

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



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VOLUME 7
ISSUE 4

COVID 19 VACCINE

What Choice will you Make?

Theme of the UCJCI 42nd Synod

ROOTED,
RESILIENT:
RESPONDING IN
HOPE



FAREWELL TO
SERVANTS OF THE
CHURCH

SUNDAYS WITH
CWM

Weekly Devotional Now Available

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

THEME FOR 42ND UCJCI SYNOD



ROOTED, RESILIENT: RESPONDING IN H.O.P.E.

The theme for the 42nd Synod of the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands was approved by The Central Mission Council, at it's sitting in November 2020.

The theme, which will be launched at the Ash Wednesday Day of Fellowship, is a declaration of defiance that, despite COVID 19 or any other calamity brought on the modern world, the United Church will actively pursue HOPE – Health, Opportunities, Peace and Evangelism by remaining rooted and working towards resilience.

A document offering contextual and theological justification, entitled 'the Road Map', outlines the journey

The difficulties and hardships of the day are a test of our faith and will in Christ, therefore we must press on.

towards the theme stating that “of the many words translated Church, the Hebrew ‘ey’dah,’ invites us in this season of the Church’s witness, to move beyond the physical sanctuary and to ‘witness’ in times of crisis and chaos, as we emerge and evolve with inspiring and life-giving ministries”.

“To be “rooted” [firmly implanted], speaks to our foundation: immovable, unshakeable, unchangeable and unstoppable. **WE ARE ROOTED IN CHRIST.** The Church has stood the test of time: historically, socially and politically and still stands, because her foundation was not of human initiation or intervention.”

The biblical basis for the theme, is “To be “resilient” [returning to the original form or
(Cont’d on page 4)

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BEYOND THE PULPIT

Issues of faith and community

Are You Concerned About the COVID-19 Vaccine?



The COVID-19 pandemic has brought tremendous suffering, devastation and death upon the land. All areas of human life and relationships have been impacted by this health tragedy, at both the local and global level.

The government statistics in Jamaica indicate that, as of January 26, 2021, there have been **15,000** diagnosed cases; anecdotal reports suggest the number could be higher, with many infected persons being asymptomatic and unknowingly transmitting the virus.

Although COVID-19 vaccines have been developed to help stop the spread, some people are skeptical. They ask, “Should we take the vaccine? Can we trust that it is effective?” Their concern may be related to how quickly it was developed and any possible side-effects. Others may be ideologically opposed to all vaccines. While the decision is personal and/or familial, I offer the following bits of pastoral counsel to help in the decision-making process:

Avoid Being Overly Anxious. Although a measure of concern is necessary when considering serious matters we must not allow ourselves to become overwhelmed by fear of either the virus or the vaccine. Keeping a cool head will help us to think clearly and to make sober judgements.

Become Properly Informed. The antidote for ignorance is accurate information. Speaking with qualified and trusted health personnel, such as your family/community doctor or a public health professional will help to bring knowledge and comfort. Social Media platforms may not be the best place to get your information.

“Should we take the vaccine?

Can we trust that it is effective?”

Consider Others: There may be vulnerable persons (such as the elderly, or persons with chronic medical conditions) in your social circle, and while you may be able to survive contracting the virus, they may not. Hence, it would be in their best interest, as much as yours, to get vaccinated.

There is a highly contagious disease among us, causing great harm to our lives and livelihoods. We must all do what we can to reduce the spread. Making an informed choice to get vaccinated against COVID-19 may indeed be the wise, moral and Christian thing to do.



Rev. Anthony Chung
Minister, Ridgemount United Charge of Churches

(Cont'd from page 2)

position after being bent, compressed or stretched], and speaks to what 2 Corinthians 4:8 & 9 declares as our way of being: "We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed." (NIV)

Resilience and hope are directly connected, as seen in Paul's charge to see beyond their physical and present circumstances and to see through spiritual eyes that whatever it is and how it may appear to be, God has *not abandoned them. The same is true for us.*

UCJCI's main 'response' {our answer less in word and more in action}, at this time is HOPE. The Greek and Hebrew words—'elpis', 'yachal', 'sabar', 'chacah' - are not suggesting doing nothing, but as we wait, with careful discernment and prayer, we act, knowing that Yahweh [I am, that I am] is working alongside us.

We are called to remain **FAITHFUL**. To this end, for this time and for the future **HOPE** calls us to:

Become and be **HEALTHY**.

To harness all the God given **OPPORTUNITIES** now and in the future

To always pursue **PEACE** and yes,

EVANGELISM remains the heartbeat of the Church.

SUB-THEMES

JANUARY – MARCH

Become and be **HEALTHY**

APRIL – JUNE

OPPORTUNITIES in this time and for the unfolding future

JULY – SEPTEMBER

Always pursue **PEACE**

OCTOBER – DECEMBER

EVANGELISM remains the heartbeat of the Church

Further information from 'The Road Map' will be shared in coming weeks.



UCJCI SALUTES REV. JAMES DAVIS

UCJCI salutes Rev. James Davis, who died on January 23, 2021. A retired minister, Rev. Davis was Ordained in 1994, one of a pioneering group to pursue ministerial training via UCJCI's in-service training model conducted by the Institute for Theological and Leadership Development, one of the antecedents of the International University of the Caribbean.

Rev. Davis served the Brixton Hill Charge until his retirement in 2002. Prior to Pastoral Ministry Rev. Davis served as Director of the Mt Olivet Boys Home for twenty-one (21) years concluding in 1990. There he was influential in positively shaping the lives of many young men who passed through that institution.

May his soul rest in peace.

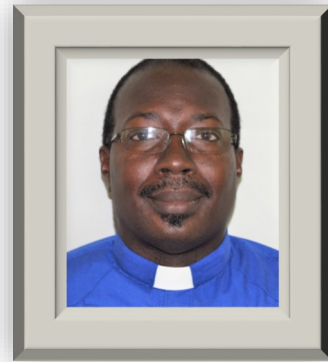


REMEMBERING MICHAEL WARING

UCJCI remembers Michael Waring, a partner from the Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI) who died suddenly on October 28, 2020 aged 42. Michael worked in the Synod Administrative Centre with the Communication Unit in 2001. He was the son of Rev. Jim and the late Mrs. Lorna Waring who worked in the Hampden Charge from 1972-76. Michael's siblings were both born in Jamaica. His sister, Stephanie, spent some months in the 1990's as a volunteer at Mount Olivet Boys' Home. Michael leaves a wife and infant daughter.

PCI is a partner denomination of UCJCI and, over the years, have shared in UCJCI ministry through personnel from PCI.

May his soul rest in peace .



JANUARY 20

Belated greetings to REV. NIGEL PUSEY



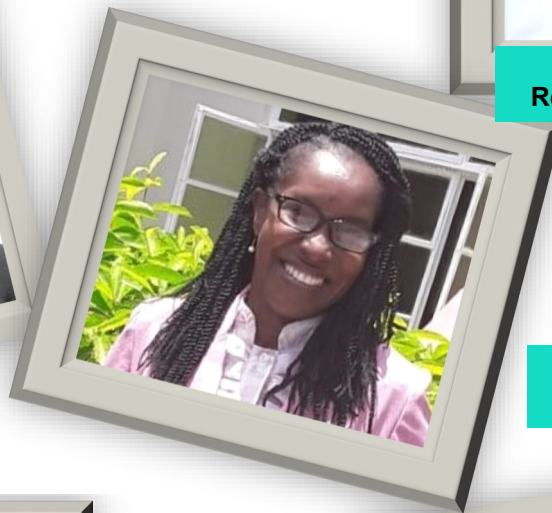
JANUARY 29

Rev. Paul DaCosta Pinto



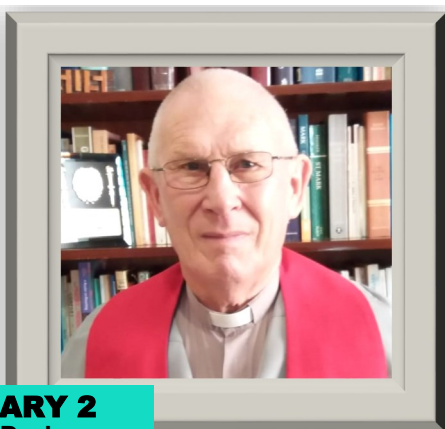
JANUARY 30

Mrs. Anne Lyew



FEBRUARY 2

Miss Sandra Collins



FEBRUARY 2

Rev. Roy Dodman



FEBRUARY 2

Mr. Patrick Newman

Upcoming Events



The United Church in Jamaica
and the Cayman Islands

HUMAN AND MISSION RESOURCES UNIT
presents a Workshop on

**THE CONGREGATION AS
EMPLOYER:
ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES
UNDER THE LAW**

via Zoom

FEBRUARY 11, 2021

9:30 a.m.—2:00 p.m.

Who should attend:

**Ministers and
Congregational
Secretaries or
Administrators**

of congregations where staff
members are employed by
congregation/congregational

To register:

Email Ms. Monique Lofters
programmeassistant-hmr@ucjci.com
by **January 31, 2021**, to book your space.

For additional information, contact:

Mrs. Janet McConnell
Human and Mission Resource Manager
janet-mcconnell@ucjci.com
or 876-926 6059 or 876 509 4669

TRAINING FOR LAY LEADERS RESUMES FEBRUARY 13, 2021



TRAINING WILL NOW BE DELIVERED ONLINE

For those who started the training in 2020, please contact your Regional Mission Council office which will provide information on plans for you to access and continue the training.

New learners welcome

REGISTER NOW
through your Regional Mission Council office.

HOUSE WORSHIP LITURGY THEMES

The liturgies developed by the House Worship Team
reflect the Synodical worship themes.

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

FEBRUARY 7
God cares about our emotional health

FEBRUARY 14
We too are beloved by God and can be used by God to
be a blessing to others.

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

Send comments and news about your congregation to: ucjciupdate@gmail.com

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:

- ◆ The family of the late Rev. James Davis, his colleagues and members of the congregations he served.
- ◆ 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
- ◆ High incidence of crime in Jamaica, especially since the start of the year.
- ◆ Access and delivery of education and the challenges faced by children, parents, teachers and administrators in Jamaica
- ◆ Rev. Donovan Myers' and family
- ◆ Family members of Doreen Barnett and Sheila Arscott Smith who have health challenges



Send comments and news about your congregation to: ucjciupdate@gmail.com

UCJCI VALUE S

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

Relationship with God
so we may know God and relate to God as a person, rather than an impersonal force, knowing Jesus to be Lord of our lives, so we may grow in grace and in the power of the Holy Spirit.”

(Mark 12:29-31, Matthew 3:16-17, Romans 8:1-17).

IN THE COMING ISSUE...

BEYOND THE PULPIT
The National Identification System

THE UNITED CHURCH IN JAMAICA AND THE CAYMAN ISLANDS

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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”

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