



# UCJCI UPDATE

MARCH 26, 2024 VOL. 11 NO. 10

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



## ON THE INSIDE

- PALM SUNDAY AT KINGS GATE UNITED
- GOOD FRIDAY FEATURE - THE PIERCED HAND
- A LETTER FROM HAITI
- NEWS FROM CAYMAN
  - YOUTH MISSION ACTION TEAM FEATURE
- OPPORTUNITIES FOR WORSHIP AND PRAYER

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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.

### HOLY WEEK AND EASTER - OLD STORY, NEW POSSIBILITIES

IN THIS ISSUE, THREE SIGNIFICANT LITURGICAL EVENTS IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH CONVERGE - PALM SUNDAY, GOOD FRIDAY AND EASTER. JESUS IS HERALDED, JESUS IS REJECTED, JESUS IS VINDICATED. THIS MOMENTOUS WEEK IN THE LIFE OF JESUS HAS BEEN THE FOCUS OF THE REFLECTIONS OF OUR CONGREGATIONS SINCE SUNDAY. EVENING AND MIDDAY REFLECTIONS, DRAMATIC PRESENTATIONS AND CANTATAS FILL THE CALENDARS OF CONGREGATIONS. THESE ARE EXPECTED. HOWEVER, AS A KNOWN STORY IS TOLD AGAIN, MAY WE ENCOUNTER JESUS IN NEW WAYS. MAY WE ALSO FIND RICH OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE GOSPEL MESSAGE TO BE SHARED WITH THOSE WHO HAVE NOT YET COMMITTED THEIR LIVES TO FOLLOWING CHRIST.



CHILDREN AT KINGS GATE UNITED CHURCH LED THE SERVICE ON PALM SUNDAY.

# Pictures from Palm Sunday at Kings Gate United



The service was  
led by the  
children

## GOOD FRIDAY FEATURE

# REFLECTION- THE PIERCED HAND

By Kevin 'Nana Moses' Calvert

*"I am the resurrection and the life, whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live; and everyone that lives and believes in me, shall never die. Do you believe this?"*

Go with me for a moment to witness what was perhaps the foggiest night in history. The scene is very simple. You will recognise it quickly, a grove of twisted olive trees, ground cluttered with large rocks, a low stone fence and dark, dark night. Now look into the picture, look closely through the shadowy foliage. See that solitary figure, flat on the ground, face stained with dirt and tears, fists pounding the hard earth; eyes, wide with a stupor of fear, hair matted with salty sweat. Is that blood on his forehead?

*"O Father, this cup is bitter! This cup is so bitter!  
Abba Father, nothing is impossible with you.  
You can let this cup pass. Nothing is impossible with you.  
But God, it's not my will, it's not my will.  
Your will, whatever is Your will!"*

That's Jesus, Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. Maybe you have seen the classic portrait of Christ, kneeling beside the big rock, snow white robe, hands peacefully folded in prayer; a look of serenity on his face, a halo over his head. The painter didn't use the Gospel of Mark as a pattern when Mark wrote about that painful night. He used phrases such as these: *'Horror and dismay came over him'; 'My heart is ready to break with grief', and 'He went forward a little and threw himself on the ground'.*

*"Him tek di cup an seh, da wine ya a di new promise wher God mek wid mi blood wher a go pour out fi unoo. But look, di one wher a go sell mi out de right a di table wid wi. A di one mi a go gi da piece a bread ya afta mi dip it inna di bowl. When him dip di bread inna di bowl him gi it to Judas Iscariot, Simon bwoy pickney. Same time Judas tek di bread so, Satan tek ova him 'art."*

Mark used black pains to describe the scene. We see an agonising, straining and struggling Jesus. We see a man of sorrows. We see a man struggling with fear wrestling with commitment and yearning for relief.

**We see Jesus in the fog of a broken heart.**

The next time the fog finds you, remember Jesus in the garden. The next time you think that no one understands or cares, re-read the 14th chapter of Mark and pay a visit to Gethsemane. And the next time you wonder if God really perceives the pain that prevails on this dusty planet, listen to him pleading among the twisted trees. The next time you are called to suffer, pay attention. It may be the closest you will ever get to God. Watch closely. It could very well be that the hand that extends itself to lead you out of the fog is a pierced one.

# A LETTER FROM HAITI

My UCJCI Family



**You are praying  
and the Lord is  
saying "Let not  
your heart be  
troubled..." St  
Jn 14v1**

**Thanks for your  
prayers and  
love.**

*Joan and Jean  
Allemand*

I am so blessed to be a part of such a cloud of witnesses, supporters and prayer warriors. At the outset I wish to thank you for your thoughts, prayers and concerns over the years but especially at this crucial time.

I am not in active service at this time having retired 4 years ago, but I still visit the clinic where I do cancer screening. I am also active in the church with the Women's Ministry and Goodnews Club with the children.

On the 13th of February I returned to Haiti after a 2 months stay in Jamaica for medicals etc, and a little time with Jiréné our daughter. The airplanes made their last commercial flight on the 28th of February. The country has been on complete lockdown, internally as well as externally. No vehicles are able travel to or from PAP the capital, the centre of all national, civic and medical administration, of which approximately 86% is under gang related activities.

Prior to the present situation vehicles could only traverse by paying an extortion fee. On some occasions the vehicle and occupants were taken, some kidnapped and or abused, sometimes murdered and supplies looted. We had two family members who were kidnapped, one a 9 year old boy murdered after a part of the ransom was paid and another 62 years old who was released after 10 days of abuse.

In Cayes the capital of (Departement Sud) South department 154km/96miles from PAP is fairly quiet, though activities are sluggish as no vehicular activity with PAP. No supplies are brought in and none sent out. The farmers reaped only what can be sold in the market in and around Cayes but the bulk is left in the fields to spoil. The schools here are open after the threat of the children being caught and murdered was lifted. Some were said to have been stopped on the way to school, beaten and sent home.

Here we still meet in church for various meetings especially for fasting and prayer. Most of the missionaries are gone. The few that are left have been offered the option of evacuation by helicopter but decided to stay. We, the missionaries here, are planning our Easter sunrise service.

We love and appreciate you more than you know. You would not imagine what it feels like to get those messages and calls. To be able to tell my brothers and sisters here in my church MEBSH, that my brothers and sisters in my church, UCJCI, are praying for me, for us. This ignites a flame within giving the assurance that there will be a tomorrow regardless of how dark and dismal our night may seem or feel.

Again thank you .

# ECUMENICAL NEWS – CANACOM UPDATE



Contributed by Mrs. Jennifer Martin

## GRANTS FOR EDUCATION SUPPORT



Mr Stephen Usher of UCJCI receives the grant from Immediate Past Chair of CANACOM, Rev. Carlington Keen,



Mr Emmanuel Beaubrun from Haiti receives the grant from Education in Mission Secretary, Mrs. Jennifer Martin.



Mrs Debesha Grant-Roberts of UCJCI receives the grant from Rev. Carlington Keen,



Mr. Jean Charmy Gabriel from Haiti receives the grant from Mrs. Jennifer Martin.

**Caribbean and North American Council for Mission (CANACOM) was pleased to award grants to four student ministers at the United Theological College of the West Indies. This was made possible through the support of Presbyterian Church USA (PCUSA). They are very thankful for this financial contribution towards their study material. We wish them God's continued blessing as they journey along. It was a pleasure to receive them here at our office.**

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## FACE TO FACE MARCH 1-6 IN SURINAME



Members of the administrative committee of CANACOM met face to Face in Suriname. We were hosted by the Reformed Church in Suriname of which our Chair Rev. Diana de Graven is a member. CANACOM council meeting takes place every two years with the Face-to-Face meeting held in between. The agenda of the meeting was informed by a review of our activities since our Council meeting in May of 2023. Discussions and plans for future work were agreed.

(Cont'd p.4)



# NEW ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE



### The New Leadership:

From left: Ms. Ominell Boyce-Caribbean Young Adult Representative-Guyana Congregational Union (GCU); Rev. Diana Thomas-Jones-Caribbean Representative-Guyana Presbyterian Church (GPC); Mrs. Merle Buchanan-Treasurer-United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands (UCJCI); Rev. Diana de Graven-Chair -Reformed Church in Suriname (RCS); Mrs. Farida DaCosta Gomez-Secretary-Verenigde Protestantse Gemeente van Curacao (VPGC); Elder. Vilmarie Cintron-Olivieri-North American Representative-Presbyterian Church USA (PCUSA); Rev. Alison Infante Zamora-Deputy Chair-Iglesia Presbiteriana-Reformada en Cuba (IPRC) and Mrs. Jennifer P. Martin-Education in Mission Secretary-United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands (UCJCI).

Other members of the Administrative Committee are:



Rev. Carlington Keen-Immediate Past Chair -United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands (UCJCI), and



Ms. Lisett Cruz-North America Young Adult Representative-Presbyterian Church USA (PCUSA).

# VISITING CONGREGATIONS IN SURINAME

We took the opportunity to visit the three congregations and to enjoy a wonderful afternoon in a resort tucked away within the city.



A few Administrative Committee members visited the congregation led by the CANACOM Chair, Rev. Diana de Graven.



EIM Secretary, Mrs. Jennifer Martin, brought greetings at the Morgenster Kerk. She is seen here with Rev. Naomie Neslo-Claver, minister of Morgenster Kerk.

The Committee members also enjoyed a wonderful afternoon in a resort tucked away within the city.

# NEWS FROM CIRMC

## Youth MAT Sunday at Savannah United Church

The Savannah United Church had its Youth Mission Action Team (MAT) Sunday on March 17, 2024, as the next in a series of Worship services focusing on the ministry of the various MATs created in the Congregation.

The MAT's theme for 2024 is, 'It's a New Season' with a focus on the fruits of the Holy Spirit in each month of the year. In her presentation, Co-Chair of the MAT, Mrs. Grace Bryant-Scott informed the congregants of the following:



The Youth MAT Leadership Team from left to right: Ms. Camile Watt (YouthMinister), Mr. Chester Hurlston(Co- Chair), Mrs. Grace Bryant-Scott (Co-Chair), Ms. Jody Jackson and Mrs. Marisa Crawford(GB Captain- Savannah).

The Youth MAT engages in both Evangelistic and Discipleship Programmes for children and youth, designed to reach young people and nurture them in their Christian walks as disciples of Christ.

The Youth MAT Leadership Team expressed their gratitude to Ms. Camile Watt for sharing her gifts and all her love through words, deeds, and life and for making a tremendous difference as the Youth Minister of the Savannah United Church.

## Jennifer King - 'An Example of Commitment and Passion'



Jennifer King (right) receives expressions of appreciation from the Savannah United Church Girls' Brigade.

On Sunday, March 17, 2024, the Savannah Girls' Brigade presented Mrs. Jennifer King with a token of their appreciation for her dedication to and leadership in the Savannah Girls' Brigade since 1996. Throughout her years of service, Miss Jennifer has been an example of commitment and passion, inspiring young explorers to grow and flourish under her guidance. With patience, kindness, and love, she created a welcoming and supportive environment where every girl was valued and encouraged to discover their potential.

# EASTER SUNDAY

FOCUS FOR THE MONTH:

## DEEPENED FAITH

### BEARING WITNESS OF JESUS! THE RISEN AND EXALTED ONE:

Having journeyed to the Cross, experienced anew the depths of His passion for us and remained in the liminal space of Holy Saturday; it is time to jubilate in the wonder of Jesus' Resurrection.

Consider, for instance what the Resurrection means today, how it affects our relationship with Jesus, the glory of the Resurrection and the fact that neither Peter (Acts) nor Mary of Magdalene (Gospels) were able to contain that news, since Jesus is alive then we have hope for eternity – He will come again!

The resurrection confirms that truly Jesus' kingdom is eternal – it cannot end, for He is not contained in the ground. And, through His resurrection, Jesus has genuine authority over Death, and has the power to judge the living and the dead! He isn't in the tomb. He is not amongst the dead. **Jesus is ALIVE! That is Good News!**

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

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

#### **SUGGESTED SCRIPTURES**

Acts 10:34-43

Psalm 118:1-2,  
14-24

John 20:1-18

#### **SUGGESTED HYMNS**

Up From the Grave He  
Arose

Don't Try to Tell Me  
God is Dead

Christ the Lord is Risen  
Today

He Lives! He Lives  
Hosanna in the  
Highest



# A Call to Prayer and Fasting

Brothers and sisters in the United Church family are invited to

## PRAY FOR CONVOCAATION

**Every Wednesday until May 1**

If able, please fast all day Wednesday; if not able to do so consider fasting up to midday

**Every Sunday until April 28**

## CONGREGATIONS

are asked to include the Convocation in their Intercessory Prayers

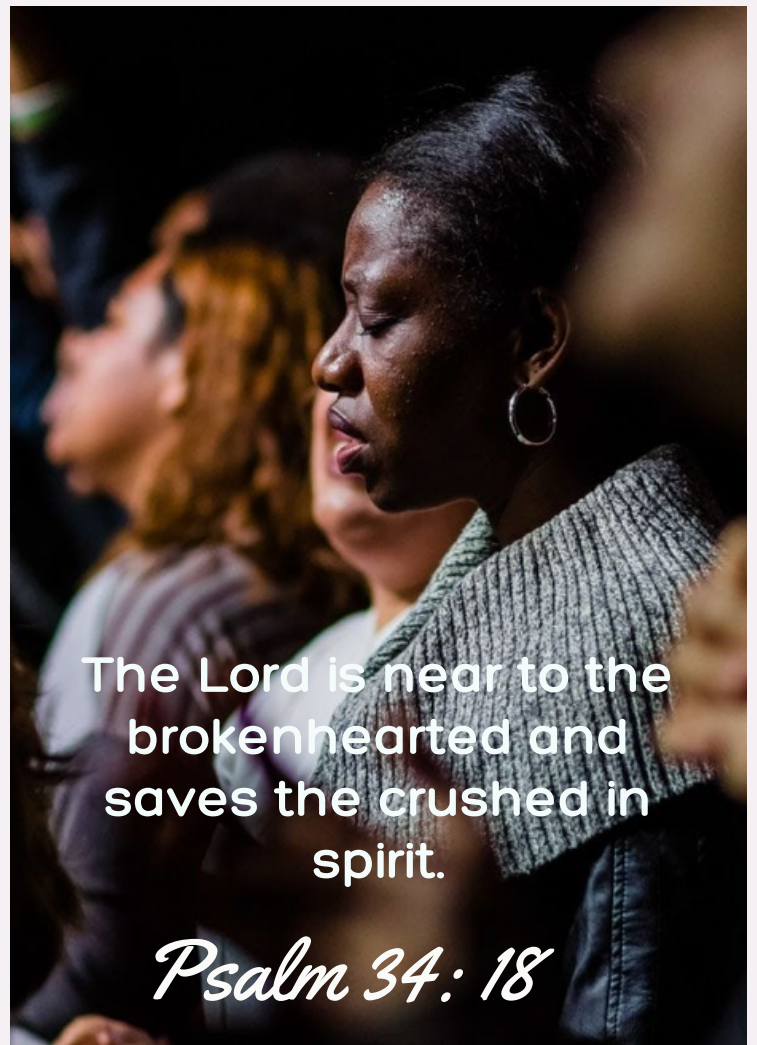
PRAY FOR THE WITNESS OF UCJCI IN JAMAICA AND THE CAYMAN ISLANDS.

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# Let us Pray Together

## WE PRAY FOR

- Mrs. Joan Page Bain and family, retired UCJCI Mission Partner in Haiti
- The people of Haiti for the restoration of peace – right relationships; good decision-making and governance.
- Mrs. Carlene Andrade, Administrative Assistant – SRMC, who lost her sister and her father.
- Ministers of the United Church who are experiencing health challenges
  - Rev. Dr. Richmond Nelson
  - Rev. Karleen Thomas Barnes



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

*Psalm 34: 18*

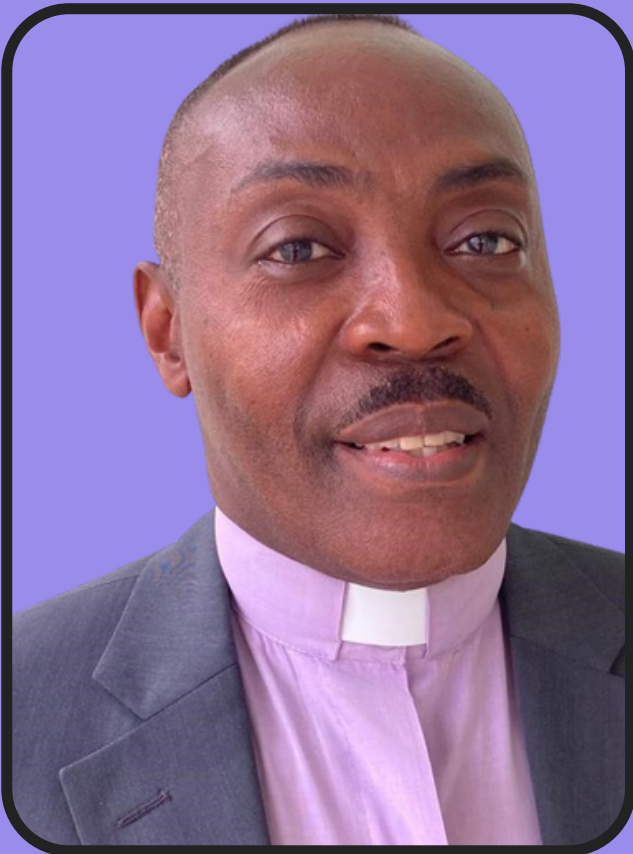
# BIRTHDAY GREETINGS



**MARCH 28**

**REV. DONALD WILLIAMS**

**APRIL 2**



**REV. EVERTON BRISSETT**



**REV. DR. JAMES GIBBS**

# Good Friday Offering

My sisters and brothers,

Lenten Greetings.

As is customary, the UCJCI seeks to invite individuals and congregations to make a special and sacrificial contribution to church development in the form of the Good Friday Offering. We are extremely grateful to the congregations which have consistently contributed to this offering thereby helping to expand the ministry of the UCJCI.

For 2024 congregations all across the church are invited to draw alongside the James Hill Congregation in the SRMC and assist this congregation in replacing its roof (see pictures below).

The estimate for the roof replacement is J\$2 million Dollars. The congregation has one quarter of that amount in hand. We are therefore trying to raise the minimum amount of J\$1.5M.

Please remit the amounts collected or individual contributions to the following account:

**Bank: National Commercial Bank – Duke Street Branch, Kingston Jamaica**

**Account: United Church in Jamaica & the Cayman Islands**

**A/C #: 234297430**

**Type of A/C: Savings**

As we give, let us pray to the God of plenty to multiply our efforts and bless this ministry.

**Blessings**

**Rev. Norbert Stephens – General Secretary, UCJCI**



# 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](mailto:citc@gmail.com) for promotion in UCJCI Update.



# BRAND NEW YOUTH PODCAST



YOUNG UNITED PEOPLE



**EVERY FRIDAY**



The United Church Lay  
Training Institute

# TRAINING FOR LAY LEADERS

## MODULE 1

**REGISTRATION ACCEPTED UP  
TO MARCH 28, 2024**

TOPICS INCLUDE  
EVANGELISM, DISCIPLESHIP,  
COMMUNICATION, BIBLE  
STUDY, WORSHIP,  
CAREGIVING

**THIS TRAINING IS FOR  
PERSONS PREPARING TO**

**SERVE AS:**

- **Elders**
- **Specialized Ministry Leaders**
- **Lay Pastors**

**2nd and 4th Saturdays- March to  
August 9:00 a.m. - 2 p.m.**

**via Zoom. Registration through regions  
opens February 27**

**FOR MORE INFO**

 [ucjci.karen.francis@gmail.com](mailto:ucjci.karen.francis@gmail.com)

 1876-4327057



**COST  
JMD  
\$10,000**

**RECORDED ORIENTATION SESSION  
AVAILABLE BY EMAILING  
UCJCI.SHERYL.CHUNG@GMAIL.COM**

DUKE STREET UNITED CHURCH' PERFORMING ARTS MINISTRY

PRESENTS

# The Predicament



WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY:

**CHEVAN SHIRLEY**

**STARRING:** Selina Baker, Latoya Campbell, Calneth Reid,  
Shama Reid, Melva Harrison & Fitzroy Clowson.

**VENUE:**

**DUKE STREET  
UNITED CHURCH**  
70 DUKE ST, KINGSTON

**SHOW DATES:**

**FRI. MAR. 29 @6 P.M.  
SAT. MAR. 30 @6 P.M.  
SUN. MAR. 31 @6 P.M.**

**TICKETS:**

**PRESOLD: \$1,500  
AT GATE: \$2,000  
\$800 FOR KIDS**

**FOR TICKETS, WHATSAPP/CALL: 876-348-7700**

SPONSORS:



*Save the Date!*

**SUNDAY MAY 5**



**The United Church in Jamaica and  
the Cayman Islands**

**CONVOCATION 2024**

*Theme: Reignited by the Spirit!*

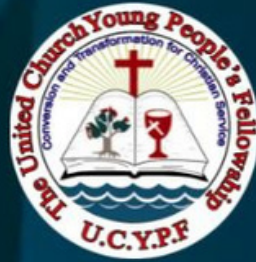
**8:30 A.M - 3:00 P.M.**



**Montego Bay Convention Centre**

**See you there!**





# Youth 2024 CONVENTION

"RE-IGNITED BY  
THE SPIRIT"

Sun., May 5, 2024  
8:30 AM

 Montego Bay  
Convention Centre  
Rose Hall Road, Montego Bay

*Preacher:*  
**REV. DONOVAN MCPHERSON**

Minister  
Eltham United Church  
Spanish Town, St. Cathrine





**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](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**