

The United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands

# THE FAMILY NEWS

George Town Charge

Volume 198, November 2021

## How Well Do You Know God?

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

South Sound United  
44 South Sound Road  
9:00am

If you have been following along in the current small group Bible studies, you would have come across one of the most extraordinary statements of trust in God in Scripture – the words of King Jehoshaphat addressed to God, found in 2 Chronicles chapter 20 verse 12: “We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you.”

He and his nation were facing a crisis. A coalition of tribal armies had joined forces to attack them. The Bible describes these forces as “a vast army” (v. 2), a threat that brought great fear. We are told that when Jehoshaphat heard the news, he “resolved to inquire of the Lord” and brought his people together to do so (vv. 3-4).

No one is immune from the crises of life. Sometimes they come up on us unexpectedly. Many times they cause us considerable alarm and often they arrive with no seeming solution.

So it was for Jehoshaphat. But in his prayer we find the secret by which he could conclude with that amazing expression of faith in his God: “We do not know what to do, but our eyes are upon you.”

If we look carefully at his prayer, we can see his understanding of God. He asks three questions relating to him. Firstly, “Are you not... God (v. 6a)? He recognized the nature of the God in whom he was placing his trust. He was the “God who is in heaven”, the ruler “over all the kingdoms of the nations,” and the one whose “power and might... no one can withstand...” (v. 6b). In other words, his God was all-powerful and sovereign, and was therefore in control of all the events of life. That was

Jehoshaphat’s God; that is my God and your God when the crises arrive. Why do we doubt him when they do?

Secondly, he asks God, “Did you not...” (v. 7a)? He reminds God – and his people - of how God had helped them in the past, driving out the enemy so as to provide them the land in which they lived. He listed some of the wonderful blessings that were theirs, and God’s promise to help them again in times of distress and crisis (vv. 7b-10). Jehoshaphat knew that the God

who had provided for them and saved them in the past was not now going to abandon them.

Why do we forget so easily what God has done for us? For starters, he has saved us and brought us into his family, with all the blessings that entails. He has protected us and provided for us in the past. So, why do we doubt he will continue to do so, even if we “do not know what to do” when the crisis comes upon us?

Thirdly, he asks of God, “Will you not...” (v. 12a)? His confidence in God is such that he knows that those arrayed against him will face God’s judgement for the way they were treating his people, especially in light of how God had spared these same tribes years before.

*Cont'd. on Page 3*

## Special Wedding Anniversary

Congratulations to **Tami & Richard Corbin** who will celebrate 20 years of marriage on 10th November.

## Special November Birthdays

### Happy Birthday to

**Sharon Walmsley - 60 on the 8th**

**Wanda McField - 55 on the 12th**

**Dania Cayasso - 93 on the 14th**

**David Whitefield - 75 on the 21st**

**Kristen Walmsley - 30 on the 30th**

**Peter Macmillan - 16 on the 30th**

# SSUC and COVID - the Second Time Around

No one has to be infected to be affected by COVID-19. Schools have been closing suddenly or extending their holiday periods, restaurants are closing or struggling as a result of lost or dwindling clientele and workplaces, if they haven't been forced to close down, have to be finding new strategies to keep their business going. Many jobs, especially in the tourism industry, have been lost. The Government set out mandates such as mask-wearing, hand sanitizing, social distancing measures, all in an effort to keep the virus from spreading. Just about every area of our lives has been feeling the effects of this pandemic.

The church is no exception.

SSUC is considered to be a small church with the average weekly attendance being about 70. This number went down drastically during the first bout of COVID which Cayman exited with a very high degree of success. We were doing a good job of getting back to normal: mask-wearing was no longer mandated, Sunday school



was thriving again, the choir was practising and performing and attendance, like tithing, was just about back to former levels. We continued to hold Board meetings regularly via Zoom and even had an in-house congregational meeting. The Bible study numbers and meetings via Zoom were very encouraging and doing quite well.

place as soon as announcements were made about community spread of COVID and hence the need to reintroduce regulations and tighten up certain preventative measures.

SSUC moved quickly. We, the Board, listened out for the up-to-date press briefings and the new regulations. Board meetings were held frequently in our effort to keep up with the latest Government decisions and mandates, even on Saturday mornings and, based on discussions and decisions made at these meetings, letters were drafted and sent out to congregants advising and informing, updating and mandating. We really 'pumped up' our communication with congregants. However, services continued to be held at 9:00 a.m. and communion continued to be offered but Sunday school classes were scrapped. Seating in church was rearranged to comply with the mandated 6 ft. social distancing, the wearing of masks, hand-sanitizing and social distancing were recommended and then mandated with provisions for hand sanitizing put in place at the entrance to the church. Very importantly, SSUC started to make services available via Zoom. Congregants were advised by e-mail that services from Elmslie Church were live-streamed on Facebook and YouTube and were given a list with details which could help them to access any United Churches in Cayman that live-streamed their services. Included in the information sent out was guidance on how to submit their tithing through the bank. Creation of a SSUC website and the requirements for having one is being seriously looked into by our IT team.

Congregants were advised to stay at home if they or someone in their household were experiencing coughing or flu-like symptoms, and to seek medical attention if necessary.

Of course, there were pros and cons to all the measures which we had to put in place. Social distancing meant a considerable reduction in the numbers who could be accommodated in church. This was reflected in the reduced weekly offering. Saying no to Sunday school meant that the children were no longer attending and, consequently, neither did their parents. While Zoom provided a platform for Board meetings, much thought now has to be given as to how to hold a congregational meeting, catering for as many as possible. *Cont'd. on Page 4*

## Mandy Bernard Turns 100!



Best wishes to **Mandy Bernard** who celebrated her 100th birthday on Tuesday, 12th October 2021.

Alas! Having learnt from the first period of COVID, and so as to comply with the Government regulations, the church moved quickly to put things in

## November Small Groups

There is to be a short series of four small group Bible studies, starting November 10th. These will be held in the hall for everyone on this occasion. It is hoped that members will attend in person. However, for those unable to do so, the studies will be Zoomed as well.

Details of the studies are still to be worked out. They will be published in Thursday's Family Life and announced at the Sunday service preceding the study.

## Baby News at Elmslie

Congratulations to **Dean and Ting Lai Mencius** on the birth of their daughter, **Anni**, on 4th October. Anni is the baby sister of **William** who celebrated his birthday on 3rd October.



Congratulations also to **Debo and Luke** who are the happy parents to twin boys, **Samuel and David**, born on 21st October. The twins' big sister is **Nissi**.



## How Well Do You Know God? (Cont'd. from Page 1)

Jehoshaphat was prepared to leave the outcome to God, even though the attacking armies were repaying evil for good by coming to drive them out of their land (v. 11).

So often the distress we feel or crisis we face is caused by people who wish us harm. The temptation is to defend ourselves with words or actions that arise from our human nature. Sometimes we seek revenge. Jehoshaphat knew better: "We have no power to face this vast army that is attacking us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you."

If we know God like Jehoshaphat clearly did, we will recognize that our greatest weapon is faith, a faith that places the crisis in God's hand. So we will pray. And as we pray, we will recognize God for who he is, for what he has done for us in the past and how he will bring victory and justice at the end.

What crisis are you facing right now? It might have to do with family, finances, health or be work-related, or any number of other things. If you know Jehoshaphat's God, you can confidently place it in God's hand.

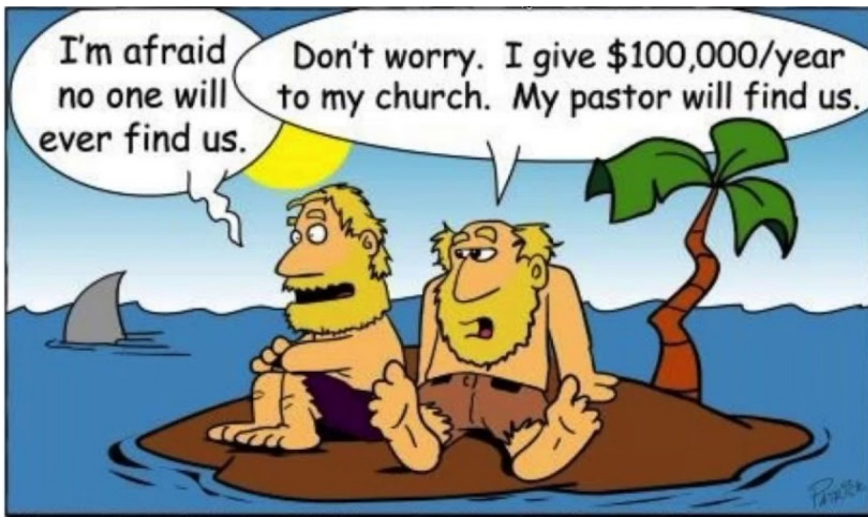
The nation of Judah were to receive an encouraging response from God through a priest: "Do not be afraid or discouraged because of this vast army. For the battle is not yours but God's (v. 15). He then added, "Stand firm, and see the deliverance the Lord will give you" (v. 17). That can be my experience; that can be your experience!

**Michael Bowerman**

## Youth Sunday at Elmslie



Pictured above are **Gabby Webb** (left) who led the Youth Sunday service at Elmslie on 24th October, and **Cathy Myles** (right) who very eloquently delivered a powerful message from the book of Joshua on making Godly choices. We are proud of our youth and the work the Lord is doing in their lives.



## News from Council

A Cayman Islands Regional Mission Council meeting was held on 25th September. Below are a number of matters of special interest to the members of the George Town Charge.

The General Secretary and the Chair of the Church and Ministry Committee, **Rev. Euthman Wray**, informed the Council that there are three candidates who will be ordained shortly in Jamaica. Of special significance to the George Town Charge is that one of them is **Anna Kay Henry McGregor**, wife of our youth minister, **Roy McGregor**. Roy plans to fly to Jamaica on November 5th, and the ordination will be held at Webster Memorial Church in Kingston on the 11th. We especially congratulate Anna Kay on reaching this momentous milestone in her life, and both of them on reaching their first anniversary on 17th October. We pray that God will continue to bless and use them, and that he will clearly lead them along the pathways of his will in the days ahead.

The Central Mission Council in Jamaica has approved the naming of the building that houses the conference area and the dormitories at the Prospect Youth Centre **The Olive Miller Memorial Building**. The event to name the building will take place on Remembrance Day, Monday, 15th November.

Back to Church Sunday, held on 12th September, had only 696 persons in attendance in the Council churches. This was largely due to the impact of the community spread of COVID-19 in the week preceding that Sunday.

With **Rev. Donovan Myers** having returned to full pastoral responsibilities at John Gray Memorial Church in West Bay on 1st September following his prolonged illness, the RDGS, **Rev. Yvette Noble Bloomfield** ended her tenure there at the end of July and **Rev. Louis Sully** at the end of September. Rev. Donovan has also been appointed to the Board of Governors of Cayman Prep and High School.

Relief funds have been sent to both St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Haiti from offerings by the churches here. The amount of KY\$8,684.75 was donated to SVG and \$5,991 to Haiti. Council urges continue prayer support for these two countries.

On Sunday, 31st October, there is to be a pulpit exchange in the Council United churches.

## Presbyterian Church Anniversary Celebrations

The planning of the anniversary celebrations for the Presbyterian Church in the Cayman Islands and the building of Elmslie's sanctuary commenced on 17th October with the first meeting of the Planning Committee being held that evening in the church hall boardroom. Although a definite date has not yet been determined, October of 2022 is the month set for the weekend of celebrations, with a few events (including fundraisers) being held leading up the main events. Be sure to mark your calendars for October 2022 and stayed tuned for more information to come. If you are interested in serving on the committee or any of the sub-committees, please contact **Terri Merren** at [terri.merren@gmail.com](mailto:terri.merren@gmail.com) or 926-2909.

## SSUC and Covid (Cont'd. from Page 2)

On the positive side, congregants were still able to access the Sunday morning services by Zoom or watch a recording of the service later on. Outreach to congregants, especially older ones, continued by phone and they could be reassured and made to understand that they were not forgotten.

The Bible Study classes continued to grow and provide very meaningful discussions and food for thought. Numbers joining in on Zoom reached as many as 16 at times. The group, which is led by Bud and Clive, met up for an enjoyable and well deserved social at a restaurant in Camana Bay between series and before tackling the present, interesting study on the Book of Isaiah.

Despite all of the above, the mission of South Sound United remains the same: circumstances may change but the call to make disciples remains and is constant.

**Jennifer Smith**

