



# UCJCI UPDATE

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THE UNITED CHURCH IN JAMAICA AND THE

*Congregational, Disciples of Christ and Presbyterian*

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

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## PRAY FOR:



Let us pray for the over 40 individuals who were deported from Britain recently. We pray too for their families, some who were left behind!

## RENEWAL AND TRANSFORMATION IN ACTION: WEBSTER'S "HARVEST EXTRAVAGANZA"

**S**eptember to October is celebrated by many countries and Churches around the world, as the time of the Harvest, as it coincides with a time when crops of the field abound in plenty.

The Harvest is seen as a time of the gathering of things

human response to God came with planting and reaping. Offerings came from the fullness of one's harvest. (Exod. 22: 29.)

Most United Churches in Jamaica, particularly those in rural Jamaica celebrate the traditional Harvest of a joyful

It was against that background the **Harvest Extravaganza** was born, not one day, but rather a **week-long celebration** during which worshippers give of the traditional fruits of the field, and other gifts with which God has blessed them—for the most part the **services they provide**.

Accordingly, this year for instance, on September 25, the Harvest begins with the traditional '**Harvest Praise**', a celebration of worship in music, song, dance, poetry and drama in a sanctuary festooned with gifts of fruits, plants (sugar cane and banana) and vegetables which are sold on the following day in the '**Harvest Sale**'.

Then those who have other gifts in the spirit of the Harvest continue in serving others with **their** gifts. So, on Tuesday, '**Spa and Medical Assistance Day**', cosmetologists, beauticians, physiotherapists, nurses and doctors, give of their talents by providing **free of cost Spa and Hairdressing services, free medical tests** for diabetes, blood pressure & cholesterol; eye tests, and general health. Referrals for continued care are made as necessary.



planted, a natural time of reaping in joy what has been produced during the year in an agricultural community.

**Jesus in Matthew 9:36**, reflects the Bible's theological viewpoint on the harvest when he enjoined believers to ask the "Lord of the harvest" for labourers.

In an agrarian society such as that reflected in the Bible, a

presentation of fruits and vegetables of the field.

Urban churches like the **Webster Memorial United Church** however have always been challenged to celebrate a Harvest in which all could give of their first fruits of the field, populated as they are by congregants who neither plant or reap of the field.



**Wednesday**, a team of teachers and counselors go to nearby schools to provide assistance and counseling, also ministering to those who want to commit their lives to Christ, in a day dubbed **'Education & Ministry Day'**.

**On Thursday, through an Advocacy Forum**, the concerns of the disenfranchised in the wider society are aired not only with Church members, but also interested members of the public. The focus this year is **'Haiti'**, which has been and is being given focus by the United Church. Other topics in the past have included, **'Human Trafficking'**, and **'Child Abuse'**, among others.

**Friday, the focus is on Fellowship and Evangelism** as members and adherents of Webster are encouraged to invite friends and family to share in a bountiful **'Harvest Supper'**, held on the Church grounds. A bountiful harvest of food is given and prepared by Webster members, and offered to all who attend **free of cost** – as members give to the Harvest. As in the feeding of the five thousand, despite swelling crowds, **food has never run out!** The evening is further enhanced as the young people and others provide **entertainment** during dinner, in music, singing, dancing, and even fashion modeling!. *It is a very popular event in the Webster Harvest Extravaganza Calendar!*

On Saturday, the youth and the seniors interact, in what has come to be called an **'Intergenerational Exchange!'** A day of fun, old-time music and story telling, as well as sharing of skills by the youth as they teach their older counterparts about the latest developments in technology. It is a meeting of the minds, and a sharing that has demonstrated a thirst for this kind of beneficial human interaction.

But the climax of the week of celebration comes on the following Sunday, when the idea is to give back to God what he wants most of all from us - our souls, Dubbed the **'Harvest of Souls'**, members are encouraged to recommit and to invite other including members of their family and friends to a special service during which they will be en-

couraged to **commit heir lives to Christ**. Persons who have visited Webster, as well as those who have brought their children to be blessed, students and staff of the **Webster Basic School**, as well as employees of nearby corporate entities are invited to attend.

Enthusiasm for Webster's **'Harvest Extravaganza'** is high, as everyone feels that **they can give** and share in the Harvest in some way. **To them it is truly an opportunity to give back from the bounty they have received from God in extravagant praise!**

## HAPPENINGS!

### A STAR SHINES!

**C**ongratulations to Rhianna Rust of Meadowbrook United Church who dominated the under 11 age group of the Caribbean Badminton Championships in Aruba when she won gold medals in the girls doubles, mixed doubles and girls singles categories.

**Rev. Norman Francis and the congregation at Meadowbrook prayed with her and her mother before they left for Aruba.**

**We celebrate the gifts of our children in the United Church!**



**BLESSINGS:** Rev, Norman Francis prays for Rhianna Rust and her mother in preparation for their travel to the tournament in Aruba.

## MORE HAPPENINGS!

• **NORTH STREET UNITED; Celebrates its 179th Anniversary** with **'Jamaica Night'**, 6:30 p.m. Sept 16, at the **St. Andrew High Schools for Girls Auditorium, Cecelio Ave, Kingston 10. Admission \$1,000; – PRIZES!!**

- And on **Saturday Sept 17th, 10:00 am–3:00 pm, its Community Impact Day on the Church Grounds. Free Medical Tests & More! Admission FREE!!**

**ST PAUL'S UNITED (LA): marks 175 years of Christian Ministry in a 5K Walkathon! 6– 8am, Saturday, October 1st. Cost \$500. Part proceeds towards Community Development!!**

## CELEBRATIONS



**Belated Happy Birthday to:**

**Rev. Verna Cassells and Rev. Delia Picart-Hibbert (8<sup>th</sup>)**

**Rev. Dr. Collin Cowan and Mrs. Shernett Smith (9<sup>th</sup>)**

**THIS WEEK: Rev. Glenroy Clarke (15<sup>th</sup>)**

**Rev. Henley Bernard and Dr. Norma Smellie (20<sup>th</sup>)**

## REGRETS AND PRAYERS:

- **The family of Mrs. Pansie Porteous**, former vice-principal of Clarendon College & SRMC executive member, who passed on. Service of Thanksgiving will be on Saturday September 17, at Clarendon College at 11.am.
- **The Family of Mrs. Gloria Swaby**, former principal of Knox Junior School, who passed on last week.