

The United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands



FAMILY NEWS

Elmslie Memorial Charge

Volume 227, April 2024

Minister:

Rev. L. Christopher Mason

Music & Worship Minister:

Antonio Sanchez

Youth Minister:

Roy McGregor

Office & Mailing Address:

108B Seafarers Way
George Town
P.O. Box 494
Grand Cayman KY1-1106

Elmslie Website:

www.elmslieunitedchurch.ky

Elmslie E-mail:

elmslie@candw.ky

Office Staff:

Janet Macmillan, Administrator
Diana Bodden, Office Assistant

Office Hours:

Mondays - Fridays
9:00am - 3:00pm
Phone: 345-949-7923

Council Website:

www.unitedchurch.org.ky
Council e-mail cirmc.info@gmail.com

Bethesda Counselling Website:

www.bethesdacounselling.ky

Service Times:

Sundays
Elmslie Memorial United
10:30am

Robert Young United
583 Crewe Road
8:45am

The Reason for *This* Season!

Those who have been part of the home group series on Nehemiah may remember a question as to why it is that Christmas is given so much emphasis as compared to Easter.

I have been pondering on this for some while. For those who are not Christians, it is easy to see why the birth of a baby is a cause of celebration while the death of a Jewish teacher, even with the added account of him coming back to life, doesn't appeal in the same way.

Then there are all the trappings associated with the Christmas season: family get-togethers, parties, trees, gift-exchanges, carols, nativity scenes and the rest. Christmas particularly appeals to children, of course, with all the glitter, the excitement and the wonder of the season.

However, for those of us who are believers, there is a question to be asked. Why is the most important event in history afforded barely a week of attention while all things Christmas are spread out over six? Yes, we do rightly mark the birth of the incarnate Son of God but most of those celebrating forget the 'why'; they completely miss "the reason for the season." It is simply a holiday with lots of glitz and razzmatazz!

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Antonio and Amelia

The Family News caught up with Antonio Sanchez, Elmslie's Minister of Music and Worship, and his wife, Amelia, and asked them to tell their story.

"As most people know, we are from Cuba. We have been married for 11 years and have two sons, Daniel who is ten and seven-year old Aaron."

"I am from the province of Santiago de Cuba at the east of the Island," says Amelia. "I was born in a humble family of four but with numerous uncles, aunts and cousins. Growing up, I always inclined towards art and music. At an early age, I was accepted to study in the School of Arts and continued my studies until I earned a Bachelor in Music from the University of Arts in Havana.

"In 2007, at the age of 19, I was sent to the province of Camaguey to comply with the school's requirement for social service. There, I was invited by a friend to the First Baptist Church.

It was a Good Friday service, and it was when I accepted Jesus into my life."

Since then, Amelia has been a faithful follower of Christ, serving in music ministry for several years, as a praise team worship leader and, later, as the choir director and part of the music ministry leadership team at the church.

Antonio was born in Camaguey, located in the centre of Cuba, also from a humble family of four.

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Oh, We Will Sing of the Goodness of God!

At the Sunday service on 17th March, **Chuck Mobley** introduced Elmslie to two ladies from Uganda, **Rebecca Muwambefu** and **Ruth Kironde**.

It is rarely a good thing when we receive a late night call. This one was no exception. It was 10:10 pm on Tuesday, 27th February, and as **Betty Ann** answers the phone she can hear loud, blood curdling screams. A woman's voice is frantically pleading for urgent prayer. Something has gone wrong with nine-month old **Baby William**. He had come out of successful lifesaving heart surgery just hours earlier but now he is clearly in distress. His eyes are fixated to one side and are trance-like. The caller is Ruth Kironde, a Ugandan translator from Samaritan's Purse, the world-wide Christian relief



organisation run by **Franklin Graham, Billy Graham's son**.

Ruth, Baby William and William's mother, Rebecca Muwambefu are all from Uganda and are in Cayman through the generosity of Samaritan's Purse which has paid all transportation cost, and Health City who has provided this life saving surgery cost free!

Betty Ann mobilises a prayer chain and we write to almost every believer in our contact list asking for immediate and urgent

prayer for young William. By 10:25 pm it is realised that it is the medication that is adversely affecting this precious little soul. His meds are suspended and William immediately begins to stabilise. By 10:55 pm, he is back in an ICU room and being closely monitored.

By 8:25 the following morning, he is stable and back in his hospital room, reunited with mama and Ruth. Phew! Quite a scare, but Rebecca, his mum, has been through it before. It turns out Baby William is quite the fighter.

Born 15th May last year with two holes in his heart, William had been a very sickly child and had had severe breathing problems from birth. On one of the more severe occasions, not knowing what to do, Rebecca cried out to God. She heard a gentle but firm voice telling her to take her vulnerable son to church and dedicate him to God. It was after 8:30 pm and you don't really travel in Uganda at night but Rebecca obeyed, even after being told young William might not survive the trip. Rebecca arrived at the church and was told the pastor was not there, only the maintenance people who were setting up for church the next morning. She was told to come back in two weeks when the pastor would be there. However, she was adamant about dedicating her only son and so obeying that still small voice.

At 8:30 the following morning, Rebecca showed up at church again and Baby William was dedicated and prayed for by the elders. She was also told about a cardiologist nearby and took William there. After a thorough examination the doctor informed her that her baby would not live without lifesaving heart surgery. The doctor then asked her if she had money because the surgery was very expensive. When she responded that she had no money, the doctor inquired if she had a home she could sell. Rebecca shook her head and was dismissed with the promise of being placed on a waiting list.

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Elmslie Memorial United Church Presents:

GLOBAL MISSIONS CONFERENCE

Nations United for Christ

Guest speakers



BISHOP RAPHAEL HAULE

Bishop of Ruvuma Anglican Diocese, Tanzania



MRS. KEITRA VILMA

OM Regional Director Northern Caribbean

10th-14th
April 2024

Elmslie Memorial
United Church

FOR MORE INFO

949-7923
@ELMSLIECHURCH
ELMSLIEUNITEDCHURCH.KY



MISSIONS CONFERENCE

Schedule

10
APRIL

Church-Wide Bible Study
Missions: My Christian Responsibility
Led by Bishop Raphael Haule

Location: Elmslie Church Hall

7:00PM

12
APRIL

Youth Night
Cultural Simulation of India, Africa, Mexico & Brazil
Short talk with Bishop Raphael Haule & Keitra Vilma

Location: Elmslie Church Hall

7:30 PM

13
APRIL

Breakfast & Workshops
Evangelism & Mission Strategies

REGISTRATION REQUIRED
Location: Elmslie Church Hall



8:00 AM - 12:00 PM

14
APRIL

Sunday Service
Special Missions Service
Speaker: Bishop Raphael Haule

Location: Elmslie Church Sanctuary

10:30AM

14
APRIL

International Missions Finale
A vibrant night of worship, diverse food, music & fashion representing over 8 various nations.
Speaker: Bishop Raphael Haule
Location: Elmslie Church Sanctuary & Courtyard

6:30 PM

Women's Prayer Breakfast



On Saturday, 9th March, a large number of Elmslie ladies and a few guests, including several members of the Girls' Brigade, came together in the church hall for a morning of fellowship hosted by the Cayman Islands Regional Mission Council's Women's Fellowship executive under the theme "Women as Agents of Peace."

Goodness (Cont'd. from Pg. 2)

Two days later the ringing of her telephone broke the otherwise silence of the morning. Rebecca answered her phone with young William nestled in her arms. It was a call from Samaritan's Purse who had heard about the child's dire predicament, and they said they could help. Rebecca listened intently with her heart racing as they explain she would need to travel to a country she has never heard of, stay with strangers in this foreign land and trust her baby with a team of doctors she had never met. They would, however, pay her plane ticket, the surgery would not cost anything and it would save young William's life. After hanging up, Rebecca dropped to the floor thanking God for his goodness.

On 27th February, at 9:00 am, William was successfully operated on by the world famous heart surgeon, **Dr. Binoy**. On 14th March, at his weekly checkup and only 16 days after open heart surgery, the doctor told an anxious mother that William is as healthy as any other nine-month old child!

During the service, after a short testimony by Ruth, Rebecca expressed their gratitude to God in the song, *Oh, We Will Sing of the Goodness of God*.

Adult Bible Class: New Series to Start

Starting 7th April, there will be a new series at the Sunday morning Bible study. We will be going through the letter to the Philippians, sometimes described as "the Epistle of Joy," and a book many regard as one of their favourites in the Bible.

We begin at 9.30 sharp and finish about 10.20, in time for the start

of the worship service, with an opportunity for comments and questions.

The Bible class provides a great opportunity to deepen our faith and to understand our Bibles better, and everyone is encouraged to come along and try it out.



Special April Birthdays

Happy Birthday to

Caroline Hunter - 70 on the 7th

Emma Walmsley - 30 on the 13th

Tara McField - 55 on the 14th

Rolphie Braggs - 70 on the 16th

Julisa Ramoon - 40 on the 27th

Damar Robinson - 16 on the 28th

Reason for the Season (Cont'd. from Pg. 1)

While we as Christians recognise the significance of Christmas - to use the Apostle Paul's words in Galatians 4:4 - at "the set time (when) God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law," we need even more deeply to comprehend that it was on the cross that God accomplished that amazing, incredible work of salvation. Had the incarnate Son of God, born in a manger in Bethlehem, living an exemplary life, teaching as he did, not died on the cross, not one of us could know forgiveness for our sins or be restored into a relationship with God. And without the resurrection of Christ, we would not have received the gift of eternal life or have the assurance of spending eternity in his presence when we die. Again, to quote Paul, without these, "then (our) faith is useless and (we) are still guilty of (our) sins, (and) all who have died believing in Christ are lost!" Further, he went on to say, "And if our hope in Christ is only for this life, we are more to be pitied than anyone in the world" (1 Corinthians 15:17-19 NLT).

I want to encourage all of God's people to spend some premium time over this Easter season dwelling on the reason for *this* season, on God's "amazing grace" - this extraordinary act of love - in sending his Son to make our salvation possible, we who were rebellious sinners deserving only his judgement. Read the relevant passages in the gospels; reflect on some of the wonderful hymns that speak of the cross. And, on Easter morning, allow the full significance of that triumphal resurrection, affirming the work of the cross, fill your hearts and souls as together we declare, "He is risen! He is risen indeed! Hallelujah!"

Michael Bowerman

New Church Doors

Elmslie's sanctuary has been blessed with new front doors through the generosity of the late **Selma Eden**.

At a short service prior to the morning worship service on 3rd March, **Rev. Chris** offered words of dedication and prayer, and expressed the gratitude of the congregation to Selma for her generous bequest. Some sixteen members of her family were present and the ceremonial opening of the door was done by her two remaining brothers, **Frankie** and **Kelly Thompson**.



Antonio and Amelia (Cont'd. from Page 1)

He started his musical studies at the age of eight and went to the Conservatory until he graduated from the University of Arts in Havana with a Bachelor Degree in Music. "Although my main instrument is the cello," he says, "I have always had a special passion for the piano and when I started visiting the Baptist Church in Camaguey, I immediately offered my talents to the service of God.

"I committed my life to serve and follow God at the age of 14, in defiance of the beliefs of family and friends," he continues. "I have sought to be faithful in devoting my life to the calling of God."

Antonio served as a team member of the music ministry of the First Baptist Church of his city and later on as the worship pastor, leading the praise team in several in-house concerts as well as around the Island.

Amelia and Antonio met while serving in the church and they were also teaching at the same school of music. They had a close friendship for years before gaining a deeper interest in each other. After a one year relationship, Antonio proposed while on a ministry trip and, seven months later, on a cold but particularly beautiful evening, on 4th March 2013, they were married in front of man and God.

"A year later, on 1st March 2014," Amelia added, "while Antonio and I were suffering from chickenpox, Antonio Daniel was born. By the grace of God, there were no complications at his birth. This was a testimony to the mercy and power of God."

A few months after his son's birth, Antonio was invited to work full time at Elmslie Church. After much prayer and confirmation from God, he came, at first alone, but six months later Amelia and Daniel were able to join him. Two years later they welcomed their second son Aaron Antonio who has brought so much joy to their home and completed their family of four.

Amelia has continued her career in Cayman as a music teacher. "I first worked at the non-profit after-school programme, *Jubilate*, based at the Cayman Islands Baptist Church. Later I worked in other schools, and currently I am employed at Spark! School of Performing Arts."

"Moving to these Islands has been a blessing for us," they say. "Although we have had to face many challenges, not only being away from home and loved ones or learning a foreign language, but also understanding the culture, the customs and the way things work. We try to blend in without losing our identity as Cubans. However, we can testify that God brought us here, and he has faithfully blessed us and is using us for his glory and according to his divine plan."

In the same way that they have been a blessing in the different places that the Lord had called them, touching many lives, he continues to do so today. "We love serving God and want to be used by him wherever we are. We would like to see a church growing in an intimate relationship with its Creator, a church where the fruit of the Spirit is found in each member and where others are infected with the eternal fruit of the Word of God."

"Recently, by the grace of God, we acquired Permanent Residency for which we are very grateful. Despite the trials, we want our lives to be a reflection of Christ at all times and to be a blessing to these islands."

Elmslie, and indeed the wider church, as well as Cayman as a whole, has been blessed by their ministry and particularly by Antonio's considerable musical ability. That is apart from his technical skills, especially with the visuals and the soundboard. Then there is the fact that he is proving to be a good preacher! Amelia, too, has been a great addition to the music and worship ministry.

Let us continue to pray for this family that God will continue to bless and use them for his glory.

Condolences

We extend sincere condolences to the family of **Desiree Myles** who passed away on Thursday, 14th March. She left two sons, **Raheem** and **Kai**, and a number of other family members. We express sympathy to her family.



MEET EVERY WEDNESDAY EVENING AT 7:30pm

The group leaders are:

Mike Bowerman	949-2232
Richard Trull	525-0591
Leoany Williams	929-2422
Suzanne Livingston	325-6927
Betty Ann Mobley	516-3679

Also on Zoom with Rev Christopher Mason

MEETING ID: 956 238 3494

PASSWORD: elmslie

If you're not currently a part of a group just call one of your choice and you will be welcomed.