



CAYMAN ISLANDS REGIONAL MISSION COUNCIL

WEEKLY UPDATE

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SEASON OF EASTER

EASTER MESSAGE FROM THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

*(The United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands is a member of the **World Council of Churches**)*



World Council of Churches

(originally publish on April 9, 2020)

Dear sisters and brothers in the Crucified and Risen Lord,

As the days of celebrating Easter approach, we would like to convey to you the traditional Christian greeting, which affirms the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead and its powerful liberating message, bringing joy and hope to the world, overcoming fear and uncertainty—

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!

This year, we observe Easter in a challenging context amid painful situations. The COVID-19 pandemic, which has affected the whole world, is also affecting the way Easter will be celebrated. To protect our own lives and those of others, we cannot fill the streets with processions, nor will churches resound with hymns and liturgies, expressing and sharing our Easter joy with one another. Instead, we will share the mystery of Easter and meet the Risen Lord in our homes, behind closed doors. Many of our people are experiencing fear and uncertainty, as well as trauma, separation, isolation, loss of members or even death in their families or in their church communities.

Yet, despite these traumatic and painful situations, the message of Easter continues to be a joyful one of courage and hope.

The first experience of the disciples with the Risen Lord occurred in similar circumstances. Out of fear and to protect their lives, Jesus' disciples gathered in a room, behind closed doors. And there the Risen Christ came among them, bringing his peace. As they were startled and terrified, "He said to them, 'Why are you frightened?... See that it is I myself.'" (Luke 24:37-39).

The Risen Lord is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Heb. 13:8). Easter is a reminder and encouragement that God in Christ continues to love and care for the whole world, overcoming death with life, conquering fear and uncertainty with hope.

To those who may be tempted to explain the present situation as an expression of God's punishment and wrath, the Easter message conveys that our God is a loving God, the source of life, not death, the God of life and love "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him." (John 3:16-17).

Dear sisters and brothers, throughout the centuries, the Easter greeting "Christ is risen!" has always infused Christians with the power and courage to confront death, destruction, oppression and enslavement, fear, doubt and uncertainty. As we are confronted today with the challenges of COVID-19, we assure you that in these days we are united with you in prayers and in affirming together our common faith and hope in the Risen Lord: "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting? But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 15:55, 57).

Yours faithfully,

The Leadership of the Central Committee

The **World Council of Churches** is a worldwide fellowship of churches, with members in more than 110 countries.



In times like these, faith communities can do a lot to promote solidarity and accountability, wisdom and care, and can play an important role in providing accurate information, encouraging and supporting the sick and those at risk of illness, and pastoral care to those affected by the virus.

The WCC seeks to bring hope and light to how churches are, and can be, contributing to constructive responses to the Coronavirus and its consequences for people's lives, physically as well as spiritually, in countries around the world.

CANAAC CHARTS COURSE FOR FUTURE

The United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands is a member of the **World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC)** and is represented through its Caribbean and North American Area Council (CANAAC).



The following article was posted on April 16, 2020 by Phil Tanis on the WCRC website.



After a year-long effort from members, the Caribbean and North American Area Council (CANAAC) has finalized their strategic plan document, “Moving Forward towards 2022: Living Faithfully, Building Relationships as a Communion” which will guide the region’s work together.

“We felt it was necessary for us to produce this document as the standard bearer which reflects the main challenges impacting the church across our North-South spaces,” said **Angela Martins**, convener of the CANAAC Steering Committee. “It is our hope that this document establishes a legacy platform upon which the much-needed ecumenical work of CANAAC can be carried out in a sustainable manner into the future.”

The plan was based on the work done at the 2018 CANAAC General Assembly in Guyana and written by a committee of Assembly delegates. It is closely aligned to the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) “Strategic Plan: 2018-2024.”

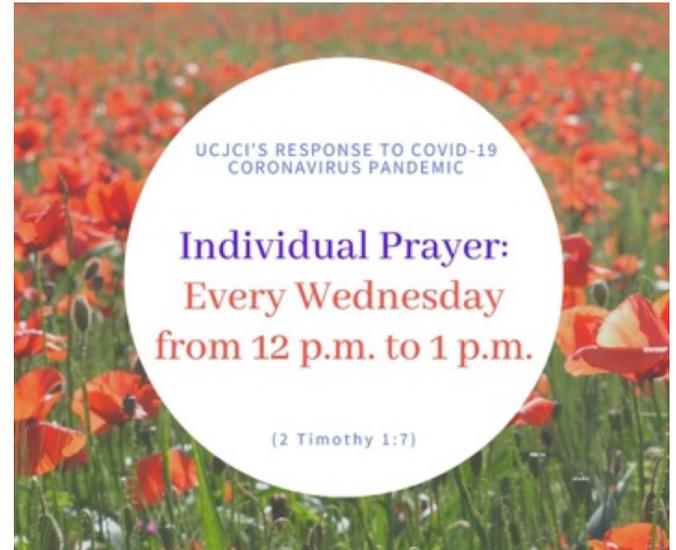
The WCRC strategic plan focuses the Communion’s work through five interlocking dimensions: communion, justice, theology, mission, and ecumenical engagement and interreligious cooperation. The CANAAC plan takes each of these areas and focuses them on specific issues pertinent to the region.

“Our core intention is to strengthen the koinonia amongst our members, addressing critical issues in our region such as food safety and security, Indigenous and racial justice, and theological education,” said Martins.

CANAAC’s work will be focused through three working groups—communications, justice, and theology—along with

the Steering Committee. The plan provides recommendations to accomplish the stated goals before the region’s next General Assembly, anticipated for 2022.

“We will also seek to acknowledge emerging issues, offering perspectives as support for our wider community of faith to enter into reflection as there is need to,” said Martins. “We believe, too, that there is need for us to identify existing materials or produce resources and helpful tools as we seek to support our member churches at the grass roots level.”



Some suggested *prayer points* are as follows:

1. A stop to the spread of the disease.
2. Those who are infected with the disease.
3. That all persons will take this matter seriously, and responsibly take the necessary precautions.
4. Our healthcare systems and workers who are on the frontlines.
5. All elderly persons and those with underlying health conditions.
6. The needy and those who have lost, or will lose, their jobs.
7. Our local and world economies.

Worship the Lord

-on Radio Cayman 89.9 every Sunday at 7:45 am-

April 26. Rev. Donovan Myers

April 26. (Sunday) 3rd Sunday of Easter

Local United Church Worship Services will be distributed via video links.

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