



The United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands

THE FAMILY NEWS

George Town Charge

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From the Pastor's Desk

Easter is a season of great gladness for those who know Christ. But for those who are without “the light of the knowledge of God’s glory” (2 Corinthians 4:6), there is nothing to rejoice over.



Jesus left us with the great hope and certainty that He is going to return to bring a new heaven and a new earth where, we are told, there will be no more sorrow, trouble or death for those who have believed and followed Him. There will be trouble, sorrow and suffering for those who have neglected or rejected Him.

As Christians, our great task is to obey the command to tell the whole world about Christ crucified, buried, yet risen again. My prayer for you during this season of the year, when we meditate on our Saviour’s great sacrifice for us on the cross, is that you will be filled with great peace and hope, because “He is risen!” That is the Good News.

As you follow Christ, are you obeying His command to tell others that He is risen indeed?



Sunday Morning Worship (Part 4): What about Holy Communion?

By Michael Bowerman

Holy Communion – by whatever name it is called – is celebrated in nearly every church and denomination throughout the world. Its frequency varies. I grew up in a church where it was celebrated every week. In our United Church tradition, it is usually monthly.

The forms of the service are equally varied. However, all agree that it a response to Jesus’ words to his disciples as they celebrated Passover together, when he offered them bread and then a cup of wine, stating that the bread was his body and the cup of wine the new covenant in his blood.

Without being trite, I see it as a kind of ‘show and tell’. Perhaps it would be better expressed as a symbolical reenactment: “Do this,” said Jesus, “in remembrance of me” (Luke 22:19). The Apostle Paul spoke to the Corinthians at some length about its practice. We cannot delve deeply into this, but may I suggest three things about Communion that he brings out.

One, **it is an act of fellowship with Christ** (1 Corinthians 10:16-17). He speaks of participation in the body and blood of Christ. It is almost like we are taking part in a play,

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Reflection on the Coronavirus Crisis

By Michael Bowerman

Fear is not always a bad thing. It is fear that protects us from danger. It prevents us from behaving in certain ways because of the possible consequences. We treat and speak to people



in appropriate ways for fear of alienating them. We get inoculated for fear of getting ill. We fear our house being broken into so we lock the doors. Children fear punishment so they are motivated to behave properly and, for the same reason, responsible citizens obey the laws of the land. And you can think of many other examples.

The coronavirus has caused considerable fear, indeed panic, all over the

world, and with good reason. It is fear of the potential outcome that has caused governments - and, indeed, ordinary people as ourselves - to take stringent measures, from quarantining to closing airports.

As Christians, we recognize there is another kind of fear that is, if anything, more important: the fear of the Lord. This is not fear as in being scared. It is, rather, a proper respect for God which comes as a result of recognizing who he is. The Bible tells us that this "fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Proverbs 9:10).

The biggest problem we humans have is that we all have another virus – a spiritual one. It is called sin. And the Bible is clear about its inevitable consequence if left unchecked: "The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23a). So, there is another fear – a justifiable fear - that many should have: eternal separation from God. It should cause them to fear the Lord and thus discover the way of wisdom. Why? It is this wisdom, as Scripture indicates, which helps us discover "salvation through faith in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 3:14).

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A Family in 'Lockdown'



Noah's Ark

40 days, 40 nights in the Ark, Noah's family was confined in a boat. There were no windows, no balconies, no terraces, no internet, no phone, no TV, no Youtube, Facebook or Netflix. They only heard the rain. They spent their time praying, loving each other and caring for the animals. God the father took care of them as Noah was a man of faith and obeyed His word. Remember even though there is out there an ocean of viruses and life seems like a stormy ride, Our God is watching over us! Do not be afraid! Be faithful to Him and wait patiently. The rain will stop one day. A rainbow will shine and all be well again.

Rev. Dr. Hewitt Preaches at Elmslie



On Sunday 8th March, Elmslie and South Sound United welcomed guest preacher **Rev. Dr. Roderick Hewitt**, former pastor at the Hope United Church in Jamaica, former Moderator of the United Church of Jamaica and the Cayman Islands and former mentor to **Rev. Chris Mason** (pictured with him above). Rev. Hewitt became the President of the International University of the Caribbean (IUC) on 1st September and holds a PhD in Systematic Theology from King's College, London.

Dr. Hewitt was here at the invitation of **Bishop PJ Lawrence** to lecture at the Centre for Theological Leadership Training. He gave a very thought-provoking as well as Christian and ethical response to Artificial Intelligence to a large and appreciative gathering at the Family Life Centre.



Farewell, Mr. Louis



Our deepest condolences to the family of the late **Louis Ebanks**, life-long member of Elmslie Church, who passed away on 17th March. Mr. Louis will be greatly missed by the congregation and especially by members of **Nicky's** homegroup which he faithfully attended every Wednesday night, often instigating lively Bible discussions. Mr. Louis is preceded in death by his wife, **Valma**, brothers **Talmage, James, Samuel, Kenneth** and sisters **Maisie, Nanette** and **Millicent**. Left to mourn his passing are his children **Gwenilee, Lowell, Margo, Magalyn** and **Jerome**, special niece **Alex**, and extended family and friends.



Special April Anniversaries

Janet & Whymon Downs -
10 years on the 6th
and
Terri & Gregory Merren -
35 years on the 6th



New Elder: Anthony Bodden

With the surname Bodden, it would be readily assumed that Anthony was Caymanian. In point of fact, he was born and grew up in Jamaica, the family name coming from his grandfather who was from Cayman Brac.

He became involved with the new Portmore United Church - **Rev. Chris's** last church - as a teenager. The minister at the time was **Rev. Gordon Evans**. Anthony tells his story of those early years: "I, along with the minister and a small group, formed the youth fellowship where I was the first president. I later became a member of the National Executive (UCYPA) where I served on the cultural and evangelism committees and travelled the island with the national executive with one of my mentors, **Rev. Verna Cassells**, conducting youth training sessions and helping to develop youth groups. On Sundays, attending two services was the norm as I went with Rev. Evans to conduct services at one of his outreach church developments. While living in Montego Bay in the mid-eighties, I did work in the Montego Bay Charge, St. Paul's United, again with Rev. Evans, where we did outreach/church building work in the communities of Farm Heights and Norwood in Montego Bay. While at St. Paul's United, I chaired the Finance and Evangelism committees. After 10 years in Montego Bay, I returned to Kingston to resettle, and it was at that time I experienced the most trying times of my spiritual walk."



He continues, "I rebelled and struggled to keep spiritually focused. I wanted power, fame and respect. In retrospect I realize that I alienated myself from God. I would blindly go wherever I pleased. I wandered from church to church but could not find peace. It was truly a wilderness experience. When God delivered me from this self-glorification, I saw an issue in my life that only He could solve. I picked up my Bible again and my path to restoration began. I said, 'Lord, for your work to be accomplished, you must first have vessels. Here I am; use me.'

"That is how it has been since 2006. It has been a difficult time, but with God all things are possible. Now, my ultimate end is to glorify God in all I do. I seek to use God's gifts to gather men and women for his glory alone. I was determined to study more about God and my faith so I went in search of an online course in theology and am now receiving Bible training for ministry at Christian Leaders' Institute. I find my private study a blessing, bringing me a step closer to the fullness of my life for him." He became a member of Elmslie in April 2019 and sings on the

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Anthony Bodden (Cont'd. from Pg. 3)

choir as well as leads worship services. "I see my spiritual gifts as serving, encouragement, faith, and providing guidance," he says.

Anthony was asked what he saw as his vision and desire for the church. "I want to see a church with a sound biblical understanding of who God is and what he does, one that leads by example in the community and lives out godly principles. It should be a church that encourages constant daily worship at home which will enhance weekly worship at church. There should be no compromise. I would also like to see a church that will raise up a 'revival generation' of young people to bring about a spiritual revival in Cayman."

Anthony arrived in Cayman in early 2016 – "my third time being in Cayman," he says - leaving his wife, **Winsome**, and his grown-up children **Andre** and **Giselle** in Jamaica. He also has a grandson of three, **D'Andre**. He has been engaged in different kinds of employment but is currently working for a small construction and electrical company on-island, interfacing with customers on a consultation basis throughout the stages of project development. For relaxation, he says, he enjoys reading, travelling and athletics.

Anthony, along with all the elders, needs the prayers of God's people as he provides spiritual leadership to the congregation.

Reflection (Cont'd. from Pg. 2)

So, there are two lessons we can learn from this. The first is that people should recognize there is a danger greater than the possible consequence of the coronavirus. People need to fear this greater danger, the virus called sin, which has this eternal consequence called death. We should pray that people's fear of the human virus will drive them to reach out to God and discover the salvation he offers, which the Bible calls eternal life. It is "the gift of God" (Romans 6:23b). The second lesson is that for those of us Christians who fear the coronavirus, while we must do all the right and sensible things, we need to recognize in all that is happening that there is Someone who loves us and in whom we can trust. We can discover a peace in him and from him "which transcends all understanding" and which "will guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:7). Here is a wonderful promise found in Psalm 91:1-6 (NLT):

"Those who live in the shelter of the Most High will find rest in the shadow of the Almighty.

2 This I declare about the LORD: He alone is my refuge, my place of safety; he is my God, and I trust him.

3 For he will rescue you from every trap and protect you from deadly disease.

4 He will cover you with his feathers. He will shelter you with his wings. His faithful promises are your armour and protection.

5 Do not be afraid of the terrors of the night, nor the arrow that flies in the day.

6 Do not dread the disease that stalks in darkness, nor the disaster that strikes at midday."

Let us shelter ourselves in our Sovereign Lord who is ultimately in charge, who only has the best for his people and who allows nothing that will not ultimately bring him glory.



Special April Birthdays

Happy Birthday to

Nadine Napier - 45 on the 17th

Courtney Burke - 40 on the 19th

Truman Bodden - 75 on the 22nd

Annibal Archbold - 50 on the 28th

Sunday Worship (Cont'd. from Pg. 1)

reenacting something that has already happened. Paul was warning his readers that it was therefore inconsistent to participate in pagan feasts at the same time (vv. 18-21). Further, as we participate, there is fellowship together as believers: "Because there is one loaf, we who are many are one body, for we all share the one loaf" (v. 17). This may be why later he chides them for their divisive and selfish behaviour when coming together (11:17-22) and, later still, warns them about eating and drinking "in an unworthy manner" (v. 27) and the need to examine themselves (v. 28). Unless we are "discerning", says Paul, so as to understand and appreciate what communion is about, and "discerning" in the way we treat our fellow Christians, we are liable to be recipients of God's judgement (vv. 29-32).

We need to address this warning seriously! We should not participate in communion if we are "participants with demons" (10:20) – any worldly, sinful, compromising behaviour - or if we are out of fellowship with another Christian.

Two, **it is an act of remembrance of Christ** (11:24-25). Jesus knew that many people's memories were poor and, lest they forget, instituted this as something to repeat going forward so they could not forget what Jesus had done for them on the cross. And this was to be done with a spirit of deep gratitude (10:16).

Three, **it is an act of proclamation of Christ** (11:26). There is a sense in which it is an enacted sermon, proclaiming the gospel in visible form. "... Whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes." I remember an old communion hymn I used to sing growing up which began, "No gospel like this feast," and I also recall hearing of someone who was actually saved during a communion service.

Paul knew that the act of communion was not forever. We are to celebrate the Lord's death only "until he comes." The Christian's great hope – and Paul was to stress this a few chapters on – is that the Lord Jesus whose sacrificial death we remember and proclaim during communion is returning, and when that happens, there will no longer be the need to continue celebrating it for we will be in his presence forever. We will have the 'real deal'!