



# THE UNITED CHURCH IN JAMAICA & THE CAYMAN ISLANDS

12 Carlton Crescent  
Kingston 10  
Jamaica W.I.  
Telephone: (876) 926-6059 / 8734  
Telephone: (876) 619- 2924 / 2925  
Fax: (876) 929-0826  
Email: [synod@ucjci.com](mailto:synod@ucjci.com)

*Congregational, Disciples of Christ, Presbyterian*

Ref. No. GS/NS 2350  
June 24, 2020

## **ADVISORY #17 TO: UCJCI MINISTERS, LAY PASTORS AND CONGREGATIONAL BOARDS RE: COVID-19 CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC**

My sisters and brothers,

Greetings,

The UCJCI COVID-19 Response Team has agreed to meet every two weeks from June 23, 2020. Consequently, these updates will follow the scheduled meetings.

The following are the decisions taken by the Team, which met yesterday, June 23, 2020, under the various headings:

### **1. Compliance with National Orders/Protocols**

We celebrate the fact that the recovery rate of persons who have contracted COVID-19 in both countries is relatively high. Cayman is currently experiencing a 79% recovery rate, while the rate in Jamaica stands at 77.3%. We continue to encourage compliance with the directives and recommendations of the legitimate state authorities in both nations.

### **2. Congregational Life**

#### **Church Worship**

- **The United Churches in Cayman will resume services in their sanctuaries from Sunday, June 28, 2020, with the exception of John Gray Memorial United Church, which will resume services on July 5, 2020.** There is no restriction on the number of persons who may gather in sanctuaries, however, physical distancing rules apply.
- The church in **Jamaica** is allowed to gather for worship under a number of conditions. We have, however, received reports that in some cases, persons have not been following some of the protocols, including the wearing of masks and physical distancing. **We strongly urge you to ensure that all of the following conditions are met in your congregation(s):**
  - **Distancing rule of one person per 40 sq. ft.,** with persons being at least 6 feet apart. **All persons are required to observe the social distancing rule, however, families can sit together.**
  - **Have multiple services.** (The same persons should not be present in multiple services.)

**Moderator:** Rt. Rev. Dr. Gordon Cowans, **General Secretary:** Rev. Norbert D. Stephens,  
**Regional Deputy General Secretaries:** Mrs. Maureen Henry, Rev. Dr. Yvette Noble Bloomfield, Rev. Dr. Henry Samuels, Mrs. Rose Wedderburn

**Registered Charity Organization**

**Registration Number: CA100-57C**

- **Temperature checks** prior to entering the sanctuary. We strongly recommend the use of infrared thermometers.
- **Ensure sanitization** measures are in place at entrances.
- **All persons must wear a mask.**
- **Choirs are not allowed.**
- Air conditioning units are not to be used in the sanctuary.
- No gathering of persons is allowed at the entrance, gate, church yard, annex, vestry, etc. for meetings and/or greetings.
- **Persons aged 65 and over who do not have underlying medical conditions are permitted to attend worship services. However, since this is still a vulnerable group, the encouragement given by the Government is that they stay at home if they have access to streamed worship services.**
- **In respect of the above, we are recommending the following:**
  - **Organize service(s) for this Sunday, only if you are able to meet ALL of the above conditions. Our duty of care has not changed with this opportunity.**
  - Establish a logistics team who will help to ensure that the conditions are met.
  - Where multiple services are arranged, as far as possible, different persons lead and preach at each service.
  - Ministers/Lay Pastors should continue to refrain from physically greeting members.
- **The inclusion of children in worship is at the discretion of the leadership of the local congregation, but in cases where a request is made for infant blessing or baptism, the following protocols should be followed:**
  - **All of the participants, including the Minister/Lay Pastor, must maintain the required distance of 6 feet and wear a face mask during the celebration of the sacrament.**
  - **Only the parents should hold the child.**
  - **Where there is a baptism, there should be no touching/holding of the child by the Minister/Lay Pastor. However, the Minister/Lay Pastor, from a distance of 3 feet, will sprinkle the child with water.**
  - **The Minister/Lay Pastor should sanitize his/her hands with a sanitizer of 70% alcohol content immediately before sprinkling.**
  - **The parents/guardians should be advised of these protocols prior to the event.**
- **Gatherings for funeral services and weddings has increased from 15 to a maximum of 50 persons based on the capacity of sanctuaries, using the 40 sq. ft. principle.**
- We encourage the continuation of streamed services and sharing on social media, as some persons will still not be able to attend worship services.
- **We remind you of the time of prayer every Wednesday between 12 p.m. and 1 p.m. We will share with you the specific suggested foci for each week.**
- We will continue to distribute the weekly **House Worship Liturgy**, and a team is now in place to produce these liturgies, using a thematic approach with sermon/reflection notes. **We welcome feedback on how this is being used within the church.**
- Tune in each Sunday to LOVE 101 FM in Jamaica at 3:30 p.m. for a rebroadcast of a congregational worship service. The broadcasts are being shared among all four (4) regional

Moderator: Rt. Rev. Dr. Gordon Cowans, General Secretary: Rev. Norbert D. Stephens,

Regional Deputy General Secretaries: Mrs. Maureen Henry, Rev. Dr. Yvette Noble Bloomfield, Rev. Dr. Henry Samuels, Mrs. Rose Wedderburn

Registered Charity Organization

Registration Number: CA100-57C

mission councils. Please contact your Regional Deputy General Secretary if your congregation has the capacity, and wishes to participate in this ministry.

### 3. **Synod and Regional Offices in Jamaica**

The Synod Administration and the Regional Offices in Jamaica have resumed their normal 5 days of operations. Following the lifting of the hard restrictions in Cayman on June 21, 2020, the Cayman Regional Office reopened on June 23, 2020.

### 4. **Pastoral Care**

- Given the psychological impact of the restriction of movement caused by the coronavirus, we celebrate those persons who continue to call members and offer inspirational messages and other support systems. **Regional Counsellors have been appointed, and this ministry has now started in all regions.**
- We continue to encourage congregations and regions to be especially sensitive to the needs of the elderly. Please ensure that their basic needs are met (food, sanitization, medication) and, where possible, offer daily contact by phone or social media to those who live alone.
- We are also encouraging you to engage your congregants to determine their access to, and understanding of, the digital space in order to gauge our reach as a church.

### 5. **COVID-19 Relief Grant**

The UCJCI will receive a COVID-19 Relief Grant from the Council for World Mission (CWM), which will be used in all regions to address:

- Technology needs (training and equipment for streaming services)
- Ensuring technology access for students within our UCJCI educational institutions
- Other urgent and critical needs, including the provision of food packages.

### 6. **Communication**

Please continue to pay close attention to the various pieces of information sent to you via our communication channels (radio, e-mail, website [[www.ucjci.com](http://www.ucjci.com)], WhatsApp Messenger, Twitter, Instagram and Facebook).

May we together continue to depend on God, *who has not given us a Spirit of fear, but of love and of power and of a sound mind* (2 Timothy 1:7).

Sincerely,

**THE UNITED CHURCH IN JAMAICA AND THE CAYMAN ISLANDS**




---

Norbert D. Stephens (Rev.)  
General Secretary