



The United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands

THE FAMILY NEWS

George Town Charge

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Sundays
Elmslie Memorial United
10:30am
Prayer Service last Sunday of each
month 6:30pm

South Sound United
44 South Sound Road
9:00am

From the Pastor's Desk

"Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you. . ." (Luke 24:5-6)

Mark's account of the resurrection leaves us unsure about Jesus on the loose. Luke agrees that the world can't control Jesus, and then he goes even further. He makes clear that Jesus is the one in control. "Remember how he told you. . ." the angels say. But Luke doesn't focus on how unsettling it is to follow someone who will radically change our lives. Rather, Luke aims to inspire awe for Jesus in us. Even though the odds seemed stacked against him, it turns out that everyone has played right into Jesus' plan.



The resurrection of Jesus is the most awe-inspiring event in the history of the world. It's not just that Jesus came back from the dead. Elisha had raised a dead boy to life, and Jesus himself had raised several people. The unique thing about Jesus' resurrection is that it is permanent - Jesus is still alive! Jesus overcame death forever!

Because of Jesus, death no longer has the finality it once had. Jesus demonstrated his power over death so that we can have real hope that he will conquer our death as well. Like Jesus, many of his followers will die. But, because of Jesus, all who follow him will one day be raised back to life.

Meeting Harriet

The Family News caught up with **Harriet Vassell** on learning that she had recently taken responsibility for the Wednesday Pantry Ministry. She had retired from working for an insurance company at the end of 2019 and went along to give some help, only for the programme to close two months later because of Covid.

"I didn't know what I was getting involved in when I agreed to take this on," she says. "Well, it has been four months now and I am learning as I go along. My challenge has been that there are a handful of people who have been there for a long time and things have been done the same way for a long time. It is sometimes hard to change the system," she adds.

Harriet is the fourth of eight children. Her mother, **Grace Nicholas**, died three years ago and had been a member at Elmslie for many years.

"Growing up, we were raised by our mum and our grandaunt **Viola Syms** who were both members of Elmslie so we had no choice but to attend. We were taught good values and discipline, based on strong Christian beliefs. In those days, people believed in a community raising a child, and any adult could chastise us if we were acting inappropriately outside the home. If I misbehaved somewhere, I would get another whipping when I reach home!" She commented that even though there were no telephones in those days, news would reach home before she did!



Harriet, with two of her grandchildren, Ezy and Emry

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Editor: This excellent article, with a few tweaks, is a repeat of one placed in The Family News prior to 2017's General Elections. We feel it pertinent to our readers to stress not only the importance of voting but to provide some principles to help us do so wisely as we go to the polling booths on 14th April.

Elections 2021: Who Do I Vote For?

By Richard Coles

Elections are coming up in April so who shall I vote for and how do I decide? Does the Bible help me to make the right decision?

The Bible has a lot to say about leadership and it's no surprise that much of this is good old common sense.

Candidates like to tell me what great things they will do for me and what a dreadful mess the present/previous Governments have made. I don't need them to focus on what is wrong. I can see that for myself, and criticising others is the easiest thing to do. What I want to hear is what they are planning to do and how they are going to achieve it.

I hear all the marvellous things the candidate says he/she will do but can I believe them? Will it really happen or will these promises dissolve away as soon as the election is over?

Unlike God, I cannot look into the future to answer this question but I can look back at the past. What has each candidate done in their life that persuades me he/she will honour these promises in the future? "Don't let the past define your future," I hear you say. Good point, and God frequently uses people with a dubious past to achieve great things. My reply is that God's insight is not available to me other than through prayer. So should I pray? Oh, yes! And what should I pray? What I always pray: that I might know the wisdom of God's Holy Spirit who lives and works through me.

Here are some important considerations for choosing a candidate:

- Necessary qualities: integrity, commitment, perseverance.
- Past behaviour and ability to make good decisions in his/her private or business life is a good indicator of whether he/she will make good decisions for the country.
- Being an MP is probably the most responsible position a candidate will have had. How has he/she handled responsibilities in the past?
- Leadership style should be that of a servant rather than trying to control, to handle power with humility, not arrogance. He or she must show transparency in all decision-making. (Matthew 20:20-28 provides a great illustration).
- For many candidates, the salary as an MP is likely to be the largest he/she has ever earned but, of course, this should not be the motivation for seeking election but, rather, a willingness to serve.

But I would still have some practical questions for and about candidates to assess their suitability:

- What examples of your past history of service to the district and the Cayman Islands can you give?
- What policies do you propose and, most important, how would you achieve these?
- If you are critical of current or past Governments, what are your alternative suggestions?
- What examples in your life demonstrate your ability to serve as an MP?
- What is your employment record?
- Do you run your own business and, if so, how successful has it been?
- Do you enjoy the respect and confidence of your peers?
- Do you agree that the Bible be your reference guide for conduct as an MP in line with John 13:2-17?

Condolences to the Mason Family

Our sincerest condolences to **Rev. Chris Mason** and his family on the passing of his oldest brother, **Lt. Col. Raphael Mason, Jr.** on February 25, 2021.

According to his obituary, Lt. Col. Mason "greatly influenced the lives of many young people across the isles of the Caribbean, Africa, USA and Canada. He lived a purposeful, complete and well-rounded spiritual life." Lt. Col. Mason was a minister in the Salvation Army. He is survived by his wife, **Lt. Col. Winsome Mason**, his daughter **Patricia**, three brothers and their wives, one sister and her husband, nieces, nephews, other family members, the Salvation Army family and a host of Christian brothers and sisters and many friends. Our continued prayers for the Mason family.



Worship Ministry Action Plan 2021

By Antonio Sanchez

Does our Worship Ministry exist to warm people up for the teaching, to express our church's unique style, to create a fun and exciting atmosphere or to carry on a millennia long tradition? No, our calling is much higher. We believe the mission is the same as the mission of the church which is **(1) To Honour God:** As a Worship Ministry, we provide an opportunity for God's people to worship him, **(2) To Nurture Believers:** Learn about Jesus Christ and the character of God revealed in the scripture in which our songs are inspired and **(3) To Proclaim to the World:** Declare his mighty works, the gospel, and our love for him through song.

Our mission is to provide an opportunity with music for every person in every service to encounter God. Whether or not they take advantage of that time is up to them. How God chooses to move and speak is up to him. However, no one who encounters God leaves the same. We seek to humbly lead others through a transforming and interactive worship experience to God's powerful presence in corporate praise and worship.

The choir's first goal is to unify generations and cultures in corporate worship to God. Secondly, to grow **(1) Spiritually:** We will gather not just for practice but for prayer, to seek God's face. We will invite the pastor and others to give us feedback every so often about worship and how to properly minister to the people of God. **(2) Numerically:** We will have extra church activities that will reinforce our unity, creating a good foundation for the new members to come - something that people want to be part of. **(3) Musically:** Basic music lessons will be taught at some rehearsals. We will share with other choirs on the island, for example, other United Church and Baptist choirs.

We plan to have services with the highest quality possible, and include at least two new songs each month. We will use different styles and types of music, always seeking to please God and keeping the balance. We will encourage the congregation to suggest songs they would like to hear during the services.

We hope to identify and train new worship leaders with the help of our pastor and re-commit those who are "taking a break" or are "too busy". We also plan to keep improving the sound system of the church by acquiring new and more modern equipment, as well as continue developing the Youth Orchestra and Youth Choir.

Harriet (Continued from Page 1)

Harriet became involved in the life of the church from early in her teens. There was Sunday school and Christian Endeavour under the leadership of **Noel Johnson**, junior choir with **Marie Armstrong** and Girls' Brigade under **Iva Good**.

Much later, she joined the Women's Fellowship. "It was my oldest sister **Lucille** who got me involved," she says. "I thought it was only for old women. I remember the youngest member being **Lorna Reid** and she begged me to join." Harriet did just that, and served as president on many occasions although the Constitution lays a limit on two!

"I had accepted the Lord in my teens at a mission weekend led by **Walford Thompson** on one of his many visits to Elmslie," she states. "There were a number of us at the time asking questions and seeking answers from the Bible. During the succeeding years, there were several people I will always cherish and appreciate, including **Zoe Bodden, Janet Macmillan** and **Mike Bowerman**. They took us under their wings and nurtured us in our new-found faith. I could talk to them about any and everything, and we had some serious discussions as well as fun times together. When I look back having had my own kids, I wonder how they put up with us! It was the love and leadership I received from home and the church that enabled me to instill the same in my kids, and they, in turn, are doing the same for theirs."

Harriet has been married to **Phillip (Slim) Vassell** for 46 years and they have been blessed with two sons, **Eric** and **Damien**, two daughters-in-law **Elitia** and **Laticia**. "My daughters-in-law are wonderful," she says, "and they have provided me seven grandchildren who are my pride and joy!" Eric and his family attend Elmslie where he serves as an elder while Damien and his family are active members at the Journey Ministries Church. Harriet and Slim have also raised four girls.

When asked what opportunities as a Christian she particularly sought, she replied, "I want to grow more in my faith. I want to gain confidence by God's grace and through prayer to enable me to assist those from all walks of life who walk through our doors each week, especially at Pantry Ministry. It is not just important for them to receive physical food but, more so, spiritual food."

She says that, outside of church work, she enjoys spending time with her grandchildren and singing with the Cayman Islands Folksingers. She is an active board member of the Cayman Islands Dance Company and Radiance Dance Company. She adds, "I like going to the cinema to watch a good action drama movie, relaxing with a good Danielle Steele or David Baldacci book and, of course, enjoying a girls-only night out for a good laugh!"

Those who know Harriet know that she is always good for a laugh! However, we know that God has given her opportunities to witness and serve him, and we pray that he will continue to bless and use her for his glory.



We wish to sincerely thank all our kind volunteers (some pictured above), many of whom have regularly since April been packing food for our Emergency Assistance ministry and delivering to those in need in our community.

Elmslie Memorial United Church

EASTER Sunday

JOIN US TO CELEBRATE
THE RISEN KING

Given, Buried, Risen

10:30 AM
SUNDAY APRIL 04

WITH Rev. Dr.
Yvette Noble Bloomfield

"I am the resurrection, and the life.
The one who believes in me will live,
even though they die;
And whoever lives by believing in me
will never die. Do you believe this?"
- John 11:25-26 NIV

WWW.elmslieunitedchurch.ky
Facebook Live: Elmslie Church
Youtube: Elmslie Church

COME WORSHIP WITH US!

PALM SUNDAY - 28th MARCH

South Sound United 9:00am
Elmslie Memorial United 10:30am

HOLY THURSDAY - 1st APRIL

George Town Charge, joint service at
Elmslie Memorial United - communion 6:30pm

GOOD FRIDAY - 2nd APRIL

George Town Charge, joint service at
Elmslie Memorial United 9:00am

EASTER SUNDAY - 4th APRIL

South Sound United - communion 9:00am
Elmslie Memorial United - communion 10:30am

Girls' Brigade Sunday at Elmslie



A special Girls' Brigade service with companies island-wide in attendance was held at Elmslie on Sunday, 14th March. Pictured above, they line up after the morning service.

Ash Wednesday Gathering

The annual Regional Council Ash Wednesday Gathering in February attracted about 150 people. The event was centred on Synod's theme for 2021, Rooted, Resilient: Responding in HOPE. The letters making up the word HOPE point to the four emphases of the church this year: Health, Opportunities, Peace and Evangelism.

Special speaker was **Rev. Donovan Myers**, speaking by way of a link following his illness. He used the story from Daniel 3 of the three young Jews in the fiery furnace and God's faithfulness in sustaining them, illustrating how he will do the same in the 'fires' we experience as we submit to and express our hope in him.

During the gathering, the new Council Executive and Youth Leadership National Executive were installed. Chairs of these are **Rev. Rohan Forrester** and **Roy McGregor**, respectively.

Coming up

- March 28th – Children and Youth Synodical Rally at Savannah United, 5-7 pm.
- April 10th – Bi-weekly Lay Leaders' Certificate Course training (by Zoom) on team building and conflict management.
- April 11th-18th – Synod (by Zoom). Representing the charge will be **Clive Hinds** (SSU), and **Liz McLaughlin** and **Eric Vassell** (Elmslie). The new Moderator, **Rev. Gary Harriott**, will be installed during the opening service.

Small Groups

With the elections and a new government coming up this month, a small group Bible study is being prepared which will consider how we as Christians should support the process and governing authorities. The study will be on April 7th, the Wednesday before the election. On Election day, the 14th, there will be no small group meetings. The following week, groups will be continuing studies on The Sermon on the Mount.

After the election, what then?

By Michael Bowerman

In a very few weeks' time, we will have a new government. Meanwhile, we will be going to the polling booths to carry out our duty as responsible citizens. As Christians, we will vote prayerfully and thoughtfully. We will hopefully have considered carefully the wise advice offered by Richard Coles elsewhere in this edition of The Family News. The result of the election will be nineteen men and women chosen to represent us.

What then? The campaigning, the claims, the promises, the infighting, the accusations will be over – for now.

Scripture in various places is clear as to our responsibility to respect and obey those in authority. Whether our favourite candidate lost the election, whether we agree with those who won and their policies, God requires Christians to "be subject to the governing authorities" (Romans 13:1), recognizing that God established government as a way to order society.

I want to suggest that our support for government as Christians, and looking to it for our country's direction, security and wellbeing, should not blind us to the fact that there is something more important on which we rely. King David says in Psalm 20:7, "Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God." 'Chariots' and 'horses' represented human and political structures. The principle by which we as Christians live is different to that of others who trust in politicians or in the many other things which they believe orders their lives, whether it be wealth, influence, education or good health.

It goes without saying that life is uncertain. Yes, it is right to seek to have in place those in government who will have ours and the country's best interests at heart. And our country does need to be wise in its stewardship of its resources, including its finances. It's important to have a good education system and quality healthcare.

Yet, life is unpredictable. The pandemic we are going through illustrates this! At the end of the day, the lives of those in Cayman – indeed, of the whole world - are in God's hands. He is the one we must look to. It is his way and will that ultimately matter and whose care and concern we look to. So, it is he on whom we rely, in whom we trust. Then, whatever happens, we can be assured as Christians that he is working all things for our good, knowing that he, our Sovereign God, is in control.

That is why, too, we need to pray for those in authority that they will be people of humility and integrity, and will seek the wisdom needed to run the country which, as King Solomon recognized, comes from God.

Special April Birthdays
Happy Birthday to
Nicholas Crawshaw - 21 on the 7th
Emma Dulles - 55 on the 13th
Olive Bush - 95 on the 23rd
Patricia McField - 60 on the 26th