



THE INFORMATION

A communication from the Chair of the PEC of the Moravian Church Eastern West Indies

To equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ. (Ephesians 4:12-13)

November, 2024 Issue



Rev. Algernon Lewis
CHAIR OF PEC

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IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

It is Christmas once again! This time of year, brings joy to most people. It is extraordinary because God made a decisive move by sending His Son at just the right moment. The time was indeed full, marked by uncertainty and chaos, much like any other period in history. In this context, God made a definitive commitment to humanity. When Jesus entered the world, the third act of God's four-part drama (creation, fall, redemption, and restoration) came into full effect.

God's action to commit to humanity is a profound testament to our worth in the eyes of God. John 1:14a (MSG) states: "The Word became flesh and blood and moved into the neighbourhood." What a compelling interpretation! Jesus moved into the neighbourhood that first Christmas, Emmanuel, God with us!

So, *what does this mean?* I believe that the original celebration of Christmas should inform how we commemorate Jesus's entry into the world. Many church circles focus on services, decorations, concerts, visiting family and friends, and enjoying food together. Some congregations go further to show kindness to the less fortunate, bringing them "Christmas cheer." These efforts are commendable as they align with the true essence of Christmas. However, it seems to me that the church often misses God's *modus operandi*, especially in this case. When God wanted to redeem the world, He chose to go small and vulnerable. It might have been reasonable for Jesus to come as a grown man, fully equipped to turbocharge the work of redemption. But God took the opposite approach God went small, below the radar, and vulnerable. God understood that to genuinely redeem humanity from the curse of sin, Jesus had to be born into the world under the same conditions as everyone else. He had to be shaped by the culture so that the work of redemption would flow "as far as the curse is found." Had Jesus appeared as a grown man, He might not have been able to be "touched with the feeling of our infirmities" (Hebrews 4:15). By living through all the stages of life, He experienced the everyday temptations we face.

Christmas then, should remind us that some of our best actions must begin small. The church needs to move beyond the desire to be noticed for every action, as if competing for attention. God was thinking about future impact. He strategically grew Jesus within the system to redeem the system from the inside. The church's mission should follow this example, meeting people where

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VISION STATEMENT

**A Church -
Transformed, United,
Victorious in Christ**

In the neighbourhood, cont. from pg 1

they are and building relationships with them, with the goal of sharing life together. While some situations demand urgent action, there should be more intentional efforts to operate in relative obscurity. Remember, even the smallest actions can have a profound impact!

Furthermore, **Christmas should inspire us to move into the neighbourhood, just as Jesus did.** When Jesus came into that neighbourhood, He lived with and among the people. He learned from them, and they learned from Him. He translated the message of the gospel using language and idioms they understood, making His message accessible. Jesus was there to journey with the people because they were His people. Even though He had a redemptive mission, His primary goal was to be a good neighbour. *How do Christmas and the neighbourhood come together in your community? How much space do we allow for the people in our neighbourhood—those outside your circles of family and friends, who cannot reciprocate our generosity?* Christmas should challenge us to seek new ways to connect with others and join them on their journey.

As we celebrate another Christmas, let us intentionally embrace the idea of going small. Let us look for small but significant ways to be present for our neighbours. Being present for our neighbours is not about giving them things to make them feel lesser; it's about recognizing our neighbours as equals to be treated with respect. They are not projects to conquer and exploit, even when our intentions are noble. Jesus came for all of us, and we are all equal at the foot of the cross.

May this Christmas remind us to treat our neighbours with the same respect and dignity we would want for ourselves. This Christmas, move into your neighbourhood, just as Jesus did!

GRACEHILL MORAVIAN CHURCH 251 & 60

From Bailey Hill to Edgecombe Hill, to Bridge Ghaut The Gracehill Moravian Church in Liberta, Antigua held a service of thanksgiving and dedication. This service, held on December 22, 2024 was the official celebration of the 60th anniversary of the construction of the sanctuary. This was also the occasion to dedicate new chairs, public address system, carpet, and other electronics to the glory of God.

This is the third location for Gracehill Church. The ministry began 251 years ago in 1773 at Bailey Hill, approximately two miles South on the current location. Ruins are still stand on the hillside where they met for worship.

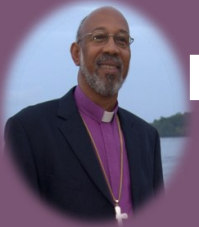


Bailey also offers stunning views of Turtle Bay and Horsford Hill. At the highest point, there are views of Falmouth Harbour and Pigeon Point Beach.



Conditions are Bailey Hill deteriorated and the church migrated to Edgecombe Hill where the ministry continued to grow. This site housed a sanctuary, a school, and the manse. Some members of Gracehill attended School at that site. The picture below shows the sanctuary prominently with the manse behind and the school off to the right. *Continue on Page 4*





Bishops' Christmas Message 2024

“GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST, AND ON EARTH
PEACE; GOOD WILL TOWARD MEN”



Rev. Dr. Kingsley Lewis, Ep. Fr.

Rev. Dr. Conrad Spencer, Ep. Fr.

The Advent season is here again and soon it will be Christmas Day.

Christmas means different things to different people. To many secular people it will be a time of much commerce—of buying and selling. For them it will also be a time of partying, of gift giving and of renewing our homes to welcome friends and family. For Christians it will be a time when our focus will be on the Lord Jesus Christ and his birth more than two thousand years ago in Bethlehem of Judea and the message of the angel and heavenly host, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace; good will toward men.

Some persons of other faiths also attribute a religious significance to the season and celebrate in their own way, and we welcome them and pray that one day they too will come to know the true significance of the season and day we Christians celebrate.

The words above come from St. Luke’s Gospel Chapter 2 and verse 14. The words of this song which the shepherds heard, as someone has rightly suggested, were in upper air, but those songs were not being sung along the streets of Jerusalem, or on the banks of the Tiber at Rome. Today Christmas comes at a time when this message needs to be heard again not only in the upper air of Christian Churches and their choirs, but also in the streets of Jerusalem and Washington and Port Au Prince and Moscow and our Caribbean Islands.

How significant it is that almost every Christmas, people go out and buy millions and millions of dollars’ worth of things just for the pleasure of giving them away or overstuffing their bellies with food while around us are people who have been starving 364 days of the year. Indeed, so much of the world has been silent this past year when war

has characterized so many spots around the globe as governments and their minions have waged wars and other battles in the Gaza and in the Lebanon, in Haiti and in Ukraine to name but a few.

Chevis Horne once wrote: “Christmas is corrective to two radically different ways of looking at life. There are those who look at it through dark glasses and see only darkness and shadows. The world is caught up in a terrible evil from which it cannot free itself. And Christmas says: ‘Take off those dark glasses. There is a better way of looking at our world.’ There are those who look at their world through rose-tinted glasses. They see only sweetness and light. And Christmas says: ‘Take off those rose-tinted glasses. There is a better way to look at your world.’ Christmas also says: look at your world through clear lenses that are neither tinted or darkened. You will see your world a strange comingling of good and evil. It is like a lighted landscape across which lie dark, sinister, frightening shadows of evil and tragedy.’ Jesus was born into our kind of world as a Saviour and Deliverer. It is little wonder we remember him best by his cross which became the greatest saving event of history.”

As Christians, let us strive at all times and especially at Christmas to proclaim by word and action, through neither tinted nor darkened lenses the essential message of hope to the world uttered by the angel host—Christmas is a time to give glory to God who sent his Son to redeem the world and a time to promote peace and exercise goodwill to all people as a reflection of God’s action toward us.

We wish for you and your families a happy and blessed Christmas.

The final migration took place in July, 1964 after the new sanctuary was built. The land was acquired from Mr. Clement Gorden. Rev William Gramley lead the charge to construct the new sanctuary at three cock tank.

A little-known remarkable fact is that this green, stone-cut, limestone building was built in six months. This is not blocks and mortar. Each stone had to be cut and fitted to match the stones next to it. The skill, craftsmanship, and commitment required for such a feat are outstanding. The walls are also thicker than other buildings. The commitment to this work remains a gold standard. Bishop Conrad Spencer, a son of Gracehill, remembers the names of some of those skilled craftsmen - Bros George Henry, Randall Williams, Mayers, and Gordon. It is good that their names live on. It remains unclear if their labour was



hired or volunteered.

On July 19, 1964, the sanctuary was dedicated to the glory of God by Bishop Peter M. Gubi. Some consider this a record with construction taking only six months. It is a testament to their commitment and purpose.



Not to be outdone in their commitment to the building of the sanctuary were the women of Gracehill. Stories abound of the stones that were carried on heads to the site from Old Gracehill. For the pace at which the work progressed, these women must have made

several trips per day. In addition to hauling limestone to the site, some also broke stones. They were fully committed to getting the work done.



The service on December 22, 2024 celebrated that journey and dedicated that new furnishings for the sanctuary. The sanctuary was beautifully decorated for the occasion. Bishop Conrad Spencer, a son of Gracehill blessed the furnishings and declared the word of God Nehemiah 2:20 – Rise up and build. In addition to beautiful singing, music, and worship, there was a beautiful cake specially created for the event by Bro. Timoy Titus. To God be the glory, great things God continues to do.





“IT IS POSSIBLE WITH GOD”

Text: St. Luke 1:37 “For there is not a thing that God cannot do” (Good News Bible).

Rev. Neilson Waithe, Clergy Care Consultant - Moravian Church EWIP.

THE WHY OF CHRISTMAS

In our day of secularism, when some wonder if we should say Merry Christmas, or we should be more inclusive of others and embrace all by saying Happy Holidays, we need to reflect on why we have Christmas in the first place.

St. Luke gives us an account of the angel Gabriel’s meeting with Mary, as he brought to her the message that she had been chosen by God to give birth to the one, in whom the first and subsequent Christmases will be celebrated.

Mary had her doubts about this plan of God, for surely, she said to angel Gabriel, how could this be? How could I who have not known a man become pregnant? This surely would be against the natural course of pregnancy.

Angel Gabriel, in an effort to put her at ease and to allow her to see that what would happen with her was no mean feat, that it was all planned by God who saw through her concerns, tells her what would happen to her cousin Elizabeth. She, in her old age would become pregnant and give birth to a son.

Having gotten her full attention he gave her the message that would be the message of the first and all subsequent Christmases. With God nothing is impossible. In other words, there is not a thing that God cannot do.

1. WITH GOD WE MUST BE OPEN

Christmas has come to mean many things to many persons. However, there are some who will tell you that they were able to experience their first miracle at Christmas, when hearts were softened, when persons changed for that

period, when persons were willing to be open to the message of peace and goodwill.

At a time in their history of war with each other, when two foes were going at each other, the terrorists, or as they call themselves, the freedom fighters in Palestine, decided to have a cease fire with Israel over the Christmas period.

Throughout the Vietnamese and the Korean wars, cease fires were negotiated during the Christmas period. It goes to show that if we are open to God and not concerned about making ourselves look good and look strong in the eyes of others, we can see the impossible becoming possible.

We cannot expect God to make a difference in our lives if we close the channels to God’s access, and behave as though we know it all.

Surely the devastations and challenges many in the world faced over the past year, can remind us that we cannot do it all by ourselves.

2. WE MUST BE WILLING TO RESPOND TO GOD’S REQUEST

Mary heard the message that angel Gabriel brought. She could have behaved as though it was a big joke, an impossible task, and she could have gone on her way without saying yes or no.

She could have shrugged her shoulder and said; “yeah right!”

She responded by saying, “I am the Lord’s servant and I am willing to do whatever he wants. May everything you say come through.”

Like many of us, we refuse to see that God has something for us and God wants a response

from us. You say it is too hard, God says, respond and let us work it out together.

Someone once said, if there were no Christmas, then we would have to invent a time where persons can indeed see others differently, where hearts can be softened, where the impossible can become possible.

3. WE MUST HAVE FAITH. WE MUST BELIEVE.

What qualified Mary for this important role. She was no more important than many around her. Her faith and confidence in God were her only claim to fame.

Christmas can mean a lot of things to a lot of people, but if we do not believe that God is able, despite what we see going on around us, then we will miss the “Why” of Christmas.

We can say, Christmas has become too commercialized and the merchants and sellers of goods have induced people to spend and spend. All of this may be true, but then, we come away from all the busyness and we are afforded an opportunity to reflect.

In is in our reflection, that, like Elijah, we may look for God in the earthquake, and all the noise and busyness about us, we may look for God in the fire, or we, in faith, can turn away and allow the still small voice, in our encounter with someone not significant, but in this encounter, we can believe that all is not lost.

The impossible can become possible for us, when we look not for the great and mighty wonder, but when we do that small deed, give that gift in sincerity. Connect with family and believe that it is because of Christmas that we have the opportunity to express love and come together as we have not done over the rest of the year.

Let us believe that as we open ourselves to God and as we respond to him, that we can believe that he can use us wherever we are to influence for good, persons around us. That for them, the

impossible would have become possible and the message of the angel would be heard, as it was on the first Christmas morning. Peace on Earth, to all people of good will.

No matter what you may be going through at this time, your prayers for healing, your prayers for others who may be hurting, your prayers for love and grace for yourself and others; the challenge and gift of Christmas is that nothing is impossible with God. With God it is possible!

SYNOD ADVISORY

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Warm Christian greetings in the name of Jesus, our Chief Elder.

As shared in Synod Advisory #1, the 34th Provincial Synod of the Moravian Church Eastern West Indies Province will be held in Trinidad. This Synod will be both virtual and in-person. Synod will convene virtually on May 15, 2025 and June 12, 2025 to conduct housekeeping matters and receive reports. The in-person sessions of the 34th Provincial Synod will be held from July 10-16, 2025 with the 10th and 16th being travel days.

Each Conference is asked to prepare for the 34th Provincial Synod by doing the following:

1. Elect Synod delegates. The Joint Boards of each congregation shall submit suitable names for approval by the Conference. The election shall be by ballot in a meeting of each congregation. Notice of the election shall be given at least two weeks before the election.
2. Submit the names of all delegates by March 14, 2025.
3. Prepare all reports for submission to the Provincial Office by April 4, 2024.

Prepare and submit to the Provincial Office all proposals to be considered at the 34th Provincial Synod by April 15, 2025.

The Provincial Board has appointed Rev. Dr. Cortroy Jarvis to serve as the Synod Chaplain. The Rev. Liselle Roberts has been appointed Chair of Synod and the Rev. Dr. Bonnie Smith has been appointed Secretary of Synod.

The 34th Provincial Synod will include an awards dinner where clergy and lay people will be awarded for their service to the church.



BIRTHDAY CELEBRANTS



December 15—31

Bro. Hilton Joseph	18
Bro. Vankys Isaac	18
Sis. Cecile Rossington	22
Sis. Maureen Lewis	23
Bro. Alvin Barker	25

January 1-15

Bro. David Ince	02
Sis. Jovanca Lewis-Smith	05
Sis. Sonia Spencer	11
Bro. Moise Jean	12

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY CELEBRANTS

December 15– 30

Bro. Erwin Warner & Sis. Onita Samuel-Warner	19
Bro. Algernon & Sis. Denise Smith-Lewis	20
Bro. Errol Connor & Sis. Jocelyn Connor	22
Bro. Patmore Smith & Sis. Jovanca Lewis-Smith	27
Bro. Hilton Joseph & Sis. Sharon McCardy-Joseph	29

January 1—15

Bro. Nevin Lewis & Sis. Billie Sterling-Lewis	05
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CONDOLENCES

The Provincial Family extends condolences to Rev. Dr. Adrian Smith as he mourns the death of his Grandmother, Mrs. Carlotta Eudora St. Hill, of Barbados. The funeral service will be held on December 12, 2024 at Mount Tabor Moravian Church, St. John, Barbados.

Please pray for Bro. Smith and family in their time of grief and loss.

Congratulations

The Provincial family extends heartiest congratulations to Bishop Dr. Conrad Spencer on the successful defense of his PhD dissertation with Carolina University. This degree is a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Leadership with a concentration in Educational Administration. The dissertation topic is “An Investigation of Perceived Authentic Leadership in Jamaican Christian Higher Education Institutions (CHEIs).”

We pray that God will continue to empower Bishop Spencer for life and the work of ministry.

CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

A Joyful 'toon by Mike Waters



When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”
— JOHN 8:12 NIV



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- ◆ There are EIGHT LARGE APARTMENTS which are available for rental. Each room is self contained with a kitchenette. The rooms are air-conditioned with available internet cable TV. All utilities are included with the exception of telephone.

Mission Statement

By the Grace of God we seek to be faithful to our Lord Jesus Christ; without distinction, we use all that we possess to call all peoples to the truth of the Gospel through worship, Evangelist discipleship and service.

Our Mailing Address

Moravian Church - EWI Province
Cashew Hill, P.O. Box 504
St. John's, Antigua

Office: moravianchewip@gmail.com