



UCJCI UPDATE

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THE UNITED CHURCH IN
JAMAICA AND THE
CAYMAN ISLANDS

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."

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PRAY FOR:



- Rev. Dr. Margaret Fowler,
- Rev. Dr. Clinton Smith,
- Mrs. Doris Longmore,
- Rev. Ashley Smith,
- Rev. Garwell Bacchas whose brother has passed (Service of Thanksgiving will be at Savlamar United on April 29 at 11 am),
- Rev. Astor Carlyle and his family,

CAYMAN SPEAKS.

Regional Deputy General Secretary of the Cayman Islands Regional Mission Council, Rev. Dr. Yvette Noble Bloomfield, in her report to the 40th Synod, brings the UCJCI up-to-date on the current status at the Cayman Islands.

The report declares that the economic outlook is robust and poised for continued success with **consistent developments which reflect the high-end luxurious living** persons perceive as normative for the Cayman Islands.

The **tourism industry** continues to grow in spite of the concerns based on the 'Cuban factor' as the island continues to offer world class facilities to its guests, and hotels have been, or are being refurbished as consumer confidence grows.

Against this excellent economic backdrop and a forecast of steady incline in growth, **there are unfinished conversations and business decisions** in the areas of the environment, cruise berthing, waste water treatment, cost and delivery of health care and education, *inter alia*.

The dichotomy in the Cayman Islands is that although there are signs of rampant prosperity, there is a social construct that belies the



Rev. Dr. Yvette Noble Bloomfield

financial prowess.

There are concerns regarding the **increase in criminal activities** and there are theories and discussions regarding its root causes, the perpetrators and crime management. There are allusions to **the presence of gangs** in Cayman and there have been a few gang-related murders in the past two years. **Domestic violence, rape, robbery, burglary and financial/ fraudulent crimes** have been more than usual in the recent past.

All this has been coupled with a **conspicuous attrition from the Royal Cayman Islands Police Services**. Additional officers are being recruited, new crime fighting strategies are being developed and a new Commissioner has been appointed.

There is also a noticeable rise in the **poor social behaviour**

among young people and this is observed even in the behaviour at Youth Group meetings at the Church.

There is a real concern regarding the socialization of the young people, the impartation of values, the respect for authority and keeping rules.

The Church is committed to working with the youth, touching lives, nurturing Disciples and seeking transformation through Christ.

THE CIRMC RESPONSE: - The Church seeks to understand the tenets that are woven together in the sub-culture of the society.

As such, there needs to be opportunities and programmes that enable life in its fullness.

There is a perceived need for a consciousness of the deeper issues which are affecting families, such as **health care, education, employment and in some cases dire financial needs.**

Homes have been foreclosed, some who are employed do find it difficult to exist daily and there are those who are living on full support from the government.

Because this segment of the social construct in the Cay-

CELEBRATIONS



Rt. Rev. L. Christopher Mason, who was elected as **Moderator of Synod** for a second term at the **40th Synod** on April 24, 2017.

CAYMAN contd.

man Islands sometimes is hidden behind the fiscal success of the country sometimes there is a 'unmasking', which the Church has to perform and in so doing, offer the fullness of life in Christ, caring for the perishing and rescuing the dying.

Across the Council, Congregations are responding to the various needs either through a Pantry Ministry, Soup Kitchen, Free Financial Counselling, After School Programmes (Savannah and John Gray Memorial); **Sports Ministry** to Youth especially (Savannah), **community visitation** (East End), **Seniors Ministry** (John Gray, Elmslie, Savannah, East End) and **Friday Night Children and Youth Group meeting** (all Charges).

The Council at its May 28, 2016 Meeting, following a rather vibrant conversation, identified a Mission Action Team to develop a document in response to the granting of recognition of a **same sex marriage** that was performed in another jurisdiction.

This recognition enabled the dependant spouse to remain in the Cayman Islands on the other

spouse's work permit, as would be the case for a heterosexual couple.

This action by the Immigration Department sparked much debate in the Church and in society and led the Cayman Islands Ministers' Association to host a **Rally on Family Values**.

There was a small group of protestors from the LGBTQ Group 'Colours of Cayman' present outside the venue of this event.

The Council document titled:

'A Statement by the Cayman Islands Regional Mission Council of the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands on **the Issue of Homosexuality**,' has been presented to the Constitution and **Doctrine Synodical Committee** and the **Central Mission Committee for approval**.

This was obtained with the caveat that **the United Church will in time produce a more fulsome document on the issue of human sexuality and that the Cayman Statement is sufficient for the unique context.**

CONCLUSION: The past Synodical period was very fluid for the Council. Only one Charge's leadership remained unchanged. As such, the Ministers were asked to serve as **Interim Ministers** on several occasions.

In addition, the Regional Deputy General Secretary **Mr. Bryan Bothwell** retired and the Bethesda Counselling Centre Director and Counsellor, **Rev. Dr. Yvette Noble Bloomfield** was asked to act as the RDGS from August – November 2015. She was subsequently appointed into the position in December 2015.

Since November 1, 2016, **Ms. April Lewis** has been appointed Director of the Bethesda Counselling Centre.

In spite of these movements the Council kept faith with the Synod's Renewal and Transformation Programme under the dynamic leadership of **the Chair, Ms. Angela Martins and the Vice Chairs of Council.** ■

MOVEMENTS



During the last Synodical period, we said goodbye to a number of persons including

- **Mr. Bryan Bothwell** who demitted office as RDGS of the CIRMC after 13 years of sterling service at the end of July 2015. His work and worth to the United Church has been invaluable;
- **Mrs. Sonia Lowe** who resigned as Director of UCJCI Children's Homes having served for five years, inclusive of a period as director for Mt. Olivet Boys Home.

- **Mrs. Mary Douglas** who retired as Director of the United Church Senior Citizen's Home.

- **Rev. Delroy Harris**, former Programme Secretary WRMC accepted a Settlement to the Riverside Charge in 2016.

- **Miss Veronica Edwards**, resigned as Programme Secretary for NERMC.

- **Miss Marsha Martin** was seconded to the Jamaica Council of Churches as Communications Officer for a period of two years.

We welcomed:

- **Rev. Dr. Yvette Noble Bloomfield** as RDGS CIRMC;

- **Ms. Donna Curtello**, Administrative Assistant in NERMC;

- **Mrs. Mervia Graham** Director of the Villa Senior Citizens' Home;

- **Rev. Henley Bernard** Ministerial Formation Coordinator,

- **Mr. Nigel Henry** as Programme Secretary in the Western Regional Mission Council. ■