



The United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands

THE FAMILY NEWS

George Town Charge

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Sundays
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48 Harbour Drive, George Town
10:30am

South Sound United
44 South Sound Road
9:00am

Time with God; Time in His Word

A comment by a daily devotional writer Bob Gass recently caught my attention. He wrote, "You can only talk convincingly about the God you know – the one you've spent time with."

It seems obvious. Yet, it is amazing how few Christians spend regular time with God. So, when they find themselves in situations when discussions about him come up, they have little to offer. When they are asked to speak about their relationship with him, they are at a loss for words.

Cultivating relationships requires us to spend time with one another, and it is no different with us and God. James 4:8 tells us, "Draw near to God and he will draw near to you." One clear way we can do this is by seeking him in his Word. It is in the Bible we can meet him and get to know him. It is through the Bible he will speak to us. But it will mean spending time reading it and meditating on it.

We have several metaphors of the Bible to show us the vital importance of doing this. It is like a **seed** (1 Peter 1:23). It gives us life – spiritual life. Further, it is life which we are able to plant in another person so God can bring them life, too. Paul says, "I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow" (1 Corinthians 3:6).

The Word provides spiritual **food**. We need nourishment. Some parts of the Bible are like 'milk' while other parts are 'meaty'. We need both, but as we grow in our faith we need to get our teeth increasingly into 'solid food' – the more difficult sections, the deeper teaching (Hebrews 5:12-14). Immature Christians are largely immature because they are not 'eating' regularly!

It is **light**. "Your Word is a lamp to my feet, a lamp on my path," states Psalm 119:105. God wants to provide us the wisdom we need for life, to lead us, to show us what is right and wrong – in short, all that is best for us. The Bible provides light in those often dark times.

James 1:22-25 describes God's Word as a **mirror**. When we look into a mirror, we see a reflection of what we are like. The Bible does that. Using a different picture but making a similar point, the Bible describes itself as a weapon – a "double-edged **sword**" which has the effect of judging "the thoughts and attitudes of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12). Often we don't recognize our sin but when we read the Bible, God's Spirit shows us what we are really like. We then have a choice - to address our sin before God or ignore it.

Paul uses this last metaphor in a different way when he describes the Word of God as "the sword of the Spirit" (Ephesians 6:17). The implication is that it is a weapon for defense and for presenting the truth about God. We can use Scripture to defend ourselves from the devil's temptations, and we can use it in seeking to share the gospel with those who aren't Christians.

We need to be like the psalmist in 42:1-2 who expressed his longing in this way: "As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?" Where are those streams of water? In God's Word, the Bible.

We were encouraged recently in a Sunday message to recognize that it's a new day. Let your new day be a determination – a commitment - to spend more time with God in his Word.

Michael Bowerman



Sunday School children with Rev. Chris during the Sunday morning service on 10th January while Roy McGregor prays.

Bali Church Reaching Completion

Nyoman Sumaryana, the young Indonesian pastor in Bali we support as a church, has written that the “prayer house” they have been building in his home town is about halfway finished and, despite being so, they have started



to hold services in it. In Indonesia, to refer to it as a “church” is very sensitive because of it being a predominantly Hindu society. To date, services have been held in Nyoman’s small living area which has inevitably become too small as many are coming to Christ through his and his wife, **Eke’s**, ministry. They also have a large kids’ ministry, and have plans to use the church during the day as an informal school, providing further opportunities to spread the gospel.

He has let us know that they need about \$10,000 to complete the project. Anyone who might wish to contribute to this should give their contribution

to **Betty Ann Mobley, William Walmsley, Diana Bodden** or **Janet Macmillan**.

He has also let us know that his son, **Ricco**, is doing well in his first year at seminary in Jakarta though, like many others, he is having to work on-line from home due to the pandemic which he does not find easy. He asks for prayer for his situation.



Home groups have begun again, continuing in the Sermon on the Mount. Everyone is encouraged to become part of one to enable them to increase their knowledge and Christian growth.

Anyone who would like to be part of a virtual home group should contact the minister or the church office.

Special February Birthdays

Happy Birthday to

Danielle Do Vale - 16 on the 3rd

Isabella Do Vale - 16 on the 3rd

Alistair Cowper - 50 on the 7th

Lillianna Evans - 21 on the 14th

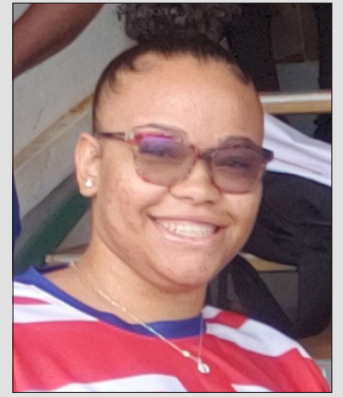
Aileen Macdonald - 99 on the 23rd

James Whittaker - 70 on the 27th

Youth Ministry Update

Youth Minister, **Roy McGregor** (pictured immediate right), has been appointed the new chairman for the YNLE for the Cayman Regional Mission Council. **Jennelle McLaughlin** (pictured far right) is the youth representative from Elmslie on the executive board.

There is to be a youth leaders' appreciation service on Sunday, 31st January 2021, at 5p.m. Leaders and volunteers who have worked over the years with our children and youth will be honoured during the service. Everyone is encouraged to attend as an indication of support to those who are committed to the children in our church.



Births

Congratulations to sisters, **Carol Braggs** and **Cathy Gomez**, both of whom, on 13th January, welcomed their new grandchildren who were born four hours apart!

Lincoln Jace Whittaker (first photo below) was born to **Leon and Christy Whittaker**, and **Freya Leigh Gomez** (bottom photo) was born to **Kris Gomez and Vicky Powery**. Lincoln is Carol's 5th grandchild and Freya is Cathy's 1st. The babies are two new great-grandchildren for **Mrs. Janilee Clifford!**



*Christmas Morning at Elmslie
(Photo credit: Richard Trull)*



Babies Blessed at Elmslie

A family of six children was blessed on the last Sunday of December. **Yoana Swaby Rodriguez** and **Matthew Brown** brought their children **Mauro, Amaury, Cattleya, Zyaire, Zyro** and **Zakai** to church, accompanied by a large number of their family and friends. Those standing at the front have been praying for and encouraging the family. **Susan and Madda Whittaker** especially have since 2018 been supporting the parents by helping to raise the three older children.



Calendar of Events

- January 24th-31st: Women's Fellowship Week
- January 30th: Women's Fellowship Annual Breakfast
- January 30th: Girls' Brigade training
- January 31st (5 p.m.): Youth Leaders' Appreciation Service
- February 5th-7th: Girls' Brigade overnight camp at Prospect
- February 21st (following the morning service): Elmslie Congregational Meeting
- February 17th: Ash Wednesday Prayer Summit
- February (date TBD): SSU Congregational meeting

Advanced notice:

- April 2nd (Good Friday): Baptisms. Anyone who wishes to be baptised should contact the minister, an elder or the church office

South Sound United News Update

Happy New Year from South Sound United! Many thanks for all you've been doing to keep us informed through the Family News. Very much appreciated, indeed.

SSU held its congregational meeting on the 22nd November 2020. In his opening remarks, **Rev. Chris** explained to the many congregants who had remained behind following the morning service that we had come together to give an account of our stewardship and to get any feedback from them on matters which may be of concern.

He gave a brief synopsis of how the church had been functioning and of some of the new measures which had to be introduced during the period of lockdown and over the entire year as a result of the COVID restrictions. The new treasurer, **Peter Anderson**, was introduced to the congregants and the outgoing treasurer, **Roger Hanson**, along with his wife **Rachael**, were thanked sincerely for their many years of devoted service to the church. They were presented with a token of appreciation from the board.

The leaders in charge of the different areas of service (finance, worship, missions, property, music, Sunday school and community care) each gave a brief presentation on what had been done during the year. Many questions were asked, thanks and praise given and the older members in particular expressed their appreciation and gratitude for the calls and the ways in which the church had reached out to them during the trying lockdown period.

It was noted that church attendance was almost back to normal and Sunday school attendance was also picking up.

On Saturday, 16th January, the SSU Leadership Team held its retreat in the Elmslie boardroom. There were presentations from Rev. Chris, **Juliet DuFeu** and **Otto Menko** who was the main presenter. All agreed that this was a very meaningful and well-received retreat with the outcomes going a long way to helping the SSU leadership team focus on advancing their roles in the church.

Jennifer Smith

William Turns 60



On 11th January, Elder **William Walmsley** celebrated his 60th birthday with some 40 family members and friends.

Recent Letter from Mount Olivet to the George Town Charge

Dear Mrs. Macmillan,

As a valued partner of the Mount Olivet Boys' Home (MOBH), we are extremely thankful for your financial support during Christmas, your gifts and prayers throughout 2020.

This indeed was a challenging year for the home. However, we were able to withstand the various shocks and have come through because of your support.

During the month of December, the home was able to pay off all its outstanding debts and started the new year afresh and this could not have happened without the assistance of the Elmslie Memorial United Church.

As we reflect on our many achievements over the last year, we would like to share the opening ceremony of the building with you as a worthy partner and will inform you at the appropriate time.

As a mark of our appreciation and your continued support, we will erect a sign at the entrance of the new road under construction depicting the Elmslie Memorial United Church. We will also rename the director's cottage, the Elmslie Memorial United Church Cottage.

The boys had a wonderful Christmas with lots of gifts and delicious meals and they remain a happy bunch with boundless energy. Some of our boys have gone out to school. However, most of them remain at the home but do some online learning.

We look forward to you joining us at our opening ceremony and wish for the church congregation a prosperous 2021 as we continue to do God's work in faith.

Sincerely, yours in Christ,

Patrick Newman, Director (Mount Olivet Boys' Home)