

The United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands



FAMILY NEWS

Elmslie Memorial Charge

Volume 213, February 2023

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Robert Young United
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8:45am

This World Is Not My Home

Many years ago I used to enjoy a song with the words of the first line, "This world is not my home, I'm just a-passing through," sung, I think, by **Jim Reeves** on a record (those of my vintage may remember Jim Reeves and also what a record was).

I was reminded of this song as I was reading about Abraham in Hebrews 11 where he is described as "a stranger in a foreign country" who "was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose builder and architect is God" (vv. 9-10). A few verses later, he is included among those early patriarchs who by faith journeyed through life as "foreigners and strangers on earth ... looking for a country of their own" (vv. 13 -14). The writer goes on to say that they – and all others who live by faith – long "for a better country – a heavenly one," one that "God ... has prepared for them" (v. 16).

I decided to search for other similar references in Scripture. I found Philippians 3:20 where Paul stated that "our citizenship is in heaven" and, in somewhat different language but with the same implication, that "as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord (for) we live by faith, not by sight" (2 Corinthians 5:6-7). I discovered that Peter understood life similarly. He exhorted his readers, "Live out your time as foreigners..." (1 Peter 1:17).

It was a good reminder to me of the reality of life and of its transience. On the one hand, God our Father has provided us with "every good and perfect gift" for us to enjoy while here on earth. On the other hand, few of us aren't affected in some way by suffering, by whichever way it comes to us. Whether it is physical or emotional illness, a broken relationship, an unexpected disaster or the inevitable ravages of time – and the list can go on – we need to remember that we live in a fallen world. Sin has not only affected our moral nature but our minds and bodies. In fact, as the Bible makes clear, it has touched the whole of creation. Paul states in Romans 8:20-21 that even "creation was subjected to frustration" by the Fall and is in "bondage to decay."

As Christians we live in tension between the 'already' and the 'not yet' of life. We live on this planet for a limited period of time and are bound by the restrictions of life. But, remember, as Christians we live by faith. We look to God to provide us his grace and wisdom. We have One who cares for us, protects us from the wiles of the Evil One and provides for our needs. And, as Christians, we recognise that this world is not truly – and certainly not permanently - our home. This is why we should not become too cozy. "Don't lay up for yourselves treasure on earth," Jesus warned.

Many of us long for things to be different. For some of us, it's our circumstances. For others it's their health. It may be we are struggling with old age. Some of us wrestle with our failures. It might just be an unhappiness with the way we are made – the way we are. We may even pray to God for change, but it doesn't always happen.

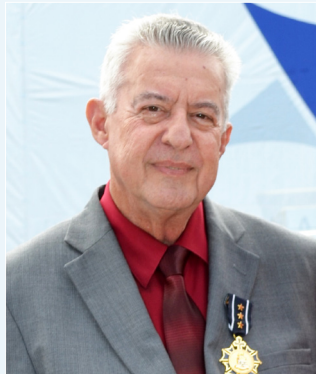
Rather than making us despondent, if we truly understand that we are "foreigners and strangers," this should, in fact, be an encouragement and a motivation. The Bible constantly reminds us to focus not on the here and now but on our real 'home'. Paul tells the Colossian Christians: "Set your hearts on things above" and again, "Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things" (3:1-2). When we do so, we will feel our spirits lifting.

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Update on Pastor John Macmillan

Most in the charge will be aware of the medical challenges **John** has encountered over the last several months.

Some while ago, he had one of his knees replaced. However, following through with physiotherapy proved difficult, and there was little improvement in his mobility. In September, he was rushed to Health City as one of his lungs had collapsed and his heart beat was highly irregular. He was fitted with a pacemaker and returned home but still continued to be making very little progress with his walking.



Soon after Christmas, he was again admitted to hospital and, following various tests, he was flown to Miami as a spot on his spine was detected, and he underwent surgery.

The good news is that it seemed to have been successful, the spot proved to be benign and John is beginning to make progress and has been transferred to a rehab. It is anticipated that he will be a few more weeks in Miami.

“John is improving slowly and is in good spirits,” says his wife Janet. “We’re not sure when he will back home, however. Thank God for his goodness and for answering our prayers.”

Continue to keep John, **Janet** and the family in your prayers.



NO THANKS ... I'VE GOT PLENTY

Baby Blessing at Elmslie



On Sunday, 15th January, twins **Samuel & David Theophilus** (pictured above with elders **Liz McLaughlin** (left) and **Lorna Reid** (right), their parents, **Deborah & Luke**, and sister, **Nissi**) were blessed by **Rev. Chris Mason**.

Profile of Members

The Family News has been published for nearly 20 years and during that time it has told the stories of many members of our congregations. All staff and each elected elder have been featured as well as others in the church. Their stories have been told because of their testimony and ministry and so as to encourage the church and enable us to get to know each other better.

Until recently, the George Town Charge consisted of Elmslie and South Sound United. However, with the recent changes, Robert Young has replaced South Sound United.

The Family News is inviting members in both congregations to suggest others for consideration whose stories might be shared. If you wish to do so, please contact either **Mike Bowerman** (bowerman@candw.ky; 925-4590) or **Terri Merren** (terri.merren@gmail.com; 926-2909).

congregational MEETING

Elmslie's Annual Congregational Meeting will be held on Sunday, February 12th, immediately after morning worship. All members and adherents are urged to attend.

After School Care

Elmslie is planning to restart an after school care programme. Details are below:

Begins: 30th January 2023

Monday - Friday 3:00 - 5:30pm

Ages: 5 - 11+ (Years 1-6)

Registration: Fridays and Mondays
4:30pm - 5:30pm in the hall.

Cost: \$20 day, \$95 week, \$350 month.

Two or more children: \$300 month.

Programme Content:

Devotions, Homework, Literacy, Numeracy, Arts & Crafts, Physical Activities

Includes a healthy snack.

Special February Birthday

Happy Birthday to

Aileen Macdonald - 101 on the 23rd

News from Some of Our Missionaries

Sam Rice writes that the work of *Gospel Growers* in southern Haiti has not been as significantly affected by the disastrous situation as in other parts of the country. The Christian schools have been functioning normally (and the children many of us support are hearing God's Word while attending) and the clinic in Dariol has been able to obtain medications. Further, the Christian radio station continues to broadcast across the region as solar panels were installed some years ago.



Pastor Bresile St. Germain phoned to say that he is continuing his ministry among the Haitian churches of southern Florida, despite advancing years. Two of his sons are directly involved in helping to alleviate some of the suffering in his home country, Haiti, and he hopes to visit for the annual convention of MEBSH (the Baptist Churches of Southern Haiti) in May.

Meanwhile, **Joan Page Bain** was able to leave the country for her usual Christmas break in Jamaica where she had her medical checkup and was also able to visit with her daughter **Jirene** who is teaching there. Her husband **Al** stayed in Haiti on this occasion where he continues to reach out to the many struggling people during this time of conflict and austerity.



Word has been received from **Walford Thompson** who with his wife **Jen** has been back in St. Vincent for several years. He writes, "We have been extremely busy this year engaged in relief and recovery efforts following the volcanic eruption on the island,



as well as with Covid and hurricanes." He also said, "We continue to support work in Haiti through a project called *Village of Hope* by providing hot meals in an area called Fontamara. The building of homes following the Port au Prince earthquake of 2010 ended in 2020. In that time, we were able to build 33 houses." Much of his effort at

this time is centred on the young church, Arnos Vale Covenant Assembly which he established and pastors. He expresses his great appreciation for the support and prayers of the members of Elmslie and hopes to visit Cayman sometime this year.

Paul and Christie Borthwick have had some challenges over the last year, with Christie recovering from leg surgery, continuing



restrictions to his ministry through Covid – although some of these were being lifted which enable some travel - and, most significantly, the devastation caused by Hurricane Ian in September to their house in Sanibel Island, Florida.

However, in his Christmas letter he expresses the joy that Christians have in all circumstances and the opportunities to again travel. He expresses his gratitude – in his words, for "your encouragement, your prayers, and your financial partnership in this ministry. We thank God for you!"

The Hindu island of Bali is blessed that one of its own, **Nyoman Sumaryani**, met the Lord while working on a cruise ship and has returned to be an evangelist and pastor there, along with his wife and family. One effective way he reaches the people of the island is through children's ministry. Over Christmas, the church held a party to which the whole community was invited and dozens came, most of them from Hindu and Muslim backgrounds. Nyoman indicated that back in 2008 he was kicked out of his village because of his Christian faith. However, ten years later, the chief encouraged him to destroy the Hindu temple where his family used to worship Hindu gods and, over this Christmas, the chief personally announced the Christmas celebrations Nyoman was organizing, encouraging all the villagers to attend. Nyoman comments, "The devil is defeated. As believers we just say thanks to God."



Mount Olivet Boy's Home Feeding Programme

The boys' home in Manchester, Jamaica, has been a special mission of Elmslie Church for many years, and we have been able to support it in a number of ways: with visits, with representation on its board in the person of **Phillip (Slim) Vassell** and, of course, with our finances. One special way has been through the "Dollar-a-day" Feeding Programme. In past years, many will remember that **Mrs. Olive Miller** used to champion this. The scheme invites members to contribute \$365 a year to be used specifically towards the boys' food.

It is that time again for us to make our contributions, and we are asking you to send them to the church office, either directly, by on-line banking (clearly marked) or through the envelopes you will find at the church doors. For those who prefer, they can be paid quarterly or monthly.



Not My Home (Cont'd from Pg. 1)

So, here is word of encouragement for all of us. As Christians, we know that we belong to God; He knows and understands us and, further, is ultimately in charge in all our struggles. Our sovereign Lord is also our heavenly Father. He only has our best in mind.

This world is just a temporary abode. We are travellers who have set up camp as we journey to our final home. The Bible promises for all Christians a new, eternal home, "a new heaven and new earth" which will be the eternal dwelling place for all Christians, a place where "there will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain" (Revelation 21:1-4).

We must, therefore, as with those saints in Hebrews 11 who journeyed in faith, "run the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith" (12:1-2). We live in anticipation of the 'not yet' but meanwhile we live by faith, rejoicing in the certainty we have of a God who is here in our 'already' but has something supremely better for us at the end of the race.

Are your eyes set on that better country which God has prepared for you?

Michael Bowerman

Request for Prayer Letters

A number of people in the church individually receive prayer letters from one or more of our missionaries. If anyone else wishes to do so, please contact either **Betty Ann Mobley** (mobley@candw.ky; 516-3679), **Diana Bodden** (elmmusic@candw.ky; 949-7923/916-4558) or **Mike Bowerman** (bowerman@candw.ky; 925-4590) who will ensure you get the specific prayer letters you request.



We congratulate **Zerah Allen**, daughter of **Lyn & David Allen**, who was recently selected to attend a basketball tournament in Toronto, Canada with the *Woman of Valor* team in February.



On New Year's Day, **Rev Chris Mason** prayed over the rings of **Myrtle & Oswald Thomas** who were celebrating 50 years of marriage that week.