

THE FAMILY NEWS

George Town Charge

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44 South Sound Road
9:00am

From the Pastor's Desk

It's the start of a new year and gyms will see a spike in new memberships. Why? New Year's resolutions. Nearly every top ten list includes the following resolutions: getting in shape, losing weight or quitting smoking. Unfortunately, most of these resolutions don't last. Just wait until mid-February and you'll have a much easier time finding a parking space at the gym.

We can do the same thing as we follow Jesus. We can make big promises about the great things we plan to do for Him. We can try to impress Him with our performance. In the process we can forget two important facts:

1. God's love for us is dependent on His grace and not our performance. Scripture makes this very clear in Romans 5:8 – "God demonstrates his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." God's love for us was settled by Jesus' sacrifice on the cross.

2. This life is not about what we can do for God but what He can do in and through us. God does not need us (see Acts 17:25), but He still desires to use imperfect instruments like us to accomplish His God-sized purposes.

As we enter the new year, the question we do not need to be asking is what can I do for God. The better question is this: What does God desire to accomplish in and through me this year?



How About Sunday Morning Worship (Part I)?

by Michael Bowerman

The first verse of Ecclesiastes 5 is a decidedly thought-provoking one: "Guard your steps when you go into the house of God. Go near to listen rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools who do not know that they do wrong."

How do we approach worship-time? "Guard your steps," says the Preacher. One commentator suggests two words: 'reverently' and 'carefully'. And how should our worship be characterized once we get there? The NLT translates the second part of the verse by stating that a person is "a fool who doesn't realise that mindless offerings to God are evil." We are therefore to be attentive and thoughtful when we worship.

The subject of worship is a big one, and often controversial. We all know there are widely differing opinions about its forms, the songs we sing, the length of the sermon and so on. However, let me suggest some practical ways whereby worship time can become meaningful and, more importantly, be that which is acceptable to God. "True worshippers," said Jesus, "will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks" (John 4:23). Worship will be led by the Spirit and will be characterized by truth.

Prepare yourself. There needs to be an expectancy. Spend time with God before you come. Some will do so on Saturday evening. Whether that's a good time for you or not, out partying late won't help you have a meaningful worship experience the next morning! Others prefer Sunday mornings. If you are able to, obtain the order of service (you can ask the office to let you have one). It is helpful,

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Sunday Morning Worship (Cont'd. from Pg. 1)

in my experience, to read through and think about the songs. If you don't have them in a hymn book at home, you can usually find them on your computer. Read through and meditate on the scripture passage. Then pray – for the preacher, his sermon, the worship leader, the musicians, for members of the congregation who come to mind, and for yourself. One important thing to do in preparation for worship is to examine your heart. The Psalmist asks, "Who may ascend the mountain of the Lord? Who may stand in his holy place?" His answer: "The one who has clean hands and a pure heart..." (24:3-4). Unconfessed sin will be a barrier to your worship. When you truly confess, God promises that he "will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

Be on time; in fact, try to be there a little early. Remember, you are going to meet with God, and it seems to me disrespectful to him to be habitually late! Worship of God starts with the first word uttered; the first part of the service is no less important than the rest. Further, those coming late disturb others and their worship experience. In the church in which I grew up, it was usual for everyone to be in their seats at least five minutes before the service began. Looking round, I could see people quietly praying or reading their Bibles or looking at a hymn in preparation for the start of the service.

If we are serious about the desire to truly worship Almighty God, we will discipline ourselves in our preparation and our timekeeping.

Bring your own Bible to church. There is so much to be gained by following the scripture and the sermon in your own copy and so become familiar with it. You may want to take notes to think about later.

Next month: How is our worship to be characterized?

Special Presentation for Elmslie

Pictured below, Janet Macmillan receives one of two beautiful floral arrangements from Renita Barnes of the Cabinet Office for Elmslie Church in appreciation for always graciously hosting various national events at the church. The two floral arrangements have been placed in the sanctuary.



Special January Anniversary

Happy Anniversary to **Elitia & Eric Vassell** who will celebrate 10 years of marriage on the 23rd of January. May God bless you with many more happy years together.

Special January Birthdays

Happy Birthday to

Colin Meronuk - 40 on the 10th

Pamela Watler - 70 on the 19th

David Bodden - 30 on the 22nd

Bertranne Menko - 50 on the 25th

Condolences

Our deepest sympathy to **Joan Wilson** and family on the passing of her son **Nigel Phillips** on Sunday, 24th November.

New Home Group Series to Begin

The September 2019 edition of The Family News had an article under the heading, *Why Join a Home group?* In essence, it suggested that because Christians needed to grow in their spiritual lives and in understanding the faith, a small group looking at the Bible together in an informal way provided a great way to encourage these. Further, small groups meeting together regularly discover the real meaning of 'fellowship', and there are also opportunities to pray together.

A recent discussion at one group's meeting centred on the need for Christians to learn the important disciplines of the Christian life, like prayer, worship and reading the Bible with intent. The group made the recommendation that there be a series on **Christian Disciplines** in the new year.

It's not only a new year but a new decade! Why not make a resolution – prayerfully – to become a member of a group if you are not presently part of one? For some, it may seem a bit of a risk, being uncertain what to expect. However, few if any have regretted doing so.

There will be further information going forward so keep your ears and eyes open.

Training for Lay Leaders

A new institute for the training of lay leaders will begin this month. It is for all members of the United Church who are interested in being trained for service in the church. All prospective elders and lay pastors are required to undergo the training. Others may undertake training for their own exploration. There are three modules in all. Each module is open to anyone who desires to learn more about the UCJCI and/or wishes to be equipped to more effectively respond to the needs of the local congregation and its context. However, only those completing all required modules will receive certification from the International University of the Caribbean.

The complete programme will be held during the first half of the year and will be held on twelve Saturdays, starting January 18th. Classes will be 8.30 am to 4 pm, with a half-hour break for lunch.

Further information and a registration form are available from the Council office: phone 947-1963; email cirmc.info@yahoo.com or rdgs@cicujci.com.

Cayman Keswick

19th – 24th January 2020

Our speaker:

JONATHAN LAMB

(former Chairman & CEO of
Keswick Ministries)



Lunchtimes

MON-FRI

12.00-12.50

Family Life Centre,
Walkers Road

Evenings

SUN-FRI

7.00-8.30

Church of God,
Walkers Road

Living Water Ministry

by Sue Trull

Begun in 2007, the Living Water Ministry is directed at visitors to the island and local office workers. It provides an open sanctuary at Elmslie to visit, pray and meditate quietly during lunch or a busy day of sightseeing and shopping. Sometimes the need is for an ear or someone to pray for or with the person. Information about the history of Elmslie helps those who visit to appreciate the church building, and a message in the packet tells of the good news of the gospel.

Currently, those who serve include **Ann Pike, Susan Craig, Rachael Hansen, Karen Turner, Joan Ramoon** and me. However, active travel schedules among this group and extended periods of absence have challenged the ministry. We are especially grateful for Joan for her constant attendance, holding the fort for the rest of the team during a very busy summer season.

The ministry is looking for others to help. Are you interested in people and willing to welcome them into Elmslie? Whether you are outgoing or more reserved, please consider coming to join us for an hour or two during the day, especially when cruise ships are in. We'll pair you with a 'buddy' to show you the ropes until you are comfortable with the routine. Please contact the church office, Joan or Sue if you are interested in joining us.



Joan, with a cruiseship tourist from Poland

Cayman Keswick

The interchurch Cayman Keswick Convention is approaching its golden anniversary, having started in 1974, the first convention having been held at Elmslie.

The speaker this year, **Jonathan Lamb**, is a writer and teacher, travelling internationally as a minister-at-large for Keswick Ministries, a Vice President for the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students, and a training facilitator for Langham Preaching. He will be here with his wife, **Margaret**.

Jonathan came to faith at the age of five through the godly influence of Christian parents and a clear gospel presentation at a children's mission in London. He is very committed to Keswick Ministries' core priorities of **Hearing God's Word, Becoming like God's Son**, and **Serving God's Mission**.

Keswick will be held at the Church of God, Chapel, on Walkers Road, evening meetings starting at 7 pm, with lunchtime meetings in the Family Life Centre from noon to 1 pm.

The theme for the evening services will be **Dynamic Christian Living: Realism and Hope from 2 Corinthians**. The lunchtime series will be Songs in the Key of Life: **Wisdom and Encouragement from the Psalms**.

Child Sponsorship Programme

Sam Rice of Gospel Growers has written, "For several months now, Haiti has been paralysed by political confusion, disorder in the streets and societal breakdown. The opposition to President Jovenel has been relentless in its objective to remove him from office... The bottom line is that society in most of the country, particularly Port-au-Prince, has been shut down. School children are unable to get to school, outside vendors and merchants are terrified to frequent streets, public transportation is greatly impeded, and patients are blocked from getting medical assistance. The prices of everyday essentials are soaring due to the unrest and disruption in transport to and from the provinces..."

"We are happy to report that the seven schools we support have had no problem functioning as there is no unrest in the rural areas. At least this vital ministry is continuing without disruption." It is one of these schools that we in Cayman support with our sponsorship programme.

Sam is asking for your prayers for Haiti, especially for the current political crisis and chaos to be resolved. He says, "These poor people are barely surviving as it is, and this disorder is affecting the wellbeing of those least able to cope." Pray, too, for **Joan Page Bain**, her husband and the Christians in their part of the country.

Sam adds, "Your support is greatly needed and appreciated at all times, but especially now.... The staff of Gospel Growers is determined to fight on to bring the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ to the people of Haiti!"

Special Need

Several years ago, the church was able to help **Nyoman Sumaryana**, the Indonesian we support in Bali, with the purchase of a vehicle to help in his ministry. This enabled him to transport AIDS patients to hospital and in various other ways. The car has served its purpose and a new one is now needed. The new vehicle will cost about US\$16,500 of which \$9500 has been raised. If anyone feels they can help with this need, please pass it on to the office as soon as possible.

Elmslie Christmas Concert



SSU Christmas Concert

