

The United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands

THE FAMILY NEWS

Elmslie Memorial Charge

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Service Times:

Sundays
Elmslie Memorial United
10:30am
Prayer Service last Sunday of each
month 6:30pm

Robert Young United
583 Crewe Road
8:45am



Elmslie in 1976 Photo credit: Rhona & Shelley Banks

100th Anniversary - Myrtle Remembers

To commemorate the 100th anniversary of the building of Elmslie's sanctuary, the Family News team caught up with **Myrtle Thomas** who re-counted some happy memories of days gone by. Here is what she said.

I want to wish our home church, Elmslie, a happy anniversary and to thank God for letting us live long enough to share many good memories. Although I am 84 years old and my memory is getting dull, some good thoughts about Elmslie still linger in my brain of our years of worshipping here. We have been a part of this old church for over a half of its 100 years!

When I first started attending, we were part of a different church. There was a crusade at Elmslie which we came to, and my husband, **Oswald**, said he liked it because it was similar to his church back home.

I remember there was no parking in the church yard back then so we used to park over at the dock. When **Berkley Bush** decided to build, we found it difficult to find a place to park and so had to hustle and park behind Cayman National Bank.

I served in many different posts at Elmslie – usher, offering counter, reader, as well as helping with the harvest sales, the bazaar dinners and tea parties. I was also a member of the Women's Fellowship. This enabled me to go to Cuba five times on missions trips, as well as to Cayman Brac twice and Jamaica twice. One trip to Cuba was a special joy! My husband,

Oswald, came and was the only man with us 29 women. The Cubans thought him the bravest man in the world! Since it coincided with his birthday, he was put in front of the congregation which showered him with songs, gifts and all kinds of Cuban-style swing dance. It was the highlight of our trip.

Not only did I serve as an usher at Elmslie but I was the head usher for many years. I had the special pleasure of collecting the offering from the Queen during one of her visits. I will not forget the practice and the counting of steps so as to be orderly, ensuring the time for the service to be exactly one hour.

Ushers were told if someone were to faint or drop down a step, you were not to move from where you were in order to render help. This was because someone was standing nearby for any emergency and you would get in the way of the emergency crew if you tried to assist!

This was really a time in 1994 when royalty visited! I was blessed to get close to the Queen and to even talk to her, like an ordinary person. I also talked to the Duke, her husband.

I was invited to Government House to a reception held for them. They were 'jay-walking', crisscrossing left and right. It so happened that the Duke came to where we were standing and he asked



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Editorial: Fellowship or ZOOM?

Have you every wondered why the Early Church spent so much time together? The first record we have of them tells us "All the believers were together... Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts" (Acts 2:44-46). Did you notice the word together used three times?

Undoubtedly, it was for moral support and self-protection. The religious establishment was very unhappy with what had recently happened on the Day of Pentecost and these first Christians were vulnerable. There was safety in numbers.

But it had to be more than this. The truth is that they had all discovered something that had changed their lives. They had come into a new relationship with each other because of their faith in Jesus. They had found they had something in common. So, to go back to a few words earlier, "They devoted themselves... to fellowship" (v. 42).

Human beings are social animals and we need each other. Everyone needs friends! A lot of people join a social club or go to parties for that reason. Friday's 'happy hour' is less about going out for a drink than getting together with friends.

No less do Christians need to come together. I believe one of God's great gifts to his people is Christian friendship. We need each other another. Christians can't make it alone. A Christian loner cannot survive. We need Christian fellowship.

One of the unfortunate things which Covid-19 has brought about in the church is its negative effect on fellowship, and in particular in enabling Christians to physically come together. ZOOM has been a wonderful servant during these days when we have had to be separated. But ZOOM must not become our master, and we need to do all we can to return to meeting together. Of course, we must be wise and follow the rules and the protocols but, as God's people, we need to strive to restore that essential coming together, whether for Sunday worship, small groups or even committee meetings. The writer of

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How do we as a church reach across the divides and gaps, and cater to the needs of all demographics within our membership and the wider community?

That's a question the leadership of our church has been grappling with for some time now. One particular target group that has been at the forefront of our hearts, minds and prayers is the young adults - individuals between 18 and 30+.

We want no one to be left behind! So, we want to hear from you as to how we can better help you get involved and motivated in your Christian walk along life's journey. How can we help you build and strengthen relationships amongst the body, and ultimately lead you into a greater relationship with the Father?

We genuinely want to hear from you so please tell us what's on your mind.

Susan Whittaker: a "Mother in Israel"

Susan was born in George Town, the third child to **Mary Whittaker**. "Of my maternal siblings, I have an older sister, **Jacqueline**, an older brother, **Tony**, and a younger sister who is well known here at Elmslie, **Madda**," she says. "Even though I was born in George Town, my mother's family originated from Old Man Bay in North Side. As such, we spent many weekends staying and visiting with our extended family there. However, as a person who loves to be where the action is, I somehow spent most of my time in George Town where I grew up amongst my paternal family members."

She indicated that in those days attendance at church was not an option nor up for discussion and, therefore, she attended Elmslie where many of her friends and family also attended, and she participated in the various youth activities. "The most enjoyable activities at that time were Sunday School and Christian Endeavor. These were led by **Zoe Boddin**, **Thomas Myles** and the late **Noel Johnson**. Around the same time, I began attending Girls' Brigade under the leadership of **Louise Dibben**, **Iva Good**, **Effie Johnson** and **Emily Seymour**. However, it was Koinonia (formerly Christian Endeavour) under the leadership of **Betty Ann Mobley** and **Sharon Walmsley** where the spiritual changes and commitment started to germinate and then take root. These were a significant contribution to my journey in becoming a Christian.

"Fast forward to today and my activities at Elmslie now include leading the Junior Section of the George Town Girls' Brigade, being a volunteer teacher for VBS, and as a member of the Adult Dance Ministry and Sunday School. I also get involved with any other task I am called upon to assist with."

Susan is a teacher at the Lighthouse School (LHS), one which cares for children with special needs and where she has been for over 30 years. She is passionate, she says, about working with children. "I started to assist at LSH in 1989 and was encouraged by **Mrs. Marge Quinland** and **Mr. Oswell Rankin** to pursue a degree in teaching so as to become qualified. They noticed the way I interacted with the children and the positive responses it yielded. Working with children with special needs can be difficult but, on the other side, it brings me fulfilment and joy. Whilst it can be said that some people - if they are lucky - may see some fruit for their hard labour, one can see growth and progress in amazing and measurable ways working with children."

An area of ministry that many are unaware of is that of fostering children in need. Susan continues, "One evening whilst getting ready to leave work, I was asked to keep two sisters for a night. Suffice it to say, that one night's stay extended to a couple of years!" *Continued on Page 4*

Haiti Sponsorship

For many years, Elmslie and others have been sponsoring a child in rural, southern Haiti. This was the initiative of Sam Rice and his mission, Gospel Growers. The sponsorship allows children to receive an education in a Christian school for a year. They will not only get good education but will also hear the gospel. The children are encouraged to keep in touch with their sponsors by sending regular coloured pictures with a letter.

It is time again to collect sponsorships for the coming school year. The cost is KY\$200 or US\$240 per child. Please make payments to the church office or place the money in a clearly marked envelope and put it in the offering. The deadline to receive these will be the end of June. And please remember to pray for these children.



Quotable Quotes on the Holy Spirit

June 5th is Pentecost Sunday when the church celebrates the giving of the Holy Spirit as recorded in Acts 2. Here are some quotes about him.

“Pentecost: the power of God on the people of God to accomplish the purpose of God” (Anon).

“Fullness of the Spirit is not the mountain top experience, the top rung of the ladder. In fact, it is just a bottom rung, the position from which a life lived in the will of God begins and develops” (Charles Price).

“To be ‘filled with the Spirit’ is figurative. It refers to a person in relationship. It simply means to allow the Holy Spirit to control you – everything... all of you” (Anon).

“Why do I need to be filled with the Spirit? Because I leak!” (Dwight L Moody).

“The chief mark of being filled with the Spirit is moral, not miraculous. It lies in the Spirit’s fruit, not in the gifts” (John Stott).

“The Holy Spirit’s work is to convict of sin, not to cleanse us from it. That is what Christ’s blood has done. ‘What can wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus.’ Once we are forgiven and cleansed, then God will fill us anew with his Spirit” (Anon).

Myrtle Remembers (Cont'd. from Pg. 1)

us what kind of work we did in Cayman. We told him that we were gardeners. He was surprised and said, “How can you garden in Cayman? I heard that there is no soil in Cayman.” I told him that I made my own soil from tree trimmings and dirty sand – making a compost heap. The nicest part at this point was a tall man standing behind me. The Duke asked him what work he did in Cayman. The man said he was a carpenter and the Duke smiled and said, “I guess you too made your lumber to work with.”

Then, in less than a minute, the Queen crossed over and stopped in front of us and asked the same question, “What work do you do in Cayman?” We told her we were gardeners and she said to us, “You know what they call me? ‘Elizabeth, the Rain-maker.’ I am good for your garden.” She said that when she went to Jamaica, they told her it usually never rained there but “it poured while I was visiting, and here

Antonio & Amelia's Family Visits from Cuba



On Easter Sunday, 17th April, Elmslie welcomed a few special visitors, parents of Elmslie's Music & Worship Minister, **Antonio Sanchez** and his wife, **Amelia**. Pictured during a family outing above left are **Antonio** with his parents, **Antonio & Ana Luisa** and Antonio's nephew, **David Anthony Williams**. On the right are Amelia and her mother **Ibon Lahera** with Amelia & Antonio's boys, **Daniel** and **Aaron**.

Commissioning of Elders



Elders, **Joan McField** and **Lorna Reid**, were commissioned by **Rev. Chris Mason** on Sunday, 1st May

I am in Cayman and someone has to walk and hold a large umbrella over me. So, that's why they call me 'Elizabeth, the Rain-maker.'”

We remember Elmslie back in the early days when it was far from what it is today. I even remember the man who designed the blocks for the church. He had to go to Jamaica to learn to use a mould to hand-make them, one block at a time. Similar blocks can be seen at the post office and library.

I have met and been served by eight ministers during my 53 years at Elmslie, with **Rev. Chris Baillie** serving the longest in that time.

I want to give thanks for God's blessing that we have lived long enough to celebrate our church's 100th anniversary. It is still located in the same place through all of the changes. But, what ever happened to that big church bell? I don't remember hearing it for a long time!

Elmslie Welcomes Cuban Musicians



Pictured above with Rev. Chris on Mother's Day, **Antonio Sanchez** introduces Cuban musicians, **Lisvany Cisneros** and **Roberto Cortes**, who recently arrived in Cayman to prepare for the 100th Anniversary Celebrations' *Jazz Under the Stars* event.

News from Sam Rice

Sam, who was a missionary nurse, served in the Dariol area of South Haiti for many years, running a clinic, establishing Christian schools, training pastors and creating a Christian radio station in the mountains.

He writes from Pittsburg where he now lives, caring for his elderly mother.

"My birthday was on April 29 and I was 69 years old - and feeling it. I'm the 24/7 caretaker for my Mom and loving the time with her. However, I'm exhausted! She is having hospice help and has an aide who comes twice a week to bathe her and a nurse who monitors her twice weekly.

"I'm so thrilled that God picked out the very special Haitian youth that I disciplined while in Haiti and who are now running the ministries - the clinic, the radio station, and keeping a check on the seven churches and their schools which we assist.

"Two youth retreats were held in February and that brought about a number of baptisms in April.

"Everything is functioning as though I were there, only it is the Haitians running the ministries."

He indicates, however, that the lawless situation in Haiti, with gang warfare everywhere and terrorist group holding up travellers and stealing their money and possessions, is making it very difficult for everyone. One effect has been the difficulties getting medical supplies for the clinic.

Elmslie and a number of others have been sponsoring children at the Christian schools of the area for many years, and it is at this time of year that sponsorship money is requested. It is collected in June as it covers the school year, from September. The amount requested is KY\$200 (US\$240) per annum, and this can be placed in the offering, clearly marked, or handed in at the church office.

Sam ended by saying he continues to be very thankful for Elmslie's support.



Tanzania Team Commissioned



The team of four, consisting of **Bishop PJ Lawrence**, **Mike Bowerman** and **Andrew & Debreca Rollins**, who will be travelling to Tanzania in East Africa on 18th May 2022 were commissioned during the Sunday morning service on 8th May.

Editorial (Cont'd. from Pg. 2)

Hebrews is clear when he wrote that we should not neglect "meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another..." (10:25). That is fellowship.

Listening to services by social media is second best because we are missing out on something critical to God's family, the church: fellowship. Yes, there may be a few who may need to continue to stay away but we must be careful that we are not using this as an excuse rather than a reason. It requires less effort to switch on Facebook or Zoom than to go to church or small group.

May God give us wisdom and discernment during these challenging days.

Susan Whittaker (Cont'd. from Pg. 2)

Whilst the girls were with me, I was invited to attend parenting workshops and, ever since then, the rest has become history! On an island so richly blessed as Cayman, it is astonishing to realize the number of children who are in need of nurturing and spiritual care. Having no children of my own, I have taken up the mantle to foster because I want to make a positive impact on the lives of our Caymanian children. I have been fostering children for more than 15 years.

There is a great need for foster parents in the Cayman Islands because the population has grown exponentially over recent years and, coupled with job loss, the rise in the cost of living, property forfeitures, many children live in highly dysfunctional homes."

"If I were to consider the gifts that we are given, I would say that mine is hospitality as nothing blesses me more than receiving and helping my family and friends, even strangers - in fact, anyone in need.

Susan ends by listing some of the things outside of work and church ministry she particularly enjoys. "Importantly, I am a coach for the Special Olympic Cayman Islands (SOCI). My hobbies include dancing, listening to music, traveling, socializing with family and friends, visiting the elderly and talking to Jule on the phone," she says. (Most at Elmslie know of Jule who often comes to morning worship in his special chair, sitting close to Susan by the belfry!)

Pray for Susan in her strategic job and important and sacrificial ministry to some of our more vulnerable and needy children.

