

The United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands

# THE FAMILY NEWS

George Town Charge

Volume 186, November 2020

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Sundays

Elmslie Memorial United

48 Harbour Drive, George Town  
10:30am and 6:30pm

South Sound United

44 South Sound Road  
9:00am

## What is Our God Really Like?

I recently saw a poster on Facebook which stated, "I need 10,000 people to say, 'God is good – all the time!'" We've all chanted it in church: "God is good!" calls out the leader. "All the time," comes back the reply. "All the time," he repeats. "God is good!" we respond. I've even seen it abbreviated so all we now need to say is, "GIG – ATT; ATT – GIG!"

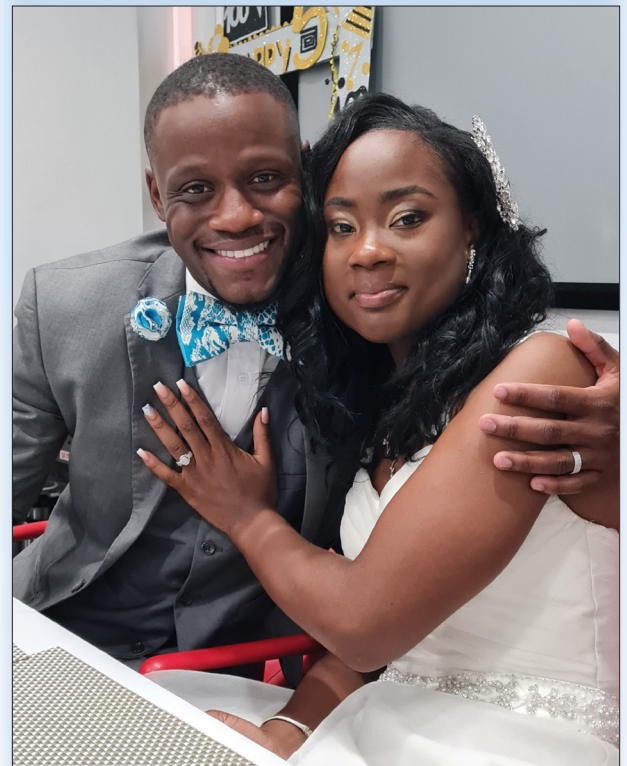
I wonder whether we always really understand let alone think what we're saying. What do we mean by 'good' in referring to God? We all acknowledge that God was good to us here in Cayman when the recent storm took an unexpected turn to the south and we therefore dodged the bullet. But would the people of the Yucatan hit by that same storm, by then a hurricane, have thought the same? Would a mother with a child just diagnosed with cancer? Or the family man with five children to feed when he lost his job and income because of Covid? Did the Jews who suffered the Holocaust call out, "God is good – all the time" from their concentration camps? In other words, do we feel the same thing about God when bad things happen to us?

What, indeed, do we mean by the word 'good'? It has such a wide and general meaning. For example, we wish people a 'good' day. We state that ice-cream tastes 'good'. We often hear speak of someone at their funeral as having been a 'good' person and new parents might talk about what a 'good' baby they have. It set me to wondering what we truly mean when we chant, "God is good" in church. Is he good in the way we often use the word in everyday life?

He is good; he is good *all the time*. That is his character. The Bible speaks many times of God as good. But how do we state this and really mean it when we don't feel it? When we're hurting inside? When life has dealt us a blow and inside we're screaming, "Why, God?"

I heard an online sermon recently which has helped me. The preacher pointed to another of God's attributes as a more helpful one on which to reflect: God is *righteous*.

## Mr. Roy is Wed!



Congratulations to our Youth Minister, **Roy McGregor**, who wed **Anna-kay Henry** at Hope United Church in Kingston, Jamaica on Saturday, 17th October. May the Lord bless you and keep you, Roy and Anna-kay, as you start your new life together as man and wife.

*Continued on Page 3*

## Special November Anniversaries

Happy Anniversary to

**Lana & Alfredo Bonilla** who will celebrate 5 years of marriage on 7th November.

## Special November Birthdays

Happy Birthday to

**Dania Cayasso**  
who will be 92 on the 14th

## Mount Olivet Boys' Home Faces Crisis

Following a Zoom meeting with **Mr. Patrick Newman**, Director of the United Church's home in Jamaica, Elmslie's Global Missions Committee is seeking to address some big concerns the home is facing. The primary ones are these:

- There is a serious financial shortfall. Synod is having to cut back on their funding. This is creating a major challenge.
- There has been no schooling since March. This poses a real problem for the boys. The home currently has 41 boys who attend 17 different schools and other educational institutions, and the director has to travel to each to collect work for them. Further, they have just four working computers at present, although ten have been promised them by a private company. Quite a few of the boys are computer illiterate.
- With the above in mind, there is a need for educators to come and teach the boys the basics as some of them are unable to read.
- There have been some fairly serious disciplinary problems.

Elmslie has been the home's biggest financial supporter and the committee is seeking ways to help further. One suggestion has been to double the donation we make. Another initiative is to try to source at least five tablets.

The construction of the new building to accommodate the boys, sponsored by the Johan Blake Foundation, is well advanced and a deadline for March 2021 is expected for occupation. That is good news. The construction of a new playing field has also started.

"There's a cry from the director's heart for the boys," states **Betty Ann Mobley**, committee chair. "He needs moral and spiritual support which needs to come from the whole United Church."

We need to pray about this situation. Those who are able also need to consider practical ways we might meet some of the immediate needs.



## Are You on the Mailing List?

The Family News is distributed in two ways: the church office has a Family News mailing list, and those on it receive their emailed copy at the end of the month preceding the dated edition. Second, copies are printed and placed at the various doors of the two churches to be picked up by those who do not receive an email copy.

If you do not currently receive an emailed copy but have access to email, please let **Janet** or **Diana** in the office know by emailing [elmslie@candw.ky](mailto:elmslie@candw.ky) or [elmmusic@candw.ky](mailto:elmmusic@candw.ky), or phone 547-6306.

## A Word from Scripture for Our Times

*"Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who call darkness light and light darkness, who call bitter sweet and sweet bitter. Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes and clever in their own sight."* Isaiah 5:20-21

## Prayer in The Church

We are often reminded of the importance – indeed the centrality – of prayer in the life of the church. While it is true that many probably pray for the church on their own – for the minister, its leadership, the young people, its ministries and the needs of different members – there is no substitute for the church coming together to intercede before God. In fact, churches which are serious about their prayer life are the ones who are more likely to be growing, both spiritually and numerically.

This is a reminder that there are three specific times in the week where there are opportunities to come together to pray:

- Tuesdays at 8 pm
- Wednesdays at noon
- Saturdays at 7 am

Perhaps you might choose a time which suits you best and undertake to meet with the few who already come together.



## What is Our God Really Like? (Cont'd. from Pg. 1)

When we think about it, righteousness is, in fact, the foundational attribute of God. It tells us that God is true and just and fair in everything. Abraham clearly understood this when he stated, "Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Genesis 18:25) and Moses wrote about God, "He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he" (Deuteronomy 32:4).

So, God is righteous – all the time! Everything God does is right, whether we like it or not and whether we understand it or not.

Because he is righteous, he is good – not in the way we think of good, like the weather or ice-cream might be, or even in the sense we use it of a person. God is entirely consistent in his nature. He is a holy God and, yes, he is loving, merciful and gracious, too. He is these because he is righteous. So, a righteous God punishes sin, but he also offers salvation to sinful people. A righteous God allows a storm to strike but averts it somewhere else. We may not understand this but we have to hold on to this truth in order to be able to trust God in both the good and the bad times. Job recognized this when he said, "Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?" (Job 2:10).

The cross, the centre of our faith, demonstrates this righteousness. On the cross we see, on the one hand, mankind's sin punished as Christ bore his holy Father's punishment and, on the other, we see his love towards sinners, offering them forgiveness. On that cross we see God's righteousness in its breadth as his justice and his love meet.

As we understand God as righteous, we come to understand that he is good but he is also sovereign. When there are things we don't like, let alone understand, we can trust him that he remains true to his righteous character. As **Walford Thompson** used to say, "All that God allows in our lives is ultimately for our good, his glory and the advancement of the kingdom."

As we understand God as righteous, we understand that he is also holy. His love is not an unconditional love. That is why the message of the early apostles in Acts was not, "God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life" but "repent and believe." A righteous God cannot turn a blind eye to sin and unbelief. The God who "so loved the world" by giving his Son and thereby offering "eternal life" demands that we believe (John 3:16). If we don't, his righteousness will lead to our condemnation. Verse 18 following makes this very clear: "Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son."

He is, indeed, a righteous God.

So, when we are asked to state, "God is good – all the time", we will do well to consider he is foremost a righteous God. What a feeling of security and confidence we can have when we face those times when bad things happen to us knowing that God always does the right thing.

Maybe next time in church we could say, "God is righteous - all the time! All the time - God is righteous!"

**Michael Bowerman**

## Women's Fellowship Prayer Gathering



Members of the Women's Fellowship of Elmslie Church gathered in the church hall for the 'Day of Prayer and Fasting' on Sunday, 18th October 2020.

## Condolences

Our deepest sympathy to the family of **Cristabel Viart** who died on Monday, 21st September, at the age of 98. Ms. Cristabel was closely related to the **Myles** family and in fact lived with and was lovingly cared for by **Francilla Myles** in her latter years. Ms. Cristabel was born a Bodden in Bodden Town and lived in Cuba many years with her husband and son. After they passed away, she returned to Cayman and worked for many years at Wholesome Bakery. Our prayers are for comfort for all who loved her.



## THE BIBLE AND HOW TO UNDERSTAND IT

YOU ARE INVITED TO...

A series of four practical workshops on why we should read the Bible and how to do so with understanding. The workshops will seek to answer questions like....

Why is the Bible important?

How did the Bible come to us?

Why can we trust the Bible?

How do we read it so that we can be sure what it is telling us?

How can we understand difficult passages?

What about the Old Testament?

**Mondays, November 2nd, 16th, 23rd, 30th**  
**Time: 7:30 - 9:30pm**  
**Place: Elmslie Church Hall**  
**Workshop Leader: Michael Bowerman**

"Work hard so you can present yourself to God and receive his approval. Be a good worker, one who does not need to be ashamed & who correctly explains the word of truth". 2 Timothy 2: 15 NLT

These workshops are designed for **everyone** who is serious about knowing the Bible and living by it

## Cayman Prep and High School Priority Registration

If you have a child that is either hoping to join the school in KG in 2021/22 or attends another pre-school, primary school, high school or is home-schooled and you would like them to potentially join Cayman Prep and High School in the 2021/22 academic year, please note their priority application deadline is 31st October 2020. Call 949-9115 or 949-5932 for more information.



## Harvest Sunday Donations

God loves a cheerful giver and 'give' you surely did! Below are items donated to the EAT ministry at the Sunday morning service. Monetary gifts were also received. Many thanks to all who contributed!



## Harvest Thanksgiving Sunday

On Harvest Sunday at Elmslie, plenty of treats were in store - not just in the way of food and monetary donations for the needy but also for the congregation who were blessed with a wonderful message delivered by **Rev. Dr. Yvette Noble-Bloomfield**, musical performances by the Elmslie Church Choir, a special by **Antonio** (on keyboard) and **Denys Carbo** (on saxophone), as well as a performance by young trumpeters, **Peter Macmillan**, **Samuel Webb** and **Antoine Rockett** (pictured below) and a solo by **Gabby Webb** (pictured far right). Also, **Rev. Chris** delighted the children when he addressed them during "children's time," speaking on the importance of being thankful for our many blessings. Pictured right are **Liyah Ebanks Burton**, **Jathena McLaughlin** and **Justice Ramoon Dixon** who read the scripture.

