

The United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands

# THE FAMILY NEWS

George Town Charge

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Sundays  
Elmslie Memorial United  
48 Harbour Drive, George Town  
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South Sound United  
44 South Sound Road  
9:00am

## From the Pastor's Desk

No Pandemic (Covid-19) Can Overpower Us  
Matthew 14:22-33.

Covid-19, a pandemic of the twenty-first century, is not only deadly but has awakened the individual, the family, the community, the society – indeed, the whole world - to a new order. People throughout the world are anxious about the future but, at the same time, are addressing the present: working from home, dealing with joblessness and searching for tomorrow's food. They have empty pockets - without even coins! There are uncertainties in their lives, some are having to educate their children at home, and more and more are being laid off jobs by their companies.

Will this continue to be normal? A million-dollar question without any certainty, without any answer.

Leaving apart all these, will there be a future for the Church? I say a big YES.

Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and precede him to the other side of the lake. He was not present with them. He sent them ahead. They did not think to ask him how he would get to the other side to meet them there. The disciples simply took for granted that they could reach the other side without Jesus, with just the help of the boat - a material thing.

The disciples did not even consider that crossing the sea would be a difficult way to travel to the other side. Yet, the boat would be troubled by the waves and winds and would make the travel difficult for them.

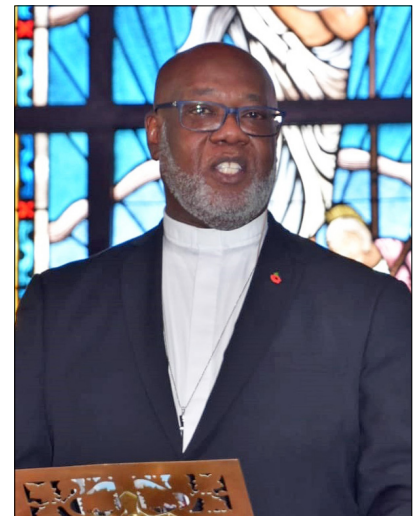
The disciples did not have strong faith. They had blind faith in the material thing, the boat. They believed that they could reach the other side with the help of the boat. Did the boat help them? No.

What would have helped the disciples to feel secure and safe in the boat and to reach the other side? With closed eyes, without rational thinking, having little faith in Jesus, we know that Jesus would have helped them to feel secure and safe on the boat and reach the other side.

The disciples represent us. The boat symbolises material things, our own belief system, rational thinking and so on. The sea is the world.

Jesus meanwhile went up on the mountain by himself to pray. There was no one with Jesus at that moment. He sent off the disciples in the boat and he dismissed the crowds. He did not have anything or anybody with him as he climbed the mountain. He went alone. He went to pray.

Our lives are filled with material things. Political power, gadgets, social media and money rule the world. There are no meaningful relationships in our lives. We have many friends on Facebook rather than in real life. We do not wish a good morning to our neighbours but send hundreds of good morning messages by social media. We have come to believe that without God everything is possible in this world. Many have left the Church because they think there is no God in this world. We use rational thinking. We have scientific knowledge. We firmly believe that science has a solution for everything in this digital and technological world.



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## Special December Birthdays

Happy Birthday to

**Ronald O'Neil** - 75 on the 6th

**Julian Menko** - 21 on the 17th

**Lakeisha Watler** - 30 on the 22nd

**Carol Braggs** - 65 on the 26th

## Special December Anniversaries

Happy Anniversary to

**Nigel & Heather Boothe**

25 years on the 9th

and

**Jennifer & Gerald Smith**

45 years on the 20th



## A Blast from the Past



Does anybody remember this couple who were part of Elmslie during the '80s and '90s?

## So, You Think You Know the Christmas Story!

Many of us are so familiar with the stories surrounding Christmas that we have difficulty differentiating fact from fiction, reality from misconception – what the Bible actually says from what we have grown up to believe is true.

We are inviting you to do a quiz about the events surrounding the birth of Jesus. Think carefully before you answer. Some of them

might have a catch! We will provide the correct answers in next month's edition.



1. How many of the Gospels record the story of Jesus' birth.

Which are they?

2. On what day of the year was he born, and in what year?

3. The angel told Joseph to call him Jesus? What does the name mean? What other well-known Old Testament character has a name which means the same thing?

4. What other name was Jesus given?

5. How did Mary travel down from Nazareth to Bethlehem?

6. How long after Joseph and Mary arrived in Bethlehem did she give birth?

7. Where precisely in Bethlehem does it say he was born?

8. What is a manger?

9. How many wise men were there? Who, in fact, would they have been, and where precisely did they travel from?

10. Why did Jesus' parents take him to Jerusalem aged just seven weeks and whom did they meet?

11. How old would Jesus have been when the wise men arrived?

12. Jesus had younger brothers and sisters. What were their names?

## Youth and Culture Night



The Youth Department of Elmslie sponsored a Youth and Culture Night on Friday, 13th November. It included dance, music, food and fun – the food being fish dinners! “It was a big success,” stated youth minister, **Roy McGregor**. “It was the first – but it won't be the last.” In the picture are the Cayman Islands Folk Singers which was one of the groups performing during the evening.



## Baby Blessing at Elmslie



On Sunday, 8th November, baby **Geji Rankin**, son of **Rozalve Cedo** and **Gilbert Rankin** was blessed at Elmslie Church.

## Pastor's Desk (Cont'd. from Pg. 1)

We are faced with Covid-19, the twenty-first century's biggest pandemic, which has turned the world upside down. People believed before the pandemic that, with our scientific knowledge, we could rule the world, that science and technology could solve and reduce our suffering. Months have passed since the news of Covid-19 broke out. Scientists are trying their best to find a solution. But nothing has brought the pandemic to a halt. The pandemic is widespread even though there is a well administered health system in many countries.

The pandemic has troubled each one of us in one way or the other. It has brought a new social order. People were quarantined. People were isolated. We could not see our loved one on their final journey to heaven. It altered the lives of many in drastic ways. Further, the world will never become normal as it was in the past. The future is uncertain.

The disciples were the same. They thought that they could manage without Jesus. They thought that they could reach the other side. What happened?

They believed in material and human knowledge rather than the divine presence and love. They were anxious when troubles approached. They soon realised that they needed Jesus to help them.

Did the disciples recognise Jesus? No. They were not able to recognise Jesus in their brokenness.

We seek scientific knowledge and rational thinking to help us have peace in heart and mind. Meanwhile, we lose our souls to those material things and in human weaknesses.

We have a desire to be like Jesus, like Peter desired to walk like Jesus on the water. But we are frightened, as Peter was, when we feel the wind of troubles, difficulties, pains and sufferings. Peter did not focus on Jesus, the divine love and presence. Rather, he focused on the winds and the waves, and he was frightened. We, too, are the same as Peter. We focus on material things and science so much that our focus on Jesus is disturbed. It makes us feel that we are not cared for by Jesus.

Jesus had not abandoned the disciples, even though he was not present with them. He did not delay his approach to reach out to them when they faced trouble. He did so immediately.

We, too, think that Jesus has abandoned us and does not reach out to us immediately we face troubles and when we need him the most. But, today, Jesus promises us and assures us that he will come at once when we call out to him, when we approach him, when we surrender to him. Once Jesus comes to us, our troubles will die down.

This was the experience of the disciples and it can be our experience, too.

Are we ready to surrender to Jesus alone?

We will surely recognise Jesus and experience him when we go to the mountain in silence to understand his divine love and presence in our lives.

No Covid-19 can overpower us when Jesus our Saviour is with us. May the heart of Jesus live in the hearts of all. Amen.

## "The Bible and How We Understand It"



Approximately 20 people from both Elmslie and SSU have been attending this series of workshops during the Monday evenings of November, led by **Michael Bowerman**. The purpose has been to gain a greater appreciation of the Scriptures and to learn how to better interpret and understand them as we read our Bibles.

## Donovan Myers



Please pray for **Rev. Donovan Myers** who is seriously ill and receiving medical treatment at Health City Hospital.

## Condolences

We offer our sympathy to **Anibal Archbold-Bryan** at the recent passing of his two sisters on the island of San Andres. **Merly**, aged 55, died a few weeks ago, and **Grinay**, 59, of a heart attack following the recent storm, Iota. Please pray for Anibal and his family at this time.



## Miss Olive is Remembered



On Monday, 9th November, the Pink Ladies honoured **Olive Miller**, long-time member of Elmslie Church and founder of the Pink Ladies, with a celebration of her life and work. The event was held on what would have been Miss Olive's 99th birthday. Pictured above, Elmslie's **Nancy Whitefield** is speaking at the podium.

## Cayman Prep and High School: High School Update

During this first term of the school year, the school welcomed back its faculty and new staff, a return to 'better normal' at CPHS with its students.

The students at Cayman Prep and High School demonstrated a positive attitude toward learning and enthusiastically returned to their studies, and regular activities over the course of the term ranging from a variety of academically focused programmes and extracurricular activities along with community initiatives.

Eight High School teachers successfully completed the COBIS (Council for British International Schools) Programme for Middle Leaders (CPML). This is an intensive programme of study and research, and was led by principal, **Mr. Murphy**, and vice principal, **Mr. Coles**.

The school is offering over 50 different extracurricular activities this term, ranging from Boxing to Wellness Warriors!

The PTA Committee receives a huge amount of support and assistance in its ongoing efforts to support CPHS, be it from teachers, parents, school staff. Prior to this year, this assistance went largely unrecognized. To this end, the PTA committee has introduced an 'unsung hero' award for the 2020/21 school year. Unsung heroes will be recognized at each committee meeting going forward. Any member can nominate an unsung hero who can be anyone outside the PTA committee who goes above and beyond to make our school community better.

Further information on the school can be obtained by calling 949-9115.



## Primary School Update

The greatest joy of this term at CPHS Primary is that school has been in session! After the trials and tribulations of last year, the boys and girls came to school in early September raring to go, and they have not stopped since. We started the term with a 'slowly slowly' approach, in recognition of the need for children (and staff) to re-integrate together. As such, the extremely engaging fortnight of 'Art weeks', themed on the Natural World, as well as social activities across the year groups, got them off to a purposeful and focused start.

Despite some further time out over the term as a result of extreme weather closures, the teaching and learning, in its many shapes and guises, has rolled on with much vigour. Core learning has been evaluated in detail to plug gaps in literacy and numeracy from lockdown. Science and Social Studies have provided the children with a fabulous canvas of scientific, historical and geographical learning, from birds' beaks to turtle releases, dinosaurs to Aztecs. Religious Education, Spanish, French and Computing lessons nurture our children's Christian understanding and linguistic and technological skills, while sports lessons emphasise the benefit of physical activity, not to mention the benefits of playing football, netball and rugby as a team. The term has flown by, and we are about to enter the thrilling rollercoaster of the run up to the end of term that includes the glory of the Christmas concerts. The children will gain both discipline and confidence through their preparations for these events, not to mention their musical and theatrical performance skills.

In the run up to this school year, we reminded ourselves of the key ingredients of the best education. Knowledge and skills will prepare the children cerebrally for the word ahead, and our values will underpin their spiritual development. Our recent Harvest Service, simultaneously positioned alongside World Kindness Day and a 'Civvy Day' in aid of disaster relief, served as a wonderful, definitive measure of the children's successful assimilation and demonstration of knowledge, skills and values.

### ELMSLIE & SOUTH SOUND UNITED CHURCHES

#### ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS EVENTS & WORSHIP SERVICES



#### NOVEMBER

SUNDAY - 29th 1st SUNDAY IN ADVENT  
**LIGHTING OF THE HOPE CANDLE**

#### SSU

9AM

#### EMU

1030AM

#### DECEMBER

SUNDAY - 6th 2nd SUNDAY IN ADVENT  
**LIGHTING OF THE PEACE CANDLE**

9AM

1030AM

[communion]

TUESDAY - 8th Cayman National Choir  
THURSDAY - 10th Cayman National Choir

7PM

7PM

SUNDAY - 13th 3rd SUNDAY IN ADVENT  
**LIGHTING OF THE JOY CANDLE**

9AM

1030AM

SUNDAY - 13th SSU Christmas Production

5PM

SUNDAY - 20th 4th SUNDAY IN ADVENT  
SUNDAY - 20th EMU Choir & Youth Christmas Production  
**LIGHTING OF THE LOVE CANDLE**

9AM

[communion]

1030AM

THURSDAY - 24th Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

630PM

[Joint Charge SSU & EMU]

FRIDAY - 25th Christmas Day Service

9AM

**LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE**

[Joint Charge SSU & EMU]

SUNDAY - 27th 1st SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

9AM

1030AM

THURSDAY - 31st Watchnight Service

1030PM

[Joint Charge SSU & EMU]