



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

Synod Issue - April 14, 2021

# UCJCI HISTORIC OPENING SERVICE

NEW MODERATOR  
INDUCTED

SYNOD VIA ZOOM

CHURCH AND  
STATE -  
CONFLICTING  
AUTHORITIES?

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VOLUME 7  
ISSUE 15

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

# HISTORIC UCJCI VIRTUAL SYNOD OPENING SERVICE

Sunday April 11, 2021 has taken its place in the annals of The United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands as the day when the first ever virtual Synod Opening Service took place.

The pomp and pageantry which normally attend the ceremonial opening of Synod were not evident in the Opening Service on the afternoon of Sunday April 11. However, what was very clear is that God’s presence transcends space and worship in praise, prayer and proclamation of the Word were undeterred by physical distancing. The United Church gathered in the digital space, to God be the glory!

The Word was powerfully proclaimed by outgoing Moderator, Rt. Rev. Dr. Gordon Cowans. Using three words as the focus of the sermon, “In Christ Alone”, he stated that when confusion and frustration abound, Jesus says: “I am the way” (John 14:6). When deception, duplicity and fake news abound, Jesus says: “I am the truth”. When death, disease, and destruction abound Jesus says “I am the life”.

Noting that when Jesus said He is the way, He was indicating that He knew where we were going, so we are to leave the navigation to Him. When Jesus said He is the truth, we are assured that truth in the scriptures was firm, reliable, and faithful. Jesus is the true Life, and we are assured that He and His Father know our needs and will provide for them.

In referencing the chosen theme of the Synod, “Rooted, Resilient: Responding in HOPE”, the outgoing Moderator stated that the challenges of the day required response from the Church. It was truly a time for action. With roots secure in the divine strength and power, there is no circumstance that could dislodge us from the connection we have in the true vine, - we are Rooted. He noted that resilience is the capacity to find a way - be strong, while flexible.

Dr. Cowans declared that, “Hope is the only option for us as people of integrity “. It is a hope in which we lived and acted and it is action time...it is harvest time, and the Church is invited to apply these truths to today’s and tomorrow’s challenges.



In identifying specific areas for the Church’s response Dr. Cowans named Evangelism, Facing the Truth of Cayman and Jamaica’s past and, Regard for the People.

- ◆ **Evangelism** – The renewed commitment of every Christian should be to humbly declare through word and action that we have found the way of life, hope - and His name is Jesus.
- ◆ **Facing the truth of our nations’ past** - in the Caribbean there had been a resilience to face up to the ugly truth of our past. The corporate trauma continued to affect many aspects of our lives. He commended Council for World Mission for its dogged approach to investigating and naming the legacies of slavery and to further take action through reparatory activities including making an apology for the part its antecedents played in slavery and the slave trade. Dr. Cowans noted that the Church had the

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opportunity to help in these operations of reparation to repair the breach, reflected in many areas such as land distribution, education, and domestic and other forms of violence.

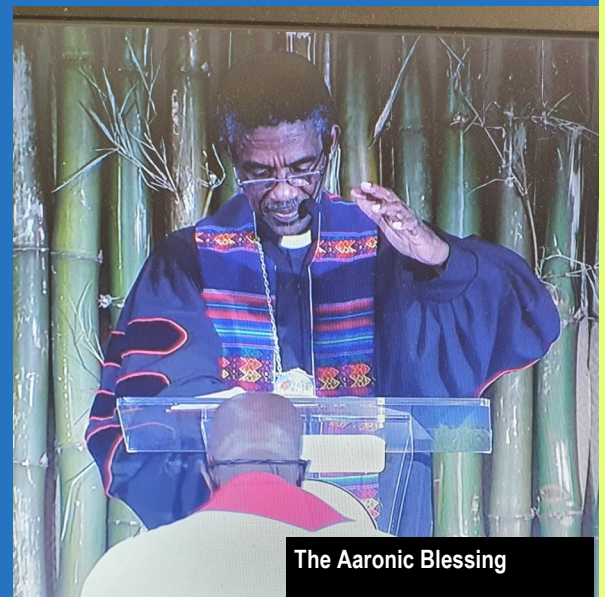
- ◆ **Regard for each other, especially the poor** — the outgoing Moderator noted an environment of mistrust, and disregard for the poor, weak and voiceless and challenged the church to respond in a way which reflects respect for every human being. Christ called His Church to be the exemplar – caring, compassionate and respectful to all creation, great and small. He singled out the men of the church stating that, in the face of the upsurge of domestic violence, too often culminating in the death of women, it is not sufficient that there are good and decent men alive, “for as long as some men, and the boys from whom they grow, became depraved, the issues would not be resolved”. Christ called men to rise up with true masculinity to declare “Enough”.

Dr. Cowans concluded that there was much work to do in the Church and the society and with our leader - Jesus, who is the way, the truth and the life, the Church is called to respond in hope in Christ through responsive action.

## SCENES FROM THE OPENING SERVICE



The Ceremony of Induction



The Aaronic Blessing

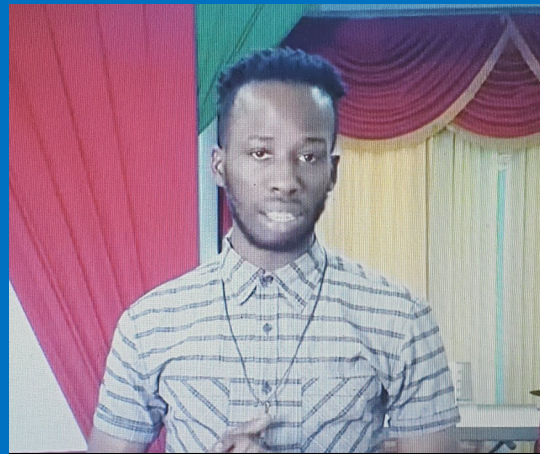


The Rt. Rev. Gary Harriott (centre) poses for a moment with the outgoing Moderator, Rev. Dr. Gordon Cowans (left) and General Secretary, Rev. Norbert Stephens (right)

# SCENES FROM THE OPENING SERVICE



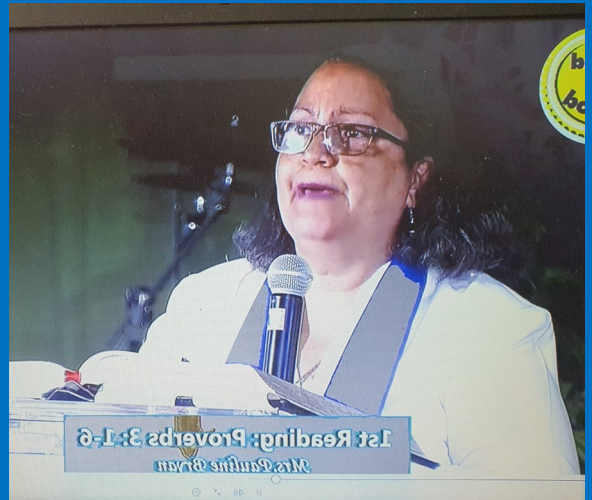
Mrs. Cora Grant-James  
John Gray Memorial United Church



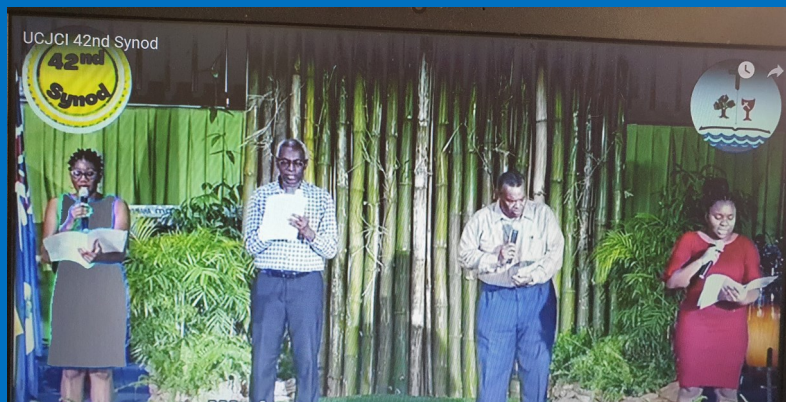
Mr. Chevan Shirley – Lowe River United Church, Southern Regional Mission Council.



President-General of Women's Fellowship, Pauline Bryan reads a lesson.



President-General of Women's Fellowship, Pauline Bryan reads a lesson.



A multi-congregation Praise Team lead the songs of worship.

# MEET THE MAN WHO IS MODERATOR— Gary Lloyd Harriott

## Family



Rev. Gary Harriott, (left) son-in-law Jevaughn Buchanan with granddaughter Giselle, daughter Diandra with grandson A'Zari, son DeJon (front), son-in-law Alex Hayden, daughter Garielle and wife Dionne.



Rev. Gary Harriott and wife Dionne

## Service

Ordained in 1991, Reverend Gary Harriott has served the UCJCI in various capacities in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands—in pastoral ministry at the East End/Gun Bay Charge in Grand Cayman, Ebenezer and Webster Memorial United Churches, and presently is the minister of the Bryce Charge of United Churches in Manchester.

Rev Harriott has also served as Interim Minister for the Shortwood and Lincoln Kirk United Churches, as well as the Denbigh and Lowe River Charges. He has served the United Church in other capacities, including those of Director of Youth Ministries, Director of Chaplaincy and Counselling, and Director of Ministerial Formation.

He holds Diplomas in Ministerial Studies from the Jamaica Bible College and the United Theological College of the West Indies, a Bachelor of Arts degree in Theology from the University of the West Indies, as well as a Master of Arts degree in Pastoral Psychology and Counselling from St. Stephen's and St. Andrew's College in Canada, in collaboration with the International University of the Caribbean, Jamaica.

He was seconded to the Jamaica Council of Churches (JCC), where he served as General Secretary from September 2006 to January 2020 and has also served the Jamaica Umbrella Group of Churches as Secretary, from 2006-2018.

He has served on various UCJCI Boards and Committees and is currently Chairman of the Robin's Hall Primary & Knox Junior School Boards.

*(Cont'd on page 12)*



Rev. Gary Harriott and mother Mrs. Gladys Harriott.



Rev. Gary Harriott, and siblings—Barbara, Jeffrey, Neil, Karen, Gary, Debra, Theda, Everard (Ally), Roxanna and mom Gladys.

# Celebrating People

**On Monday April 12 2021, the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands celebrated faithful servants of the Lord who have provided outstanding services in various areas. Here are some aspects of the service**

The General Secretary, Rev. Norbert Stephens, introduced the main agenda: "Celebrating Life and Witness" and announced the first category of awards.

## **HONOURING OF REGIONAL LAY PERSONS**

Two lay persons from each Regional Mission Council (RMC) who are deemed to have gone beyond the call of duty and sacrificed much in contributing to the advancement of the work and witness of the UCJCI were honoured as follows:

- ◆ CIRMC: Ms. Angela Martins (Savannah)/ Mr. Clive Hinds (South Sound United)
- ◆ WRMC: Pastor Merton Jones (Big Bridge)/ Mrs. Heather Dennisur (Savanna-la-Mar) • SRMC: Miss Blossom Foster (Andrews Memorial)/ Dr. Elvris Hewitt Buckle (Pike)
- ◆ NERMC: Mr. William McLeod (St. Stephens)/ Pastor Emeralla Forde (Seafield/Mt Regale)

## **AWARD OF MERIT FOR ORDAINED MINISTERS AND LAY PASTORS**

The Award of Merit was established to recognize Ordained Ministers or Lay Pastors who, at the congregational level, are deemed to have made outstanding achievements in contributing to and leading the advancement of any area of the Renewal and Transformation Agenda of UCJCI. In this Synodical period, the following Renewal & Transformation Merit Awards (Certificates) were awarded:

- ◆ CIRMC—Administration: Rev. L. Christopher Mason (Elmslie) Outreach: Rev. Donovan Myers (John Gray) Evangelism through the Word (Teaching & Preaching ministry): Rev. Euthman Wray (Savannah) Stewardship with emphasis on tithing: Pastor Ormond Williams (East End Gun Bay Ministry to Children: Rev. Rohan Forrester (Bodden Town Northside)
- ◆ WRMC—Administration: Rev. Tara Tyme (St. Paul's Montego Bay) Outreach: Rev. Everton Brissett (Stirling) Evangelism through the Word: Pastor Maxene Jones (Norwood) Stewardship: Dr. Heather Jones Fray (Salt Spring) Ministry to Children: Mrs. Earlee Bowen (Goodwill) Schools & Social Institutions: Mrs. Onex Bowen (Sommerton)
- ◆ SRMC—Administration: Rev. Lembe Sivile (Lowe River)



**Mrs. Joan Page-Bain**



**Ms Claire Trueman**



**Mrs. Rose Wedderburn**

Outreach/Community Engagement: Rev. Gary Harriott (Bryce) Evangelism through the Word (teaching & Preaching Ministry): Rev. Anthony Chung (Ridgemount)

- ◆ NERMC—Leadership/Administration: Rev. Joel Downer (North Street) Outreach: Pastor Vernice Downer Evangelism: Rev. Nevroy Francis (Portmore) Discipleship & Stewardship: Rev. Garwell Bacchas (King's Gate) Ministry to Children & Youth: Rev. Sylvan Hinds (Shortwood)

#### **THE RENEWAL & TRANSFORMATION AWARD**

This award was established to recognize Ordained Ministers or Lay Pastors, who at the congregational level are deemed to have made outstanding achievements in contributing to, and, leading the advancement of the Renewal and Transformation Agenda of the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands. These awardees have demonstrated at the congregational level, significant/outstanding achievement in two or more areas of the Synodical Implementation Plan for the current Synodical period.

- CIRMC – Rev. L. Christopher Mason (Elmslie)
- WRMC – Rev. Glenroy Clarke (Lucea)
- SRMC - Pastor Edwards Williams (James Hill)
- NERMC- Rev. Astor Carlyle (Webster Memorial)

#### **RECOGNITION FOR FAITHFUL SERVICE -SPECIAL HONOUREES**

- ◆ **Mrs. Joan Page-Bain** Commissioned by UCJCI in 1984 to serve as a missionary nurse in Haiti. She served for over 30 years responding to the spiritual and physical needs of the community. She has been selfless in her service to people to the glory of God.
- ◆ **Ms. Claire Truman** A missionary from the Presbyterian Church in Ireland came to Jamaica from Northern Ireland in 1962. She served primarily in Children's Ministry as Director of Children's Work, Camp Ministry Director and as a consultant in later years in the development of Church School material and also conducted Lay Training. She earned the trust and admiration of others over her years in Jamaica. She has put her memories and experience into a book called "Wonderful Years" which is currently under review for printing.
- ◆ **Mrs. Rose Wedderburn** In 2009, she became Regional Deputy Secretary for the Southern Regional Mission Council and has served for 12 years. She has been a trusted leader in the Church for over 30 years. Her self-discipline and quiet confidence are reflected in her commitment to serve.

#### **50 YEARS OF ORDINATION 50 YEARS OF ORDINATION AWARDEES**

- ◆ Rev. Harry Bodden – ordained on January 18, 1970
- ◆ Rev. Joseph Crawford – ordained August 18, 1971

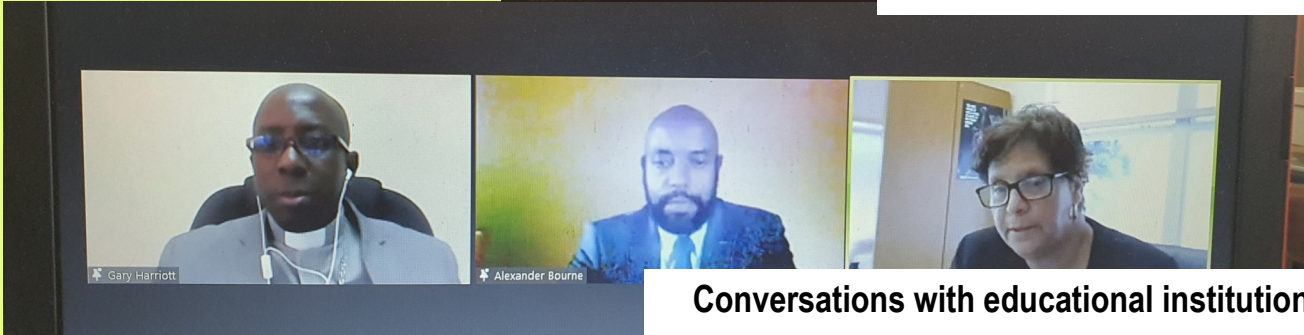
Mrs. Joan Page-Bain offered a response of thanks on behalf of the Special Honourees, stating her indebtedness to UCJCI for their support, love, prayers and tears.

# SYNOD VIA ZOOM



Synod delegates in meeting.

Cayman's musical story of hope.



Conversations with educational institutions.

While the United Church community has been invited to join in worship services via YouTube, another technological innovation has been harnessed to facilitate the discussions and deliberations during the 42nd Synod— teleconferencing via Zoom. Delegates enter a virtual meeting room each day 9:00 am— 3:00 p.m. to interrogate the stewardship of the church.

Through the medium of Zoom, reports are shared using video, photographs and the spoken word. Communities through which the United Church serves have brought their perspectives to the conversations. Educational institutions such as the North Street Primary School, Clarendon College and Mona Preparatory; and social service institutions e.g. Bethesda Counselling Centre, the United Church Senior Citizens' Home provided the on-the-ground realities of daily service to the Synod. Delegates were able to raise questions, make suggestions, offer practical help to our institutions as they carry out the work of service to children, youth, the elderly and wider community.

In a musical demonstration of a hopeful story—a running motif throughout the Synod deliberations where the delegates are invited to observe the ways in which hope is already springing from our various acts of service— on Tuesday, the Cayman Regional Mission Council shared a video of a regional choir assembled in the midst of the COVID 19 restrictions singing, 'Holy Spirit Rain Down' which ushered the delegates into a time of worship in the midst of the work. Meetings via Zoom will continue until the business sessions end on Thursday April 15, 2021.



# BEYOND THE PULPIT

## Church and State ...Conflicting Authorities?

The rise in the COVID -19 cases over the past few weeks, has engendered some stringent measures from the Government of Jamaica. These include weekend lockdown, which affects worship. There is ambivalence among church leaders and members about the action taken. Some feel that the Prime Minister has acted with wisdom, some feel that the move is too stringent, while others feel the Prime Minister has no authority to interfere with worship, especially during the Easter season. We have seen in the news and in social media two extreme cases defying the Government's order, one in St. Ann's Bay where a Pastor refused to comply with the orders of the police and the other in Browns Town of a video in which the pastor was extremely defiant.

The question as to whether the Government's action, with regard to "locking down church" constitute an elevation of its authority over that of God and whether the church should obey

**Is there a limit to Government's authority and is there a place for disobedience of the law?**

God rather than man, came to the fore. **Is there a limit to Government's authority and is there a place for disobedience of the law?**

A careful reading of scriptures will shed some light on the subject. The first four words of the bible, "In the beginning God" affirms the fact that God is sovereign. God is creator and the supreme authority, and all things are under God's control. Recognizing God as creator forces us to recognize that we are not ultimately in charge. Whatever authority and control we have, have been delegated to us by God. "Listen therefore O kings, and understand; learn, O judges of the ends of the earth. Give ear, you that rule over multitudes, and boast of many nations. For your dominion was given you from the Lord, and your sovereignty from the Most High; he will search out your works and inquire into your plans." (Wisdom of Solomon 6: 1-3). Governments, therefore, have delegated authority and must exercise this authority under God.

Jesus, when he was asked by the Pharisees and the Herodians whether it was right to pay taxes to Caesar or not, responded, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's." (Matthew 22: 21)

It was the consistent and official teaching of the Christian Church that obedience must be given to, and prayers made for, the civil power. Two references from the pastoral letters will suffice.

"I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all men, for kings and for all who are in high positions; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, godly and respectful in every way." (1 Timothy 2: 1-2) "Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore, he who resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment" (Romans 13: 1-2). See also Titus 3: 1 and 1 Peter 2: 13-17.

The call for civil obedience came against the background of Jewish rebellion against civil leaders. The Jews, and in particular the Zealots, were convinced that God was the only king and so there were often insurrections, aimed at making any civil government impossible. The New Testament, and in particular Paul, seems to be disassociating Christianity from this belief and practice and to make it clear that Christianity and good citizenship go hand in hand. The general principle which the pastoral letters state so unequivocally is the duty of being good citizens.

As Christians we live with the tension of dual citizenship, our earthly citizenship and citizenship in the kingdom of heaven. This is a tension in which wisdom must be exercised and in which scripture must be our guide. When times of tension occur, the Christian must settle as best we can the vexed question as to which of the loyalties has the higher claim; but under all ordinary circumstances it is our responsibility to obey our earthly rulers. As citizens we certainly have a responsibility to our country. But our citizenship in the Kingdom of heaven requires that we pledge to God our primary obedience and commitment.

The issue of the "lockdown" of the church must be seen against the background of the spike in the Coronavirus. Good citizenship, both in the kingdom of heaven and the earth, should dictate that we are concerned about the other person and that we take every precaution against its spread.



**Rev. Dr. Henroy Samuels**

## PRAY ♦ PRAY ♦ PRAY

UCJCI responds to the COVID-19 pandemic as a community of faith

### *A Call to Prayer*

Every Wednesday

12 noon—1:00 pm

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by **prayer** and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God."  
Philippians 4: 7 (NIV)

LET US BE DILIGENT IN PRAYER

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

- ♦ Rev. Khereen Wilson Bailey who lost her grandmother.
- ♦ Mrs. Maureen Henry whose mother has not been well.
- ♦ Rev. Sylvan Hinds whose mother has had surgery.
- ♦ Persons who are bereaved.
- ♦ The anticipated newly-elected leadership of the Cayman Islands
- ♦ The concluding work of the 42nd Synod of UCJCI
- ♦ The family, colleagues and friends of Rev. Lloyd Reid
- ♦ Continued healing and help for Rev. Dr. Elsa Clarke
- ♦ Healing for members of the United Church and the wider community who have contracted COVID 19.
- ♦ Persons struggling with the impact of COVID 19 on personal, family, community and work levels.

## THEMES FOR HOUSE WORSHIP LITURGY during the Month of April

**SUNDAY APRIL 18**

**Theme:  
The Power of Christ's  
Presence**

Knowing that God is with us can be so reassuring in chaos and confusion.

Isaiah 55: 1-11; Psalm 4;  
St. Luke 24: 36-50

**SUNDAY APRIL 25**

**Theme:  
Whose voice do I listen  
to?**

Knowing the Shepherd's voice makes the difference between life and death.

Zechariah 11: 4-17; Psalm 23;  
St. John 10: 11-18



UCJI Lay Training Institute is talking...  
**The United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands  
LAY TRAINING INSTITUTE**

**LAY LEADERS CERTIFICATE COURSE - MODULE 1**

# LAY LEADERS TRAINING IN COMMUNICATION

**SATURDAY APRIL 24, 2021 |  
9:00 AM - 4:00 P.M.**

Training via Zoom. For persons interested in joining this session, please contact your Regional Mission Council office.

Lecturer:  
**Mrs. Elaine Commissiong**  
Communication and Change Management  
Consultant



(Cont'd from page 5) He is a Family Counsellor and broadcaster, having served as Coordinator for the Counselling programme at Webster Memorial's Eden Garden Social Services, and as host of the Family Counselling programme on RJR. His is the voice that leads the nation in Noonday Meditation on RJR, even as he serves Radio Jamaica Limited as Spiritual Advisor.

Rev Harriott has lectured on a part-time basis at the International University of the Caribbean, and holds or has held positions on various Boards and Committees. These include: Director of The Violence Prevention Alliance, Director of LOVE FM, Director of the Ecumenical Loan Fund, Member of the National Leadership Prayer Breakfast Committee, Member of the World Council of Churches' Ecumenical HIV & AIDS initiative and Advocacy Reference Group, Member of the General Council of the International University of the Caribbean, among other posts.

The Reverend Gary Harriott is a strong believer and advocate for the empowerment of individuals and communities. He believes in helping people to see the good in themselves and to achieve their full potential, and believes that the Church is a strategic institution for community transformation. He is a motivational speaker who addresses issues concerning Children, Youth, Parents, Couples, and other groupings.

Reverend Harriott is married to Dionne, and together they are the parents of Diandra, Garielle, and DeJon.



# HAPPY BIRTHDAY



**APRIL 18**  
**REV TARA TYME**



**APRIL 19**  
**MS. KIMBERLEY**  
**ELLIOTT**



**APRIL 20**  
**MRS. JANET MCCONNELL**

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## UCJCI VALUE S

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

### The Work and Worth of All People:

Displaying unconditional love to all people, acknowledging all in the ministry of Christ, affirming the priesthood of all believers, embracing the gifts of the Spirit, and enabling each person to participate to the fullest extent possible

(Matthew 12:28-31, 1 Peter 2:4-10, Ephesians 4:7-13, 2 Corinthians 1:12-14).

## IN THE COMING ISSUE...

**Outcomes of Synod—  
What have we decided? What will we do?**

## THE UNITED CHURCH IN JAMAICA

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Moderator

**Rt. Rev. Gary Harriott**

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”**