

The United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands



THE FAMILY NEWS

George Town Charge

Volume 178, March 2020

Minister:

Rev. L. Christopher Mason

Music & Worship Director:

Antonio Sanchez

Youth Minister:

Roy McGregor

Office & Mailing Address:

48 Harbour Drive
George Town
P.O. Box 494
Grand Cayman KY1-1106

Elmslie Website:

www.elmsliechurch.org.ky

Elmslie E-mail:

elmslie@candw.ky

Office Staff:

Janet Macmillan, Administrator
Diana Bodden, Office Assistant

Office Hours:

Mondays - Fridays
9:00am - 5:00pm
Phone: 345-949-7923

Council Website:

www.unitedchurch.org.ky
Council e-mail cicucjci@candw.ky

Bethesda Counselling Website:

www.bethesdacounselling.ky

Service Times:

Sundays
Elmslie Memorial United
48 Harbour Drive, George Town
10:30am and 6:30pm

South Sound United
44 South Sound Road
9:00am

Changes in the Regional Mission Council

Rev. Rohan Forrester, minister of Bodden Town's Webster Memorial and North Side's William Pouchie Memorial congregations was elected as the new Chair of Council at a special meeting held on Tuesday, 4th February 2020. He replaces **Ms. Angela Martins** who served as Chair of Council from January 2015 - January 2020.

Council also elected three new Vice Chairs. **Dr. Liz McLaughlin**, Elder and Congregational Secretary of the Elmslie Memorial Church, was elected as the Vice Chair for Leadership. She will spearhead the Mission Action Team that is responsible for the UCJCI's training of lay leaders.

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Synodical Annual Sports Day

On Saturday, 8th February, for the first time in over 30 years, young athletes from Elmslie represented the Cayman Islands Mission Council at the Synodical Youth Sports Day at the Naranda Sports Complex in Discovery Bay, St. Ann, Jamaica. Leading the group were **Roy McGregor, Joan McField, Jennelle McLaughlin** and **Chrysannae Mason**. Those participating were **Hannah Robinson, Johanna Dixon, Renadra Smith-Powell, Nicola McLaughlin, Alyssa McField, T'Keyah Dreckett, Jaydon McField, Jacob Kelly** and **Antoine Rockett-McLaughlin**, with Elmslie taking home four gold, two silver and three bronze medals!

Of special mention, in addition to placing first in the dominoes competition, both male and female teams took first place in the Class IV 100m, as well as the girls taking first place in the Class IV 200m. The boys took second place in this event as well as in the 4X200m. Third place went to Elmslie in the youth leaders' race, tug-a-war and the lime and spoon race.



Mission Statement: The George Town Charge exists to love God, love others and make disciples.

Deaths

Our heartfelt condolences to the family of the late **Nanette Bernard** who passed away on Tuesday, 11th February 2020. A Service of Thanksgiving was held at Elmslie Church, on Saturday, 22nd February.

How About Sunday Morning Worship? (Part 3)

By Michael Bowerman

I stressed in the previous articles that we must be serious and thoughtful about our worship. This will impact our preparation, and it will characterize the time itself. But worship should also be joyful and 'life-giving' (though I am not fully sure of the meaning of this expression I often hear!).

Another important characteristic of worship is reverence. This is being aware of the nature of the God whom we have come to worship and, equally, recognizing ourselves in the light of this. We need to start with a sense of the holiness of God and our sinfulness before we dwell on his grace and love. We like to sing, "Come, just as you are, to worship..." but, in point of fact, we can't come "just as we are"! Like Isaiah, following his vision of the Lord, we should cry out, "Woe to me!... I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips and I live among a people of unclean lips..." (Isaiah 6:5). So, most worship leaders will have a time early in the service where acknowledgement and confession of sin is made, seeking God's forgiveness. We do this because we cannot have fellowship with a righteous God with unconfessed sin. The Psalmist stated, "If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened" (Psalm 66:18). The fact is that God has invited us to approach him, but only through Christ. It is because of his work on the cross we have been forgiven and thus can enter his presence. As 'saints who sometimes sin' we must come to receive again forgiveness and cleansing, not now for salvation but for fellowship. Remember, it was to *Christians* that John wrote that "if we confess our sins, God... will forgive... and cleanse..." (1 John 1:8-9).

Every part of a service should be worship. That is why we should never seek to 'entertain' (not even as children) as entertainment draws attention to the person and the performance whereas worship should *always* point to God and seek his honour.

Even the offering should be seen as an act of worship and therefore should be done prayerfully and thoughtfully. To see the bag coming round and dig into our pockets or purses for a couple of dollars is hardly a way of expressing our love and gratitude to the God who has saved us!

In most Reformed traditions as ours, the sermon is the peak of worship. Everything else leads to this. The music, prayers and scriptures should all be a preparation for worship in preaching – the 'proclamation of the Word.'

This is the time when we should listen for God to speak to us. He does this through God's servant, using God's Word to address God's people with the authority and power of God's Spirit.

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New Elders

Several new elders were elected by the Elmslie congregation at a meeting held in late January. The Family News, as is its custom, has interviewed each and will feature them in the next issues.

Eric Vassell

Eric is a born and bred Caymanian. "I wouldn't have it any other way," he insists. He grew up going to Elmslie Church with his mother. "Even when I didn't want to go, I didn't have a choice, living under my parents' roof!" he states.

His early days were typical of many Caymanians. Although he kept to himself a lot, he had a small circle of friends, got involved with a few groups and loved the night life - sessions, movies, functions and so on. "I still do, to a degree," he adds.

God used two events to grab his attention. "I got hit hard emotionally and psychologically when a friend of mine was murdered and that's when a transformation started taking place with my journey towards God," he says. Not too long after that, my best friend died of kidney complications. It was a major blow in my young life." That transformation reached its climax the night he attended an outreach event at Elmslie and gave his life to Christ, just before he left Cayman for University. "It was a great time in my life. God surrounded me with a bunch of people in university who were instrumental in helping to keep me grounded in the faith and to grow as a disciple."




Eric is married to **Elitia** and they recently celebrated their 10th anniversary. She is a teacher at the Clifton Hunter High School and God has given them two little boys, **Eze** (7) and **Emry** (6) who attend Cayman Prep. "They are doing very well and we're proud of them." When asked about his own work, he replied, "I work in the IT industry for the Cayman Islands Government. I am an IT professional amongst a team of application developers - and no, I don't fix computers!"

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Elders Commissioning at Elmslie - Sunday, 2nd February. Pictured front row left to right are **Liz McLaughlin, Suzanne Livingston, William Walmsley, Eric Vassell and Anthony Bodden**, with Rev. Chris and Astra Christian standing behind.



Special March Birthdays
Happy Birthday to
Nickerson Godfrey - 85 on the 23rd
Janet Crawshaw - 55 on the 3rd

Special March Anniversaries
Kristen & Ian Charlery -
10 years on the 20th
and
Evelyn & Nickerson Godfrey -
61 years on the 28th

Proposed Mission Trips
Mount Olivet Boys Home, Jamaica: Easter weekend (9th – 13th April)
The Global Missions Committee is planning this trip. As there is very little time before the trip, it is important to express your interest as soon as possible as flights are filling up fast.
A team leader is being sought.
One project planned is the restoring of a chicken coop at the home.
For other details and costs, contact **Roy McGregor** (925-6734), **Diana Bodden** at the church office (949-7923) or **Betty Ann Mobley** (516-3679).
Haiti: 15th – 25th May 2020
This trip is being planned under the auspices of Hand and Way International.
Cost (excluding airfare) will be \$750.
Primary focus:

- Restocking the *Elizabeth Hurlston School of Sewing*
- Building three additional classrooms

 Further details are available on the church notice boards.
Contacts (phone or WhatsApp): **Ann Sully** (327-3661), **Patty Rivers** (925-1689), or email inquiries to handandway.international@gmail.com.

Neesah is Honoured
Congratulations to **Neesah Godet** who was recently honoured by the Ministry of Education, Youth, Sports, Agriculture and Lands as a **2020 Proud of Them Honouree** for her academic achievements.



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Ash Wednesday Convocation

Gatherings took place in all four regional mission councils of the United Church on Ash Wednesday to replace the usual annual convocations. The theme for the day was *Evangelism: the Heartbeat of the Church*. Here in Cayman, the venue was Savannah United, with about 100 in attendance.

The morning started early with a time of quiet meditation, after which there were discussion groups on evangelism. This was followed by a worship service at which Rev. Chris spoke. The regions then joined together by livestream for the final section at which the Moderator, **Rt. Rev. Gordon Cowans**, led communion. During the service, the new chairman of Council, **Rev. Rohan Forrester**, was inducted, the Executive of Council prayed for and **Rev. Harry Bodden** was recognized and honoured as he celebrated 50 years as an ordained minister.



Changes in Council (Cont'd. from Pg. 1)

Rev. Donovan Myers, Minister of the John Gray Memorial Church, was elected Vice Chair for Discipleship. He will spearhead church growth and development.

Rev. Chris Mason is the new Vice Chair for Evangelism and in this year when the UCJCI has declared that “evangelism is the heartbeat of the church”, this Mission Action Team will be introducing “Operation Andrew” as one of the tools of evangelism.

Council will shortly name a new member-at large to replace Dr. Liz McLaughlin. This executive, as per the UCJCI Constitution, will continue the term started in 2018 and there will be a full slate election at the January 2021 meeting of Council.

New Members for South Sound United



On Sunday morning, 26th February, SSU welcomed eight new members to its congregation. All have been attending membership classes which were run by **Rev. Chris** at Elmslie. Pictured, after being welcomed into membership are, from left: **Andrew Millar, Eric and Laetitia Bush** (with their children), **Nadine Gray, John Boccaccio, Jennifer Hiley, Natalie McCann, and Alistair Cowper**.

Sunday Morning Worship (Cont'd. from Pg. 2)

Sermons must therefore be scriptural (and the congregation needs to have their Bibles open). A good sermon will provide both teaching and preaching; providing understanding of Scripture *and* its application. It will tell the congregation what they should do but, equally important, how they can do it.

A good sermon will elicit a response which may, or may not, be in the form of an 'altar call'. There needs to be an opportunity for responding, whether with a time of quiet or a hymn. Some churches have dispensed with a final hymn so as to allow for personal reflection so there is actually quiet at the end of the service. One important thing to keep in mind when it comes to hymns of response is to sing them only if you mean them. I wonder how many honest people there are during the singing of *All to Jesus, I surrender* or *Take my silver and my gold, not a mite would I withhold*!

It is my prayer that some of the things said have helped you to think more carefully about whether you are among "the kind of worshipers the Father seeks" (John 4:23).

Next month: What about Communion? (Final in the series)

Thank You from the Ogstons

When we retired two years ago we decided that we would revisit all of our past churches so we were very glad that we were able to come out to Grand Cayman in January. We were delighted that we were able to see so many friends from our time on the island in the 1980s. We were particularly appreciative of the opportunity to join you in worship over three Sundays at Elmslie, South Sound and Robert Young. We were very touched by the warmth of the welcome which we received throughout our stay and particularly by the lunch and the most unexpected gifts on our last Sunday. It is good that the Elmslie Service is broadcast every week on Facebook and our children and grandchildren were able to join us there, too.

We were glad too that we had time to explore the island and revisit favourite places like Seven Mile Beach and Smith Cove on a number of occasions. We could not believe the development which has taken place since our last visit in 2000 and in many cases we are really comparing with when we lived on the island. We were struggling to drive in the heavy traffic and find our way around when so many familiar landmarks had disappeared or were swamped behind much taller buildings.

We were safely back at Heathrow when our children sent us news of the earthquake. We could not believe that only 19 hours after we left one of the worst earthquakes in the last 200 years had struck! We were glad to see that damage was minimal. Nevertheless, we hope that you are recovering from the shock. It would take time for the implications of it all to sink in. Compared with the 1980s, the internet gives us up to the minute news of Grand Cayman. We realise that it must have been a very alarming experience for everyone and we continue to pray for all of you.

Eric Vassell (Cont'd. from Pg. 2)

When he was asked what his vision and desire for the church were, he replied, "Unity, and for everyone to be in one accord, committed to the church and the ministries to which we are called to serve. We also need to impact and reach the needs of the youth, the hurting and the needy in all areas of their lives."

He admits to being uncertain as to what his specific spiritual gifts are, whether service, listening or helping but, he says, "I enjoy working behind the scenes and getting things done. On returning home from university, I was immediately drafted to the audio/visual ministry at Elmslie and have been happy assisting in that in whatever ways I can." Elitia, too, is very involved in the life and work of the church.

Eric admits to missing "the good ole' days" as he sees Cayman rapidly changing. He is concerned about marriages, family and family life within the Cayman community. "We are heading down a grim trajectory," he states.

When asked what his interests outside of church were, he stated, "Football, football, and more football!"

We are pleased to see Eric take his place as a member of the elders' board. He needs the prayers of all the church in this awesome responsibility to which God has called him.



Yoan Garcia, gracing the Elmslie congregation with music on 16th February

Several of Elmslie's young musicians performing during the Sunday morning service on 16th February