

The United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands



FAMILY NEWS

Elmslie Memorial Charge Volume 224, January 2024

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10:30am

Robert Young United
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8:45am

Do We Get it Just Right?

Preacher Alistair Begg has stated that the key to selling real estate is “location, location, location.” He then says that the key to understanding Scripture is “context, context, context!” There are a number of scriptures people are fond of quoting which, however, are often not properly understood because they are not read in context. Here are four.

1. **“This is the day which the LORD hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it”** (Psalm 118:24 KJV).

Many quote this verse to encourage themselves or other Christians on those occasions when things are proving difficult and challenging. And that is not a bad thing to do! However, the psalmist is pointing to a particular event - the day when the Lord established his new temple. So, the preceding two verses state, “The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; the LORD has done this, and it is marvellous in our eyes” (vv. 23-24 NIV). These verses are quoted at least half a dozen times in the New Testament and in each case, the “stone” which “has become the cornerstone” is, of course, Jesus! Here is the “cornerstone” of the new temple, his church. So, when we recite the verse, we need to recognise that the reason we rejoice and are glad is because we have in Jesus, the one who, while rejected by the religious leaders of his day, gave his life for our salvation. Rejoice and be glad today because of that!

2. **“The name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe”** (Proverbs 18:10 KJV).

One of our favourite praise songs is Don Moen’s “Blessed Be the Name of the Lord” with the stanza, “The name of the LORD is a strong tower, the righteous run into it and they are saved,” taken from this verse.

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The Importance of Home Groups

You may ask the question as to why we have small groups - what we often refer to as home groups. The simple answer is that they provide an opportunity to come together to discuss the Bible and to learn more about the Christian faith in an informal, non-threatening setting.

To enable us to grow in our faith and seek to become healthy, mature Christians, one of the most important means is by getting to know our Bibles. Scripture is food for our souls, it provides light for our journey and it is the weapon we need in the warfare of life. Hence, every serious Christian will give priority to reading and studying it, just as anyone serious about their health will eat regularly and well. Such people will read their Bibles on their own, they will attend Bible studies, listen to good, biblical preaching and teaching - and they will take the opportunity provided by these interactive small groups.

Here at Elmslie, we have provided small groups for nearly 40 years. They meet weekly and every church member is encouraged to become a part of one.

One of the good things about the format of a typical small group Bible study is that not only can everyone contribute but no one has to! Many prefer to listen and learn quietly until they feel more confident in joining in the discussion. Further, being interactive, members can learn from each other. And, finally, many who attend find the friendships and fellowship in the small group something they greatly value.

The Discipleship Committee has decided to do a series of nine studies, taking us to Easter, on the Book of Nehemiah, starting on the 10th of January. At present, groups meet on Wednesday evenings but, if there is interest, a group can be formed at another time.

If you are not presently part of a group and would like to join one, contact the church office or one of the members of the committee: **Nigel Boothe** (926-5969), **Sharon Walmsley** (925-8671) or **Lorna Reid** (916-6795).

Shana: Elmslie's Newly Elected Elder

At a recent congregational meeting, **Shana Linwood-McLaughlin** was one of two new elders joining the congregational board of elders. Family News caught up with her to hear her story.

"I have been attending Elmslie since the age of 10 and have come to consider Elmslie my second home," she says. "I attended every youth programme at Elmslie where I learned much of what I know and believe about my faith. In each youth programme, whether Youth Group, Sunday School or Girls' Brigade, I participated by becoming a youth leader and helping in any area I was needed or asked to assist.

"Growing up, much of my time was occupied either by engaging in basketball with the Women of Valour Basketball Club or volunteering at church within the various youth programmes. I attended John Gray High School (JGHS) and the University of the Cayman Islands (UCCI).

After graduating from JGHS in 2012, I promptly journeyed to the United States where I pursued a degree in architecture at Vermont Technical College (VTC). After successfully finishing the bachelor's programme at VTC in 2017, I returned home and dedicated three years to professional work. I then travelled to Plymouth, England in 2020 to pursue my Masters in Architecture, despite the havoc the Covid-19 pandemic had brought to the islands and the rest of the world.

My interest in architecture took root during my tenure at JGHS when I enrolled in a technical class in Grade 10. Fuelled by my enthusiasm for art, craft, and a meticulous attention to detail, I not only found enjoyment in the class but also excelled in it. This experience prompted me to contemplate my future career, leading me to the firm decision that pursuing architecture would be the most fitting path for me. I managed to find summer employment with a construction firm during my undergraduate studies where I gained insight into the construction aspect of the building industry, enhancing my comprehension of the building process and the diverse professionals contributing to the successful completion of a construction project. Upon completing my bachelor's degree, I joined Design (Cayman) Limited in 2017, where I became a valued member of an exceptional team comprising of individuals who are passionate about their work. Their devotion to imparting knowledge and guiding me in my journey to enhance my skills as an architect has led me to persist in my professional growth and development with the company, even once I achieve licensure as an architect."

Shana was asked about her journey of faith and what her faith means to her. She replied that she first accepted Christ at

the age of 13, during an altar call at one of the Youth Group evening gatherings. "Learning that Jesus took away my sins and the clear representation of how my sins would no longer be remembered by God once I accepted Jesus was enough to convince me to fully commit my life to the one who gave up His for mine."

"Since then, I have lived every day desiring to draw closer to Jesus, striving to be more like him and seeking his wisdom, so that I can live a life that is pleasing to Him whilst drawing others to him. I am unashamed of my belief in Jesus and have shared my faith with my college and university peers, telling them about God's offer of salvation. My desire to draw closer to God has transformed my lifestyle and has guided me in many decisions that I would have otherwise regretted today. I look back and I see how many battles God has carried me through and all I can do is give Him thanks for giving me just the right amount of faith I needed at the time, like when I relied on God to cover my college tuition, trusting in Him during my transitions to new countries for education (where I knew no one) and choosing to follow His ways and plans over those of the world and my own.

"I have truly been humbled as I realise that the things I thought I wanted were not actually things that would make me happy. I thank God that He was in control of my life then and now. Every day I seek and ask God for wisdom so that I can do the things He desires me to do, encourage others with his truth and avoid being misled by the worldly wisdom."

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Cayman Keswick Soon Come

A slightly shorter Cayman Keswick will take place on the evenings of Sunday, 28th January to Wednesday, the 31st, and will be held at First Baptist Church. There will be no lunch-time sessions this year. The speaker will be the chairman of the English Keswick Convention, **Jeremy McQuoid**. Dr. McQuoid is the pastor of Deeside Christian Fellowship in Aberdeen, Scotland.

Cayman Keswick provides an opportunity for all the island's churches to come together to hear Bible teaching by a well-known and gifted preacher, and this year it will be celebrating its 50th anniversary.

The idea was conceived in 1972 with a meeting of ministers and other Christian leaders who were praying for opportunities to bring Christians of the various churches together. It was decided to request the Kingston, Jamaica,

Keswick Council to allow their speaker to come to Cayman following their convention and, in January 1974, the first Cayman Keswick was held in Elmslie Church with well-known British preacher, **Alec Motyer**, the speaker. Keswick has been held here every year since, with the exception of the year of the Covid pandemic.

The name 'Keswick' derives from a town in the Lake District of England where, almost 150 years ago, the convention was birthed. Today, about 12,000 Christians from every denomination and from all over the world meet in that town during the summer to enjoy some of the best Bible teaching available. Over the years, many conventions under the auspices of 'Keswick' have formed around the world, Cayman Keswick being one.



Cathy Gomez Commissioned

The commissioning of **Cathy Gomez** as Pastoral Assistant took place at the 8.45 am service on 3rd December at the Robert Young Memorial Church where she will serve. Those involved in the commissioning were the Chairman of Council, **Rev. Rohan Forrester**, RDGS, **Rev. Dr. Yvette Noble Bloomfield** and the charge minister, **Rev. L. Christopher Mason**. Cathy expressed her appreciation by stating, "I want to give God thanks for this new opportunity to serve him in this capacity. Robert Young is where my Christian journey began, and I feel honoured to have been asked to now serve as Pastoral Assistant. I thank my family for their support and I look to God for guidance."



Have You Tried the Adult Bible Class?

A year ago, the church introduced a 45-minute adult Bible class for those who wanted some additional Bible teaching. It is held in the church hall each Sunday morning before church. During the past year, there were three series: one on Romans 1-8, the next entitled "A Look at the Psalms" and, during the latter part of the year, the studies focused on Acts 1-10.

Starting on Sunday, 7th January, there will be a new series, looking at incidents in the lives of Old Testament Bible characters such as Abraham, Jacob, David and Esther. There will be time for a few questions at the end.

We invite all members and adherents to come along. We especially encourage Sunday school teachers who, in the usual way, are not in church for the sermon. We start at 9.30 sharp, finishing in time for morning worship.

Special Wedding Anniversaries

Congratulations to **Myrtle & Oswald Thomas** who will celebrate 51 years of marriage on 5th January and to **Olsie & Neals Godfrey** who on the 31st will celebrate 57 years.



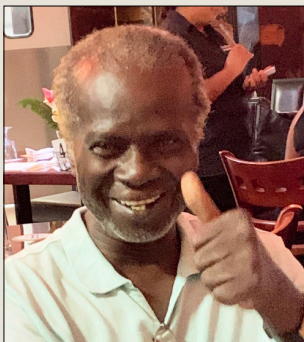
Condolences

Our sincere sympathy to the family of **Winston Wilks** who passed away on 10th December. Winston was the brother of **Alex O'Neil**. We also extend condolences to **Judy Ebanks** on the passing of her brother **Bossie Byrd**.



Farewell, Edward Rodney

Edward Rodney left Cayman on 11th December to return to his homeland of Guyana, having being in Cayman since 1999 - apart from a couple of "rollover" years during that time. Throughout this period he worked as a welder. Although a quiet man, he has been involved in the life and work of the church, helping with the Friday youth programme and, for a



time, assisting with the audio/visuals during worship services. He was also a Bible study leader of the small group which meets in the church hall and one of the most faithful attendees at the Tuesday and Saturday prayer meetings. Latterly, he had been suffering from a measure of ill-health so it was timely for him to return to his family in Guyana.

We wish him God's blessing and

we pray for him as he returns to his home country and church, the Guyana Congregational Union, one of the CWM churches of which our United Church is a part.

Shana (Cont'd. from Pg. 2)

Shana says that she has been involved with youth ministry since she was 18, despite the constant traveling to and from university since then. She found herself naturally returning to Elmslie and picking up right where she had left off. "I am compelled to persist in my involvement with youth ministry, not only because I believe it aligns with God's will but also due to my personal journey of encountering Jesus through it. My passion lies in guiding young individuals to discover and live for Christ. I believe the ministry plays a crucial role in encouraging them to step out of their comfort zones and to entrust their lives to God. Communicating this message to teenagers is challenging at times, especially since the world's influence often overshadows the godly exposure they require.

"I have found that youth ministry can become a "shelter" for young people, a place where they can take a break from the world and think about their purpose and God's immense love for them. They can critically consider the times in which they live. As Jesus passionately saved me and consistently exhibits great patience with me each day, my earnest desire is to extend the same compassion to the youth and children in the church. My prayer is that they, too, will feel God's love for them and desire to live their lives in total surrender to Him."

She went on to explain what she would like to see in the church. "We currently have children and youth activities, but we need a young adults' ministry and one for the elderly. For a church to be authentic it needs all its members to be connected and to feed off each other. The elderly need to pass down their wisdom and knowledge to the younger generations and to provide discipline and guidance in the way Christ would want them to live. There is a gap between the elderly and children. There are no intentional opportunities where they both come together to fellowship and learn from each other."

She continues, "The most obvious need is for a young adults' ministry. They need to be encouraged to become a part of the family of God. This age group is under pressure to start a family and to pursue a career that will allow them to live a comfortable lifestyle. How can God's people help young adults recognise the importance of drawing close to God and His family if the generations are not linked intentionally? I firmly believe that without this intentional linkage, the authentic growth of a church remains unattainable."

Shana was asked what she saw as the role and expectations of an elder. "The book of Titus has been instrumental in enlightening me about these principles" she explained. "Essentially, I hold the belief that elders ought to remain faithful to Jesus Christ, even in private. They should consistently seek God's guidance in their lifestyles, serving as spiritual exemplars to the community of believers. A life marked by prayer and devotion is indispensable - one that expresses praise and worship to God, inspiring others to actively pursue a closer relationship with Him."

"Whilst I wait for God to reveal to me how best I can contribute as an elder, I pray that I will be an encouragement to people to pursue God wholeheartedly. I trust that God will show me His purpose, having called me to this important responsibility and I will seek to trust and depend on Him to guide me."

Let us keep Shana in our prayers as she embarks on this key ministry in our church.

Do We Get It Right? (Cont'd. from Pg. 1)

We know from the New Testament that calling on the name of the Lord is the means of salvation. For example, Paul writes, "Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved" (Romans 10:13). The context in Proverbs 18:10 suggests that the last word should be "safe," not "saved." The Scripture here is saying that calling on God in times of trouble or danger is the means of finding safety, just as a tower in ancient days provided safety from the enemy. So perhaps we should change the word to "safe" when we sing the song - as, indeed, does Don Moen in his YouTube version!

3. "...**speaking the truth in love**" (Ephesians 4:15).

Many of us at some time or other have had someone come to us - and we may ourselves have done the same - to point out some inappropriate behaviour in our lives, preceding what they are about to say with, "I need to speak the truth to you - but in love!" Whether they do so with a genuine spirit of love might or might not be the case. However, the expression used in this scripture has nothing to do with pointing out someone's questionable behaviour. Rather it is about doctrinal truth. In context, Paul is emphasizing the need to teach and defend the truth of the gospel in light of those who are doing the reverse - perverting it. We are being called to do so, not in an abrasive, accusatory way but with an attitude of love. We must love the person to whom we are speaking as we love our faith. As 1 Peter 3:15 puts it, "Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect." Notice the last few words!

4. "**I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me**" (Philippians 4:13 KJV).

Growing up, I remember many young Christians, while giving their testimony, would quote this as their favourite verse. I got the impression from them that when someone became a Christian, nothing was impossible for them. Every temptation would be overcome. They would pass all their exams. They would get the job they applied for. And so on!

But what is the context when Paul wrote this? He was in prison. He was telling the Philippians that he had learned in life that whatever the circumstances he found himself in, he had complete confidence in Christ to look after him and to accomplish whatever it was that he, Christ, wanted him to do. So verses 12-13 in the NIV read: "I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength." Notice the word "this." It is not "things"! So what we can learn is not that we will get some super-spiritual strength that will overcome every obstacle of life but that, as Christians, wherever we find ourselves, whatever the circumstance, Christ by his indwelling strength will look after us and accomplish his will in our lives.

Michael Bowerman

CTLT to Begin Second Semester

The Centre for Theological Leadership Training will start back its courses on Saturday, January 13th.

There are three classes each week:

- Evangelism, Witnessing and Church Growth: Saturdays, 2.00-3.30 pm. Tutor: **Dr. Mike Bowerman**
- Prophetic Tradition: Saturdays, 3.30-4.30 pm. Tutor: **Rt. Rev. Dr. PJ Lawrence**
- Synoptic Gospels: Sundays, 4.00-5.00. Tutor: **Rt. Rev. Dr. PJ Lawrence**

Those interested can choose the whole programme, with a Certificate awarded at the completion of the nine courses over three semesters, or select individual courses, each of which runs for 10 weeks. Classes are taught by way of Zoom.

Contact the Administrator **Winston Vernon** at 324-8196 (email winalverctl@gmail.com), or Dr. PJ at 922-3902 (lawrencejoba@gmail.com) for further details.



George
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Christmas-
time
Highlights







