



# Jamaica Methodist District

143 Constant Spring Road, Kingston 8

Tel. #: 876 924-1218\* 876 925-6768\*876 445-5713

Website: [www.jamaicamethodist.org](http://www.jamaicamethodist.org)

Email: [mainoffice@jamaicamethodist.org](mailto:mainoffice@jamaicamethodist.org)

## METHODIST CHURCH IN THE CARIBBEAN AND THE AMERICAS

### CONNEXIONAL BISHOP

Rev'd Everald Galbraith,  
MTS, B.A, Dip. Min

### JAMAICA DISTRICT

#### DISTRICT BISHOP

Rev'd Christine Gooden Benguche  
M. A., BA., Dip. Min., Dip Tchg

#### DISTRICT CONFERENCE SECRETARY

Rev'd Dr. Wayneford McFarlane  
D. Min, B.A., Dip Min.,

#### DISTRICT TREASURER

(Vacant)

### CIRCUITS

Annotto Bay  
Beechamville/Bensonton  
Brown's Town/Edmondson  
Coke  
Duncans  
East Kingston  
Falmouth  
Frankfield  
Grateful Hill  
Lucea  
Lyndhurst  
Manchester  
Manchioneal  
May Pen  
Montego Bay/ Mt. Ward  
Mount Fletcher  
Ocho Rios  
Port Antonio  
Portmore  
Providence  
Savanna la mar  
Spanish Town  
St. Ann's Bay  
St. Elizabeth  
St. Thomas  
Watsonville  
Western St. Andrew

## NEW YEAR'S (2023) MESSAGE FROM DISTRICT PRESIDENT – BISHOP THE REV'D CHRISTINE GOODEN BENGUCHE

Happy 2023, sisters and brothers across the beautiful isle of Jamaica and the diaspora, who are associated with the Jamaica Methodist District, whether by birth, marriage, study, work or friendships! HAPPY NEW YEAR! 😊

It is a delight to greet you at this beginning of a brand-new year (2023!), as we give God thanks for His sustaining grace and peace, that brought us through 2022 – a year which seems to have started only yesterday. Time is really in the Master's hand.

As we reflect on the year we just exited, we have much to give glory to God for, including: successful resumption of face-to-face worship in all our congregations, reactivation of some of our groups which fell into inactivity in the heights of the COVID-19 pandemic, hosting of a variety of virtual and hybrid forums for our members – such as the Methodist Tertiary Students and Young Adults Retreat, Club Wesley - Jesus Party, Mission and Evangelism fora, guided by a new publication from our very own Rev'd Dr Oral A. W. Thomas – President of the United Theological College of the West Indies (UTCWI) – **“Reimagining Caribbean Methodism for Contemporary Missions”**, Methodist Children's Fellowship (MCF), various Exploring Ordained Ministry in the MCCA, Towards a Methodist Position on Living Safely with COVID-19, re-launch of the Methodist Teachers Fellowship (MCF), launch of the Young Adults' Marriage and Singles Ministries (MSM), Youth Week Encounter under the theme “Building Meaningful Relationships”; District Convocation under the theme “Mission in the Post-Pandemic World: Adaptive Change” and Talking Health Boundaries with Clergy and Laity (separately), and reintroduced a newsletter, with the

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support of the Rev'd Dr Paul Douglas Walfall – Minister in the United Church of Canada, with roots here in Coke Circuit, Jamaica; and various Early Morning Prayer Sessions. There was also the lovely Ordination of another daughter of the soil – Rev'd Shanet Edmonson who had candidated from the St Thomas Circuit. These, and other successes must be celebrated, and we must never lose sight of God having made all these things possible and affirm our commitment to continuous improvement.

I must also extend thanks to the entire church community, for your kind words and other gestures of congratulations to me, on receipt of a national award for work in religion and chaplaincy. This one is for Team Jamaica Methodist District, as it's loving partnership and support which has enabled this acknowledgement. We also celebrate with other members of our church community who, likewise, received national awards, namely: **Bro. Glaister Ricketts and Sis Luna Matthews (Western St Andrew Circuit), Dr Myrna Hague-Bradshaw and Sis. Nova Johnson (Ocho Rios Circuit) and Sis Patience Williams (Montego Bay/Mt Ward Circuit). Congratulations, siblings-in-Christ! May those who come behind us, find us faithful.**

As we embark on yet another calendar year, we will continue to direct our attention and our energies ***“Building a Resilient People: Church, Community and Nation”***, fortified by Paul's Letter to the Church in Corinth, which the church today often resembles; - **2 Corinthians 4:8-9 - “We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed;”**. Of course, in addition to that sub-theme, our standing District theme of ***“Spreading Scriptural Holiness to Reform the Nation: Beginning with Me”*** remains at the forefront of our collective work, as we seek to fulfil God's mission in our various undertakings, in keeping with sound Biblical teachings and foundational work and teachings of our fore-parents.

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When we reflect on the situation in our nation, the horrendous levels of crime and violence; the inadequate resources to meet the demands of our educational institutions; the decline in our moral standards and sanctity of life; among other things, we need not hesitate, as a church community, when we pause to seek God's face on behalf of the society. The nation is afflicted, but the church of Jesus Christ must become that resilient force at work, under God, to ensure that we do not crumble; amidst the perplexities, the church of Jesus Christ must be that voice, in 2023, that brings hope and comfort to the people in our communities that are ailing because of the misdoings of a few.

It has not escaped my attention, as I journeyed across the length and breadth of the nation in 2022, engaged my clergy colleagues and our members, and receive the calls, messages, and letters, that there exist many shortcomings which we must join forces to fix now, lest we inter-persecute ourselves and the mission that God has called us to. Christian friends, the year is now, that we arise and re-double our efforts to restore those dying organisations; to re-ignite our passion to engage in life changing missional and outreach activities; to restore our engagement in Class Meeting and related activities to strengthen each other in the faith; to embrace our children, youth and young adults and support them in returning to full fellowship, and take their rightful place in the work, even as we challenge them and the whole community of believers that God requires that we walk in accordance with His precepts and not the standards of our world. After all, we are not conformers....we are called to be a transformed and transformational church. The change in our world must begin with each of us, and as it happens, each of us will effect change in others we encounter in our social and other secular activities, effectively bringing the gospel of Jesus Christ, the mighty to save, to people everywhere – who are struck by social, emotional and spiritual ills, and may only avoid destruction, if we as the **church without walls** become committed builders of the a people who are so resilient, that together we can withstand the tests of the present days.

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I beseech us, as we seek to realise our personal goals, that we resolve to embrace the will of the Lord, and His desire to prosper this nation, as a people under God.

Pricilla Owens penned a hymn which aptly encourages us, as we face a new year, filled with challenges to overcome:

**Will your anchor hold in the straits of fear,  
When the breakers roar and the reef is near?  
While the surges rave, and the wild winds blow,  
Shall the angry waves then your boat o'erflow?**

***We have an anchor that keeps the soul  
Steadfast and sure while the billows roll;  
Fastened to the Rock which cannot move,  
Grounded firm and deep in the Saviour's love!***

On behalf of our District Conference Secretary - Rev'd Dr Wayneford McFarlane and the other leaders in our District, I wish for you a blessed and purposeful 2023! Happy New Year! Be blessed in abundance!

Yours in Christ's service,

Christine M. Gooden Benguche, OD (Bishop the Rev'd)  
District President