



UCJCI UPDATE

FEBRUARY 28, 2024 VOL. 11 NO. 6

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

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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 - THE LENTEN SEASON

I HAVE HEARD DECLARATIONS FROM PERSONS WHO ARE NOT COMMITTED CHRISTIANS THAT THEY WILL 'GIVE UP' SOMETHING DURING THE LENTEN SEASON. INSTEAD OF A CYNICAL RESPONSE TO SUCH DECLARATIONS COULD WE SEE THESE AS OPPORTUNITIES FOR CONSTRUCTIVE CONVERSATIONS? COULD WE ENGAGE OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS TO HEAR FROM THEM AND SHARE THOUGHTS ON THE REASON THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY IS ENCOURAGED TOWARDS ABSTINENCE DURING LENT? LET'S SEIZE THESE OPPORTUNITIES TO ENCOURAGE THEM TOWARDS 'TAKING UP', SACRIFICIAL GIVING AND PRAYER WHICH ARE MEANT TO ACCOMPANY FASTING AT THIS TIME. LET US BE ON THE ALERT FOR OPPORTUNITIES TO SHARE OUR FAITH.



IMPOSITION OF ASHES AT ASH WEDNESDAY GATHERING IN CAYMAN.

Here I am, Lord!

(Excerpts from the Ash Wednesday Reflection)

Based on Isaiah 6:1-8

Rev. Dr. Yvette Noble-Bloomfield

There is a difference between **'I am here'** and **'Here I am.'**

'I am here' is an announcement of our presence. 'I am here to control, display power, and ensure things are according to my will and desire.'

'I am here' is not dependent on a call or a request from anyone. It is not a response but rather a self-assertion and suggestion of self-importance.

When the same three words are re-ordered as 'Here I am', the words become a response to a call and a submission to the caller's request. The humble posture we need to have before the Lord.

'Here I am' is found seventeen times in Genesis, Exodus, Samuel, and Isaiah. It is a response to God, or a response to an angel, who is God's proxy. It is the response given by Abraham to God in Genesis 22:1, Jacob to God in Genesis 28:10, Moses to God in Exodus 3:4, and Isaiah to God in Isaiah 6:8.

'Here I am' is also a parent's response to a child and a child's response to a parent, e.g., Abraham to Isaac in Genesis 22:7

'Here I am' indicates that the call has reached its intended target, and the responder gives full attention to the call. The previous references from the Scriptures suggest that the life of the person who responds with 'Here I am' is transformed.

We are invited to adopt the same posture and respond to God's call with a sincere, heartfelt 'Here I am.'

Isaiah's transformative experience with God happened after Uzziah's death amid political, national, and international crises. The outlook for Isaiah and the nation was troubling, with an uncertain future.

But amid all this crisis, Isaiah had a vision. He saw the Lord in a dramatic theophany—a direct call from God. Angels and Seraphim (associated with burning and God's holiness) ministered to Isaiah in what seemed to be God's heavenly throne or court. Isaiah heard the angels' song proclaiming, 'Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts; the heavens and earth are full of His Glory.' This encounter allowed Isaiah to experience the majesty and mystery of God. Feeling called to attention, he recognized his unworthiness in the presence of God.

Let us consider the following three points based on Isaiah chapter 6.

1. Isaiah was CALLED and CONVICTED

When, in his vision, the prophet entered God's holy presence, he was confronted not only with the distressed state of the nation, marked by confusion, crisis, cruelty, corruption, and imminent collapse but also with his inadequacy. Isaiah responded with confession, seeking God's forgiveness.

2. Isaiah was CONSECRATED

The live coal, administered by an angel, represented the act of consecration. It signaled the purification of Isaiah's lips and his overall life. He was cleansed from the stains of sin and emerged clothed in righteousness, which was a prerequisite for his consecration. Forgiveness, restoration, and consecration speak of God's love for the prophet and nation.



“The life of the person who responds with ‘Here I am’, is transformed.”

'Here I Am'...Cont'd from p. 1

1. Isaiah was COMMISSIONED

Finally, when Isaiah heard the question, "Who will go? Whom shall I send?" he responded with a resounding "Here I am! Send me!" After receiving forgiveness and becoming consecrated, he was ready to offer himself for God's service.



Dear Sisters and Brothers, God calls all of us to seek forgiveness, restoration, consecration, and commissioning. We miss the point if we ask only for forgiveness and restoration. We must be open to be consecrated and commissioned. Deep within our hearts, we know that without these, there is no authentic renewal and transformation.

Look around where you live and work. Do you see the needs? Consider what God is calling you to do. God needs those who offer themselves to serve wholeheartedly.

May our answer be 'Lord, I hear your call on my life. Here I am! Consecrate me now and commission me for your service.'

**'Lord,
I hear your call on my life.
Here I am!
Consecrate me now and
commission me for your service.'**



NEWS FROM CIRMC

ASH WEDNESDAY GATHERING 2024

On February 14, 2024, around 130 persons gathered from the nine Congregations of our Regional Mission Council at the Prospect Youth Centre beach for the annual Ash Wednesday Gathering, themed 'Here I Am.' The day commenced at 6:30 am with praise and worship songs led by musicians and singers from Elmslie Memorial, Savannah United, and John Gray Memorial Churches. Mrs. Betty-Ann Mobley, from Elmslie Memorial Church, shared her testimony about her faith journey. Rev. Dr. Yvette Noble-Bloomfield (Acting RDGS-CIRMC) based her message on Isaiah chapter 6, emphasizing the significance and implications of the day's theme, 'Here I Am' for our personal faith journeys.



Rev. Donovan Myers imposed ashes.

Following the reflection there was a time for group conversations, prayer, and the Sacrament of Holy Communion. Refreshments and drinks were served at the end, courtesy of the Women's Fellowship.



Rev. Dr. Yvette Noble Bloomfield was the preacher.

Highlights of Ash Wednesday Gathering



Testimony from Betty-Ann Mobley



Gathering on the beach at Prospect.



NEWS FROM NERMC

DAY OF FELLOWSHIP 2024

Reignited by the Spirit: Return for Revival

Hundreds of members of the North Eastern Region gathered at Meadowbrook United Church for the traditional Ash Wednesday Day of Fellowship on Valentine's Day.

The congregation engaged in songs of praise and thanksgiving, prayer and fellowship celebrating the opportunity to gather as a region.

The occasion included the commissioning of lay pastors, participation of youth and children and an update on the region's Cedar Valley Mission Restoration.

Rev. Khereen Wilson-Bailey, Minister of the Ebenezer/Andrews charge in the Southern Region, was the preacher for the morning's worship.



Mrs. Rose Wedderburn, Regional Deputy General Secretary, NERMC, addressed the gathering.



A section of the overflow congregation which participated in worship from the neighbouring auditorium at the Meadowbrook High School.

Rev. Khereen Wilson Bailey, preacher for the day, gave a stirring charge to the congregation to turn away from the tendencies, appetites and inclinations which do not please God but that can be easily hidden from others.



Lay Pastors Commissioned

Junior McCalla - will serve St. Andrew's Scots Kirk; Karl Smith - serves Pretoria Road United; Herbert Henry - serves Portmore United; Robert Rainford - serves Harbour View charge; Corey Williamson (first time commissioning to serve Castleton charge), Ionie Vincent (first time commissioning to serve the Cedar Valley mission), Roger Stewart - serves Mt. Pleasant United, Wadwall Knight - serves Hamstead United.



NEWS FROM WRMC

DAY OF FELLOWSHIP 2024

The Body of Christ Reignited

On Ash Wednesday, February 14, 2024 the Western Regional Mission Council gathered for worship at the Farm Heights United Church in Montego Bay, under the theme: "The Body of Christ - Reignited."

The preacher for the morning worship was Rev. Euthman Wray, Minister for the Savannah/Bodden Town Charge of United Churches in Grand Cayman.

In the afternoon, the Young people shared their gifts in dance, speech, music etc.

Young Nathan Brissett, a member of the Savanna-la-mar Youth Fellowship, addressed the gathering.

-Mrs. Mauleen Henry, RDGS, WRMC

Youth Address

Our theme for the day speaks to us about "the body of Christ - Reignited." The use of the words "body of Christ" could easily be interpreted to mean the physical body of Christ, however, for clarity, those words are actually referring to the church - as a whole. Corinthians 12:12 explains that, "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.

It is also quite possible that others could hear the words "church as a whole" and be quick to think we are talking about the physical building in which we worship, but no, 1 Corinthians 12: 27 also explains it for us that "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. In other words, Brothers and sisters, when the word church is used, it is talking about you and I, servants of God who are harbouring the spirit of peace and love while leading others to what Jesus has gone to prepare for us according to St. John 14:2-6, I go to prepare a place for you and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. You and I must be reignited, for we serve a living God who will one day come again for his church.



Nathan Brissett
Savanna-la-mar United Church

FIRED UP DUH ROAD FI GOD!

Church, I believe that our theme is calling our leaders, adults and youth to go and find the old landmark, Proverbs 22:28. I believe it is time to re-erect the boundaries of our walk with God, restart the programs that once made us effectively use our gifts and talents for God, and time to Jumpstart new programmes that will take us to new levels in and for Christ.

I suspect the big question on everyone's mind is how do we reignite the body of Christ, how do we set ourselves in motion again? My response to that question comes from St. John 15. which charges and challenges us to: Begin by making our lifestyle one with Jesus's lifestyle! Let our way of thinking, how we dress, how we walk, where we walk, what we watch, listen to and by the words of our mouth, allow God to show others of his goodness through us. Why? Because "The branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; which is Jesus Christ.! Because HE is the source of life and we are just the branches: Without God we can do nothing, our batteries will go dead and be good for nothing. St. John 15:4-6.

Can we be honest and share how much of our time is given to others as opposed to God? No need to, because I already know as I too, am guilty.

I invite us to stop for a moment and check what would happen if we were to spend a fraction of our down time, in prayer, reading the bible and making daily personal commitments to God? Can you imagine what would happen if we were to offer all our praise to God and be more grateful and obedient to his words? I see reignited people walking, talking and sharing their faith with each other, and the church within us coming alive again.

I know you may be saying to yourself right now that it is hard to reignite because you have become comfortable where you are but hear what Psalm 29:11 says "The Lord will give strength unto his people; the Lord will bless his people with peace.

My second charge to us as we seek to be reignited is to Give God more of us.... more of what he deserves and stop waiting for someone to make us come alive and click for Christ. My fellow Young people, the time has come to arise for Christ, reignite for life, and duh road fi God!

Let us all as individuals in the body of Christ begin to click for Christ in our small corner, and before long, the body of Christ will be a place set on blaze by a fire that cannot be quenched.

Youth

Address to

WRMC DAY

OF

FELLOWSHIP

GO BEYOND WEARING BLACK

Calling for Acts of Resistance, Resilience and Solidarity

Recently in an online meeting responding to the surge in reported cases of Femicide, I reminded the team that there is more to the #ThursdaysinBlack campaign than wearing black on Thursdays as a sign of solidarity, resilience and resistance. Truly, we urge those of you who adopt the campaign to begin with something as simple as wearing black; however, there is always scope for the action-oriented aspect of the campaign which may not necessarily be practiced on Thursdays. It must therefore be recognized that the Thursdays in Black campaign is symbolic, as both the day and colour represent acts of resistance, resilience and solidarity.

Thursday is important to us, given the fact of Latin American protesters Mothers of the Disappeared, whose demands for justice continue to resist the militarism and dictatorial regimes of Chile and Argentina. Black echoes the colours worn by South Africans, Israeli and Palestinian women protesting violence during the '80s. Within the UN spaces, Orange highlights the call to transform misogynistic structures on the 25th of each month; moving the call to action beyond 16 Days of Activism (Nov 25 – December 10) to a continuous effort to transform systemic violence.

One might wonder, do these campaigns make a difference. Inasmuch as each of us, as a result of, or in support of the campaigns, is intentional in

- raising awareness about the reality of sexual and gender-based violence
- advocating for change in our cultures – symbols, language, norms, values, and artifacts – and the structures that undergird them (e.g. faith, politics, education)
- living the reality that we wish to see through our actions, speeches and even our writing
- sensitizing others to the cultural practices (language, behaviours, beliefs/myths, and normalized patterns) that silence, discriminate and alienate others because of their gender

then yes, it makes a difference.

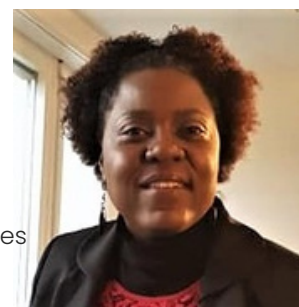


FOR A CULTURE TO CHANGE...

... it requires one person to be willing to see the need for transformation, and in turn influence others to challenge the system, and critique the existing structures while proposing new ways of being.

Wearing black or orange in our world are steps in the right direction to ending sexual and gender-based violence.

Join us, and together we can also propose alternatives.



Rev. Nicole Ashwood –
Programme Executive,
Just Community of
Women and Men
World Council of Churches

**#THURSDAYSINBLACK
FOR A WORLD WITHOUT
RAPE OR VIOLENCE.**

MISSION RESTORATION CEDAR VALLEY

The North Eastern Regional Mission Council (NERMC) has embarked upon a journey to revive ministry with the community of Cedar Valley in St. Catherine.

GET ON BOARD. WE NEED YOU!!



**THE COMMUNITY WALK TOOK PLACE AS
PLANNED ON FEBRUARY 24, SUPPORTED
BY MEMBERS OF UNITED CHURCH
CONGREGATIONS IN NERMC**





The United Church
in Jamaica and the
Cayman Islands

**Calling Men,
Women, Youth,
Children**

CEDAR VALLEY COMMUNITY CRUSADES!!!

Theme:

MISSION TO RESCUE

Where?

- ✓ **Feb 28** - ST. JOHN TOWN
- ✓ **Feb 29** - REDWOOD SQUARE
- ✓ **March 1** - JUBILEE SQUARE
- ✓ **March 2** - DOVER CASTLE SQUARE
- ✓ **March 3** - MS SPENCER'S SHOP,
CEDAR VALLEY
- ✓ **March 4 - 9** CEDAR VALLEY SQUARE

6:30 EACH EVENING

February 28 - March 9, 2024

**COME HEAR
GOD'S WORD
FOR SALVATION
RESTORATION
TRANSFORMATION**

**Answer the Call -
Jesus Christ Makes a Difference!**

JOIN ONLINE BIBLE STUDIES

IN UNITED CHURCH CONGREGATIONS

St. Paul's Lockett Avenue and North Street United

WEDNESDAYS - 6:00 P.M.

Meeting ID: 850 369 0667

Passcode: 3eEM4L

TOPIC

**DEFENDING
THE FAITH**

Meadowbrook United

WEDNESDAYS VIA ZOOM - 6:00 P.M.

Meeting ID: 862 8088 4128

Passcode: 026309

**THE
BEATITUDES**

Ridgemount United

WEDNESDAYS VIA ZOOM - 5:30 P.M.

Meeting ID: 894 9305 3068

Passcode: RIDGEMOUNT

**THE BOOK OF
GALATIANS**

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

**Let's reach beyond our communities by sharing access
information to our online bible studies.**

**Ministers and Lay Pastors, if you want to participate,
please send Topic, Date of Studies and access
information to ucjci.karen.francis@gmail.com**



Let us Pray Together

WE PRAY FOR

- Mrs. Janet McConnell who lost her aunt, Ena-Mae Bascombe.
- Mrs. Debesha Grant Roberts, UCJCI ministerial student at UTCWI, who lost her grandfather - Headley Sutherland.
- Mrs. Carlene Andrade, Programme Assistant SRMC who lost her dad - Duncan Powell.
- Joel Kong, young son of Rev. Rohan and Stephanie Kong. The family remains in need of supportive prayer.
- Rev. Clement Reid who lost his uncle, Telford Norman, and his brother-in-law, Norbert McPherson.
- The family of late Rev. Herbert Redway Snr.
- Rev. Obren Thomas and other members of the family of the late Rev. Ellen Thomas .
- Pastor Peter Neil who lost his grandmother.
- Ministers of the United Church who are experiencing illness
 - Rev. Dr. Richmond Nelson
 - Rev. Karleen Thomas Barnes

Please pray for all those God has placed on your heart and those brought to your attention in some way.

These sisters and brothers are in need of continued prayer.



**The Lord is near
to the
brokenhearted
and saves the
crushed in spirit.**

Psalm 34: 18

JOURNEY THROUGH LENT

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



FOCUS FOR THE MONTH:

DEEPENED FAITH

JESUS: FULFILMENT OF THE LAW:

3rd Sunday in Lent

There is a school of thought that said the Israelites were taken out of Egypt, but Egypt was not wholly taken out of them, hence their wilderness wanderings for 40 years (1st generation). Incidentally, NONE of those who left Egypt as adults physically entered the Promised Land, despite forty years of trying to get the slavery mentality out of their systems. Whether that is true or not, despite God providing all they needed, obeying Gods Law – the Ten Commandments – proved to be challenging for them. One could say they disrespected the Hand that saved them, and perhaps we should explore which commandment is a challenge for us and why.

Let's not be misled; God is real and the message of the Gospel is true, because Jesus is the cornerstone of our Faith and the fulfilment of the Law. We do not have the luxury of 40 years; we have the blessed gift of NOW. We also have the gift of hindsight – to recognize and change the methodology of the Children of Israel. We do that by recognizing Who God is and what God has done for us through Jesus Christ, observing the proof of God's creative power in nature and using those as praise-prayer points in our walk with God, yielding our bodies to God as Temples of the Most High, inviting God's Spirit in to lead, guide and nurture us in God's Truth, and by making time to read AND understand God's Word, applying it to our lives so that we intentionally establish a deeper relationship with God.

LET'S WORSHIP TOGETHER IN MARCH

Enabling people
to grow in the
depth of their
understanding of
God, Jesus and
the Church
(The Divine
Personhood of
Jesus)

SUGGESTED SCRIPTURES

Exodus 20:1-17

Psalms 19

1 Corinthians 1:18-25

John 2:13-22

TIME SAVING SUGGESTED HYMNS

Change My Heart O God
I Want Jesus to walk with
Me
Purify My Heart
Search Me O God

BIRTHDAY GREETINGS

Belated Greetings



REV. CARLINGTON DOUGLAS

February 17



REV. VALERINE REYNOLDS

February 19

Happy Birthday



**REV. ICYLYN PARKINSON
WILLIAMS**

February 27



MS. SHEREE O'CONNOR

March 1



World Communion
of Reformed Churches



JOB OPPORTUNITY

The World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) is accepting applications for its internship programme, particularly from individuals interested in communications and administration.

**Applications are due by 15
March 2024.**

APPLICATIONS FOR EXTENDED INTERNSHIPS INVITED

- **COMMUNICATIONS**
- **ADMINISTRATION**

The two positions available in 2024—one beginning in July and the other in September—will be for 16 months, with both interns serving through the next General Council, to be held in Chiang-Mai, Thailand, in October 2025.

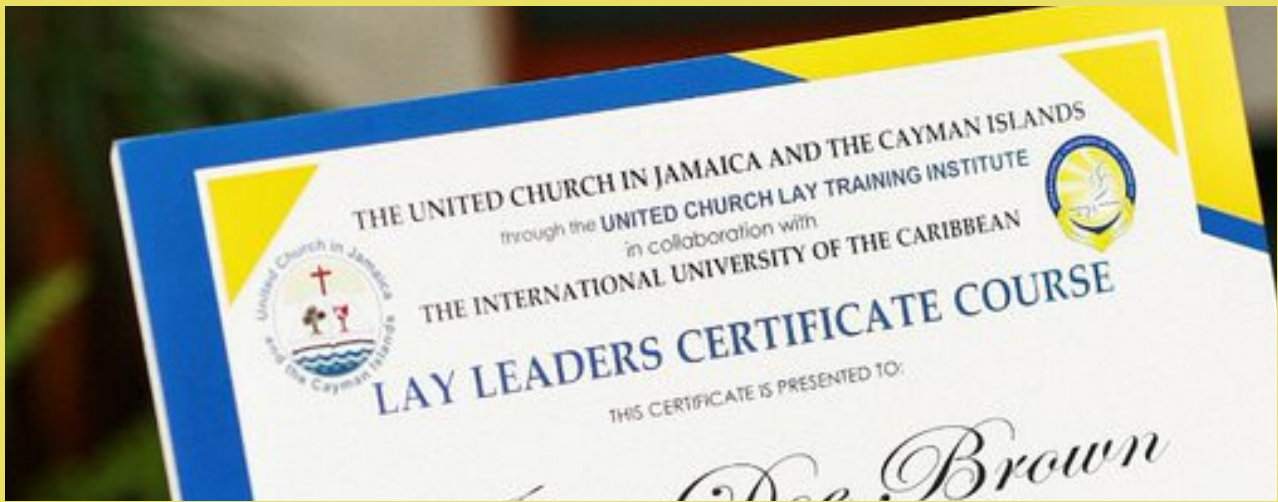
The programme is open to English-speaking individuals of WCRC members who are aged 30 or younger, including ministers, seminarians, or Christian professionals with an interest in working for their churches or the ecumenical movement at any level. Women and individuals from the Global South are particularly encouraged to apply.

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.



MODULE 2 - MARCH 2

TOPIC: SURVEY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT



ANY
MEMBER OF
UCJCI MAY
JOIN IN THE
TRAINING
FOR EACH
SESSION OF
MODULE 2
AT A COST
OF \$1000
PER TOPIC

RESOURCE PERSON:
REV. BRYAN STONE

**Training via Zoom
9 am - 12:00noon**

**Register and make your
payment through your
regional office. You will
then be provided with
the Zoom link.**

*Come and learn about your
church and the Christian faith*

FOUNDERS' Day 2024

Theme: The Church in its Engagement with a World in Crisis, Strategies and Duties

Date

Mon. March 4

Tues. March 5

Tues. March 5

Time

6:00 PM

10:00 AM

5:00 PM

Event

Worship Service

Lecture 1

Lecture 2

Presenter

Rev. Khereen Wilson-Bailey

Prof. Canute Thompson

Prof. Canute Thompson



Reverend
Khereen Wilson-Bailey
Preacher



Professor
Canute Thompson
Lecturer

 Meeting ID: 838 5658 4428 Passcode: Founders

 7 Golding Avenue, Kingston 7, Jamaica

 unitheol@cwjamaica.com

 876-927-1724, 876-927-2868

Save the date

The Clement Gayle Colloquium on Preaching

Theme:

"Thus Saith the Lord... Daring to Speak for God"

Wednesday, March 6, 2024

9:00 AM - 1:00 PM

More information coming soon

Meeting ID: 838 5658 4428 Passcode: Founders

✉ unitheol@cwjamaica.com

📍 7 Golding Avenue, Kingston 7, Jamaica

☎ 876-927-1724, 876-927-2868

Panellists:

Rev. Dr. Michael Friday
Rev. Cecily Athill Horsford
Rev. Dr. Stephen Jennings
Rev. Dr. Michael Jaggesar

Meadowbrook United Church

THANKSGIVING SERVICE FOR SARAH PALMER

Saturday, March 9, 2024
AT 10:00AM



**Ms. Sarah Palmer served
the United Church in
Jamaica and the Cayman
Islands in various
capacities including
children's ministry.**



THE UNITED CHURCH IN JAMAICA AND THE CAYMAN ISLANDS
invites you to



SUMMER CAMPS 2024

Children's Camp
July 6, 2024 - July 11, 2024

Junior Camp
July 13, 2024 - July 18, 2024

Pacesetters Teen's Camp
July 20, 2024 - July 25, 2024

Discovery Teen's Camp
July 27, 2024 - August 1, 2024

Youth Encounter
August 3, 2024 - August 8, 2024



Cost
\$15,000.00

REGISTER NOW!!
AT YOUR REGIONAL OFFICE

 **Madge Saunders**
Conference Centre



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

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Rev. Norbert Stephens

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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