



UCJCI UPDATE

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

THE UNITED CHURCH IN JAMAICA AND THE CAYMAN ISLANDS

Volume 2: Issue 37

Wednesday, September 20, 2017

Congregational Disciples of Christ and Presbyterian

12, Carlton Crescent, Kingston 10. Tel: 926-8734, email: synod@ucjci.com. Website: www.ucjci.com

OUR VISION: "Touching lives, Nurturing Disciples, Seeking Transformation through Christ."

IN THIS ISSUE:

- THE UCJCI DISABILITY POLICY 1
- THE POLICY CONTD. 2
- BIRTHDAYS 2
- THE JAD PROJECT. 2

PRAY



Mr. Nigel Henry, Programme Secretary for the Western Regional Mission Council, who suffered a stroke on the weekend; and for his family, RDGS Mrs. Maureen Henry and children Jason & Chiann.

The peoples of the Caribbean who have been affected by recent Hurricanes.

THE UCJCI DISABILITY POLICY.

On November 30 to December 7, this year, 'Disabilities Awareness Week' will be marked.

As part of his report at the last Synod of the United Church, General Secretary, Rev. Norbert Stephens, identified among some 12 achievements since the previous Synod meeting, the establishment of a Policy on a Ministry with People with Disabilities.

The 'Disabilities Policy' recognizes that of the world's population, some 15% are persons with disabilities of various kinds and varying degrees of severity. It also identifies that across societies and cultures and histories, persons with disabilities have been marginalized and discriminated against, rejected and even abandoned. The Synod recognizes that the disabled face limited opportunities; and social services like education, health services and employment opportunities often elude them. In the churches, barriers are often not limited to the absence of ramps but also the lack of provision for inclusion and full participation in all areas

and at all levels of church life.

The UCJCI recognizes that God has created everyone of us in God's image (Genesis 1:27). And that to be a person is to have received divine dignity. Accordingly, it determines that everyone deserves to be treated with respect.

In addition, it recognises that persons with disabilities bring talents and skills developed through education and training, and that some bring the gifts of their presence and affection, and that while some persons with disabilities may be sick, disability is not sickness.

Recognising also that the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) has identified 'the need to protect the rights of persons with disabilities to ensure their access to fundamental freedoms and promote respect for their inherent dignity'; it further states; God's church can do no less.

Accordingly, the UCJCI Policy on its Ministry with People with Disabilities states:



The United Church commits to:

1. Discover more fully the riches to be found in Christian fellowship in which everyone has a place.
2. Recognize the gifts of all, especially those considered most vulnerable.
3. Ensure the removal of stigma and encourage the promotion of theologies and ideologies that are liberating.
4. Increase participation of all and recognize the value of mutual dependence.
5. Facilitate programmes for increased awareness and understanding of disability issues.
6. Identify obstacles and improve facilities and accommodations for persons with disabilities to express more fully their spirituality. (More over-page.)



70:

Rev. Kraig DeLeon-Diedrick
September 21

Rev. Ashley Smith
September 25



PARTNERSHIP FOR LITERACY ENHANCEMENT FOR THE DEAF PROJECT.

The main goal of this activity is to increase the literacy level of Deaf children in schools operated by the four major service providers of Deaf Education in Jamaica.

This will be realized through the attainment of the following main objectives:

- Increase the number of deaf students functioning at age appropriate levels for literacy development by 10%;
- Establish JSL as a subject within the schools for the Deaf by 2020;
- At least 75% of all teachers advancing at least two levels of JSL Communicative Competence at the end of the three years from entry;
- Provide learning forums for teachers in the areas of effective in-school transitioning and instructional practices for multiple disabilities; and
- Foster the development of parents' communication skills through JSL (Jamaica Sign Language.) - **SUPPORT IT!!**

THE UCJCI POLICY ON MINISTRY TO THE DISABLED

7. **Provide a variety of liturgical expressions that increase accessibility** in worship for all.

8. **Provide greater opportunities** for persons with disabilities to take leading roles in church and fellowship.

9. **Promote communities in which persons with disabilities are respected** and have access to their rights.

10. **Urge the respective governments to promulgate legislation** for the protection of the human rights of persons with disabilities, consistent with the UN Convention (ratified by the Government of Jamaica and embraced by the Government of the Cayman Islands).

11. **Challenge injustice in society** in which increasing numbers of individuals become persons with disabilities because of ineffective health services, economic disempowerment, environmental degradation, catastrophe, violence, civil unrest, war, etc.

12. **Maintain its commitment** to share resources between itself and partner churches, strengthening the network in faithful missional engagement at home and abroad.

13. **Educate and nurture all its children** and young people into a knowledge of the innate dignity of all humanity, including persons with disabilities.

14. **Promote disability education** among ministers and lay persons in training in the theological colleges and other educational institutions in which it exercises influence.

15. **Specifically, the United Church will:**
· **be deliberate in its efforts** to include persons with disabilities in all levels of the Church's government and its range of programmes.

16. **Use the model of pilot congregations spread across all regions** which develop practices to address all the barriers to full inclusion of all persons with disabilities.

17. **Promulgate regulations** to require its congregations, schools and other arms to ensure all plans for new churches and other buildings conform to requirements of reasonable access to persons with disabilities.

18. **Make a concerted effort to bring existing buildings up to the required standards of reasonable access** to persons with disabilities.

19. **Collaborate with other denominations**, e.g. Jamaica Baptist Union's (JBU) Ministry to Persons with Disabilities to enhance the churches' awareness of disability issues.

20. **Join the voices advocating** for and subsequent compliance with national legislation for the full inclusion of persons with disabilities in all spheres of life e.g. access to public buildings, education, employment etc.

21. **Promote the establishment of support mechanisms** within local congregations which focus on creating opportunities for independent living for persons with disabilities, e.g. suitable housing, education, funding for entrepreneurial activities, etc.

22. **Develop Synodical/Synod-wide programmes** to sensitize and educate Church members in respect of disability issues.

23. **Develop systems to communicate the Gospel message** to persons with disabilities across all its regions.

24. **Accelerate efforts** in the development and dissemination of disability curricula, e.g. EDAN, to theological institutions within its sphere of influence, e.g. UTCWI, IUC.

25. **Effect reasonable improvements in all Church institutions**, including schools, to conform to requirements of reasonable access to persons with disabilities.

This is OUR Policy. Do what you can to effect it in your local congregations!