



# The United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands

November 30, 2022 || Volume 9 Issue 47

## The 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence Against Women and Girls-25 November to 10 December 2022.

**Theme: “UNITE! Activism to end violence against women and girls”**

**A woman seeks healing from Jesus against all odds!!**

**Mathew 15:21-29 NLT**

by Rev. Dr. Jane C. Kaluba

The 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence against women and girls is an international civil society-led campaign that takes place each year. It commences on 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, and ends on 10 December, Human Rights Day, indicating that violence against women is the most pervasive breach of human rights worldwide. It was originated by activists at the inaugural Women's Global Leadership Institute in 1991 and continues to be coordinated each year by the Center for Women's Global Leadership (CWGL). It is used as an organizing strategy by individuals and organizations around the world to call for the prevention and elimination of violence against women and girls (VAWG).

As a female theologian who preaches every Sunday and reads and hears stories about women who are battered and murdered almost every week, 16 days of activism is a time when I reflect on the suffering of women, girls and their families and what each one of us needs to do in our own spaces to address this 'pandemic'.

This year's theme is “UNITE! Activism to end violence against women and girls” and invites everyone to play a role in ending violence against women and girls, show

support and solidarity to women's rights activists and to resist the rollback on women's rights.

When talking about activism, Saffiya Khan defines an activist as somebody who does activism. She made an argument entitled “Be active, not an activist”. She argues “I don't think the word activist should exist”. Khan argues that everybody should be engaged and active with what is happening in their community so that we do not need a specific term to restrict those who are more active.

### **A gentile woman seeks help from Jesus**

The stories in the bible teach us to be united in whatever we are doing as children of God. History has proved that at times when one stands up and be active to address a certain problem, usually one is ostracized and called names especially if it is a woman. One story that I have been reflecting on this week is the story of a woman in St Mathew 15:21-29 NLT. This was the time when Jesus went up North to the region of Tyre and Sidon where the Amen did not come easily. The Bible says she was a gentile woman who was a Canaanite. That means that she was an idol worshipper. This woman was not from the commonwealth of Israel. She knew nothing

about the God of Israel!! In verse 2, she said, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David! For my daughter is possessed by a demon that torments her severely." There are many demons that torment women and girls in the world and in our churches today and one of them that is severe is gender-based violence.

This nameless woman must have seen or heard Jesus healing people and believed that He could heal her daughter. Many are the stories that we hear of women battered to death many are the tales of the scars on women's bodies by their partners. They are the nameless women who continue to hear and believe that Jesus heals but they take no step to get closer to Jesus. As women, we continue to cross barriers, traditions, religion, countries, gender, etc to seek healing and deliverance for ourselves and our fellow women who are tormented severely by their partners, be it at work, home, school, market, and wherever women are found.

### **What do you do when God is Silent?**

This woman let her faith cross boundaries as she did not just travel geographically but theologically as well. As she was begging Jesus to heal her daughter, the Bible tells us that Jesus gave her no reply, not even a word (verse 23). Likewise, a battered woman keeps crying and seeking and imploring God to help her, and most of the time in such instances, God is silent. What do you do when God is silent? Silence, most of the time, may mean that you are not wanted or that no one cares about you. There are times in our lives when God is silent. The Bible tells us that God was silent for 400 years from Malachi to Mathew. Also in Revelation, God was silent for 30 minutes. What do you do when God is silent? The church should begin to teach its members that silence is real and there will be times when God will be silent but it does not mean that God is not hearing your cries. He has promised us that, "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear." Isaiah 59:1 KJV.

To make matters worse for this woman, the disciples urge Jesus to send her away. "Tell her to go away," they said. "She is bothering us with all her begging" (verse 23). You can imagine that these disciples, in our time may be church people who cannot even offer help to these women who keep seeking help from God by coming to our congregations. She did not ask them for anything nor did she reply to their accusations. This woman had radical faith. She knew what she wanted and she kept at it. Most

people who pass comments when troubled women seek help because of gender violence do not understand what a battered woman goes through at the hands of her spouse or family member. Jesus kept on igniting her faith by answering her back. In verse 24 Jesus said, "I was sent only to help God's lost sheep - the people of Israel." Jesus was simply telling her that he was capable but she was not eligible. He was telling her you are not a Jew, you are not from the commonwealth of Israel, and you are a foreigner. But this woman came and worshipped him, pleading again. "Lord, help me!" (verse 25). What a loaded prayer in three words. She recognized that he was different. This man was different. She had the revelation when she came closer to him that He had the power and she had the problem. The common issue in our churches is that we have men and women who fail to acknowledge that they have the problem and some who feel that God has a problem with them. This woman thought of neither. She just worshipped him.

### **Jesus called her a Dog**

Jesus continued to respond to her and in verses 26 and 27 Jesus said, "it is not right to take food from the children and throw it to the dogs." Jesus called her a dog! However, she replied to him and said, "that's true, Lord, but even dogs are allowed to eat the scraps that fall beneath their master's table." This woman knew what she wanted, the healing of her daughter. She had every right to be upset at the insult but she decided to cross over it for the sake of her daughter. Most women completely give up when the violence and the injustice continue at home, at work and wherever they may be and they simply give up and when they are told otherwise, they walk away and accept that this is their fate!! During these 16 Days of Activism, I am here to encourage you to get closer to Jesus and he will hear your prayer. My sister, my brother, do not give up, do not be silent; your healing, your deliverance, your joy, your peace is kept especially for you by Jesus, the bread of life is on the way.

### **God honors Radical faith**

Finally, her request was granted when Jesus said to her, "Dear woman, your faith is great. Your request is granted." And her daughter was instantly healed. May it be so for you my sister, and my brother. Do not feel alone, do not be quiet, speak out and help is on the way!! Do not give up and do not listen to those who are in the way of your healing. You may not belong to any



# Jamaica Council of Churches

2B Washington Boulevard, Kingston 20,  
Jamaica, West Indies

## **The JCC responds to the call for support for the extension of SOPEs**

**(Corrected)**

The Jamaica Council of Churches (JCC) has taken note of the call, from various sectors, including directly from the government, to support the extension of the announced States of Public Emergency (SOPE) in seven communities in our nation.

We are concerned that the continuation of the SOPEs continues to be proffered despite challenges to its existence. In 2021, the Supreme Court handed down a ruling on the unconstitutionality of the SOPEs. We understand the intention of our government to ameliorate those concerns. We are also mindful that the Opposition has suggested further changes that will improve consideration of citizens' rights.

However, we are hard-pressed to support a practice which has been appraised, in some respects, to be a breach of the Constitution. A prevailing narrative is that SOPEs reduce crime. We acknowledge that while crime and violence are reduced during the actual course of the SOPE, the reality is that the incidents of crime escalate shortly thereafter. The continued reliance on the SOPEs is sidestepping fundamental deep-rooted strategies for long-lasting transformation.

The Council affirms the dignity and sanctity of all human life. The loss of any life is lamentable and unacceptable. Thus, every human life is deserving of protection under the law, the care and compassion of the social structures and the affirmation of its value.

We, therefore, deplore all forms of violence and abhor and condemn the killings which are taking place in our land. We note, however, that our nation appears to have been in a state of undeclared civil war for over two decades with murders exceeding one thousand for all years since 2002, except 2003. As a nation, we have not addressed the causes of crime and violence in an effective way. The SOPEs have been used to cauterize in local settings but not transform at the national level. We note with anticipation the promised benefits of the Citizen Security Plan. We look forward to this as the nation demands more than temporary measures.

We note that the proposal for the creation of Enhanced Security Measures (ESM) gives consideration to the following specific concerns:

1. The employment of a tribunal comprised of eminent jurists to determine how detentions are done.
2. The targeting of known violence producers instead of the "dragnet approach." These items are in alignment the CMOC's proposal for reducing crime on a more responsible and constitutionally acceptable way.

The Council is challenged, therefore, to support the present call for the extension of the announced SOPEs in the seven communities beyond December 14, 2022.

We, therefore, believe that our Government and the Opposition must responsibly arrive at a compromise in the short term and attended to the drafting of the ESM forthwith to be presented for debate in December 2022. We call on our governing officials to give this matter the most urgent priority and spare no effort to get this done. If need be, the parliament should extend its sessions over the coming weeks to make the progress that is possible.

Dated the 25th day of November, 2022.

## Welcome to the Season of Advent

The beginning of the Advent season signals the coming of Christmas and so our preparations begin. There are gifts to buy, cards to send, menus to plan for, people to see. The four Sundays – and weeks - of Advent remind us of the importance of the spiritual aspect of this preparation, the readying of our hearts and minds, not only for the celebration of Jesus' birth (1<sup>st</sup> coming) but also for His future return in glory (2<sup>nd</sup> coming) when He will set up His kingdom, judge His enemies, and reward the faithful, both living and dead.

Advent is full of symbolism and meaning. These are expressed by the themes of the four Sundays/weeks.

- 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday - HOPE
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday - PEACE
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday - JOY
- 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday - LOVE



### THE ADVENT JOURNEY:

**HOPE** BECOMES PEACE

**PEACE** BECOMES JOY

**JOY** BECOMES LOVE

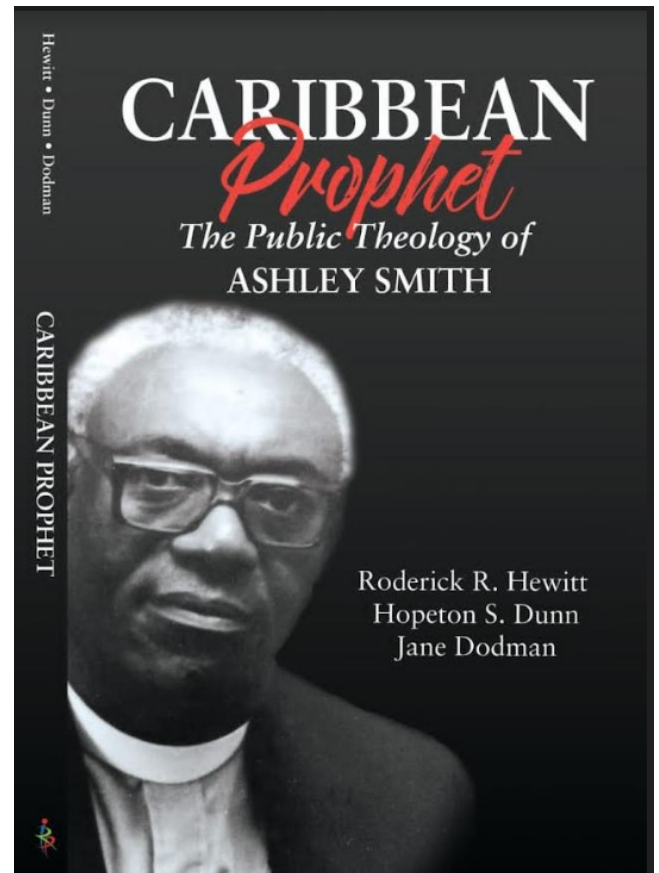
**LOVE** BECOMES **CHRIST**

*R. Schuller*



**Tune in to United in Faith**  
**Sundays on *RJR 94 F.M* at**  
**6:30 a.m.**

## Book Launch



## SAVE THE DATE

**December 14, 2022**  
**Hope United Church**  
**3 p.m.**

Caribbean Prophet interrogates Ashley Smith's role in shaping the post-independence theological discourse in Jamaica and the Caribbean through his anti-imperial Afro-centric interpretation to the reading of scriptures, his understanding of political, cultural and economic policies, and how the church's ministry and mission must demonstrate preferential option for persons who live on the margins of unjust structures in society.

# Prayer Corner

## Prayer Requests

- Rev. Wendell and Mrs. Lloy McKoy, whose children, Wonniel and Wonhelia are ill
- Rev. Raymond Coke, whose sister, Mrs. Hyacinth Bernard, passed on
- Rev. Dr. Cephas Stern whose mother, Rena Stern, passed on
- Pastor Edward Williams who lost his brother, Charles Williams
- Ms. Heather Thompson who lost her aunt, Ms. Annis Freeman
- Students, staff, parents and other members of the Oberlin High School community
- Rev. Dr. Marjorie Lewis whose mother, Mrs. Nellie Lewis, passed
- The family of the late Karl Bright who passed recently
- Lay Pastor John Macmillan and Mrs. Itza Bodden, Youth Worker, in Cayman who both face health related challenges
- The family of Ms. Rose Spalding, who passed recently
- All who have experienced weather related to the passage of Hurricane Ian
- Members of staff with relatives affected by COVID-19
- People affected by the war between Ukraine and Russian
- Victims and perpetrators of crime and violence in Jamaica and the security force and government as they respond

## Prayer:

Lord, please brush away our weariness, so that we may be inspired in your work. Help us to discover new ways to reveal your love to all we meet. Keep our minds clear and focused on all we need to achieve, and give us the wisdom to overcome difficulties and find solutions.

# Liturgy for Worship

**December 4, 2022**

**Advent 2**

**Isaiah 11:1-10**

**Psalms 72:1-7, 18-19**

**Just Jesus – God's**

This Shoot from Jesse's line is a fulfilment of many a prophetic promise – from as early as Adam. A stump is usually the dead portion (non-living) remaining after a tree has been felled. But by God's Spirit, that which was cut down brought new life, a life infused with Hope in God's mercy.

We who are non-Jews also have hope for redemption through Jesus, God's anointed Son. Jesus brings Justice for all.

Possible song 'I for Jesus'

Theme Song 'Jesus Christ our Living Hope'

# NOTICES



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## End Violence Against Women and Children



### ARE YOU INTERESTED IN ORDAINED OR COMMISSIONED MINISTRY?

The UCJCI Ministerial Formation will be hosting a virtual meeting on December 10, 2022.

•SAVE THE DATE•

MORE DETAILS TO FOLLOW



Share your Thursdays in Black photos on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram and tag us @ucjci

#WCC, #UCJCI #evgw #ThursdaysinBlack



## The Pringle Home for Children

*100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary*  
Calendar of Events  
2022

*"Pringle at 100: preserving a legacy of service"*

Church Service	July 31
Open Day	August 24
Panel Discussion: Child Care and Protection in Jamaica	November 24
Luncheon	December 10



**Nigel Henry, December 1**



**Rev. Rohan Kong, December 4**

## The United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands Congregational, Disciples of Christ, Presbyterian

### Moderator:

Rt. Rev. Gary Harriott

### General Secretary:

Rev. Norbert Stephens

### Regional Deputy General Secretaries

Cayman Regional Mission Council-  
Rev. Dr. Yvette Noble-Bloomfield

North-Eastern Regional Mission Council -  
Mrs. Rose Wedderburn

Southern Regional Mission Council-  
Mrs. Janet McConnell

Western Regional Mission Council-  
Mrs. Maureen Henry

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We appreciate your feedback.  
Please send your comments and input to  
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