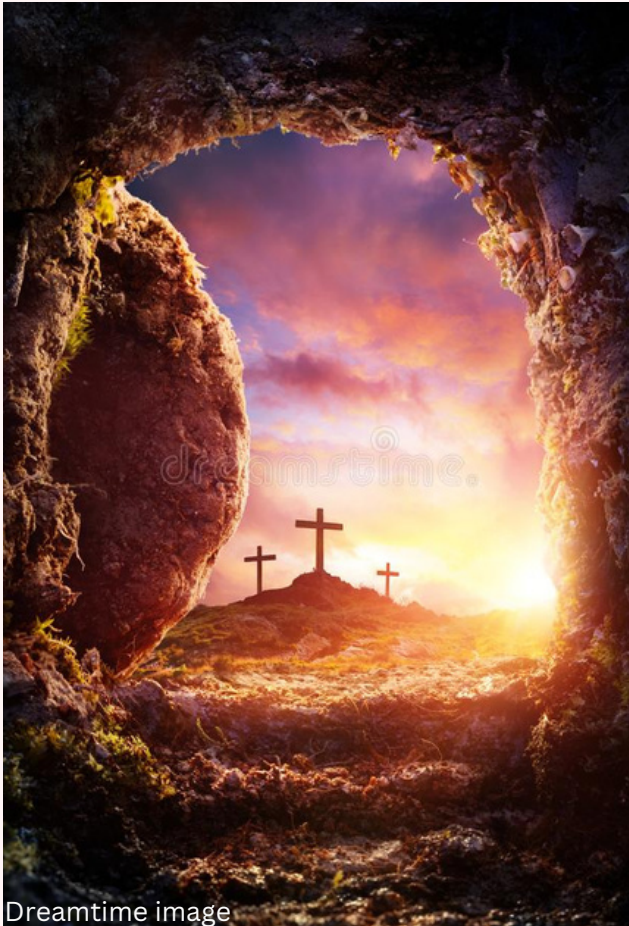




UCJCI UPDATE

APRIL 12, 2023 VOL 10 ISSUE 11

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



Dreamtime image

ON THE INSIDE

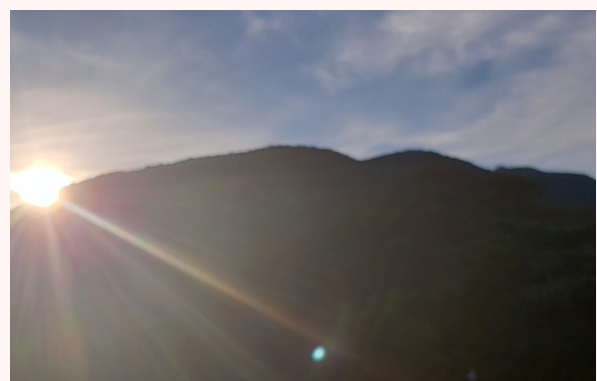
- RECONNECT TO THE RISEN CHRIST
- GIRLS' BRIGADE JAMAICA IS 100 YEARS OLD
- SYNOD AT WORSHIP
- COUNCIL NEWS - CIRMC EASTER PROJECT; NERMC CHILDREN'S RALLY
- POINTS FOR PRAYER AND WORSHIP

UCJCI UPDATE

UPDATE IS PUBLISHED BY THE UNITED CHURCH IN JAMAICA AND THE CAYMAN ISLANDS. THE PUBLICATION PROVIDES INFORMATION ABOUT OUR CHURCH, NEWS OF HAPPENINGS IN OUR LOCAL CONGREGATIONS AND REGIONS, MATERIAL TO FACILITATE WORSHIP AND STUDY OF THE BIBLE, ACTIVITIES FOR PARTICIPATION AND PRAYER AND SPIRITUAL PERSPECTIVES ON ISSUES OF PUBLIC CONCERN.

FEATURE ARTICLE

RECONNECT WITH THE RISEN CHRIST - THE MESSAGE OF EASTER TRANSCENDS THE DATE OF CELEBRATION OF EASTER. GENERAL SECRETARY, UCJCI, REV. NORBERT STEPHENS SHARES A MESSAGE FROM A SERMON DELIVERED AT ANDREWS MEMORIAL UNITED CHURCH BRINGING TOGETHER AN ASPECT OF THE SYNODICAL THEME WITH THE EASTER STORY (SEE PAGE 1)



RECONNECT WITH THE RISEN CHRIST

To this point of your life, what is your story?

What is the nature and texture and pattern of the life you have lived to this point? What have been the highpoints and low points, the celebrations and the struggles you have and or enduring?

On this Easter Sunday we all have a story to tell. The resurrection story highlights two things which, when they are a feature of the human story, render the human spirit and will powerless. We find them in the varied ways in which the gospels portray the resurrection events, on this day we label Easter Sunday: doubts and fear.

When you have doubts about life, about the integrity and the commitment of others (leaders, friends, family, spouse), doubts about the ability of a system or an institution to function effectively, you lose confidence in yourself, in others and in that institution.

When you live with or live in fear, it immobilizes you, it consumes you and ultimately controls you to the extent that you are unable to discern and identify the possibilities around and within you.

When you combine doubt with fear the result is a combination of distress, despair and hopelessness. What story about your life and circumstances do you bring to this Easter Sunday/Resurrection Sunday Service, this morning?

If you have studied the narratives in the Gospels, you will find a common thread in the details of the accounts among the presence of the women, the stone being rolled away, the empty tomb, Jesus' interaction with and declaration to the women and the interaction of the women with the disciples. In each account doubts and fear feature.

Matthew's account offers us a kind of template to not only overcome the doubts and fears of life and living but to equally to connect and reconnect with the Risen Christ. For Matthew, the resurrection of Jesus was the decisive event in human history for it paved the way for Resurrection faith, indeed for Matthew the resurrection is the rock upon which the entire gospel stands. Critically, Matthew declares that this resurrection faith is not grounded in what you have seen or heard about the Risen Christ, indeed the disciples saw and heard and others heard as well but they did not believe. No, it is not what you have seen or heard, whether through videos or plays or via sermons or reading scriptures, rather it is how you have encountered and experienced the risen Christ to the point of belief!

For Matthew it is the risen Christ who enables us to overcome our doubts and fears, for it is the risen Christ who replaces the doubts with confidence and the fear with faith in God, who has the ability to transform and renew our lives and living!

"For Matthew, the resurrection of Jesus was the decisive event in human history for it paved the way for Resurrection faith, indeed for Matthew the resurrection is the rock upon which the entire gospel stands."

RECONNECT WITH THE RISEN CHRIST

To reconnect with the Risen Christ requires:
Consciousness

The consciousness Matthew wishes for us to have about the Risen Christ, is that while the Easter story has many perspectives and facets and versions, while each has its own focus and emphasis, while each present with a different texture and fabric, all declare that the tomb is empty, that Jesus is no longer dead and in the grave but risen and alive!

We don't need to harmonize our stories, your testimony and mine will sometimes be radically different but we can all testify to the connection we have the Risen Christ, who helps us to write and rewrite our stories! Truth: We are not all alike! But we all have access to the Risen Christ

When we reconnect to the Risen Christ we are assured of: Companionship

What strikes me about Matthew's account is that the women, having encountered the natural, the supernatural, the guarded and empty tomb, the new instructions about Galilee for the disciples, hurried from the tomb, afraid yet, filled with Joy!

In the midst of the contradiction of fear and joy, Jesus appears to them and offers them companionship in two critical ways. Firstly, He offers His presence. This was confirmation that neither the earthquake, nor the guards, nor the angels, nor any other force had removed his body from the tomb, he was indeed risen! Secondly, he offered comforting words, do not be afraid! Truth: We are not alone! As we travel along the contradicting and perplexing path called life, Jesus comes alongside us and offers us companionship!

"The Resurrection story is a constant reminder that despite our stories, despite how they have played out, and dare I say it, despite how others read or interpret our stories, God can, does and will use any of us to accomplish God's will."

To reconnect to the Risen Christ demands of us: Commitment

We know well a significant contradiction of the Resurrection, it was women, considered of lower status than men at the time, who were both the first witnesses to the empty tomb and the first to see the risen Christ. More critically, culturally, women were not allowed to testify in court and so their witness was not considered credible.

The Resurrection story is a constant reminder that despite our stories, despite how they have played out, and dare I say it, despite how others read or interpret our stories, God can, does and will use any of us to accomplish God's will. Truth: We have work to do!

As we seek to live out the stories which point to our connection with the Risen Christ, let us remember that we are not all alike, we are not alone and we have work to do.

Rev. Norbert Stephens
General Secretary, UCJCI





UCJCI-CIRMC PEACE INITIATIVE 2023 EASTER PROJECT

On April 5, 2023, the Mission MAT of the CIRMC presented the 'fruits' of the UCJCI- CIRMC Peace Initiative 2023 Easter Project to Ms. Mariesha Spencer of the Cayman Islands Crisis Centre.

The Mission MAT, under the leadership of Mrs. Tessa Bodden, coordinated the Council-wide campaign that yielded the following:

- Gift vouchers -\$2,575
- Cash donation of \$6,547
- Food and household items - \$1,200(estimated)
- Total \$10,322



Thank you all for your participation and most generous support!

WELCOMING NEW MEMBERS AT GUN BAY AND EAST END

On Sunday, April 2, 2023, Mrs. Itza Bodden (nee West) was received into membership at the Gun Bay United Church, and Mr. Eddinton Powell, at the East End United Church. We wish God's plentiful blessings on them and on the congregations.



"He did it for me."



On Sunday April 2, 2023, the Savannah United Church presented an Easter Cantata, a unique retelling of the Easter Story through the reflections of those who encountered Jesus during his time on earth. A combination of songs, voice overs, and snippets of Jesus films were brought together for a powerful and moving production!

North Eastern Regional Mission Council
Presents

Children's Synodical Rally



Venue:
Webster Memorial United Church

SUNDAY
April 16, 2023
@ 2pm

THEME:
**"Rooted, Resilient:
Reignited by the
spirit"**

Competitions
POETRY
POSTER, & ESSAY

SHOWCASING OUR CHILDREN'S TALENTS IN THE ARTS

GIRLS' BRIGADE JAMAICA CELEBRATES 100 YEARS



Blossom Hoad and two brigaders cut the anniversary cake.

THE CENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY IS THEMED "RISE IN STRENGTH...AT SUCH A TIME AS THIS"

Girls' Brigade is a Christian organization that has impacted the lives of many girls worldwide. It provides a platform for girls to grow in faith and character while developing leadership skills through various activities and programmes. As a member of the Girls' Brigade, I can attest to the immense impact it has had on my life.

Being a member of the Girls' Brigade has taught me the importance of teamwork, perseverance, and service to others. Through various activities such as camping, charity events, and community service projects, I was able to develop leadership skills that have been invaluable in my

personal and professional life. I learned how to work well with others, communicate effectively, and lead by example.

Recently, I was named Brigader of the Year, an honour that makes me extremely proud. My experience so far has been nothing short of amazing. It has been a humbling experience, and it has allowed me to serve as a role model to other young girls. This recognition has motivated me to continue to strive for excellence in all that I do.

On March 19th, our Girls' Brigade in Jamaica held a Thanksgiving Service to celebrate our achievements and to give thanks for all the blessings we have received. The service was a momentous occasion that brought together girls from all walks of life to celebrate our accomplishments. During the service, we had the opportunity to reflect on the impact that Girls' Brigade has had on our lives and the lives of those around us. We also had the chance to give thanks for the blessings that we have received as a result of being a part of this incredible organization. We journeyed to Brownsville United where GB in Jamaica began.

For many girls and young women, Girls' Brigade has been a significant influence in their lives. It offers a safe and supportive environment for them to learn, grow, and develop their skills and talents. And so, my vision for Girls' Brigade is for it to continue to grow and expand its reach, providing more girls and young women with the opportunity to develop their skills, build their confidence, and make a difference in their communities. I hope to see Girls' Brigade become even stronger as a global movement that empowers girls to become leaders in all aspects of life, making a positive impact on the world around them

Shamari Ricketts
Brigader of the Year

LOOKING BACK AT GIRLS' BRIGADE MONTH



Quindell Ferguson, International Vice President of Girls' Brigade presents trophy to Davyton United for 1st place for Fund-raising.



Leading in praise.

This year, our National GB Fellowship Day and Rally Competition was different than one would expect. We travelled from St Hilda's High School for fun in the sun, a mini sports day, a concert and even a fashion show using bed sheets and pillowcases! This rally was certainly unlike any other and I enjoyed the outing from my home in Mandeville, Middlesex to fellowship with my fellow Brigaders from Surrey. This Rally has enabled me a great day of relaxation, while also fostering a sense of community and bonding with girls both inside and outside my region.

Riana Tracey
Emerging Leader of the Year



Recommissioning of Officers



JOIN THE GIRLS' BRIGADE TODAY!

"SEEK, SERVE AND FOLLOW CHRIST"



ADVOCACY



EDUCATIONAL



SPIRITUAL



**PHYSICAL
AND
SERVICE**

**WE ASPIRE TO SEE GIRLS' LIVES
TRANSFORMED AND GOD'S WORLD
ENRICHED.**



SYNOD IN FOCUS

Theme: Rooted, Resilient: Reignited by the Spirit

43RD SYNOD OF THE UNITED CHURCH IN JAMAICA AND THE CAYMAN ISLANDS APRIL 23-30, 2023

SYNOD AT WORSHIP

Synod worship committee gives the background to planned worship events

Motif: MOVEMENT MAIN SYMBOL: SHIP

If ever there was a time in human history that the Church must be a relevant community of Hope and Life, it is now. The hope-stifling and life-threatening realities of our times are many: fractured homes, congregations, and relationships; abused men, women and children.

It is a time of mental, emotional, and spiritual fragmentation and depression, as persons struggle for stability in a world changed by the onslaught of the Covid 19 pandemic. Value-principles that served previous generations are being challenged by a culture of new thought, creating alternative life-styles that not only contend for their space in the social arena, but contest the doctrines of the Christian Faith.

Institutions that were once regarded as bastions of hope and guidance, and in which was reposed the confidence of many, are experiencing a deficit in public trust. Technological advancement has served well to increase awareness and connection with each other making the world a global village, but it has also been manipulated to invade privacy and aid in sophisticated criminal activity.

Medical science works hard to develop new interventions for the combating of increasing illnesses, and world leaders struggle to bring equilibrium to the socio-economic and political instability of our times. Many persons are fearful about the future.



Our world needs a voice and a vehicle to help it navigate the swirling waters of our days and lead us into a viable future, God's future. This is the assignment of the Church of Jesus Christ.

The theme for Synod 2023 ROOTED, RESILIENT: RE-IGNITED BY THE SPIRIT is relevant for our Church. It is the RE-IGNITING of the Holy Spirit that will keep the Church anchored and agile in her calling. Scripture shows that each time the Spirit of God re-ignites the people of God, they move from a state of malaise to Mission-engagement. They become a MOVEMENT.

Our United Church, re-ignited by the Holy Spirit, will express herself and be experienced as a MOVEMENT. That will serve as the motif for our Synod Services...MOVEMENT.

As a Church, governed and guided by the Holy Spirit, we are making forward MOVEMENT. We are committed to transition out of the spiritual malaise deepened by the Covid 19 Pandemic, to Mission-engagement.

43RD SYNOD OF THE UNITED CHURCH IN JAMAICA AND THE CAYMAN ISLANDS APRIL 23-30, 2023

SYNOD AT WORSHIP

Like the Early Church we must eagerly WANT the re-igniting of the Holy Spirit. Like them we must prayerfully WAIT for the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit who comes with transforming power to revive both the souls of believers and the systems of the Church. Like them we must WALK in the way of the Spirit guided by God's Word.

To that end we will be the safe and sustaining community, a SHIP (ark), to navigate the waters of the times, helping persons to find safe harbour in our LORD JESUS CHRIST and the community He calls to himself.

As such the symbol on which the motif will rest is that of "A SHIP"

In theology and architecture, the Church has often been referred to as a Ship, reminiscent of the family of Noah and representatives of the created order's traverse upon the tumultuous tides (Genesis 6-8).

Jesus in his ministry used boats as the vehicles for his work of mission. Our Caymanian sisters and brothers will provide "cat boats" for the Synodical experience as representations of the motif's symbol.

Further, the services will feature focus points containing elements representative of the Holy Spirit's work within the Church and world; namely: Oil, water, wind, and fire.

When the Holy Spirit's oil fires up the Engine of the Ship of the Church, and the Wind of the Holy Spirit fills the sails of the SHIP of the Church; and the Water of the Holy Spirit carries the SHIP of the Church, then we will see renewal and revival in our WorSHIP; FellowSHIP; DiscipleSHIP; LeaderSHIP; and StewardSHIP (of unsaved souls, our selves, and substance).

Rev. Astor Carlyle, on behalf of Synod Worship Planning Committee 2023



Motif: MOVEMENT Main Symbol: SHIP

SCHEDULE OF WORSHIP SERVICES AND BIBLE STUDIES

OPENING SERVICE

Sunday April 23 at 4:00 p.m.

BIBLE STUDIES

6:00 - 6:45 a.m.

Monday – *Realign our Worship*

Tuesday– *Reconnect our Relationship with Children & Youth*

Wednesday– *Reignite our Stewardship and Leadership*

Thursday– *Return to Discipleship*

All bible studies will be available on UCJCI YouTube channel

CELEBRATION OF LIFE AND WITNESS

Tuesday April 25 at 6:00 p.m.

CLOSING SERVICE

Sunday April 30 at 4:00 p.m.



THEME FOR WORSHIP AT HOME

RECONNECT IN FAITH

Suggested Scripture: John 20:1–18

·Blessed are those who have not seen, yet have believed

Sometimes, when we missed that moment when Jesus appeared, it is hard to find joy and peace with everyone else. Let's walk a while in Thomas' shoes, look at the situation from his perspective, and think about how Thomas must have felt.

But is Thomas the only doubter in town? How do we find hope in the face of despair? We have this confident faith that reconnects us to The Source even in the gloom and uncertainty. Our ability to remain steadfast keeps us connected as we rejoice with a glorious inexplicable joy. (1 Peter 1:8)

'Whose report will we believe?'

LET US PRAY FOR...

- The upcoming Synod of The United Church
- Nedra, the granddaughter of Ms. Lorraine Howell. She has been hospitalised
- Family and friends of Mrs. Ena Stewart, WRMC Delegate who passed recently
- Those affected by recent earthquakes
- Jerome, the son of Mrs. Sheila Arscott Smith, who is recovering from injuries from a car crash
- People affected by the war and conflict across the world

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS!



**MAITLAND EVANS -
APRIL 13**



TARA TYME - APRIL 18



**HEATHER THOMPSON
- APRIL 13**



**KIMBERLEY ELLIOTT
WILLIAMSON - APRIL 19**



JANET MCCONNELL - APRIL 20

UPCOMING EVENTS



THE UNITED CHURCH IN JAMAICA AND THE CAYMAN ISLANDS
(PRESBYTERIAN, CONGREGATIONAL AND DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)

CAMP MINISTRY

presents

CAMP 2023

VENUE:
**MADGE SAUNDERS
CONFERENCE CENTRE**

COST PER CAMPER:
\$10,500

GET READY!
GET READY!!
GET READY!!!

SCHEDULE:

Children's Camp (Ages 8 - 10)

- Saturday July 8 - Thursday July 13, 2023

Junior Camp (Ages 11 - 13)

- Saturday July 15 - Thursday July 20, 2023

**Pacesetter Teens (Teens 1)
(Ages 14 - 17)**

- Saturday July 22 - Thursday July 27, 2023

**Discovery Teens (Teens 2)
(Ages 14 - 17)**

- Saturday July 29 - Thursday August 3, 2023



**CAMP MINISTRY
SUNDAY
SUNDAY, JUNE 4, 2023
(Bring a special
offering & help send a
child to camp)**

MORE INFO COMING SOON!

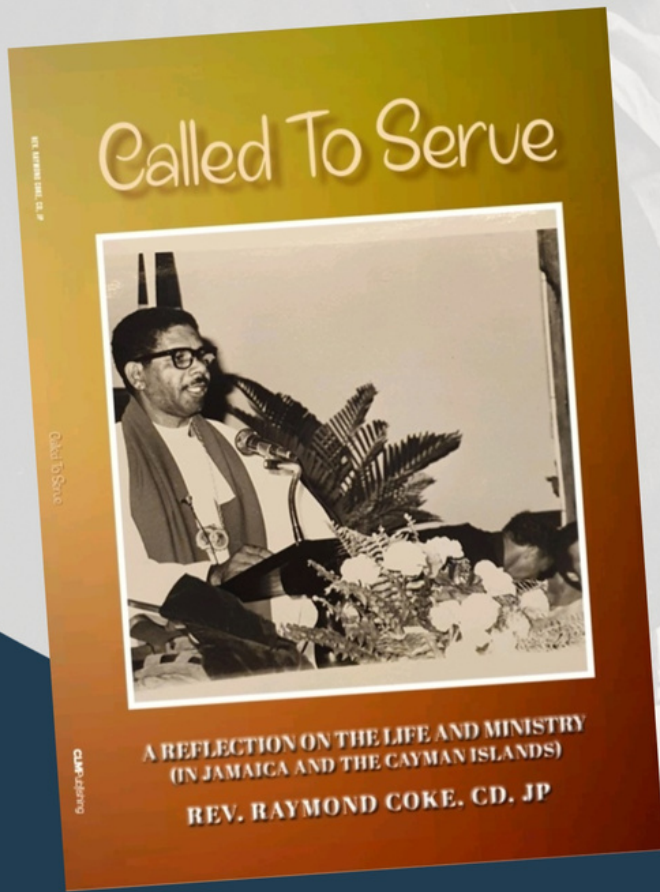
MAY 28, 2023

At 5:00pm

Hope United Church

BOOK LAUNCH 

"CALLED TO SERVE"



"An exciting read on the life of a modern day Moses - called to lead the Church body through change over many decades..."



**Price: \$3,000
JMD**

Written by

REV. RAYMOND COKE, CD, JP

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:
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Former Moderator and
retired Minister of the
United Church in Jamaica
and the Cayman Islands

**On Thursdays wear
something black
TAKE A STAND**



**End violence
against
women and
children**

**Tune in to United in Faith Sundays
on RJR 94 F.M at 6:30 a.m.**

**You can also listen on
demand on Anchor FM:
The United Church in
Jamaica and the Cayman
Islands.**



The United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands

Congregational, Disciples of Christ, Presbyterian

Moderator:

Rt. Rev. Gary Harriott

General Secretary:

Rev. Norbert Stephens

Regional Deputy General Secretaries

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

**North-Eastern Regional Mission
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Southern Regional Mission Council-
Mrs. Janet McConnell

Western Regional Mission Council-
Mrs. Maureen Henry

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We appreciate your feedback.
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