



# UCJCI UPDATE

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

THE UNITED CHURCH IN JAMAICA AND THE CAYMAN ISLANDS

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Congregational,  
Disciples of Christ and  
Presbyterian

## A CROSSROADS

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

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### PRAY



- Rev. Dr. Clinton Smith (UWI)
- Rev. Dr. Margaret Fowler
- Rev. Carlington Keen
- Family of Lady Cooke
- Rev. Astor Carlyle and his family

**W**e are at a crossroads."- This was the theme of the General Secretary's Report to the 2017 Synod, as he took a look at the Church and its position in society since the last Synod.

The 40<sup>th</sup> Synod of the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands, he noted, also celebrated 25 years of the union of the United Church of Jamaica and Grand Cayman and the Disciples of Christ in Jamaica "We gather under the theme, **Renewal and Transformation: Discipleship for Life**, he said, at a time when some global analysts are of the strong opinion that within 2016 we have transitioned from one age to another. They argue that we have left the age of ongoing conflict and have arrived at the age of anger; populist anger at the establishment (Brexit and Donald Trump), angry at the notion of sharing space in community (anti-migrants movement), angry at being boxed in by values and behaviour (liberal options and rights).

The crossroads, he said, was not just for individuals but equally for institutions, including the church noting the recent negative attitude towards the church in the media, following the revelation of a number of Jamaican



Rev. Norbert D. Stephens

pastors arrested for carnal abuse in the latter part of 2016 and early 2017.

However, he said, when a crossroads is a place of uncertainty **it provides an opportunity for reflection on your journey to that point, an assessment of where you need to get to, and making a decision about the best direction and then committing to the same.**

Against this background, he noted that It could be argued by some that as **a United Church, we are at a crossroads relative to our Renewal and Transformation Programme;** our understanding of ministerial vocation and our public theology.

In which case, the Synodical period presented clear opportunities **for reflection, assessment, inquiry, decision and commitment.**

### GOD HAS NO 'PLAN B'

"What, however, ought to be clear," he emphasized, "is that a crossroads speaks more about the **path towards our objective or destination rather than a new destination altogether.** We should encourage vigorous abandon becoming a **needs-meeting, contextually mission-driven church, with conversations about how we renew and transform the Church,** rather than one which declares that we should abandon becoming a needs-meeting, contextually mission-driven church. **As one past Moderator stated in 2008, 'God has no 'Plan B' for a Missional Church'.**

While observing reasons for **hope** in his analysis of the macro-economics of both Jamaica and the Cayman Islands, the UCJCI General Secretary, said that the crossroads are inherent in both nations in terms of the challenges they face, **"to hear the words of the Prophet in Jeremiah 6:16, 'Stand at the crossroads and look, ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, walk in it...'**

"This is the divine, ongoing call for **faithful discipleship.** It is the opportunity for **reflection, assessment, inquiry, decision and commitment,** as we seek to give full expression to our vision: **"Touching lives, nurturing disciples, seeking transformation through Christ."**



70:

Mr. Carlyle Nesbeth

Dr. Jane Dodman

June 8.



## CAMP NEWS

### THINGS TO REMEMBER

- Remember to sign up for Camps.
- Camp forms are available at the Regional Offices.
- Encourage persons to sign up as Camp Leaders.

The camp dates are:

- Children's Camp -  
July 8-15, 2017
- Junior Camp -  
July 15 - 22, 2017
- Pacesetter Teens  
(also known as Teens 1)  
July 22 - 29, 2017
- Discovery Teens  
(also known as Teens 2)  
July 29 - Aug 5, 2017
- Youth Camp -  
August 5 - 12, 2017
- Young Adults Conference -  
August 17 - 20, 2017

## REASONS TO CELEBRATE!!!

**T**he General Secretary's Report also lifted up significant reasons to celebrate as follows:

"This report will lift up some of our accomplishments for celebration as a Church, wrestle with some of the challenges that require attention and identify matters for consideration in the future."

This report benefits from the engagement of the congregations and **Regional Mission Councils (RMCs), the work of the Standing Committees and the input of the Synod Administration Centre.**, noted Rev. Stephens.

### ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR CELEBRATION

- A **debt-free Synod** continuing to meet its statutory obligations
- The establishment a **Child Care and Protection Policy**
- The establishment of a **Single Business Entity, UCME** (United Church Mission Enterprise)
- Establishment of **Policy on Ministry with Persons with Disability.**
- Establishment of a biannual **Youth Convention and a Youth Synod**
- Establishment of the position of **Ministerial Formation Coordinator**
- Successful **VBS and Camp Ministries**
- The ongoing development of **Human Resources polices**
- Additional **physical resources** at the Regional Offices
- **Efficient** Regional Offices
- Ongoing **capacity building workshops** in all Regions
- Our continued impact in the area of **Education and Care** through our schools and institutions.

**I**n an overview of the Renewal and Transformation Programme, the General Secretary made the following observations:

"It is clear that to date the indicators of **numerical, financial and spiritual growth for Renewal and Transformation agenda** have not yet yielded the desired results.

However, we have made **much progress in some areas** and very little movement in others. It is also true that some among us have yet to be convinced that this is the direction the church should take and have not given their best effort to the programme. **Despite this, we continue to press on as the path towards being missional will never be a journey without challenges.**

**We continue to celebrate those congregations that are engaged in the business of needs-meeting and encourage regions to continue to share best practices and to explore creative partnerships to ensure that each community receives the best of the United Church located in its bounds.**

### The 'R&T' Implementation Plan

The Plan focused on **six areas of the overall Renewal and Transformation Agenda**, namely:

- **Evangelism** through the Word (preaching and teaching ministries)
- **Ministry to Children**
- **Outreach**
- **Congregational Administration**
- **Stewardship with an emphasis on Tithing**
- **Liturgical Renewal** with a focus on worship.

The **'Discipleship for Life'** theme will continue to address these areas at the Synodical, Regional and Congregational levels", the General Secretary reported. ■

