

The United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands



THE FAMILY NEWS

George Town Charge

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48 Harbour Drive, George Town

10:30am and 6:30pm

South Sound United

44 South Sound Road

9:00am

A New Normal?

Will there ever, in fact, be such a thing as 'normal' - whether 'old' or 'new'?

World Health Organization Chief Tedros issued a blunt warning very recently: "The pandemic is going to get worse and worse and worse." Meanwhile, we here in Cayman are trying to get used to wearing masks, social distancing, an absence of tourists and, for many, a lack of work and financial resources. Our borders remain closed, and Cayman's 'suburb', Miami, together with the state of Florida, is seeing a frightening spike in coronavirus cases.

Some 2500 years ago, the little nation of Judah faced a similar situation, not the result of a pandemic but of God's judgment because of their disobedience and rebellion against him. Their nation was overthrown by the superpower of the day, Babylon, and most of the people were taken into exile. They weren't to know this but it would be seventy years before some would be able to return. It was to these that God delivered a word of encouragement through the prophet Jeremiah: make the best of your situation. Indeed, pray for peace and prosperity for the land in which you are living. Then Jeremiah added, "This is what the LORD says: 'You will be in Babylon for seventy years. But then I will come and do for you all the good things I have promised, and I will bring you home again. For I know the plans I have for you,' says the LORD. 'They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope'" (Jeremiah 29:10-11 NLT).

Those years later, God selected a Persian king called Cyrus to accomplish his divine purpose. This pagan ruler is described by Isaiah as God's "shepherd" and his "anointed" (44:28 & 45:1). Isaiah stresses that God chose him even though he did not acknowledge him (45:4 & 5).

Why? That's the question God answers: "And why have I called you (Cyrus) for this work? Why did I call you by name when you did not know me? It is for the sake of Jacob my servant, Israel my chosen one" (v. 4). God loved Israel despite their rebellion. In his grace, he was going to restore them - to give them another chance.

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Congratulations, Isaiah!

Congratulations to **Isaiah Robinson** (pictured right) on gaining First Class Honours in Computer Science with Forensics and Security from Cardiff University. Isaiah is presently finishing up a one month internship with Deloitte with future plans to pursue his Master's Degree in Cyber Security at the University of Southampton.



A New Normal? (Cont'd. from Pg. 1)

He then seeks to provide them an understanding of his divine providence in the face of disaster – the apparent evil which had fallen on them. “I form the light and create darkness, I bring prosperity and create disaster; I, the LORD, do all these things” (v.7).

God’s ways are often strange to us. But we can be reminded from God’s dealings with Israel and from our own current experience in this pandemic some things about him. One, that he is in charge. Nothing catches him by surprise, and there is nothing which happens of which he is not in control. He alone is God. Five times in this chapter he states, in effect, “I am the LORD, and there is no other; apart from me there is no God” (v. 5, and see vv. 6, 14, 18 & 22). Second, God always has a good purpose, one which we may not always immediately recognize. In verse 8, he states it. “Open up, O heavens, and pour out your righteousness. Let the earth open wide so salvation and righteousness can sprout up together. I, the LORD, created them” (NLT). God is going to display his “righteousness” for he is a good God – all the time! Even when circumstances aren’t good. And he will bring “salvation” out of the seeming evil and disasters of life to those who reach out to him in faith.

Life is not always comfortable. I was reminded of a great 18th century Christian poet who suffered such depression all through life that on several occasions he attempted suicide. Out of his experience, William Cowper wrote the great hymn

God Moves in a Mysterious Way.
Each of the six verses develops the theme, with verse 3 providing special encouragement: “You fearful saints, fresh courage take; the clouds you so much dread are big with mercy, and shall break in blessings on your head.”

God is in control and he is a good God. We can be confident that in his time he will step in and bring about a ‘new normal’. Meantime, let us reach out to him in faith, declaring again that he is the LORD, and there is no other; apart from him there is no God.

Michael Bowerman



Valerie Anderson: South Sound’s Storyteller

Those who attend South Sound United regularly would almost certainly be captivated during children’s time when done by a lady who is often assisted by puppets or props helping her to get over her message - one which rarely fails to be right on the mark.



Miss Valerie has been telling stories to children since before she arrived on the island nearly forty years ago. In fact, she has been around children all her working life. Having been born and raised in Northern Ireland, she trained as a teacher in Scotland, taught there for a while before moving to Cayman with her new husband, **Peter**, in January 1982. Apart from a brief period in her first year here, she has taught on and off at the Cayman Prep and High, sometimes full-time, sometimes as a supply teacher, until she finally retired just a few years ago. Many past students –

not to say teachers - of the school remember “Mrs.Anderson”!
“We lived initially in West Bay and attended the United Church there,” she states. “When we moved to live in George Town I attended Elmslie.

“Cayman was a paradise for us - sport all the year round. I played hockey, tennis and squash. Peter played these and more. I then went on to have four children, all schooled at the Prep, Mike, Cath, Claire and Christine. My time was focused on school and family. I served on the PTA and

on the Board of the school. My kids were busy with activities after school and at weekends.

“It is only since retiring that I have attended South Sound and embraced the opportunity to teach Sunday school and be involved with

children’s time. When I was teaching English I loved reading to the children - stories and poems. Now I am back to basics with my two-year old granddaughter, Ellie, and loving the magic all over again,” she says. (She has recently had two new grandbabies – see separate pictures!) “All those years of daily assemblies at the Prep made it clear what it took to engage the children and give them something to remember. On that hook you hope they will be able to recall the ‘point’. I would observe those doing school assemblies, especially those so effectively, like **Chuck Mobley** and **Rick Gorter**,” she says.



William David Anderson (6lbs 7oz) was born on July 12th at HSA to **Michael** and his wife **Karen** who also have a daughter **Ellie**, now 2 years 8 months old.

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Nurse Joan Page Bain



Joan Page Bain on her final day - June 30th - as Director of the Guichard Clinic in Haiti. Although she has formally retired, she will continue to work there a few days a week.

Summer Activities for Youth

Youth Minister, **Roy McGregor**, indicates that, because of the pandemic, the church has decided to cancel all events for the summer so there will be no camps and no V.B.S. Plans so far are to have the children keep participating in worship services, youth group by way of Zoom until the end of July, and Sunday School on Zoom every Sunday.

Two beach days out for two different age groups for all young people - youth group, Sunday school and church - are being planned.

- Beach Day 1 scheduled for July 25th at the Public Beach will be for ages 5-12. This will already have taken place at publication of The Family News.

- Beach Day 2 scheduled for August 8th, again at the Public Beach, will be for ages 13 -18, to especially include children who would have

recently completed their CXC exams. See poster above.

Youth ministry plans for the future are uncertain and will depend on the protocols given by our church and government.



Babies Blessed at Elmslie

On 12th July, two babies were blessed during the Sunday morning service at Elmslie. Pictured right in the background is baby **Isla Whittaker** whose parents are **Christy & Leon Whittaker**. Christy is a member of Elmslie United and the daughter of **Carol & Rolphie Braggs**.

Pictured in the foreground is baby **Rikha Smith** whose parents are **Samantha & Ricardo Smith**.



Pray for the Masons



Our sincerest condolences and prayers for Tom & Terry Mason on the recent passing of Terry's father followed by the death of Tom's mother about ten days later.

Mount Olivet Boys Home Update

Following the report of the work of the home published last month, here are two updates from the director, **Mr. Patrick Newman**.

• **Property.** The construction of a new building to accommodate the boys is moving fast since work resumed after Covid-19 caused a stoppage. They are now in the process of putting on the roof and we are looking forward to occupy this new building in January of 2021.

• **Recognition.** We have approached the board

to have the cottage in which the director resides at the home be renamed The Elmslie Memorial United Church Cottage in recognition of the valuable contribution Elmslie has made to the home for many years.

Mr. Newman stated, "All of our boys are doing well and, although it is almost impossible to practice social distancing, the boys continue to be in great spirits and are looking to return to school in September... All in all, the Mount Olivet Boys Home, despite our many challenges, is at a good place and we are looking for a great improvement in the quality of boys who will depart from the home, becoming rounded and well-equipped young men."

He adds, "We want to take this opportunity to thank all the members and leadership of the Elmslie Memorial United Church for your commitment to the Mount Olivet Boys Home success so far and look forward to your continued support in faith."



Good progress is being made on the new MOBH dormitory which will hopefully be completed by January 2021

Valerie Anderson (Cont'd. from Pg. 2)

"My mum was a natural teacher and was always making up stories and using voices so it is all engrained in my memory bank. I remember a lady who came to the house who created weekly episodes about 'Joe Crow'. I was entranced! I have always loved puppets and crafts, and with four kids had plenty of practice.

"I still lose sleep before a children's time and pray that I will be given the right words. However, I still stumble and on my way home it becomes clear how much better the presentation could have been. I love to see the faces of the children when they are listening or interacting, and, when they talk about it later, that is the icing on the cake. Everything I do is very basic, but I firmly believe it still appeals to children who often need to be given the opportunity to be children and not mini adults. The latter can be challenging.

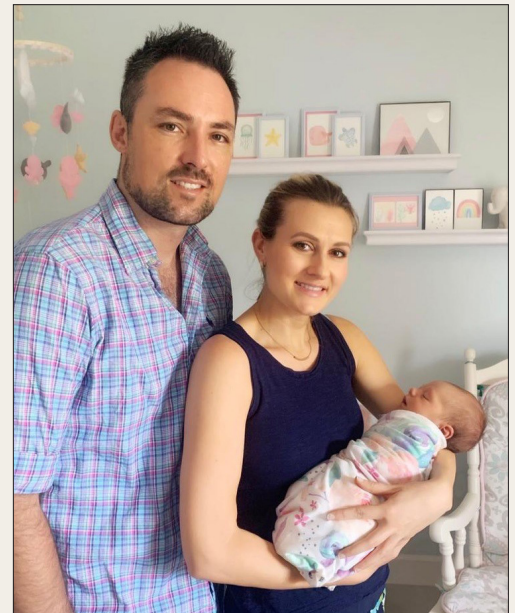
"There are wonderful sites on the internet with creative ideas although I am not patient with searching. I find inspiration in all sorts of places. One story I did come from my daily reading. It was perfect for children. Another one was from an emailed story from a friend. One time I saw a new children's book being discussed on TV. I had to have it and use it. Locally, I have found books I just fell in love with.

"I find I can spend hours putting together a 'lesson' for my wee ones. I am very picky about any video I might use and will spend ages getting visuals and even voices I like. I now subscribe to several sites which meet my criteria but search further afield to find a variety of activities. Sometimes I get carried away and have to cut it all back to basics."

Valerie was blessed by growing up in a Christian home. "In recent years," she says, "I have participated more in prayer times than ever before and expanded my reading and listening. I know that I am not as well versed in biblical knowledge as I would like to be but I learn more every time I prepare something for the children. I feel very secure in my relationship with God. He has given me such strength and comfort through some recent challenging times."

She adds, "I still find it hard not to worry. Bad enough with four 'children'; now I have three grandchildren in a world I cannot make sense of!"

We are grateful to God for the special gift given to Valerie by which she is able to convey his love and truth to our children.



Natalie Jane Bond (6lbs 15oz) was born on June 9th at HSA to **Catherine** and her husband **Daniel**.

Special August Anniversary

Happy Anniversary to **Linda & David Boddin** who will celebrate their first year of marriage on 31st August.

Special August Birthdays

Happy Birthday to
Jaydon McField - 16 on the 1st
Roger Hanson - 60 on the 9th
Iva Good - 85 on the 12th
Niko McField - 30 on the 20th

