



The United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands

THE FAMILY NEWS

George Town Charge

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44 South Sound Road
9:00am

If you are engaged in any form of church ministry, whether as an elder, to youth or Sunday school, leading a Bible study, Men's Fellowship, Living Water or Pantry Ministries, or heading one of the ministry teams, some form of training will be very helpful. In fact, anyone who wishes to serve God as an effective witness will benefit.

Courses are being offered by CTLT, a non-denominational, theological education provider and Bible School here in the Cayman Islands, to help those who are serious about learning to be better able to serve God.

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Profile on Rannie and Alex O'Neil

Familiar to everyone at Elmslie Church is the smile you receive at the door when **Catherine Alexandra O'Neil**, known to everyone as **Alex**, greets you when she is on ushering duty, or the sight of her husband, **Ronald – Rannie** - enthusiastically singing during a special on the back row of the choir.

Alex has been part and parcel of Elmslie from birth, having been raised just a stone's throw from the church. Many of her large and extended family were and still are members, and her uncle, the late **Rev. Talmage Ebanks**, was a minister for many years.

Rannie was born and grew up in Jamaica but has lived on the island for almost 50 years. "We were both born into families who loved the Lord and made it their duty to ensure that we were taught the ways of Scripture," they say. Alex adds, "The woman I am today can be largely attributed to the rich family traditions I experienced growing up as a young girl in those early days. Being the eldest amongst my siblings, I learned to be industrious, working from a very young age to becoming a business owner later on in my working years."

Her husband acquired many skills including that of tailoring which would one day lead him to Grand Cayman. Rannie was also the eldest amongst his siblings and, as a young man, worked hard to earn money to help his family.

He arrived in Grand Cayman in early 1971 as a 25 year-old and found a job in the tailoring trade, working with a friend. Alex would frequently walk by the shop where Rannie worked. "I believe he deliberately placed his tailor's desk and machine in the window so that he would see me each time I passed on my way home," she claims. One day, he built up the courage to invite her out to Mr.



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What, Indeed, Is Truth?

When Jesus, the embodiment of truth, stood before Pilate and stated, "Everyone on the side of truth listens to me" (John 18:37), Pilate retorted with the cynical question, "What is truth?" (v. 38).

We are being challenged by the same kind of question today. We are told what is true for you may not be true for me. It is relative to the circumstance. It all depends on how you feel or what is more convenient. Facing this kind of worldview is creating new challenges for us as Christians. When once we thought we had a clear understanding of right and wrong, now we are being told differently.

We can view truth in two areas. There is truth in what we believe and truth in how we behave. There is right understanding and there is right conduct. And they are bound together. The way we live our lives will reflect what we believe about life.

So, by way of example, as Christians we seek to learn from God the truth about sexuality and about marriage. When we understand and accept it, we will behave in that context appropriately. We will come to know what is true (what one Christian writer calls *true* truth) - what is right - and, correspondingly, what is wrong in terms of our sexual behaviour.

That is why we have our Bibles, and why we need to read them carefully. David stated the reason clearly, "The teaching of your word gives light, so even the simple can understand" (Psalm 119:130 - NLT). Later, Jesus in his prayer to his Father stated, "Your word is truth" (John 17:17). It is Scripture that shows us truth and untruth, right and wrong.

How do we respond as Christians to the new tide sweeping against us? How do we deal with the pressure to accept beliefs and lifestyles which go against what we believe God wants and the Bible teaches?

Let me suggest three things. One, we need to be both uncompromising and courageous. We must stand strong and speak out. But we must do it in a way as becoming of those who follow Jesus whom John described in his gospel as one "full of *grace* and *truth*" (1:14). Quoting Isaiah, Matthew said about him, "A bruised reed he will not break." (12:20) When Peter encouraged the believers of his day to speak out in the face of opposition, he said, "Do not fear their threats; do not be frightened. But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with *gentleness* and *respect*" (1 Peter 3:14-15). Harsh, unkind words and judgemental attitudes are never appropriate. And rarely do they accomplish the goal we are trying to seek. Even if we are, at best, misunderstood and, more likely, ridiculed and insulted for our stand, something the Bible tells us to expect and be prepared for, our manner must be characterized by gentleness and respect.

Second, we must be consistent in our own beliefs and lifestyles. The charge made so often that most

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CTLD (Cont'd. from Pg. 1)

CTLT provides systematic and professional teaching on biblical and theological subjects like Old and New Testament Introduction, Church History, Witness, Evangelism and Church Growth, Interpreting and Preaching God's Word, and more than 40 related subjects, including counselling courses.

You can study individual subjects or take up regular courses leading to a Certificate, Diploma, B.A. or M. A. in Theology. Classes are taught by able, and experienced tutors during the evenings and at weekends. During this COVID period, classes are being offered by Zoom so you can study and be equipped for ministry and mission in the comfort of your home.

There is a very affordable cost, and all courses are accredited. Classes will start the first week of September 2020.

For more details, application forms, semester dates, subjects, fees, timetable, accreditation, etc., please contact either: Director, **Rev. Dr. P. J. Lawrence** at 922-3902, email: lawrencejoba@gmail.com or the administrator, **Winston Vernon** at 324-8196 email: winalver@yahoo.com or info@ctlk.ky or see the website: www.ctlk.ky



Rev. P.J. Lawrence with Elmslie member, Sue Trull

Certificate in Theological Leadership

Semester 1: 12th September to 15th November 2020

Three subjects:

- Introduction to the New Testament: Saturdays, 2:00 – 3:30 pm
- Introduction to the Old Testament: Saturdays, 3:30 – 5:00 pm
 - Overview of Church History: Sundays 3:00 – 4:30 pm

Other subjects are being offered at the Diploma and Master's level. Please inquire about these.

Birth Announcement



Congratulations to **Amanda & Dion Bodden** on the birth of their son **Tate Ian** (pictured with his sister, **Tory**), on 24th July 2020 weighing in at 7 lbs. 11 oz. Tate Ian and Tory are the grandchildren of **Diana & Ernie Bodden**.

Rannie and Alex (Cont'd. from Pg. 1)

Berkeley's theatre. Whilst the invitation was acceptable to Alex's mother, **Maisie**, not so acceptable was the fact that the date would only be allowed if Alex's sisters could also attend! "I endured these 'bodyguards' on my dates with Alex," he says, "as I was determined to marry her. I had found the woman of my dreams." They were married on August 12th, 1972 by Alex's Uncle Talmage at Lincoln Kirk United Church in Jamaica. They have two children, **Lisa** who is an assistant branch manager at Cayman National Bank and also an active part of Elmslie, and Troy who is a supervisor at the Customs Warehouse. Troy has provided three grandchildren, **Louisa, Tre'** and **India**. Alex was active in Girl's Guildry, Christian Endeavour and attended Sunday school. "There was still a void," she says, "Something personal was lacking. It wasn't until the mid-1970s under the ministry of **Rev. Neil Banks** that I fully understood the reason for the void and realized that I needed to fully commit my life to Jesus and not just do religious things." She says that it was under the ministry of **Rev. Chris Baillie** in the early 2000s that she really understood what it meant to serve the Lord. "That's when I started to get involved in ushering, the hospitality ministry and home groups." Everyone at Elmslie knows that when there is a church meal, Alex is the one who is largely responsible!



Whilst dating, Rannie followed Alex to church every time she attended, especially at nights as he claimed this was the best time to see her wearing the special dresses he made her. However, it was during the ministry of **Rev. Dave Hazle** that Rannie's desire to fully serve the Lord grew. In 2017, after completing confirmation classes, Rannie was baptised and began his new journey with the Lord. He not only sings with the Elmslie choir but is a member of the Male Voice Choir and of the Men's Fellowship. Together, Rannie and Alex host a weekly home group at their house in Tropical Gardens.

"We love Elmslie United Church, which has come a long way from our early days. The people are friendly although it is a diverse church. Despite our differences in race, creeds, colour and socio-economic status, we all come together and worship the Lord as one body. We like the way in which there is space available for the youth to participate in the services, something that we were not privileged to have in our early days of attending church."

They admit that while diversity is a great strength it can also be an Achilles' heel as it is difficult to please everyone in terms of their preferred worship styles or the decisions which sometimes must be made. "To overcome this challenge," they state, "we must make sure that whatever we do is done through the leading of the Spirit."

A concern they have is that while the topic of sexuality has been dominating the airwaves and media recently, our church is not vocally sharing its Scriptural understanding with the community.

A further concern is financial giving. "It is not where it should be. This sometimes cripples the church from carrying out the activities it has pledged to. We would love to see the church grow numerically, financially and spiritually," they add.

"A vision of ours is to see the sanctuary moved as the current location does not lend itself for growth. We know, however, that this is a sore subject!"

Rannie and Alex have been married for 48 years, a significant statement in today's world. They describe the success of their relationship this way: "The guiding light in our marriage has been our walk with Jesus Christ, coupled with the advice given in the well-known verses on love in 1 Corinthians 13:4-8. These have taken us through many seasons and are both still actively at work within and through us today."

Youth Beach Picnic



Two Saturday beach picnics were held for our young people, one for children and the other for youth. Above are some of those who attended the latter.

Global Missions Committee

The committee has set up a schedule to contact by Zoom the various people we support overseas. So far this has included

Joan Page Bain in Haiti, **Jim and Karla Smith** in East Timor, **Sam Rice** who is retired in Pittsburg to care for his mother but continues to oversee the ministries of Gospel Growers in the Dariol area of Haiti and **Nyoman Sumaryana** in Bali, Indonesia.

Of particular interest was the fact that Nyoman's oldest son, **Ricco** (pictured inset), felt called to be a pastor like his dad but did not have the necessary resources to go to Jakarta for seminary training. The committee decided that it would cover these expenses so Ricco has now travelled over to the mainland to commence his studies.



Students Studying Overseas

From Elmslie Memorial:

Kai-leigh Houghton - Portsmouth University, UK, studying Language & Linguistics, 3rd Year

Kimberly Eccleston - University of Reading, UK, studying Mathematics & Statistics, 3rd Year (currently doing courses online)

Emma Walmsley - Leicester University, UK, studying Medicine, 4th Year
Katherine Walmsley - University of Liverpool, UK, studying Occupational Therapy, 2nd Year

Joshua McField - University of Greenwich, UK, studying Computer Engineering, 2nd Year

Jaydon McField - Rossall Boarding School in the UK finishing high school and playing football for Fleetwood EFL League One Football Club.

Amari Watler - Ryerson University, Canada, doing Business Studies with a double major in Entrepreneurial Studies & Marketing, 3rd Year (currently doing courses online)

Ethan Whittaker - Princeton University, USA, studying Physics & Mathematics, 4th Year



From South Sound United:

Charlotte Grey - awaiting an Irish college offer in September and hoping to study History in Dublin, Ireland.

Matthew Hanson - University of Exeter, UK, studying Civil Engineering, 1st Year

Julian Menko - University of Kent, UK, studying Politics & International Relations, 3rd Year

Charlotte Hinds - Imperial College London, UK, continuing her PhD in Clinical Medicine Research

Sabine Ellison - doing Grade 12 at Mercersburg Academy, Pennsylvania, USA.

Please keep these students in your prayers and support them in whatever other ways you can.

Sunday School Going Forward

Miss Suzanne writes,

Sunday school by Zoom will take a break from today. We will resume on the 20th September 2020. We have thoroughly enjoyed the past sessions with the children.

– worshipping and growing together with them in many ways. These are challenging times. And now the youth leadership takes this break in order to prayerfully plan for the time ahead

– to work towards spiritual growth and, at the same time, safety for all.

We look forward to seeing all the children again on the 20th September.

For our children ages 7 and under (and for the young at heart), we will continue to provide, by email, each week, up to the 20th September, some of the songs we have been singing during Zoom Sunday School.

Truth (Cont'd. from Pg. 2)

Christians are hypocrites is undoubtedly exaggerated, but there is sufficient truth in it for us to ensure we take a close look at ourselves before we speak. Let our lives not be a stumbling block. People watch before they listen. The British evangelist “Gypsy” Smith once said, “There are five Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John and the Christian, but most people will never read the first four.”

Last, let us never forget that every person believing or living in a way that we believe is contrary to biblical teaching, everyone stridently demanding their different views and lifestyles be accepted, is someone whom God loves, for whom Christ died. They are, like us, sinners in need of a Saviour. So we should love them and pray for them. And if and when we have the opportunity to speak to them one to one, it is not our job to change their minds or their lifestyles, to work, as it were, from the outside in, but rather to introduce them to Someone who can change them from the inside out. When a person accepts Jesus as Saviour and Lord, his Holy Spirit enters their lives, and he can do just that.

Michael Bowerman

Special September Anniversaries

Ann-Marie & Rodney Webb - 20 years on the 2nd and

Bertranne & Otto Menko - 25 years on the 23rd

Special September Birthdays

Happy Birthday to

Bryce Thompson - 21 on the 11th

Elizabeth Riley - 50 on the 19th

Cherry Ann Hodgson - 60 on the 20th

Sherry Lee McLaughlin - 60 on the 20th

Alvernie Watson - 95 on the 20th

Theoline Wellington - 92 on the 28th

Terri Merren - 60 on the 30th



The Family News is always interested in feedback, hopefully constructive! Comments and suggestions are welcome either by phone or email to **Terri Merren** (926-2909 / terri.merren@gmail) or **Mike Bowerman** (925-4590 / bowerman@candw.ky).