

The United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands

FAMILY NEWS

Elmslie Memorial Charge

Volume 222, November 2023



Minister:

Rev. L. Christopher Mason

Music & Worship Minister:

Antonio Sanchez

Youth Minister:

Roy McGregor

Office & Mailing Address:

108B Seafarers Way
George Town
P.O. Box 494
Grand Cayman KY1-1106

Elmslie Website:

www.elmslieunitedchurch.ky

Elmslie E-mail:

elmslie@candw.ky

Office Staff:

Janet Macmillan, Administrator
Diana Boddén, Office Assistant

Office Hours:

Mondays - Fridays
9:00am - 3:00pm
Phone: 345-949-7923

Council Website:

www.unitedchurch.org.ky
Council e-mail cirmc.info@gmail.com

Bethesda Counselling Website:

www.bethesdacounselling.ky

Service Times:

Sundays
Elmslie Memorial United
10:30am

Robert Young United
583 Crewe Road
8:45am

Are We in the Last Days?

The recent events in Israel and Gaza have led to renewed questioning as to the imminence of Christ's return. Many believe these *have* to be last days. They point out that when the disciples asked Jesus what would be the sign of his coming and of the end of the age, he told them there would be "wars and rumours of wars" and that "nation (would) rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom" (Matthew 24:3-8). Clearly, many believe, the events in the Middle East clearly indicate the rapture is very near.

This kind of question has been asked throughout church history because, at any time you think, these 'signs' have been apparent. Some notable Christian leaders have gone as far as predicting the date of the rapture. **William Miller** set the date as 21st March 1843 and, when it didn't happen, revised it to a year later. His theology gave rise to the Advent Movement. The founder of the Jehovah's Witnesses, **Charles Taze Russell**, prophesied Jesus' return in 1914, and then again in 1918 and 1925, and finally decided that there was a secret, unseen return at that time. One most recent prediction was by a man called **Harold Camping** who set the date as 6th September 1994, revising it to 21st May 2011.

The truth is, we don't know when Jesus will return. In fact Jesus told his disciples that even *he* did not know: "But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father" (Matthew 24:36).

Are we in the last days? The answer is yes because, as Peter stated in Acts 2, these days started on the Day of Pentecost. Have the signs immediately preceding Jesus' return increased? If you look back over the past 2000 years, the answer is an open one.

Continued on Page 4

Harvest Sunday 2023

Thank you to all who gave generously at our Harvest Service which was held on 15th October. Items received will be used in Pantry Ministry which meets every other Wednesday at 10:00 am and caters to approximately 70 people, 15 of whom are shut-ins who receive meals weekly.



New Prep Principal

Cayman Prep and High School welcomed **Mrs. Sacha Strand** as the principal of the primary section of the school at the start of the school year. She is here with her husband **Andrew** and two of her three children, **Reuben** who is 16 and **Imogen**, 13, both of whom are at the Prep. Her oldest, **Isaac**, has remained in the UK where he is at the University of Bath studying Aerospace Engineering. Andrew has retired after 30 years in the Fire and Rescue Service and is hoping to resume his flying career on island.

Sacha was born and grew up in the south of England and initially trained to be an engineer which, she said, was thoroughly enjoyable. She explains her journey from that to teaching. "Following the opportunity to train some of the engineers in the latter part of my engineering career, I discovered a passion for training others. I

was at that time also developing my skills as a gliding instructor for the Royal Air Force, so taking a different direction, to follow a career into teaching, seemed a natural move.

Once qualified, she began her early teaching career as a secondary maths teacher, collecting business studies and computing along the way. "My move to primary", she says, "occurred when I offered my services to a few local primary schools as a maths specialist. I



gained a great deal of experience supporting other schools as a maths specialist and in a variety of leadership roles, until in 2018, I took my first headship."

Her first posting as a head was in a school which, she says, had a very long standing, well-respected 250-year-old two-form entry but which had gone through a long period of underperformance. Under her leadership, the school was able to gain a much more positive culture, rooted in strong Christian values. As a result, pupils came to enjoy school and develop well personally, socially and academically, according to a report by Ofsted (the British Schools' Inspectorate).

Her second headship was taking charge of a school graded 'Inadequate' by Ofsted. "Six months later, in July 2022," she says, "Ofsted revisited and after the rigorous two-day inspection, recognised the rapid improvements that had been made to ensure a safe environment, with high-quality, inclusive education for all, and we were graded 'Good' with an 'Outstanding' Early Years provision. Inspectors stated that 'high aspirations are reflected across all phases of the school,' noting how much had been achieved with the new leadership in just six months".

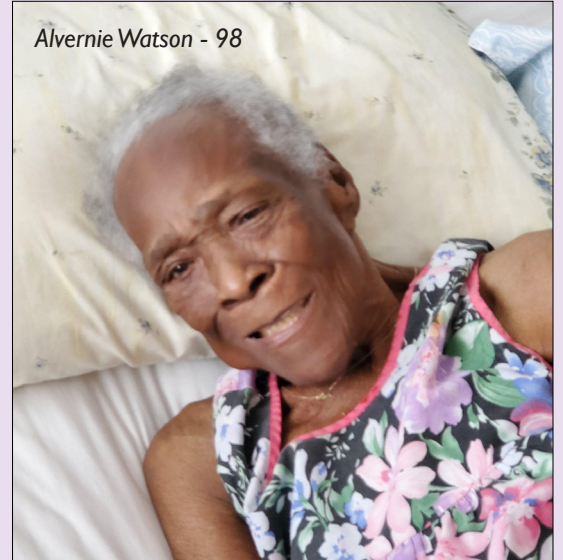
When asked why she applied to CPHS, Sacha first admitted she didn't exactly know where Grand Cayman was located! However, on discovering this, she replied, "CPHS' Christian values and ethos align very well with my own and this stood out during my interview process on island earlier this year. In addition, Cayman is a wonderful location for our own children to continue to develop into young adults and continue their education. I am excited to be working with the high calibre team, empowering our high achieving students and being a part of leading CPHS to the next phase of its journey and beyond." Her vision for the school is a mission that is lived out within the curriculum as this, she says, "is essential to who we are, how we treat each other and therefore how we work together as a community. CPHS' vision to develop confident

learners resonates deeply with me and the way in which I lead. Furthermore, this aligns very well with my aspirations for education: providing the foundation of a unique education for
Continued on Page 4

September Over 90s Club

Last month, Elmslie's own **Alvernie Watson**, **Theoline Wellington** and **Helen Merren** were no doubt delighted to have been paid a visit by **Rev. Chris Mason** in celebration of their special September birthdays.

Alvernie Watson - 98



Theoline Wellington - 95



Helen Merren - 92



Special November Birthdays

Happy Birthday to

Chrysannae Mason - 25 on the 4th

Judy Byrd-Ebanks - 70 on the 5th

Dania Cayasso - 95 on the 14th

Esmie Bodden - 90 on the 23rd

Mare's Milk and Yak Yogurt

We are inside a bare-ground teepee with a wood burning stove lit to keep the midnight chill at bay. There is a rustling sound against our teepee. It gets louder and louder, and we can now see the canvas wall of the teepee moving with each rustle. Someone or something is trying to get into our teepee! In a land with only three million people and over 70 million animals, it could be anything. Turns out it was a reindeer! Four feet tall with five feet antlers! It should have been obvious since we are staying in Mongolia with nomadic reindeer herders about seven kilometers from the Russian border.

Betty Ann and **Kacey** confirmed this when they made a wee hours outhouse (no walls) visit. During the course of their "visit" in the pitch dark Mongolian night, they were visited by a reindeer! Don't you hate it when you have to use the restroom in the middle of the night and a reindeer brushes up against you?

A mission trip you ask? No. This was just a vacation but, as Christians, aren't we always in mission mode?

Mongolia is a vast country with a very small population. Only one per cent of the people identify as Christians. The main religions are

Buddhism, 86 per cent, and Shamanism which is the ethnic religion of Mongolia.

We were first introduced to Mongolia when we had the opportunity to host two Mongolian boys who were in Cayman as part of Samaritan's Purse Children's Heart Project. **Anar** and **Baaska** together with their mothers and a translator were here for life saving heart surgery. After hearing about Mongolia from them, we vowed to visit one day. So here we were. We actually had the opportunity to visit with Anar and his mom, **Bysaa**, at Samaritan's Purse office in Ulaan Bataar, the capital of Mongolia. Bysaa shared in tears her many great memories of Cayman and all the nice people that brought meals.

We were fed a typical Mongolian lunch and showered with many Mongolian gifts. We learned about the ministry that they are doing in Mongolia and visited a Bible museum and Bible Society, which were in the same building, where we were able to buy some Mongolian Bibles and youth Christian booklets to pass around during our travels. We were able to give these out throughout Mongolia from Taiga bordering Russia all the way down to the giant sand dunes of the Gobi Desert. We were also invited to the home of another family that visited Cayman for heart surgery who had been hosted by Sunrise Church.

After sore behinds from 15 hour treks across extremely bumpy tracks - not roads, day after day of noodles and boiled meat and mare's milk for breakfast, lunch and dinner, two falls off a galloping, half wild horse, we made our early morning return drive to the airport, through herds of thousands of sheep, goats, cows, camels, horses and yaks as we said good-bye to Mongolia for a while.

We see many mission opportunities for Mongolia and are already thinking of a possible mission trip in the future.

So if you like mare's milk and yak yogurt and don't mind a reindeer sharing the facilities, and if you want to help spread the gospel to the ends of the earth, let us know! Mongolia calls.

Chuck, Betty Ann and Kacey Mobley

CPHS Admissions Administration

31st October 2023 is the deadline to apply to receive priority placement on the wait list for the next school year, 2024 - 2025.

If you have a child who does NOT currently attend Cayman Prep and High School but would like to potentially join us as a NEW STUDENT in the 2024-25 academic year, in KG - Year 10, please take note that our deadline to apply to receive priority placement (i.e. United Church member/adherent, staff-child, sibling, alumni sibling, or child) on the waiting list is 31st October 2023. NB: this item is not related to the place deposit for existing students.



Visit from Gospel Growers

For many years we have supported **Sam Rice** from Gospel Growers and his ministry in Haiti.

On 9th November, we will welcome **Karen Thomas**, a representative from Gospel Growers, who will be visiting our church to bring us an update on the ministry in Haiti including the school ministry that we support.

Karen will be sharing at youth group on Friday, the 10th, a breakfast on Saturday, 11th, at 8am to which all are welcome, South Sound United Church at 9am and Elmslie Church at 10:30am on Sunday, 12th November.

Please come out and hear what God is doing in Haiti and how you can be a part of it!

Special November Anniversaries

We extend congratulations to **Susy & Harwell McField** who will celebrate 25 years of marriage on the 14th of November. May God bless you with many more happy years together as you continue to serve him.

New Principal (Cont'd. from Pg. 2)

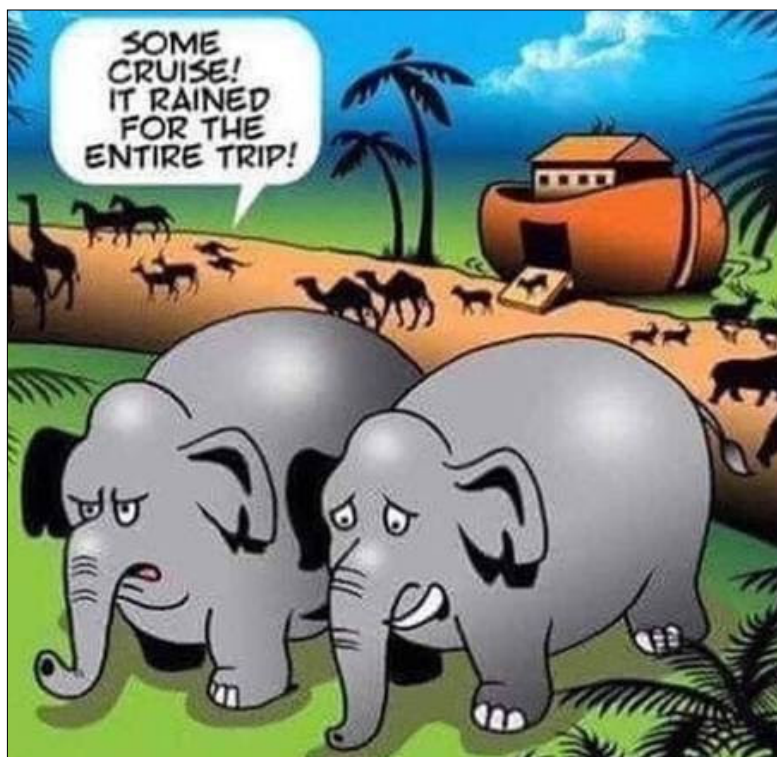
all where every child is valued, known and supported to be curious and achieve the best they possibly can within a global society.”

Her approach is part of her Christian perspective. “Church and our Christian community is a big part of our family life and leaving our church family behind has been hard, but we are being welcomed into church families here, which is a real blessing. As a Christian leader, I am passionate about inclusive, Christian education and enjoy the family feel of CPHS, which is unique.”

It was during her time of teaching in the UK that she set up and managed the Duke of Edinburgh’s awards scheme which grew to enroll around 300 students onto the bronze level each year, with many going on to Silver and Gold. “As a Gold award holder, myself, I appreciate fully the opportunity to enable youngsters to grow and be encouraged out of their comfort zone, to look outward to support others,” she says.

Sacha says that she and her family have discovered that the island has some of the most amazing beaches and clear waters of any they had visited on their world travels, with some of the friendliest of folk. “The biggest challenge”, she says, “is not having all our family members here to share it with us.” She and her family love snorkeling and exploring the island and, she states, “I am improving gradually at pickleball each week! Flying, however, is unfortunately on hold for a while!”

We welcome Sacha and her family to the school. Pray for them all as the CPHS seeks to educate students whose lights - in the words of Jesus from which the school’s motto is taken - will hopefully “so shine before others that they may see (their) good deeds and glorify (their) Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:16).



CPHS Staff Appreciation

On Sunday, 9th October, Elmslie welcomed and showed appreciation to the many teachers of Cayman Prep and High School, as well as its heads of departments, office administrators and members of the Board of Governors of the school.



Last Days? (Cont'd. from Pg. 1)

So, how do we respond to the question, and how do we react to the horror and tragedy taking place in Gaza and Israel? To the first: Jesus, and Scripture in general, says we must be ready and prepared for Jesus’ return and we must keep busy.

To the second, however we view what is happening and we discuss some of the root causes. But, as Christians, we are to pray. From a human perspective, a solution to end the conflict seems almost impossible. From a divine one, we believe in a God who is ultimately in control. So, we must beseech him for peace and for justice, and that in some way people might be drawn to him as a result of what is happening.

And while praying for the Middle East, let us not forget the many other parts of the world where there is conflict, such as Ukraine and Armenia. And, lastly, we need to keep in our prayers those many parts of the world where our Christian family is under severe persecution, countries like North Korea, Pakistan, Afghanistan and India, to mention a few. Paul reminds us, “If one part (of the body) suffers, every part suffers with it” (1 Corinthians 12:26). We may not have much opportunity to do anything practical but we can, and must, pray.

Michael Bowerman