



A WEEKLY NEWSLETTER OF  
THE UNITED CHURCH IN JAMAICA AND THE CAYMAN ISLANDS

Ash Wednesday Issue: February 17, 2021

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# FASTING IN A FEASING CULTURE?

Beyond the Pulpit

ASH  
WEDNESDAY-  
THE DOOR TO  
LENT

'A SHOT IN THE  
ARM' - COVID 19  
VACCINE FOR ALL

UCJCI Church and Society Committee

VOLUME 7  
ISSUE 7

Our Vision: Touching Lives, Nurturing Disciples, Seeking Transformation through Christ

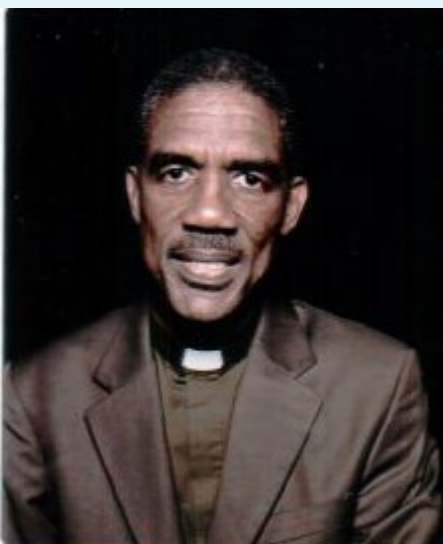
# A SHOT IN THE ARM

## *The Case for COVID-19 Vaccine for All*

Statement from The Church and Society Committee of The United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands

The news that Jamaica, as one of the countries that is part of the Covid-19 Vaccines Global Access (COVAX) facility, is set to receive its first doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine this month is welcome relief. The Government has previously indicated that vaccines would not be available before April 2021, with a target of vaccinating 16% of the population by the end of 2021.

Given the widespread nature of COVID-19, its mutation and the exponential rise in cases in Jamaica over the last few weeks, the need for a vaccine is fundamental to bringing the virus under control. This would allow for a reduction in the infection rate and usher in a positive movement towards achieving herd immunity.



The Government has indicated that this vaccine will be made available to the population free of cost. However, due to the cost of the vaccine from the various suppliers, it is not beyond the realm of possibility to suggest that the government does not have the resources to make this available to sufficient numbers of the pop-

ulation at a pace and level to achieve herd immunity, which conservatively is around 90% of the population.

The Private Sector of Jamaica has indicated its willingness to purchase the vaccine and having their workers vaccinated. This would assist the effort to increase the number of those vaccinated. One would hope that there will be a public/private partnership in supplying vaccines to the wider population. Indeed, a healthy population makes for a more productive nation.

What is desirable is to have as many persons as possible



vaccinated in the shortest possible time in order to achieve herd immunity.

What seems likely, however, is that given the basic principle of supply and demand, there will come a time in the short to medium term where a cost is attached to obtaining the vaccine for persons who require it. The reasonable conclusion is that there will come a point where the vaccine will not be affordable to all within the society.

We believe that the ideal situation is that every Jamaican who needs the vaccine should receive it. Consequently, for every Jamaican, the vaccine should be available, accessible and affordable.

From the perspective of the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands, we believe that the ideal situation is that every Jamaican who needs the vaccine should receive it.

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Consequently, for every Jamaican, the vaccine should be available, accessible and affordable .

Communities of believers have often come together to respond to pressing needs in society. From the Bible we learn, for example, how the church at Antioch (Acts 11 &12) responded to the famine needs of their sisters and brothers and established a relief fund which was sent to Jerusalem under the supervision of Paul and Barnabas. This is a fundamental principle of community, where there is a consensus principle of all being included and supported in a time of need.

One of our United Church congregations has taken this biblical principle and has applied it to the current COVID-19 vaccination need. They have established, as part of their budget for 2021, a fund to ensure that members of their congregation should be assisted to access the vaccine during this year. The commendable underlying principle is that no one should be left behind.

As we wrestle with the issues of justice and equity in this Black History Month, should we not offer this as a starting paradigm for our own United Church and the wider church, where such funds be established and hopefully, in partnership with local businesses and communities, expanded to include as many as possible to achieve the herd immunity so necessary at this time?

Should we not also advocate for a strong partnership between the private sector and the Government in the acquisition and distribution of the vaccine, where necessary at cost, making the vaccine as affordable to as many as possible in the shortest time possible?

In response to these questions, it is our hope and commitment, as the United Church, to work towards the reality of all who need a shot in the arm to manage and overcome this virus will receive it .

From Church and Society Committee  
Rt. Rev. Dr. Gordon Cowans

## THE DOOR TO LENT



- Rev. Otto Menko, Cayman Islands Regional Mission Council

As part of the Church's annual liturgical journey, we will transition from the Season of Epiphany into the Season of Lent. During the six weeks (and five Sundays) of Lent we engage in a meaningful spiritual preparation for Easter, sets the tone for our spiritual journey to the cross and to the empty tomb of our Lord. The symbolic meaning of ashes indicating mourning and sadness, is a stark expression of our sinful nature. It is also a solemn reminder of our mortality and desperate need to find forgiveness through repentance and reconciliation with God. On our own we are hopeless, but through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ there is the promise of cleansing and of new life that extends beyond the grave! Let us then journey on in faith, hope, and love!



As you make your way through these special 40 days of Lent, consider tapping into the limitless riches of fasting.

# TODAY WE WORSHIP!



**SOUTHERN REGIONAL MISSION COUNCIL**

**ASH WEDNESDAY CONVENTION**

***Theme: Rooted, Resilient:  
Responding in HOPE***

**A PEOPLE OF HOPE: YOUTH ARISE**

Join our children and youth as they lead us in worship. Listen to inspiring stories of resilience from our young people.

FEBRUARY 17, 2021 | 10AM  
venue: Ridgemount United Church



STREAMED ON  
@Ridgemount United Church

It has been the tradition in UCJCI to meet in regions for a day of worship, teaching, fellowship and witness. In the past, face to face gatherings engendered spirit-filled and enriching experiences. This year face to face interaction in Jamaica was limited to the locations from which worship will be live-streamed. In Cayman there were face-to-face gatherings.

On Ash Wednesday 2021, members and adherents of The United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands gathered virtually for Day of Fellowship worship events which mark the beginning of Lent, the period leading up to Easter.

North Eastern Regional Mission Council



**ASH WEDNESDAY**  
**Day of Fellowship**



THEME:

**Rooted &  
Resilient;  
Responding in  
H.O.P.E**

**Portmore United Church**  
**February 17, 2021 @ 9:00 a.m.**

Join us on Youtube/Facebook.  
Prepare your communion elements at home.

# DAY OF FELLOWSHIP 2021



Western Regional Mission Council

Wednesday

FEB 17

9AM-12 noon

\*STREAMED LIVE FROM  
St. Paul's United Church  
(Montego Bay)

Via  
WRMC YouTube Channel

## ASH WEDNESDAY

### VIRTUAL Day of Fellowship

*A day of Fasting - Worship & Prayer*

**Preacher: Rev. Glenroy Clarke**  
(Minister, Lucea United Charge)

Theme: Rooted, Resilient: Responding in HOPE

\*Sacrament of Holy Communion  
will be observed

\*Liturgical Colour:  
Purple/Lavender



**On Ash  
Wednesday  
February  
17, 2021  
distance  
did not  
deter  
worship.**



CAYMAN ISLANDS REGIONAL MISSION COUNCIL

## Ash Wednesday Worship

February 17, 2021  
7:30 – 9:45 am

Location: Savannah United Church

**Rooted, Resilient: Responding in HOPE**  
(Health, Opportunity, Peace, Evangelism)

With strident conviction of faith in God and a determination to be faithful to God's call to the church to make disciples, UCJCI declares we are:

**Rooted, Resilient:  
Responding in H.O.P.E.  
(Hope, Opportunities,  
Peace and Evangelism.)**

# BEYOND THE PULPIT

A space for leadership discussions of issues of faith in community.

## Fasting in a Feasting Culture?

**On this Ash Wednesday, as the Christian Church once again observes the beginning of Lent, a 40-day fast in preparation for Easter, we do so in emulation of Jesus' fasting in the wilderness before he began his public ministry.** Fasting as defined by the Encyclopaedia Britannica is the "abstinence from food or drink or both for health, ritualistic, religious, or ethical purposes".

This practice of fasting is not a new one and has existed from antiquity. It has proven itself to be of great worth and value. Whilst fasting is not restricted to religion, it plays an essential role in the life of the Christian Church.

But abstaining from food or drink or both in a culture of feasting? Is this still plausible? If we consider the various purposes for fasting, therein we may arrive at our answer.

Fasting has been known to avert or halt calamity by evoking God's compassion (1Kings 21:27-29). Fasting has been known for successfully averting disaster facing a community or a nation. When Jonah delivered God's message to the people and King of Nineveh, they received it and repented. The King called a fast in response to which they put on sackcloth and turned from their evil ways, or in the words of Jonah 3:10, "God



**In light of our present culture, there is a real challenge in exercising the spiritual discipline of fasting.**

relented of the disaster that He had said He would do to them, and He did not do it". Fasting has been used to express repentance and a return to God (1Samuel 7:6). Fasting has been used in seeking deliverance and protection (2 Chronicles 20:3-4). Fasting has been known to spiritually strengthen participants (Matthew 6:16-18). Fasting has been declared a necessity for overcoming certain situations with which Jesus' disciples were faced (Matthew 17: 14-21). "However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting", Jesus' own words.

Indeed, we live in a fast-moving world where most things are available at the click of our fingertips and we want what we want and we want it now. Jamaica is known worldwide for its culinary delights. Jamaicans in general take pride in our foods and we enjoy good food. Our people no doubt belong to a feasting culture. In light of our present culture, there is a real challenge

in exercising this spiritual discipline of fasting. Nonetheless, I am convinced and convicted that the spiritual discipline of fasting is still very much relevant for those of us who are called to be disciples of Christ. Fasting continues to be relevant as it provides us

with soul cleansing. It does this by giving us the opportunity to be rid of the toxins that would have built up in our bodies over time. Fasting continues to be relevant as it has the ability to increase our desire for God. Through fasting, we connect with God in ways that may not have been possible otherwise. Fasting continues to be relevant as it improves our ability to hear and recognize the voice of God. Fasting continues to be relevant as through fasting we can request God for a shifting in what we really deserve.

**Rev. Tamara Smith Coleman**





*During the Season of Lent*  
**HOUSE WORSHIP LITURGY THEMES**

**THEME FOR FEBRUARY:**  
**Rooting our Emotional Health in God  
 brings us Hope**

**FEBRUARY 21**

**We too are beloved by God and can be used by God  
 to be a blessing to others.**

Genesis 9:8-17 □ 1 Peter 3:18-22 □ Mark 1:9-15 Psalm 25:1-9

**FEBRUARY 28**

**How do we keep our emotions in check when we face conflicts especially  
 those that jeopardize our emotional wellbeing? .**

Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16 □ Romans 4:13-25 □ Mark 8:31-38 □ Psalm 22:22-30

**Liturgies are available from the Minister/Lay Pastor,  
 Communication Officer of your congregation and from  
 your Regional Mission Council Office.**

**The liturgies developed by the House Worship Team reflect the  
 worship theme for the 42nd Synod**

## PRAY PRAY PRAY PRAY

*Look to the LORD and his strength; seek his face always.- 1 Chronicles 16:11*

### LET US BE DILIGENT IN PRAYER FOR:

- ◆ **Rev. Dr. Elsa Clarke** who has been hospitalized
- ◆ **Mrs. Ruth Coke**, wife of Rev. Raymond Coke, who is recovering from surgery
- ◆ **Rev. Donovan Myers** and family
- ◆ Persons in Cayman and Jamaica whose mental, physical, emotional and spiritual health have been impacted by COVID-19
- ◆ Good judgement and decision-making in relation to the COVID-19 vaccine.
- ◆ All UCJCI and other ministers of the church as they serve and practice self-care
- ◆ Access and delivery of education and the challenges faced by children, parents, teachers and administrators in Jamaica
- ◆ Health care workers and members of the security forces in Jamaica and Cayman.



Devotional available from the CWM website

<https://www.cwmision.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Sundays-with-CWM-2021.pdf>





## HAPPY BIRTHDAY GREETINGS



**FEBRUARY 19**  
Rev Valerie Reynolds



**FEBRUARY 23**  
Rev. Norman Francis

# Upcoming Events

## Preparing to Serve

### TRAINING FOR LAY LEADERS

The second training session in the Lay Leaders Certificate Course for 2021 is scheduled for Saturday February 24 beginning at 9:00 a.m. via Zoom

Topic:

## Introduction to Leadership

Lecturer:

**Mrs. Janet McConnell**  
Human and Mission Resource Manager

If you are interested in joining in this session please register with your Regional Mission Council

# Upcoming Events



**A VIRTUAL MEMORIAL EXPERIENCE**  
to celebrate the life of Rev. James Davis  
on Thursday February 18, 2021  
6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

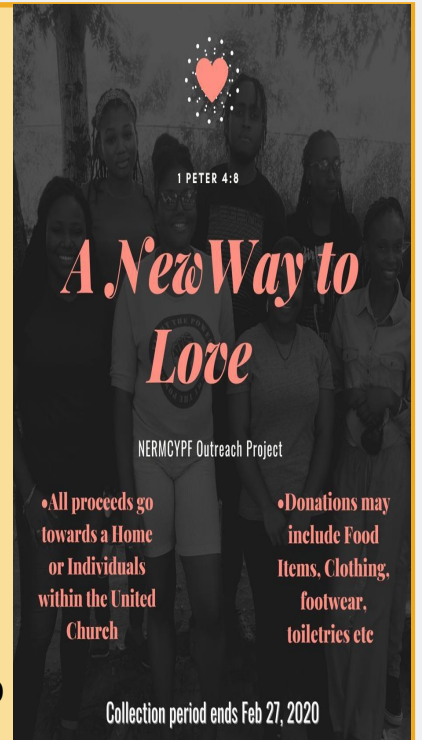
Reflect and offer tributes for Rev. Davis.  
All are invited.  
Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86197792664?pwd=c3RFY3Ywem5SYS80MU9xRFR1OVIXQT09>



**North Eastern Regional Mission Council Youth Fellowship**

**OUT-REACH**



## A New Way to Love

1 PETER 4:8  
NERMCPYF Outreach Project

•All proceeds go towards a Home or Individuals within the United Church

•Donations may include Food Items, Clothing, footwear, toiletries etc

Collection period ends Feb 27, 2020

FOR EVENT DETAILS CALL OR WHATSAPP 876-274-1310 FOR MORE INFORMATION.

Spread love with #lovealwayswins



**UTCWI Graduate Studies Department**  
presents

# Inaugural

# Lecture



Presenter: Rev. Dr. Norman Francis  
United Church Ministerial Tutor, UTCWI

**Date: Thursday, February 25, 2021**  
**@ 4:30p.m via zoom.**

**Topic: "The Synoptic Trial and Mockery Scenes: Matthew's Redaction of Mark in presenting Jesus as the Archetype of the Yom Kippur Ritual"**

**Meeting ID: 870 1338 3106 Passcode: 114613**



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**UCJCI VALUE S**

“In seeking to live out our calling, we particularly value and are committed to:

**Discipleship and Holiness:**

The intentional and relational development of believers to become mature followers of Jesus Christ

(1 Peter 2:2, Colossians 3:1-17).

**IN THE COMING ISSUE...**

**FEATURE**

**THE UPCOMING 42ND SYNOD OF THE UNITED CHURCH IN JAMAICA AND THE CAYMAN ISLANDS**

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

*Congregational, Disciples of Christ ,Presbyterian*

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Moderator  
**Rt. Rev. Dr. Gordon Cowans**

General Secretary  
**Rev. Norbert Stephens**

Regional Deputy General Secretaries

Cayman Regional Mission Council  
**Rev. Dr. Yvette Noble Bloomfield**

Southern Regional Mission Council  
**Mrs. Rose Wedderburn**

North Eastern Regional Mission Council (Interim)  
**Rev. Norbert Stephens**

Western Regional Mission Council  
**Mrs. Mauleen Henry**

**SYNODICAL THEME:**  
**“Renewal and Transformation: Discipleship for Life”**