



# 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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OUR VISION: "Touching  
Lives, Nurturing Disciples,  
Seeking Transformation  
through Christ"

SYNODICAL THEME:  
"Renewal and Transfor-  
mation: Discipleship for  
Life"

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## PRAY FOR:



\*The family of **Rev. Mil-  
lard Edwards**, who  
has passed on.

\***Rev. Icylyn Parkin-  
son**, whose hus-  
band, **Mr. Godfrey Par-  
kinson**, has passed  
on.

\***Rev. Kimberley  
Hines**, whose aunt-  
in-law, **Mrs. Avis  
Lynch**, has passed  
on.

Volume 6: Issue 40

Wednesday, October 21, 2020

# THE CALL TO CONTINUE

“ This COVID-19 pan-  
demic has forced us  
into difficult decisions  
and actions which have  
removed from our lives  
and living the notion of  
normality. So some of us  
wrestle with the difficult  
task of self- or state-  
imposed quarantine.

These are not normal  
times.

Many of us long for nor-  
mality to return, for ac-  
cess to our sources of  
comfort, entertainment,  
social interaction and in-  
spiration. All of us long  
for the day when this  
COVID-19 pandemic will  
breathe its last.

If there is one truth I am  
convinced about, it is this:  
*one of, if not the most diffi-  
cult task or activity in life, is  
to continue.* To continue  
on, despite the prevailing  
circumstances.

Thing about it, is it not  
difficult to continue to  
hope when all the evi-  
dence around us suggest  
despair; to continue in the

face of disappoint-  
ment; to continue in the face of disas-  
ter; to continue in the face of  
hurt and pain; to continue in  
the face of deception?

Is it not difficult to continue  
to believe when the preva-  
lence of doubt exists; to con-  
tinue to walk alone when  
others have abandoned the  
path; to continue to search



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for the positives in the face  
of a negative diagnosis; to  
continue to believe in the  
potential of another when  
they no longer believe in  
themselves?

Is it not difficult to continue  
to love another person in  
the face of anger, abuse, ne-  
glect, abandonment, spite or  
hate; to continue to commit  
to a relationship when the  
other partner shows no sim-  
ilar commitment; to be com-

passionate when the oth-  
er's default is vengeance?

Is it not difficult to con-  
tinue when you join the  
growing list of those who  
are unemployed or fur-  
loughed; to continue when  
your business goes under;  
to continue when you  
can't pay your bills or  
don't know where you or  
your family's next meal is  
coming from; to continue  
when you are not eligible  
for financial assistance  
from the state?

Simply put, in the chal-  
lenging circumstances of  
life and living, it is almost  
always difficult to contin-  
ue! Often the far more  
compelling option is to  
give up or to give in.

I know, as you do, that  
often we have little choice  
but to continue. We hu-  
mans adapt; that is our  
default. I also know, as  
you do, that while life  
sometimes pauses, it con-  
tinues with or without us.

(Continued on Page 2)

## CELEBRATIONS!



70:

**Rev. Walter Russell**

**October 21**

**Rev. Donald Burke**

**Rev. Herbert Redway  
Snr.**

**Rev. Norbert Stephens**

**October 22**

**Rev. Dr. Richmond  
Nelson**

**October 23**

**Rev. Sylvan Hinds**

**October 26**

**Rev. Godfrey Meghoo**

**October 27**

## UCJCI VALUES

**In seeking to live out our calling, we particularly value and are committed to:**

**Family:** Family is a gift from God. As we grow in relationships, we encounter God through each other, and are strengthened to live for God in the world. (Psalm 127:3-5, 128:3-4, Ephesians 5:22-33, 6:1-4).



## THE CALL TO CONTINUE

*(Continued from Page 1)*

However, when we transition from being passengers in life to being determiners of what we do, indeed when we choose to continue, two things are true. Firstly, to choose to continue is fundamentally to be **hopeful**, and secondly, to choose to continue requires us to be **faithful** to a particular path or direction.

*What are you choosing to continue to do, or believe in, at this time, that is hopeful and requires your faithfulness?*

My simple message to you based on 1 Peter is that in the midst of our lives and living, and more so, in these abnormal times, God's call to us which requires a faithful response, **is the Call to Continue**.

First Peter, a General Epistle, was written to a group of churches in Asia Minor at a time when the Christians were suffering slander and persecution from a larger unbelieving community. Targeting primarily the most vulnerable within the community, this message was one of encouragement for the Christians to hold fast to the promise of God's blessings, while remembering and acting out their calling to act appropriately to those hostile to the faith.

It was a call to continue! Hold fast, don't give up or give in, continue on!

There are three expressions of this **Call to Continue**:

### 1. Continue To Do your Duty

Do your duty in the faith despite the consequences. Engage the difficult tasks you have and embrace the suffering that will come your way as a result. Five duties are located in this text between verses 13-18: **Be eager to do what is good. Be bold. Be hopeful. Be trustworthy. Be rejoicing.** Note the promise – even if you should suffer for doing what is right/duty you are blessed! To be blessed means God has recognized us, God identifies with us, God empowers us to transform our reality.

### 2. Continue to be Defiant

Our calling in the face of doubt and fear and discord, in the face of accusation, charge, slander, evil, moral liberalism, ethical temptation, human and physical weakness, illness, disappointment and despair, is to continue to keep the faith!!! Why? Because of who you are and whose you are. You are God's distinctive people!

*So we continue:* To worship in spite of; to pray and praise in spite of; to study God's Word – light and lamp – in spite of; to be a witness of God's saving and transforming grace in spite of; to be persons of integrity in spite of; to pursue high values and morals in spite of; to encourage and support others in spite of; to challenge the systems and structures which lead to brokenness and evil in spite of.

We will not stop until the earth is filled with the glory of God as the waters cover the seas!

I appeal to you, through the words of 1 Peter 3, to *be hopeful and faithful, to continue to do your duty, continue to be defiant, and continue to be distinctive.* In simpler terms, continue to do what is right, continue to challenge what is wrong, continue to depend on God in Christ, through the Spirit!"

*- Contributed by: Rev. Norbert Stephens, General Secretary, UCJCI*

**Send comments and news about your congregation to: [ucjciupdate@gmail.com](mailto:ucjciupdate@gmail.com)**