



# THE UNITED CHURCH IN JAMAICA & THE CAYMAN ISLANDS

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*Congregational, Disciples of Christ, Presbyterian*

Ref. No. GS/NS 2403

August 19, 2020

## **ADVISORY #21 TO: UCJCI MINISTERS, LAY PASTORS AND CONGREGATIONAL BOARDS RE: COVID-19 CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC**

My sisters and brothers,

Greetings,

The UCJCI COVID-19 Response Team now meets every two weeks. Consequently, these updates will follow the scheduled meetings.

Following are the reminders and decisions taken by the Team, which met August 18, 2020, under the various headings. **New/updated information is in bold print.**

### **1. Compliance with National Orders/Protocols**

We celebrate the fact that **Cayman is now COVID-19-free**. To keep that status, **the national borders are to remain closed until October 1, 2020.**

**In Jamaica, positive cases continue to rise, resulting in communities in Clarendon and St. Thomas being quarantined until September 2, 2020. The government has also instituted other restrictions for St. Thomas, as follows:**

- **No funeral services are permitted in the parish. However, burials only will be allowed with a maximum of 15 persons in attendance.**
- **No weddings or public gatherings are permitted in the parish.**

We continue to encourage compliance with the directives and recommendations of the legitimate state authorities in both nations, **as well as a proactive commitment to preach the message of COVID-19 prevention at every opportunity. Let us use creative ways to engage people in our homes and communities (on the street, in the taxi/bus, at the market/supermarket/shop/barber, etc.) on the importance of taking the necessary precautions, such as wearing a mask in public places, the regular washing/sanitizing of hands, and keeping the six feet distance when waiting in lines, etc. Let us take responsibility for our neighbours as well as ourselves.**

**Churches that have multimedia equipment can show short clips of real-life stories on the negative impact of COVID-19 on the lives of people, so as to assist in building consciousness of the need for everyone to do their part to prevent the spread of the disease as much as possible. Other practical ways of reinforcing the message of infection prevention and control, such as the**

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**Registered Charity Organization**

**Registration Number: CA100-57C**

**distribution of masks, can be engaged. We can also encourage visitors and residents returning to the island to abide by the quarantine orders.**

Please continue to refer to the Disaster Risk Management Act in Jamaica for the most recent update to the protocols.

## **2. Congregational Life**

### **Church Worship**

Now that most of our United Churches in Cayman & Jamaica have resumed services in their sanctuaries, please continue to engage all relevant protocols, as previously outlined in Advisory #20 issued on August 5, 2020.

- We remind you of the time of prayer every Wednesday between 12 p.m. and 1 p.m. We will share with you the specific suggested foci for each week.
- We continue to distribute the weekly House Worship Liturgy, using a thematic approach with sermon/reflection notes. We welcome feedback on how this is being used within the church.
- Tune in each Sunday to LOVE 101 FM in Jamaica at 3:30 p.m. for a rebroadcast of a congregational worship service or the sharing of reflections or activities by the UCJCI.
- The number of persons allowed to gather for funeral services and weddings (outside of St. Thomas) is a maximum of 50, based on the capacity of sanctuaries, using the 40 sq. ft. principle.

### **Other Gatherings**

- **Virtual meetings are strongly encouraged, where facilities permit, as a standard mode of operating instead of simply as a crisis response. Begin to embrace the new normal fully for board meetings, bible studies and small group meetings. Plan deliberately and creatively for these meetings in order to maximise the use of the time, considering issues such as data cost, over-exposure to screen viewing and online fatigue. Where meetings, bible studies and small group gatherings must be face-to-face, these should be held under the existing protocols.**
- **The Jamaican Government has indicated in the Disaster Risk Management Order No. 11 that “no place of worship shall hold any crusade, conference or convention during the period from August 7, 2020, to September 30, 2020”.**
- **Regional Mission Councils are assessing how to conduct the September Council Meetings using mainly the virtual space and will provide more information soon. Critical to this will be the access of delegates to the relevant devices and connectivity. Congregations are encouraged to start considering how they may be able to assist in providing this access.**

## **4. Pastoral Care**

Given the psychological impact of the restriction of movement and other factors caused by the coronavirus, please continue to be socially connected, though physically distant, and to be especially sensitive to the needs of the elderly, those who live alone and those who are grieving.

## 6. Communication

Please continue to pay close attention to the various pieces of information sent to you via our communication channels (radio, e-mail, website [www.ucjci.com], WhatsApp Messenger, Twitter, Instagram and Facebook).

May we together continue to depend on God, *who has not given us a spirit of fear, but of love and of power and of a sound mind* (2 Timothy 1:7).

Sincerely,

**THE UNITED CHURCH IN JAMAICA AND THE CAYMAN ISLANDS**



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Rose Wedderburn (Mrs)  
Regional Deputy General Secretary  
Acting for General Secretary