

A COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR OF PEC EWI PROVINCE

The Information

February, 2025



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

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Re-igniting our passion for service



Rev. Algernon Lewis
Chairman of PEC

As February rolls around, we are reminded that the focus for the EWI Province is Re-igniting our Passion. Whereas this theme could cover many areas, our three-pronged focus is – soul, service, and sustainability. Last month’s article focused on souls, and this article will focus on service. Re-igniting our Passion is in the broader framework of SHIFT – seek and submit, hear and heed, insight and innovation, focus and function, and total transformation. The Church has been called to engage in this SHIFT as it consistently reorients itself to become mission ready.

The Moravian Church has three orders of ministry: deacon, presbyter, and bishop. Deacon is intentionally the first. The Greek word for deacon is δῆκονος (diakonos), meaning servant, minister, messenger. One senior colleague declared that even when one moves through the orders in ministry, she/he remains a servant/ a deacon. Service ought to characterize the lives of the people of God. This is not new information for us as the Moravian Church. This church was characterized by service. Since the rebirth of the Moravian Church in 1732, there has been a passion to serve the kingdom of God and the people of God. The passion for souls was twined with the passion for service. This service caused our spiritual forebears to create schools that helped our forebears to learn to read and write. How do we get back to a place where we are characterized by service to our neighbour? How do we embrace the line of the beautiful hymn: to serve the present age, my calling to fulfil?

The best example of a life of service is Jesus. When his disciples were arguing about who is the greatest, he declared – “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45).

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Vision Statement

A Church - Transformed,
United,
Victorious in Christ

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.

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SHIFT: Reclaiming our identity, Renewing of Purpose, and Re-igniting of Passion

Re-igniting our passion for service
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The call to give his life as a ransom for many is unique to Jesus. However, his dedication to serving the present age should inspire us all. Jesus' posture of service had the goal of bringing salvation to all people. His service was meant to change the trajectory of the lives of those served. Jesus served others because he knew there was always more they could do and be, and his service was meant to help them reach the place of fulfilment. In my limited view, fulfilment is more than using one's gifts. Fulfilment also includes personal fellowship with Jesus. The shorter catechism's teaching still holds true: the chief end of humanity is glorifying God and enjoying him forever.

Out of that relationship with God should come a deeper care and concern for others. Jesus cared for people, and therefore, he met them at their point of need. This requires empathy.

Empathy is the "accurate perception of another's internal frame of reference" (Atkinson, 1995, p.384). It is about entering another person's world to better understand where to meet that person. It is expected to approach a person, viewing them through our own experiences, and then rush to judge what they should do or how we should respond. Yet, we see Jesus approaching people on their terms and offering them grace in their time of need. Jesus served them by giving them a picture of God, who loves them completely. The often-repeated phrase is, "he looked beyond my fault and saw my need."

Re-igniting our passion for service is an invitation to embrace the ways of Jesus more fully. We must embrace the truth of scripture in 1 John 3:17, "But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?" Open hearts reflect the heart of Jesus, a heart of service. Empathy flows from hearts that are open to others. We have received from God, and we have a responsibility to reach back and help others to get to where we have gotten. The text mentions "this world's goods," but that is entry-level – soup kitchens, clothing, etc.

It seems that our passion for service must major in the intangible things that people cannot get elsewhere – forgiveness, grace, deliverance, hope, peace, and love. We live in a broken world, and many people are feeling the pressure of living more and more. As the church accepts the mantle of service and begins to cultivate spaces where the intangibles of God are accurately presented, we can do more excellent service to the mission of God in the world.

This proposition may sound magical. However, I see this in the actions of Jesus as he encountered the woman at the well (John 8), the crowd of people (Matthew 14: 13ff), and washing his disciples' feet (John 13). Jesus met people where they were and brought them to where he was. We have been left with that ministry to practice in our time and season.

We must get over ourselves and all our inward-looking proclivity of caring only for ourselves and our own. We must put on bowels of compassion. There is a greater calling to see people and desire to be God's hands extended to them. There is a calling to serve again, to be deacons again in our communities, bringing the light of Jesus in dark places. We must change the narrative that the church is always begging for something and update it with the truth that the church is adding more excellent value through the ministry of service she brings. This is the time to get moving – Re-ignite the passion for service.



Quote of the Day

"Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter."

Martin Luther King Jr.



COMPLETED FAITHFULLY

On Sunday, February 9, at 4 PM, family, colleagues, friends, and well-wishers gathered at the Zion Moravian Sanctuary in St. Kitts to celebrate Rev. Adelyn V. Mgonela's ministry during her Retirement Service, themed "Completed Faithfully."

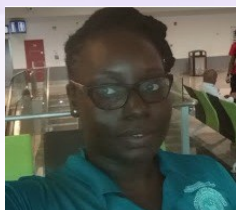
The afternoon was a heartfelt celebration of over 40 years of ministry, with participation from Colleagues across the Province, each congregation within the St. Kitts Conference paying tribute, and family. Rev. Adrian Smith, Vice Chairman of the PEC, batchmate Rev. Mgonela, delivered an inspiring message centred around 2 Timothy 4:7. He encouraged everyone to "Finish focused with a Focused Finish" and shared three important lessons: 1. We are all sharing a public testimony, 2. We all have personal victories, and 3. We all must complete the journey.

In her response, Rev. Mgonela expressed her gratitude for her experiences and praised God for being with her throughout her journey. We wish her all the best as she embarks on the next chapter of her life. For those interested in viewing the service, please visit the Retirement Service of Rev. Adelyn Mgonela at https://www.youtube.com/live/8_bMAz_Id4Q?si=znsgacd0Vi5iekJ3



SHIFT: Reclaiming our identity, Renewing of Purpose, and Re-igniting of Passion





Young People in the Ecumenical Movement (YPEM)
First In-person Meeting by Tia Phillip
November 13-19, 2024
Continued from January Newsletter

We had opportunities to listen to their stories, share in hospitality, and explore how faith in Jesus the Christ offers hope and transformation in the face of injustice. I particularly recount the faith in Jesus and hope for the future shared by young adolescents living with HIV.



Member churches speak out against the persecution of church workers.

The Church

In this period, we learned of congregations, pastors, church leaders, and youth members who face persecution [intimidation, accusations of terrorism, and arrests and imprisonment], as they minister, provide humanitarian relief to, and advocate for marginalized groups. I recount periods of prayer for the release of these pastors and church leaders. I also recount the swell of praise and tears upon receiving news of acquittal for one (1) pastor.

The Storm

On Sunday 17th November 2024, the Filipino authorities issued a warning regarding Super Typhoon Manyi. Prior to the storm, we gathered to fellowship with our ecumenical partners at the Philippine Christian University. As the winds blew and the rains fell, we sang, danced, and shared meals and stories with the brethren.

The Response

The YPEM commits to amplifying the voices of ecumenical youth in the Philippines and carrying their stories with us into our contexts. We also offer our solidarity to them in their Christian witness.

We commit to highlighting the concerns of Christian youth around the world to inform the work of the commission and influence the programmatic work of the WCC.

We further invite youth within our individual locales and traditions to connect over our common faith, extend strength to each other through accompaniment, and lend a voice to the oppressed and marginalized.



YPEM offers message of solidarity to ecumenical youth in the Philippines.

Reflection

Persecution and various forms of oppression is not a new phenomenon to the church. The church [universal] has faced persecution and has been a perpetrator of persecution. I recall the persecution of Jan Hus in our history as the Unitas Fratrum. I also recall the oppression experienced by our enslaved ancestors in the nations that make up the Eastern West Indies Province.

In this vein, I must recount the mission of our forebears in the faith who ventured to this region to minister to the enslaved people. As a church, our forebears presented faith and hope in the context of suffering, and empowerment in the face of oppression. We celebrate our missional heritage, and as a church, we are celebrated for our contribution to the development of our nations.

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Condolences

I encourage us as a church, in this era, to return to our heritage of mission. I invite us to move beyond opening our doors and welcoming diverse people. As fishers of men (Matthew 4:19) I encourage us to venture from our spaces inland, to the waters' edge and perhaps even atop the waters, where we may meet these fish where they are.

I invite us to go, reach, serve, and actively engage the topical issues of today, where we may share the love, message, and character of Christ within these marginalized, oppressed, and even persecuted communities.

I also urge us, the youth of our church alongside the aged and more mature among us, to shake off the senses of fear, apathy, fatigue, or overwhelm that affects us. I pray for each of us to have hearts, minds, and bodies that are willing and ready to walk and work together to touch the lives of people beyond ourselves for Christ.

I believe that this begins with us lifting our eyes to see the people and conditions in our communities. May we remember the love that God has for them, and the sacrifice that Christ has already made for them. May we be ready to hear their stories and touch their situations, that we may share and show the love of Christ as his disciples.

May God, in Christ Jesus, empower us so to do.



The Provincial Board shares the sad news of the death of our colleague and sister, Rev. Julie Joefield-Parris. Sis. Joefield-Parris died today, February 6, 2025, in Barbados, after a brief illness.

Sis. Julie was a native of Tobago and candidated in 1986 for the Ministry of Christian Education from the Spring Garden congregation in Tobago. Sis. Julie was ordained in 1991 and served the Province in Antigua and Barbados.

The Provincial family expresses sincere condolences to her husband, Rev. Ezra Parris, their children, Jaaziel and Tevye-Kaori, and the extended family. Let us pray for the family as they journey through this place of grief and loss.

A Service of Thanksgiving will be held on Tuesday, February 25, 2025 at Sharon Moravian Church, St. Thomas, Barbados at 2:00 pm.



Theological Education Sunday

Sunday March 23, 2025 is Theological Education Sunday.

Special prayers are requested for our Theological students who have answered the call to God on their lives and offered themselves for Ministry. They are Sis. Chioma Henry and Bro. Wycliffe Morton from the Zion Moravian Church in St. Kitts and Sis. Melissa Bart from the Bethesda Moravian Church in St. Kitts.



Let us Celebrate

Birthday Celebrants February 15—28

Bro. Adrian Smith	21
Bro. Errol Connor	21
Sis. Billie Sterling Lewis	22
Sis. Esther Moore-Roberts	24



Birthday Celebrants March 1—15

Sis. Alicia Ross-Floyd	07
Bro. Jeremy Francis	09



Anniversary Celebrants February 15 - March 15

Bro. Kingsley Lewis and Sis. Maureen Lewis	19
Bro. Ralph Prince and Sis. Rosalind Prince	02



Ordination Anniversaries

Bro. Ulston Patmore Smith	March 13, 2005
Sis. Liselle Roberts	March 11, 2011



Unity Sunday

March 2, 2025 is Unity Sunday. At this time of year, we remember the birth of the Unitas Fratrum, the Moravian Church, on March 1, 1457 (568 years ago). Please continue to pray for the work and witness of our Church.

A special Unity offering will be taken in all Moravian Churches worldwide on Sunday March 2, 2025. This offering will go towards the Common Moravian Theological Education Curriculum.



Unity Prayer Watch

The Unity Prayer Watch is a special service to the world, offered by the worldwide Moravian Church. The Eastern West Indies Province will participate in the Unity Prayer Watch from April 03 - April 17, 2025. The Schedule is as follows:

Tobago 12am, April 3 - 11:59pm April 5, 2025
 St. Kitts & The Grenada Mission 12pm, April 5-11:59pm - April 7, 2025
 Trinidad 12am, April 8 - 11:59am - April 9, 2025
 Barbados 12pm, April 9 - 11:59pm - April 11, 2025
 Antigua 12am, April 12 - 11:59pm - April 14, 2025
 Virgin Islands 12am, April 15 - 11:59pm - April 17, 2025

Conferences are asked to observe the time allotted for our members to engage in this unbroken prayer chain.

This prayer meeting began on August 13, 1727 when the Moravian Church had its Pentecost experience. Prayer is still a vital part of our walk with God and the life of the church. Let us therefore be in readiness for this prayer event as we continue to seek God's guidance and direction for our Church, the world and ourselves.

Moravian Multipurpose Complex

Conference Center & Apartments



Graduations

Conferences

Weddings

Banquets

Meetings

Dinners



- ♦ Only ten minutes away from the stores, shops and banks in St. John's.
- ♦ Our International airport is also just ten minutes away.
- ♦ Our balcony provides a refreshing view of undulating hills and valleys.
- ♦ The Conference Center has a seating capacity for 200 persons.
- ♦ We are situated on a hill over-looking the picturesque out-skirts of the city of St. John's, Antigua.
- ♦ There are EIGHT LARGE APARTMENTS which are available for rental. Each room is self contained with 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.

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