



**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."*

IN THIS ISSUE



**We mourn the
passing, and cele-
brate the life of a
beloved Minister of
the Word and
Sacraments,
Rev. Henry Earl
Thames.**



UCJCI UPDATE

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

Volume 1 : Issue 16

Wednesday, August 17 2016

Devoted and committed servant of Christ - **REV. EARL THAMES PASSES**

The passing of the Rev. Earl Thames on Thursday August 11 at 'Youth Camp' held at the Madge Saunders Conference Centre was met with shock and disbelief by all.

Rev Thames, described by the UCJCI as "a rare, gifted and self-effacing individual", and a special and celebrated treasure of the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands, made his transition while doing one of the acts of Ministry he loved best— serving and interacting at Youth Camp, an activity he engaged in for 52 consecutive years. He was equally instrumental in the formation of the UCJCI Young Adults Action Movement of which, at the time of his passing, he was an advisor.

A devoted and committed servant of Christ, Rev. Thames described his decades of Ministry as "a celebration of marriage" - a vocational union which began with his ordination in 1964.



Rev. Henry Earl Thames.

Rev. Thames served the United Church as pastor, Moderator (twice), theologian, Chairman of Synodical Committees (Mission Witness & Service, Constitution and Doctrine); as member of Christian Education, Finance and Property Committees, Chairman of School Boards and Institutions (Knox Community College - 29 years!), Regional Director and lecturer in the International University of the Caribbean (IUC) and most recently,

Coordinator of the Prelimi-

nary Year for United Church theological students.

He was pivotal in the union of the Presbyterian and the Congregational Churches in 1965 to form the United Church in Jamaica and Grand Cayman (UCJGC); and later in 1992 that of the UCJGC with the Disciples of Christ to form what is now the UCJCI.

Much of the Church's polity and practices have been shaped and refined by his gifted intellect and practical orientation.

UCJCI Moderator, the Rt. Rev. Christopher Mason, commenting on the great loss to the Church occasioned by the passing of Rev. Thames, said;

"Indeed, it is true to say that Rev. Thames is an institution within this United Church, and the UCJCI throughout his years as Minister, experienced added value through his leadership, commitment and contributions."

Rev Norbert Stephens, UCJCI General Secretary describing the life of this former 1959, Jamaican Rhodes Scholar states that, "What has been clear throughout Rev. Thames' long and outstanding career has been his passion **for children and young people, his advocacy for justice for the marginalized, his pursuit of high morals for the society and his push for evangelism for all**". In fact, Rev. Thames passed while carrying out his Ministry to the youth of the Church who had gathered at the Madge Saunders Conference Centre in St. Mary, for their Youth Camp with its theme: "**Discipleship: Action- not a bag a mout**". "

Rev. Thames has several [publications to his credit](#), the latest being "[The Book of Revelation: A commentary for Lay Persons](#)", published in 2015.

He leaves behind his sisters, **Maxine Parchment, Hilma Bramwell** and other relatives.

TRIBUTES TO REV THAMES:

Having heard the shocking news as many of you did, I started to reflect on the life of Rev Thames; the memories of him. I think back of the days of Youth Camp at Clarendon College; Rev. Thames patrolling with his flashlight, making sure all campers were in their dorms. I remembered the brown **Hillman Hunter; then the Jeeps**; Oh, the after Camp Impromptu Sunday Evening Concerts organised by Rev Thames for stranded campers who could not get home on Sunday; his push to ensure there was adequate food for the campers, especially the males. For him, it was not so much about taste, but quantity - a belly full was the thing. For Rev Thames - Camp must be a rounded experience - there must be sports; there must be the ex-

posure of the talents of the young people. I remember the pride he experienced when he produced the album with the Hayden Brothers.

Rev. Thames was known for his advocacy for the youth and for evangelism.— You could not imagine a **Youth Camp; a Day of Fellowship/Youthquake**; a Sports Day without Rev Thames. Can you hear him advocating for rural youth who would not be able to afford the the rising cost of camps and his reminder that Kingston is not Jamaica? Now that I am serving in rural Jamaica those expressions have meant much more to me.

For many of us, Rev Thames was the first to train us in **personal evangelism** - theory and practice. Many would remember that after the training we would go on the streets to witness and then an Open Air Service.

Could there be a PA System or a Microphone that needed to be set right and Rev. Thames was present? And what of his continuous challenge about the need for Church Growth. "Moderator! brothers and sisters! we have a spiritual problem. Let's face it, it is simple, if our membership is not growing, we are not going to see any growth in the finances of the church. Sorry to be taking up so much of your time, Moderator/Chairman, but..."

No matter how much older or senior Rev Thames was, he treated you as a colleague with respect and regard. There will never be another Earl Thames. I am happy that I too came under his influence; ordained by him 25 yrs ago.

Walk good brother."
Rev. Gary Harriott.

•**My beloved father in shaping my Christian faith, brother, colleague, friend, humble servant of God,** Rev Earl Thames, Rhodes scholar and former Moderator of the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands has been called home. May heaven dance on your arrival home, celebrating with us in the church and nation, a life that embodied faithfulness with intellectual rigor.—**Rev. Dr. Roderick Hewitt**

PRAY FOR:



Give thanks for answered prayers:

•**Jirene Bain, daughter of Joan Paige Bain, who was listed for**

prayers some weeks ago has made a miraculous recovery!

MOVEMENT

•**Dr. Derik Davidson has been appointed the Interim Minister at the Georgetown Charge (Grand Cayman) effective August 21, 2016**

•**Friends, I am in shock at reading about Rev Thames passing.** I was so looking forward to seeing him at Youth Camp tomorrow. We have lost one of the most committed leaders of the church in this region. His love and commitment to the Lord and this denomination is without question. We will miss his theological and legal acumen that made him one of the experts in matters about the United Church's constitution and doctrine. **I will miss his cheerful greeting, encouraging words and his excitement about youth ministry and evangelism.**

•It is hard to imagine any gathering of the United Church without him yet there is no one that can replace him. I don't know what God is saying to us when he calls home such a key soldier but may God give us grace to bear this loss and discernment to hear what he wants to say to us.
Rev. Dr. Dave Hazle

•Knowing Rev. Thames' love and passion for Youth Camp he would not want to miss it even if feeling ill.

'**Father Camp**' is his official title. A more faithful servant of God we cannot find. He has inspired thousands and groomed us in the Faith. Well done. **We are in shock but will pass on and preserve his godly legacy. Peace.**

Rev. Margaret Downer-Messias

TRIBUTES TO REV HENRY EARL THAMES CONTD.

Join with you in expressing sorrow at the sudden passing of Rev. Thames – coupled with tremendous joy, respect and admiration for his full and looming life and extraordinary Christian witness!

His death, at nearly 80, at Youth Camp helps set the picture! (I would not say, "sums it up", as his life was too big and his passions too diverse for that.) Even from outside of Jamaica, I knew how much ministering with youth and children meant to him – but then

so did social justice, Keswick, and photocopying papers for our Synod gatherings – with nothing in between seemingly too big or small. So I know he would have been happy passing while at work in any of the many aspects of the Lord's work on which he thrived so well.

Like you, I will certainly miss him – I've always felt I learnt so much from him, and not just because of his Rhodes Scholar intellect.

I loved hearing his explanations and arguments in regard to the

great tenets of the **Reformation**, and am having a hard time thinking of Constitution & Doctrine meetings without him (and his hearty laugh)! We have certainly lost a great man, friend, brother and Pastor, with a defining example of Christian integrity.

With kindest personal regards – and sincere condolences,

Mr. Bryan Bothwell

FROM THE YOUTH HE SO MUCH LOVED!

"Venting Process"

Speaking from a burdened heart which knows no pain
For what I feel I just can't explain

It's ironic that God took one of his best disciples,

When the topic is "Discipleship Action not a bag of mouth"

A man of God's word even a man of his own words

A fan of God, A follower of Jesus Christ

A humble servant, A positive outlet of energy

Drawing the holiness and Godliness out of everyone

The commitment mirrored the

burning passion of Christ

Letting go is not easy, why this...why now..?

I can't even fathom my own feelings...

I want to believe I'm wool-gathering,

but reality keeps staring me in the face...

So harsh... It hurts

I want to cry...scream... yell ...anything!!

But it won't come out... can't come out...

Clueless as to how to let go...

SighI don't know sigh

In what way can I even be a fraction of what he was?

Earl Thames impacted so many including my own life.

I am honoured I was with him at his death.

He died how he lived - with young people.

His focus was for the youths, our present and future .

His face would be beside the Oxford dictionary words for humble, knowledge , golden , legacy, mentor , disciple and reverend.

I'm glad he even remembers me after so many years by full name.

It's time for you to rest Rev , we'll continue God's work for you.

The way I felt about rev, at first was calm.

“VENTING PROCESS” ... The Youth Mourn Rev. Thames!

But thinking about the type person he was,

The impact that he had on my life as a boy.

It's was as if I was going through a heart attack, wanted to cry but didn't know how to do so, I just have to wonder why.

Ever since I know this man - trust me not only he had taught me

but also a lot of young persons.

He taught us to be good leaders

It's really sad to know that rev is gone,

But I know he's gone to a better place because of the tremendous work that he has done in the Lord.

We all went to the beach on the 11 of August and didn't expect anything like that,

Losing Rev but sigh :- (sigh . the bible said that the Lord gives life and he takes it away,

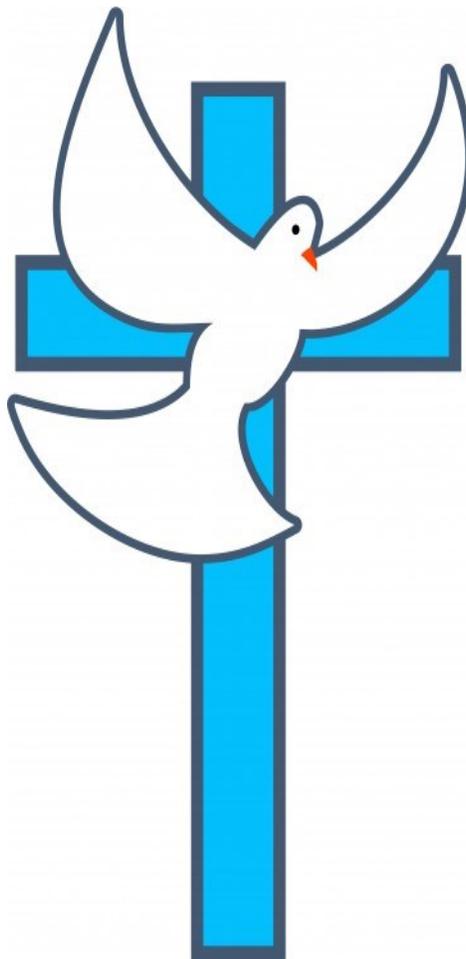
so I just have to accept the fact of life and death - he is gone,

not just any place but gone to be with God in heaven.

It was as if the sun had turned dim and my entire mood

changed in an instance, Rev's passing took me by surprise because I was expecting a very fun filled day!

Silence and introspection is where it is at for me right now and I pray that his family and friends remain strong and com-



posed knowing that he is resting in peace with the Lord.

Even though I never knew him well it was always admirable

how active and engaged he was with the youth at camp!

Sourced from the Members of Youth Camp 2016

Compiled by:

Michael Mc Gregory

“It's time for you to rest Rev , we'll continue God's work for you.”

Farewell Rev. Henry Earl Thames we love you!

The UCJCI Family.