



The United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands

THE FAMILY NEWS

Elmslie Memorial Charge

Volume 211, December 2022



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10:30am

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8:45am



Elmslie Celebrates 100 Years!

The last weekend in October saw the culmination of several months of celebrating the Elmslie Church building which has reached its 100th year. On Saturday night, 29th October, a banquet was held at the Lions' Centre, with a concluding service in the sanctuary the following afternoon.

The Sunday anniversary service, which was led by **Rev. Chris Mason**, was attended by several dignitaries, including His Excellency, the Governor, **Mr. Martyn Roper**, and the Premier, **Hon. Wayne Panton**, who both brought greetings, as well as the Moderator of the United Church, **Rt. Rev. Gary Harriott**, and the church's General Secretary, **Rev. Norbert Stephens**, who both came from Jamaica for the occasion. The Moderator delivered the sermon, reminding the congregation that the church's true foundation is Jesus Christ.

The service was preceded by the dedication of a plaque marking the occasion, with a time capsule being placed in the plinth. (See pictures on insert.)

The chairman of the anniversary committee, **Terri Merren**, commented that the preparation and activities involved a lot of time and hard work. She added, "Without the tremendous support from all of the committee members who worked together as a team, "these events would not have been possible. There often did not seem to be enough time in the day," she said, "but God said not to worry. He is good, and He made it possible to complete everything on time. At the end, we wanted to ensure that it was He who received the glory."

From the Pastor's Desk

There have been many different responses to the Covid-19 pandemic, with many disagreeing with the solutions taken up by one or another. We, as Christians, will not be strangers to these kinds of situations. Jesus, who was born more than 2000 years ago, brought about such a situation. Different people had different opinions and took different actions to that one single event.

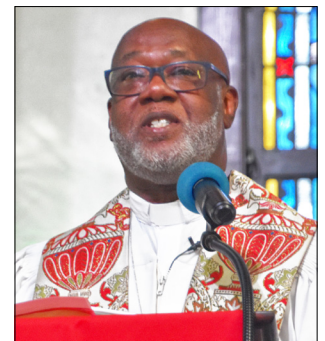
As we prepare ourselves for Christmas during this time of Advent, we need to go back to the Word of God. Jesus came for our salvation and He came to show us how to live as a child of our Father. Jesus is the Promised Word. He is the fulfilment of our Father's promise.

During this time of preparation, we invite you to dwell on the richness of the Word of God and be transformed. The Word of God is active and alive. We begin with the Word of God because it is truly Jesus that we are starting with. We begin with Jesus in the hope that we will not just end with Jesus but would have walked with him on our pilgrimage of life. Enlightened, nourished and strengthened by the Word, we hope you will be enabled to have a deep experience of the love of the Lord this Christmas.

Advent finds meaning only in Christmas and Christmas can only be discovered at its depth when we spend time pondering on the mysteries of the birth of our Lord Jesus through His revealed Word. Spend time removing distractions in order to give glory to our Saviour.

At the Incarnation, the Holy Spirit had an important role. Therefore, during this time of preparation we should ask for the strength and wisdom of the Holy Spirit to enlighten our minds and hearts so that we are ready to receive Jesus once again at Christmas.

I wish all of you a meaningful and joyous time of preparation with one another.





Elmslie Memorial United Church
PRESENTS

My Cup Runneth Over

A Tea Party in celebration of
Elmslie Church's 100th Year



SAT., DECEMBER 3, 2022

4:00 - 6:00 pm

Elmslie Church Hall

Cost: \$15

Tickets available in the church office
(949-7923) and after Sunday services
in the belfry

Quotable Quotes: Who was this Jesus who came to us at Christmas?

"The God who fills the universe imploded to be a peasant baby who, like every infant who has ever lived, had to learn to walk and talk and dress himself. In the Incarnation, God's Son deliberately 'handicapped' himself, exchanging omniscience for a brain that (had to learn) Aramaic..., omnipotence for arms strong enough to saw wood but too weak for self-defence. Instead of overseeing a hundred billion galaxies at once, he looked out on a narrow alley in Nazareth, a pile of rocks in the Judean desert, or a crowded street of Jerusalem" (Philip Yancey).

"The gap between the throne of God and the stable of Bethlehem is surely the widest chasm, certainly in terms of contrast, that there has ever been" (Jeff Lucas).

"Here is the scandal. God chose to invade planet earth in the person of his Son, what Christians call the Incarnation – God made flesh. He did so to rescue humans. He became man so we could become holy" (Charles Colson).

"The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood. We saw the glory with our own eyes, the one-of-a-kind glory, like Father, like Son, generous inside and out, true from start to finish" (John 1:14 The Message).

"The life of Jesus was bracketed by two impossibilities: a virgin's womb and an empty tomb" (Anon).

It would "always be winter but never Christmas" on earth if Jesus had not come (from CS Lewis).

"Christmas is the annual ceremony to the 'Unknown God'" (MGB).

"Once you see who Jesus is you only have two possible responses: rejection of him or submission to him" (Anon).

Olive Miller Memorial Building

After several years of planning, the Prospect Youth Centre was officially named and dedicated in memory of **Mrs. Olive Miller** on the afternoon of 14th November 2022.

This was an initiative of the Girls' Brigade, and a crowd of about 80, including many from the island's Brigade companies, as well as Miss Olive's family, ministers and members of the United Church congregations, assembled to hear tributes to her as well as some of the history of the Girls' Brigade in Cayman. Miss Olive, who died in May 2020, introduced its antecedent, the Girls' Guildry, to Cayman in 1946, with the name changing to the Girls' Brigade in 1968.

During the ceremony, the Brigade song, *This is GB*, written by Miss Olive on the Brigade's 65th birthday, was sung. The ceremony was followed by refreshments in the upstairs hall where there were also displays depicting the Brigade's 76 years in Cayman.



December Christmas Calendar:

| | | |
|-------------|--|----------|
| 11th | Youth Production, 'A Night in Bethlehem' | 5:30 pm |
| 13th & 15th | Cayman National Choir | 7:00 pm |
| 18th | Musical Morning | 10:30 am |
| 24th | Candlelight Service | 6:30 pm |
| 25th | Christmas Day Service (with RYUC) | 9:00 am |
| 31st | Watchnight Service | 10:30 pm |

Special December Birthdays

Happy Birthday to

Josie Knox - 91 on the 6th

Mary Bowerman - 75 on the 9th

Pulpit Exchange Sunday



Sunday, 20th November, was designated by the Council as *Pulpit Exchange Sunday*. **Rev. Chris** was therefore preaching at East End United while the preacher at Elmslie was **Rev. Euthman Wray** who completed the series on 'Stewardship' with an excellent message.

We also had a visit from members of the Pantry Ministry who sang a special song during the offering after the coordinator, **Harriet Vassell**, had introduced them. She gave a short explanation of the ministry and thanked the helpers. Currently, it meets every other Wednesday in the church hall, and between 40 and 50 come along to the service and for some soup, and leave with a bag of food. There are also about 10 others, shut-ins, to whom a bag is delivered.



Mission Trip to Cuba

A team of seven, including three native Cubans, visited the island of Cuba in mid-November. Led by **Chuck & Betty Ann Mobley**, the others were **Louis Sully**, **Evelyn Rocket**, **Antonio Sanchez** and **Emmanuel Gonzalez** and his wife **Dayana**. They headed for the town of Camaguey which is mid-island and the original home of the Cubans on the team. "We visited and worked with The First Baptist Church of Camaguey who welcomed us with open arms and offered us the finest hospitality," stated Betty Ann.

She continued, "As the desperate needs grow in Cuba and the situation becomes increasingly dire, we made our way with 56 pieces of luggage, thus providing just a little bit of help to meet these needs.

"Our trip was twofold: firstly, to take in the most needed items, namely, food and medicine, and secondly, to explore the options of how we can best partner and assist in the future."

Their mornings were spent meeting with the pastor and various departments and ministries of the church. In the afternoons they visited homes in the community, delivering food packages. Team members willingly blessed the homes they visited. She added, "As a team, we were also able to assist financially with repairs to a couple of desperate homes."

She finished by saying that they are in prayer and discussion regarding larger projects and needs.



Packing boxes in the church hall prior to the trip.



Tears were brought to team members' eyes when one of the church's intercessors smiled and referred to her humble dwellings as 'her mansion.'

Haiti: “One of the darkest times I’ve ever experienced”

This was a statement made to **Joan Page Bain**, the retired missionary we support in Southern Haiti, by a senior citizen, relayed to The Family News as we sought to catch up with her and her husband **Allemand** recently. “We are assured and are grateful for your prayers,” she stated. “I know you are aware of the serious problems we are facing in Haiti.” She then laid out some of the primary needs facing the country:

- The resignation of the prime minister
- Justice following the assassination of the president
- The opening of the main roads traveling north and south of the country
- Opening the gates to the fuel tanks in Port au Prince
- The rolling back of fuel prices
- Cessation of gang violence and kidnapping, and the dispensing of justice to those guilty

Joan and Al had spent six weeks in Jamaica in the summer when they had family time with their daughter Jirene, celebrated their 25th Anniversary, formally thanked their helper of 26 years as she went into retirement, and Joan was also able to visit her doctor.

The return journey in late August took five days “due to the distasteful and inconsiderate service of the airline,” she said. To make matters worse, on finally landing in Les Cayes, they were not able to get out of the airport because of the demonstrations and barricades on the roads. Further, there were no vehicles available. However, two motorcyclists took the risk of driving them round the back, across fields, together with their suitcases, and dropped them at their back gate. They were exceedingly happy to be home, although hungry!

Although they had a little food, they were without propane for three months and had to make charcoal from branches. Stores are closed and, anyway, mainly empty. The trucks to pick up the farmers’ produce are not allowed through so many people sit in the heat and the rain for days, and return home having not been able to sell anything. Food prices have escalated; rice when it is obtainable is twice the price it was. She said, “Prisoners are dying of starvation for lack of food. The little gas available can only be purchased on the black market and costs three times the usual price. People are having to walk many miles, and often money is demanded by the gangsters just for walking past a barricade!” Joan adds that she knows of the deaths of loved ones who simply cannot get medical help. “Looting and destruction are so bad in some parts,” she said, “that people are being burnt and killed, and women in labour are giving birth on the side of the road because the blockades prevent them from getting to a medical facility. Schools are closed because neither children nor teachers can reach.”

Joan was asked about the clinic. “Before I left for Jamaica, I was unable to continue cancer screening because of the inability to get specimen testing done in Port au Prince. Since I have been back, the clinic has been unable to open. I am still able to work among the children and women in the church, however.”

She ended by saying, “The darkest part of the night is just before dawn, and we are waiting and praying for the dawn.” She then quoted Psalm 27:4 as her encouragement, “I remain confident of this: I will see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living. Wait for the LORD; be strong and take heart and wait for the LORD.”

Clearly, this dire situation needs our fervent prayer.

Men’s Breakfast and Bible Study

Every first Saturday of the month, the men of the church are invited to breakfast in the church hall which is followed by a lively, interactive Bible study. This takes place between 7.30 and 9.00 am. A Caribbean breakfast is available for which a donation is asked, after which there is an informal discussion based on a Scripture passage selected for the occasion. This is open to all men of the church – old and young – and is something one member says is his favourite time in the month.



Condolences

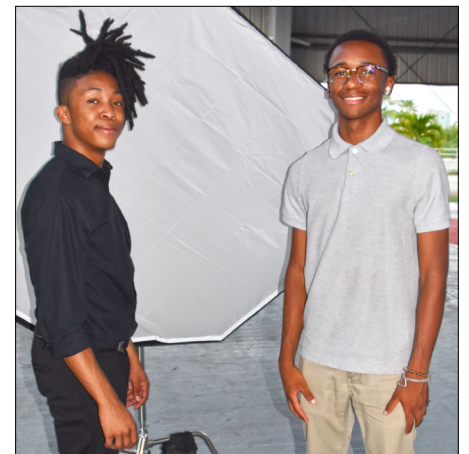
Our sincerest condolences to the family of **Janet Bodden Downs** who passed away on Sunday, 6th November 2022. Janet who was the mother of Elmslie’s **Lyn Allen** and her sister, **Samantha**, was a faithful member of Elmslie Church for many years and will be missed tremendously by her church family.

Cayman Culture Night



Despite the low turnout and support from the church, the Youth Ministry’s Culture Night held on 11th November turned out to be a wonderful event with performances by Cayman Islands Folk Singers, Radiance Dancers, both senior and junior, Cayman Islands National Dance Company and our very own dancers from Elmslie’s Dance Ministry. Those who were there can testify to that, especially the excellent food. A big thank you to all the participants and those who contributed to the event.

Banquet Fellowship and Fun







Highlights from the Sunday Anniversary Service

