving Service

The Annual Thanksgiving Service of the Cayman Council Women's Fellowship was held on Sunday afternoon, November 26, 2023, at the East End United Church, with fifty (50) persons in attendance representing the various Branches.

The service was a joyous occasion filled with singing, Scripture readings, and heartfelt testimonies. In her meditation, based on Psalm 99, Rev. Dr. Yvette Noble-Bloomfield emphasized that thanksgiving is an expression of the inner condition of the heart that is reconciled, ransomed and rejoicing. In addition, she added that thanksgiving is also an outward expression of giving freely and gladly, regardless of the circumstances. Finally, she pointed out that thanksgiving is an act of worship whereby we honour God as the source of all blessings. In this sense, our thanksgiving goes beyond mere gratitude; it becomes a sacred and worshipful interaction with God.



Rev. Dr. Yvette Noble-Bloomfield, Regional Deputy General Secretary CIRMC preached the sermon.

“Thanksgiving is an expression of the inner condition of the heart that is reconciled, ransomed and rejoicing”.



The congregation in worship.

NEWS FROM SRMC



Bryce United were the overall champions for Kids Quake 2023

KIDS QUAKE 2023- A PEACE WI SEH!

The Southern Regional Mission Council held its annual Kids Quake on Saturday, December 2, 2023 at Ridgemount United Church. Under the theme "A Peace Wi Seh!," children from across the region competed in public speaking, dub poetry, choral speaking, music, dance and poster design categories. Bryce United Church was awarded the overall victory score, with Ridgemount placing second and Baillieston receiving third place.

Resounding Success

Kids Quake 2023 was a resounding success. The event saw 182 children in attendance accompanied by 75 adults representing 16 congregations and one mission station. This marks a 10% increase in the number of children that participated in 2022 and an increase of participating congregations by two. Lowe River United Church received a special award for the most children in attendance with 32 children being present at the event.



Baillieston placed third overall

Talking Peace

While the final scores were being tallied, first place performances were presented and the children were engaged in conversation regarding peace. When asked what children could do to bring peace in schools, one child from Baillieston indicated that, "Children should also respect other children- not just the adults."

Outstanding performances in individual categories:

- **Whitefield United** placed first in several music categories including solo for the 8-12 age group, duet for the 3-7 age group, small group for the 8-12 age group and choir for the 8-12 age group.
- **Mount Airy United** received three awards- two for posters and a second place for public speaking.
- **James Hill United** placed first in the Dub competition

NEWS FROM SRMC **Cont'd from page 8**



Ridgemount United receiving the second-place trophy.

This event aims to provide children with an opportunity to explore their God-given talents, develop confidence, fellowship with children from other congregations as well as to provide an additional opportunity for congregations to engage children in their community.

The region expresses sincere gratitude to the congregations that attended or participated and especially to the adults who prepared the children. Congratulations to Bryce United for securing another victory. A Peace Wi Seh!



All smiles as the young man from Whitefield receives his gold medal for the solo music category.



Much excitement as a child from Mount Airy receives a silver medal for poster design.



182 children accompanied by 75 adults attended the SRMC Kids Quake

UCJCI CONCLUDES CHURCH SCHOOL MONTH

COMMUNITY PEACE MARCHES - 'A Peace wi Seh!'



Oberlin United Church peach march on Sunday December 2, 2023



Throughout the month of November UCJCI has celebrated Church School month.

Church Schools have staged peace marches, held Children's Days in Sunday morning worship, and acknowledged the work of Church School teachers and administrators. The Children's Commission has also highlighted the ways in which former Church schoolers are presently impacting the Jamaican and Caymanian societies in positive ways. **Let us continue to support our Church Schools.**



Mannings Hill United Church peace march on Sunday November 26, 2023

UCJCI LAY LEADERS CERTIFICATE COURSE MODULES 2



January to March 2024



**FIRST SESSION - JANUARY 6, 2024 AT 9:00 A.M. - 12 NOON
VIA ZOOM**

**REGISTER NOW THROUGH
YOUR REGIONAL OFFICE**

**If you have completed Module 1
and desire to continue training
to serve your church through
key ministries, then Module 2 is
for you**

COST FOR MODULE 2 - JMD \$10,000

WHO IS MODULE 2 FOR?

- PERSONS WHO HAVE COMPLETED MODULE 1
- PERSONS WHO ARE INTERESTED IN HONING THEIR LEADERSHIP SKILLS IN SPECIALIZED AREAS SUCH AS CHILDREN'S MINISTRY, YOUTH MINISTRY, EVANGELISM, DISCIPLESHIP, COMMUNICATION AND PIONEER MINISTRY WITH SPECIAL GROUPS (MEN, WOMEN, PERSONS LIVING WITH DISABILITIES)
- PERSONS WHO WANT TO OFFER TO SERVE AS LAY PASTORS

For more information
email:
ucjci.sheryl.chung@gmail.com

MINISTERS AND LAY PASTORS

LET'S SHARE RESOURCES AND OPPORTUNITIES



Can we work together to bring the Word to those who are thirsting for it?

Let's reach beyond our communities by sharing the links to our online bible studies, with **DATE, TOPIC, TIME, LINK**

Ministers and Lay Pastors, if you want to participate, please send information to ucjci.karen.francis@gmail.com

NORTH STREET AND ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCHES



WEEKLY WEDNESDAY ONLINE BIBLE STUDY

TOPIC: DEFENDING OUR FAITH IN AND OUT OF SEASON
A STUDY IN APOLOGETICS

6:00 P.M.

JOIN VIA ZOOM

Meeting ID: 850 369 0667

Passcode: 3eEM4L

LET US WORSHIP TOGETHER IN ADVENT

Advent
The Season of Hope and Expectation



2ND SUNDAY OF ADVENT - PEACE

**By the power of
God's Spirit within
us, the light of our
flame calls others
to spread the
gospel of peace
and goodwill to all
people.**

**RE-IGNITE WITH
THE MESSAGE OF
PEACE:**

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES


Isaiah 40:1-11

2 Peter 3:8-15a

PRAYER THEMES FOR THE WHOLE CHURCH TO USE IN OUR
HOMES AND FOR GATHERING IN OUR CONGREGATIONS

Let us Pray Together

- The Mona Prep family at the sudden passing of a teacher, Miss White.
- Recurrent violence in educational institutions and against children in various incidents.
- Ministers, of the United Church who are suffering bereavement and illness
 - Rev. Dr. Richmond Nelson
 - Rev. Sandra Collins
 - Rev. Anna-Kaye McGregor and Roy McGregor
 - Rev. Karlene Thomas Barnes
- The continuing disturbing conflict between Israel and Palestine and the resulting hardships to peoples of both nations



Hear my cry, O God;
listen to my prayer.
From the ends of the
earth I call to you,
I call as my heart
grows faint;
lead me to the rock
that is higher than I.

Psalm 61: 1-3

MINISTRY AND JOB



OPPORTUNITIES

The following pages carry opportunities for ministry and professional engagement with The United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands.

For more information, contact

The Human and Mission Resource Department

Email – synodhr@ucjci.com



EMPLOYMENT AND MINISTRY OPPORTUNITY

Executive Assistant

The Executive Assistant provides general managerial support to the General Secretary in a manner that ensures that the mission of the UCJCI is effectively carried out.

- ✓ **Coordinates and provides support for all appointments with respect to the General Secretary's responsibilities. Schedule and make arrangements for meetings as requested.**
- ✓ **Manage all activities pertaining to correspondence in the General Secretary's Office, draft responses, and ensure timely and accurate responses.**
- ✓ **Ensure effective administration of group life insurance, health insurance and pension benefits.**

Qualifications:

- **Bachelor's Degree, in Business Administration, or any equivalent from a recognized institution**
- **Excellent computer (to include typing) and modern office management skills**
- **Excellent written and oral communication skills**
- **Excellent time management and human relations skills**

**SEND YOUR RESUME TO
SYNODHR@UCJCI.COM
DEADLINE: FRIDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2023**



JOIN OUR AMAZING TEAM

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

NORTH-EASTERN REGIONAL MISSION COUNCIL

Job Summary: To perform a variety of administrative/secretarial duties in supporting the Deputy General Secretary in order to maintain and enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the Regional Mission Council.

✓ Drafts letters, official and routine correspondence and memoranda

✓ Maintain the financial records for the Council

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE:

- Diploma in Business Administration or another related discipline OR
- Five GCE O'Level or CXC/CSEC subjects at the General Proficiency Level, including English Language with three years related work experience

**Send your resume to
synodhr@ucjci.com**

DEADLINE: FRIDAY, Dec. 8, 2023



EMPLOYMENT AND MINISTRY OPPORTUNITY

DIRECTOR, UNITED CHURCH SENIOR CITIZENS' HOME

The Director shall be responsible for the efficient and effective management, promotion and representation of the Home.

- Plan, direct, organize and control the day to day operations of the Home
- Hiring and supervising staff
- Implementing and overseeing quality assurance protocols

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

- Bachelor's Degree in Business, Finance, Management, Nursing, Education or related field
- Five years' experience in a management/supervisory position

**SEND YOUR RESUME TO
SYNODHR@UCJCI.COM**

DEADLINE: FRIDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2023

EVENTS PAGES



SUPPORT WITH PRAYER AND PRESENCE

The following pages carry notification of events. Please send your posters and flyers in pdf, j-peg or png format to citc@gmail.com for promotion in UCJCI Update.

PAH! DEAF DANCE COMPANY
Invites you to our fundraiser



Deaf Innate

MOTION

SAT. DECEMBER 9 2023

**Margaret Gartshore Hall
(St. Andrew High School for Girls)**

Showtime: 6pm

Contribution: \$3,000

Tickets Available online at:

<https://cari-flo.com/events/deafinnate-motion>

**SPONSORED
BY:**



Cari-flo
stream · watch · go



For more info contact PAH!: pahdeafdanceco@gmail.com | Tel: 876-909-2533



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)

12 Carlton Crescent, Kingston 10 Jamaica, W. I.
Tel: 876 9268734; ♦ E-mail: synod@ucjci.com ♦ Website: 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