



And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.
Luke 4: vs 4.

The Information

Report of visit to the Hurricane ravaged Virgin Islands

November, 2017

I arrived in St. Thomas on AA 983 at 1.08pm on Wednesday October 04, 2017 and left on Friday October 06, 2017 at 2.10 pm. Let me now describe what obtained on the ground. I was met at the Airport by Sis. Elisa G. Hodge. We drove straight to Nisky Moravian Church compound where we examined the damages done to the Sanctuary and School. After touring Nisky and Memorial Manse, I took the Seaplane to St. Croix where I met the Superintendent of the Virgin Islands Conference, Rev. Eulencine Christopher where we toured the properties there that were damaged. I returned to St. Thomas the next day accompanied by the Superintendent and we immediately took the barge to St. John to tour the devastated areas. There we were touched and moved to see that in spite of the devastation, the Bethany Moravian Church Hall was still being used as a Shelter. In fact, the Shelter was untouched by the hurricanes and those in the Shelter were quite thankful for the accommodation. It was a Shelter equipped with a Manager, Nurse, Chef, Security Guard and a Chaplain.



Rev. Dr. Cortroy Jarvis
Chairman of PEC

Nisky's Sanctuary (St. Thomas): The Main door was blown out and destroyed; stained glass window badly damaged; another window damaged badly; a few windows have spaces in them from the hurricanes which make them difficult to close tightly. The building suffered much water damage. A window in the basement was also blown out which has caused the commercial stove to have absorbed much water which has resulted in it rusting.

Moravian School Nisky Campus: Stairway on the outside of the building is badly damaged and needs to be replaced; cracks around parts of the roof; two windows on the east of the building lost half of the shutters;



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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, evangelism, discipleship and service.

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'Advance the Kingdom' -Use the Keys

much water damage - one room has water coming in from a small hole close to the floor which over time, sends water to other areas as well. One of the Teacher's Desk made of chip wood is disintegrating from water damage.



Part of the roof came off but has now been restored in order to

resume classes, however, when the roof came off it caused an excessive amount of water to enter and remain in the building.



The floor in that particular area got water soaked and so the roof below that floor is showing mildew/

mould which needs to be dealt with immediately to avoid anyone getting sick.

The Moravian School School Campus reopened on October 02, 2017 under difficult circumstances but the parents, students and teachers see this as a very positive move in spite of the challenges.

Nisky Moravian Manse is in good shape. A fallen pole with all of its attachments fell on the manse and punctured one of the window shutters. The utility company has not removed it as yet.



New Herrnhut's buildings (St. Thomas) are intact. There is a large landslide which blocked the main road to the Sanctuary. This has now been cleared but the road is still closed.

Memorial Moravian Sanctuary (St. Thomas) has all of its shutters intact; however, a few of the inner glass windows to ensure that the building is airtight for the air conditioning got blown out. The steeple of the Sanctuary sustained a little damage.

Moravian School Memorial Campus: This sustained significant damage. In fact, it is without a large portion of the roof which was taken off by the hurricane. This has caused significant water damage which has made the building unusable at this time. While the building has been around for some time, it has been serving a very useful purpose in providing space for the children of St. Thomas to get an education. The Fellowship Hall is being used as the School to house all of the classes displaced by the hurricane.

Memorial's Manse is intact except that one window at the back of the house was blown out which caused much water to have gotten into the house. Plywood has been nailed to secure the window. The Pastor's vehicle sustained a cracked Windshield.

Friedensthal's Sanctuary (St. Croix) sustained some damage. The stained glass window was blown out. Half of the shutter to the Sanctuary on entering the compound was blown off; a window behind of the pulpit was damaged; a few windows on the side of the Sanctuary facing the manse got some minor damages. Much water entered building.

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Church Hall: The large door on entering the compound is unable to close properly. It is obvious that the hurricane had a toll on it. The wooden floor is warped in several places and raised very sharply at some points due to the excessive amount of water that entered the building.



Old School building/Old Manse lost 2 or 3 shutters.

Friedensfeld Moravian Sanctuary (Mid St. Croix) sustained significant roof damage. The roof which is divided into three (3) segments has lost most of the galvanize sheeting from the centre segment of the roof. The two (2) outer segments appear to be intact at this time. In addition, the Vestry lost most of the galvanize sheeting from the roof. These two (2) significant roof losses has caused a lot of water damage. A lot of water was still on the floor when I visited and once it rains, water will continue to pour in until and unless the roofing is rectified.

On the Southern side (street side) and the Western Side (main entrance) of the Sanctuary has lost significant portions of wood which can be replaced to make the building more secure and esthetically pleasing. The door to the Southern side was also blown out. In addition, there seems to be some damage to the steeple. Broken trees and other debris are everywhere on the compound.

Friedensberg Moravian Sanctuary (Western St. Croix) sustained significant roof damage on the Northern side, immediately over the Altar area. In addition, the steeple in the centre of the roof sustained some damage as well. These two (2) areas has caused significant amount of water damage. Most of the ceiling over the Altar has caved in. Water is still inside of the building since it has been raining on a consistent basis since the hurricane devastated the Western part of St. Croix. Mildew/Mould is all around on the furniture in the Sanctuary. The Organ will need to be tested once there is electricity to determine whether it is still functional. **Fallen trees, fallen electrical poles and other debris are all around.**

Friedensberg Church Hall had a window on the western side which was blown out completely, however, because of the louvre like aluminum window it looks good enough to be reused. Once the window was blown out the door to the female toilet was blown off as well. This building also suffered significant water damage. Until the Sanctuary is restored, the Church hall will be used for worship.

Friedensberg Manse lost the roof for the porch/gallery area.

Fredericksted Town and indeed the Western half of St. Croix looks like a war zone but without any dead bodies.

The vegetation all around the Island looks very brown. The trees are devoid of leaves. How, there is sign of new life for some greenery has begun to appear.

Faith Moravian buildings are intact.

Emmaus Moravian Sanctuary (Coral Bay, St. John) is a disaster area. The entire roof has been torn off of the Sanctuary and is nowhere to be seen.



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Most of the furniture was literally crumpled together in the middle of the sanctuary by the hurricanes. The Pulpit was destroyed. The Organ was destroyed. It appears as if a few of the pews are still intact and therefore can be salvaged.



The Sanctuary was Insured, however, the contents were not insured and therefore there should be some urgency in securing whatever can be salvaged and covered from the elements. Much water was still settled in different areas of the Sanctuary since it has been raining on a regular basis.

Emmaus Manse lost more than $\frac{3}{4}$ of its roof which caused everything on the inside to be water logged. The Manse is on the upstairs while the Fellowship Hall is on the downstairs. With the abundance of rain since the hurricanes water is everywhere. The Pastor and his family have been displaced from the manse. The Pastor and his wife survived for almost 3 days in the bathroom of the manse.

The furniture and appliances in the Emmaus Fellowship Hall need to be secured. It would be easy for persons to steal those things especially since no one is living on the compound at this time.

Emmaus Kitchen was flattened to the ground, however, there are many things that can and should be salvaged. All of the furniture, appliances and crockery and cutlery have been left exposed to the elements and for anyone to take.

Debris is everywhere on the compound. It is very



difficult to even walk on the compound because of the amount of nails, galvanize sheeting, wood and other sharp objects around.

In **Coral Bay** the hurricanes took a toll on the area. The topography of the area is very mountainous and so there were several landslides which came into the roadway. Lots of debris of every kind has dotted the mountainside.

Several boats seemed to have been destroyed around the area where the original Jetty on Moravian Land is located. The Floating Docks are nowhere to be seen. It is believed that they have either been blown away or sunk to the bottom of the sea. It is going to take a tremendous amount of effort to clean up the area.

Electric Poles and large trees have been uprooted and broken into pieces everywhere. Immediately in front of the Fire Station in Coral Bay, a massive tree fell in the middle of a house.

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Like St. Croix, the vegetation all around the Island looks very brown. The trees are devoid of leaves. How, there is sign of new life for some green-ery has begun to appear.

Bethany Moravian Sanctuary (Cruz Bay, St. John)

lost ½ of its roof. With the strong wind and persistent rain, water poured in everywhere I understand, up to ankle deep. *All of the benches were destroyed. The Piano was*

destroyed.

The PA system was destroyed.

The Organ will need to be tested to ascertain if

it is still functional once electricity is restored. A

Tarpaulin is now covering the area of the roof that was ripped off. With the hard work of Members and friends, the destroyed benches and the Piano were placed on the outside of the Sanctuary. Some platforms were built from what looks like plywood, placed on a portion of the floor and a Tent was placed on the platforms so that worship was able to take place on the inside of the building.



Bethany Moravian Church Hall (St. John) was used as a shelter. This building is still intact and still had approximately 10 persons living in that shelter. The shelter is well staffed with a Manager, Nurse, a Chef, A Security Guard and the Chaplain in Pastor Vankys Isaac. Pastor Isaac is the resident Pastor of Bethany and Emmaus Moravian Churches.

The Superintendent of the Virgin Islands Conference, Rev. Eulencine Christopher and I had the opportunity to minister to and Pray with all those persons at the shelter. It is a real credit to the Bethany Moravian Church that in spite of all they have suffered that they are still able maintain the shelter.

Many Members on St. John, St. Thomas and St. Croix have lost everything. Their entire property have been laid waste. Those who were blessed enough to still have a portion of their house have not been able to remain there for everything got waterlogged. It is reported that a number of persons from St. Thomas and St. Croix has taken Mercy Flights and Mercy Ships out of the Island the first opportunity they got. No one is certain whether they will return to the Islands. (The Mercy Flights/Ships operated when the Airports were closed and the Military Planes that came in took persons who wanted to leave the Island up to the mainland. Once you got to the mainland, you were left on your own. It is believed that some went to live with family and friends). This will have a tremendous impact on some of our congregations, conference and province.

As a Province, we will seek to help the best way we can in helping to restore our buildings. In addition, we will endeavour to reach out to ALL of our Members who were traumatized and displaced in a tangible way.

The financial estimates on the properties are not yet complete. The Property Manager, the person employed by the Virgin Conference is presently assessing/appraising the damages. It is anticipated that even a preliminary estimate will be given soon.

We are grateful to all of our partners who continue to pray for us and offer tangible support.

It is a real miracle that many lives were not lost. God was truly in the midst of everything. The type of devastation spells death everywhere, yet almost everyone survived to tell the story of what Irma and Maria did to them personally and the communities around them.



Quote of the Day

**To be a Christian without prayer
is no more possible than to be
alive without breathing.**

-Martin Luther

Postponement of the 32nd Provincial Synod

Over the past few weeks we have witnessed first-hand the fury that can be unleashed through nature. Many of the residents in the Caribbean region have been on the receiving end of this fury as we lived through two major Category 5 hurricanes merely weeks apart. While some islands have been hit directly and are now recovering from these disasters, all of us have been impacted one way or the other.

The hurricanes have dealt a major blow to the Virgin Islands Conference of the Moravian Church. It appears what hurricane Irma left behind, Hurricane Maria cleaned up. All four islands in the Virgin Islands Conference were severely damaged and are seeking to put things in place for the recovery and reconstruction efforts. It is going to take a long time and many resources for the Conference to get back on its feet again. Many members of our Church in the Virgin Islands have left on Mercy Ships and Mercy Flights because of the devastation wrought to them personally and to their Church and the Territory in general. It seemed too much for them to bear.

The PEC consulted with the Superintendents on the way forward with regards to the 32nd Provincial Synod and the resources it will require on all of us and more so, the Virgin Islands Conference. It was the general consensus that the Synod should be postponed. The Book of Order of the Moravian Church, Eastern West Indies Province 2012, paragraph 4.3 which speaks of the Convening of Synod, states the following:

The Provincial Synod shall be convened every three years at a place and time to be arranged by the P.E.C. Notice for the calling shall be given by circulars six months before the date fixed for the meeting. In extraordinary cases or if two-thirds of the conferences in the Province request a synod, the P.E.C. must call a synod.

In addition, paragraph 5.5.3 which speaks of PEC Special Duties, states the following:

To convene the regular Provincial Synod and to summon an extraordinary Provincial Synod under pressing circumstance, when requested to do so by two-thirds of the conferences that make up the Province. In either case, the P.E.C. shall also determine the time and place of meeting.

After much thought and deliberation at its meeting held via Skype on October 16th, 20th and 23rd, 2017, the PEC decided given the extraordinary pressing circumstances, resulting from the hurricanes, that the Synod should be postponed for one (1) year. The new date for the 32nd Provincial Synod to be held in Barbados is July 05 to 11, 2019 with both days being travelling days.

The PEC will continue to provide updates to the Province with regards to the restoration plan for the Virgin Islands in particular as well as several Pre-Synod Conferences that are planned in 2018 in order to continue to move the business of the Province forward.

Let us continue to hold our Brothers and Sisters in the Virgin Islands Conference in prayer

Sincerely and Fraternally,



Rev. Dr. Cortroy Jarvis
Chairman of PEC



VIRTUE OF THE MONTH

Excellence is doing your best, giving careful attention to every task and every relationship. Excellence is effort guided by a noble purpose. It is a desire for perfection. The perfection of a seed comes in the fruit. When you practice excellence, you bring your gifts to fruition. Excellence is the key to success.

You are practicing excellence when you:

- ◆ Give your best to whatever you do,
- ◆ Give your best to relationships,
- ◆ Set noble and realistic goals,
- ◆ Remember to plan and practice,
- ◆ Don't try to do everything, and
- ◆ Develop your special gifts.

Affirmation:

I give my best to the work I do. I give my best to others. I dare to set noble goals. I choose excellence in all things.

The Family Connection was established in 2005 by the Community Foundation of the Virgin Islands as an early-childhood initiative. The mission of TFC is to strengthen the community child care and early education infrastructure in the USVI by building awareness of the importance of early learning and development for success and working with community agencies to promote quality care and education. One of its efforts is the Virtues Project, an international initiative focused on building peaceful and caring communities. The Source supports the Virtues Project. We will publish one of the virtues developed by the project each week.

Hymn of the Month for November, 2017

by Rev. Dr. Mikie Roberts, Provincial Director of Music



This time of the year usually ushers in the Harvest and Thanksgiving season in many of our congregations. The hymn of the month for November reflects this theme. It is # 638 **God of the earth and sky** and was written by the late Jamaican statesman Rev. Hugh Sherlock. The hymn recognizes God to be

the creator and Lord of creation. However, Sherlock highlights the beauty of God's creation as reflected here in these Caribbean islands. We are reminded of the natural beauty that surrounds us and for which we ought to be thankful. They include – hills, plains, the sun, rain, the sea, fruit trees (eg. plantains, bananas, sugarcane, star apples and citrus), palm trees. Truly there is so much for us to be grateful to God for whom we are also called to embrace as the “matchless Artist.”

As we sing these words and observe the harvest celebrations this year might these words trigger within us a deepened appreciation for the blessings of God which are ours because we live in these beautiful islands of the Caribbean.

Below are the words and music for the hymn of the month for November:

God of the earth and sky,
Lord of our hills and plains,
Ruler of night and day,
Bright sun and cooling rains—
Great Elohim! To thee we raise
Our harvest hymn of joyful praise.

2 'Mid dancing azure seas,
Upheld by thy command,
Our lovely islands rise
In tropic splendour planned.
And we are stewards of thy grace,
Until we see thee face to face.

3 Thine is the fruitful field,
The broad-leaved plantain thine,
Banana, slender cane,
Tall palm and lowly vine.
Thine own, O Lord, we bring to thee
Of all thy bounty rich and free.

4 Star-apples, purple-dyed,
Their leaves of bronze and green,
With ackees scarlet-hued,
Gay citrus gold is seen.
Thou matchless Artist! here may we
Thine own eternal beauty see.

Hugh B. Sherlock d. 1998

God Of The Earth And Sky

Hugh B. Sherlock

UTCWI Workshop,
Arr. P.E.P.

♩ = 92

1. God of the earth and sky, Lord of our hills and plains, ru - ler of
2. 'Mid dan - cing a - zure seas, up - held by thy com-mand, our love - ly
3. Thine is the fruit-ful field, the broad - leaved plan - tain thine, ban - na - na,
4. Star - ap - ples, pur - ple-dyed, their leaves of bronze and green, with ack - ees

night and day, bright sun and cool - ing rains— Great El - oh - im! To
is - lands rise in trop - ic splen-dour planned. And we are stew - ards
slen - der cane, tall palm and low - ly vine. Thine own, O Lord, we
scar - let-hued, gay cit - rus gold is seen, Thou match - less Art - ist!

thee we raise our har - vest hymn of joy - ful praise.
of thy grace, un - til we see thee face - to face.
bring to thee of all thy boun - ty rich and free.
Here may we time own e - ter - nal beau - ty see.

'Advance the Kingdom' - Use the Keys

Provincial Synod in Cuba

In the midst of the aftermath of the devastation caused by Hurricane Irma, the Cuban Moravian Mission Province celebrated its first official Synod in Havana, September 25 – 28. The Synod was originally scheduled for September 11 – 14, but the dates as well as the venue had to be changed because of the storm.

68 voting delegates and 11 observers from 7 Districts (Havana, Mayabeque, Matanzas, Camagüey, Granma, Holguín and Guantánamo), the Rev. Dr. Cicely Athill-Horsford and Sis. Cheryl Croney-Sealy from the Mount Tabor Moravian Church in Barbados gathered at the beautiful facilities of the Catholic Diocese Center in Havana. The use of this building for lodging, meals, plenary sessions and committee meetings was a testament to the ecumenical spirit and the good relations and reputation of the Moravian Church in Cuba.

Because of Cuba's relatively new status as a Mission Province (formerly a Mission Area), the Synod was faced with the task of adjusting the Book of Order to fit that status. Revisions were outlined by the "Constitution Committee" and then presented to the floor for discussion and ratification. The outgoing president of the board, the Rev. Armando Rusindo, stated that the church was in the process of "organizing and institutionalizing" many of the ministries that are already taking place. So, for example, structures were set up for the formation of a Provincial Youth Department with local youth groups and representatives throughout the island.

The Synod was very capably led by its chair, Pastor Yaser Armas (Matanzas), vice-chair, Pastor Ezequiel Hernandez (Havana) and secretary, Pastor Barbara Alién Gonzalez (Camagüey). Each day began with devotions led by the various districts and a Bible Study led by Bishop Sam Gray.

The Rev. Tania Sanchez (Havana) was elected president of the new Provincial Board. The other four members of the board represent the districts of Havana, Mayabeque, Holguín and Camagüey.

An emotional and historic moment in the Synod occurred when the Rev. Armando Rusindo, who has led the development of the church in Cuba from a personal vision in 1997 to a Mission Area (supervised by Jamaica) in 2002, to a Mission Area under the supervision of the

Southern Province in 2012, and to a Mission Province in 2016, was elected as a bishop of the Moravian Unity. When consecrated, Brother Rusindo will be the 365th bishop (since 1462) and the first Hispanic bishop ever to be elected in the Worldwide Moravian Church.

Representatives from BWM, ARMF and the Mount Tabor Moravian Church in Barbados were present throughout the Synod. At the closing service, with representatives from the Cuban government and the Council of Churches present, members of the ARMF board presented a donation (along with BWM) to help with disaster recovery efforts, the Rev. Dr. Cicely Athill-Horsford preached, and Bishop Sam Gray installed the new Provincial Board.

Our prayers continue to be with the Moravian Church in Cuba as it moves forward in ministry and mission.



'Advance the Kingdom' - Use the Keys

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To: Provincial Elder's Conference

From: The Provincial Director of Christian Education




A Report of Provincial Youth Leadership Conference 2017

This year, PYLC was hosted by the Virgin Islands Conference of the Moravian Church Eastern West Indies Province. The Conference ran from **26th to the 30th July 2017** under the theme **"Advance the Kingdom: Use the Keys"**. The venue was the **Iciss Villas** on the picturesque Tortola. Approximately **45 youth leaders, Ministers of Christian Education and staff** were in attendance.

Our keynote speaker, Rev. Dr. Mikie Roberts spoke on the theme during the course of two days. He offered that the Kingdom of God is the sovereign rule or government of God. Dr. Mikie stressed that in order to advance the Kingdom of God, the message of God's Kingdom must be preached and passed on from generation to generation. He also highlighted the fact that God will use individuals from older generations to influence those to be used in the next generation. Rev Roberts introduced the idea of various doors within ministry that may be seen as opportunities or barriers. Behind each door, he suggested, stands persons representing different generations. Therefore, it is important for persons to be sensitive to older generations and find a balance even in our worship services so that we do not isolate any particular generation. During the exploration of the contents of these doors, common barriers and key kingdom truths were identified to help youth leaders and all in attendance navigate the nuances of each door. Dr Mikie's discourse was candid and thought-provoking. Those present were challenged to be discerning and insightful and to know that believers are not alone, God is ever present. A message which can be of benefit from the pulpit to the pew.

Delegates were also engaged in other sessions, which included: "I am my body: Know it, care for it, control it". Rev. Julie Joefield-Parris, "Rethinking Youth Issues: Shifting the Caribbean Paradigm" by Rev. Erwin Warner. "Financial Management: Check and Balances", Sis Icilda Potter. Mrs Maris Hodge-Wright dealt with "Addiction". "In His Presence" was led by Sis Monique Richards.

Surely, all who attended PYLC 2017 were able to take away some additional thoughts. Youth leaders, and Ministers of Christian Education all noted that it is imperative to surround ourselves in the things of God to always be in God's presence. Children of God must not only talk with the lips, but show the presence of God in lifestyle. It is the believer's responsibility to impart the knowledge of God to those under our charge and encourage them to love God and devote themselves fully to God. Believers must not be afraid to share their personal experiences. Instead, believers must be honest about life's encounters and stay genuine in relations to the challenges of life. In a world where crisis, disappointments and insecurities have found a stronghold in young people's lives, it is every believers duty to disciple the young people who come our way so that the message of the Kingdom of God will be relayed from generation to generation using all the resources at our disposal.



In essentials, unity.
 In nonessentials, liberty.
 In all things, love.

'Advance the Kingdom' - Use the Keys

WHO'S KNOCKING AT THE DOOR?

A personal reflection on the passing of Hurricane Irma
By Rev. Dr. Winelle Kirton-Roberts

Anyone at Home?

Have you ever watched a movie where persons are desperately trying to get into a house? At first they start knocking on the doors and windows, and when there is no response they begin to "hammer down" the house with loud knocks. When that doesn't work, they look around for a missile like a block, or a piece of wood and use it as weapon to break down the doors or windows. And, if they are still not satisfied with that then they go all the way and take off the roof. They have made up their minds that come what may, they are not leaving until they get into this house today. This is the picture I have of Hurricane Irma, the brutal, catastrophic and unprecedented category 5 storm that passed through the northern Caribbean and striking many islands including Tortola, St Thomas and St John. She was knocking at every body's door and was going to get inside, in one form or another.

Unlike most adults my age living in the Caribbean, I had never experienced a major hurricane. Growing up in Barbados, which is the most easterly of the Caribbean islands, most systems passed us as tropical waves and depressions, only to develop into storms and major hurricanes afterwards. For the few that have come close to the island, they tend to be no more than a tropical storm with drenching rains and some high winds. Having colleagues who have resided and worked in several Caribbean islands that tend to be in the "path" of hurricanes, I have heard the many horrifying stories of the Hugo, Gilbert, Marylyn, Ivan, Erica etc. But it is one thing to listen to persons stories and a whole matter to experience it for yourself.

Overcast to Overwhelmed

On the morning of September 5, after running an errand, I felt compelled to run into Cost U less to stock up on non-perishable food, household items and water. There was still, in my mind, the belief that this is just another hurricane warning, which will be discontinued when the system passes "north" of us. However as a precaution, we, like most on the island, had our shutters put up and we settled in for the night.

Wednesday September 6, was not an unusual Caribbean morning. Outside was slightly overcast but there appeared to be some sunshine trying to peep through. Having been already on curfew we got up as a family, had

breakfast, read and played card games. During the time, we received several calls, texts and Whatsapp messages from family members, colleagues and friends from literally all over the world who were checking to see if we were ready for Irma. We got the news that Antigua was spared the brunt of the storm but Barbuda was devastated. We also saw some pictures from St Maarten and Anguilla. But, we were still hoping for the best.

Around 10:00am, the weather began to slightly deteriorate. The winds increased and there was some light rain. At this point we received an Alert informing us that the worse part of the system will begin at 11:00am. We turned to the weather channel which said in no uncertain terms, Irma is heading straight to the Virgin Islands and it is not good news. That was the last thing I saw on TV.

Ready or Not

The main part of Irma was felt between the hours of 1:00pm and 6:00pm. Like a thief in the day, she was desperate to get into everyone's homes: knocking, hammering and taking aim at every door and window. As Irma progressively intensified, the howling winds sounded like freight trains or army fighter jets ready to take off. Several times I attempted to peep through the window to see what was happening but the wind-driven rain covered outside like an invisible cloud. Clocking as high as 220 mph, and accompanied by deadly tornadoes, it became very clear to us around 3:00pm that the only thing we can do is pray. Not even the sturdy shutters were any match for Irma who made her way through the windows and doors and eventually knocked out a window. Along with that, she broke off tree limbs and sent objects flying in every direction. The house was shaking like an earthquake! Our ears were popping like an airplane descending. There was no place to go.

In the midst of the storm, we received a most touching call from our neighbour, Sis Anique. The call was almost inaudible but we essentially wished each other God's speed not knowing if we will see each other again. After that conversation, I broke down in tears as did my daughter, Tsalom. Bro Mikie on the other hand burned his energy trying to stop the house from flooding with all of us in it. The experience was traumatic, dramatic and very scary!

By this time, the power had gone out, telephone service was down and we were literally cut off from the world. I was concerned about our two daughters, Tsedek and Tsamara, who had been keeping in close contact with us throughout the day.

But later in the night a short window of about 60 seconds we were able to make contact to let them know that we were fine. They too became emotional.

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'Advance the Kingdom' - Use the Keys

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We survived Irma

To say that we were shocked when we open our doors the morning after Irma is an understatement. It was as if we had moved to a new place. The place was brown, the trees were gone, roofs were off, polls and wires all the ground. As we stood in our porch we noted that Cost U less and the movie theatre were destroyed. We saw the homes of many neighbors we did not know existed. The good news is that we saw our neighbours as the Matthew's emerged from the confines of their home at the same time. We were able to console each other giving God thanks that God kept us safe till the storm passed by. Thankfully too, both of our homes had generators and we were able to use them in a limited manner since the diesel was scarce at the time.

As we traverse the entrance to our homes, the trees, power lines, debris from just about every where made our roads impassable. For many days, we were blocked in by power lines at the front of our streets and we had to park on the bottom of the road and beg a ride to where we wanted to go. It was very touching for me the Saturday after Irma as I was driving down to see if we can get to the supermarket that I saw one of my Elders walking up the hill. He parked his car on the street and when I met him he said: Pastor I came to look for you. He said Pastor, wherever you want to go today, I will take you. With the few supermarkets that opened, the lines were too long and we resolved that we would ration the crackers, luncheon meat and other canned foods that had become our breakfast lunch and dinner. And then the evening, as we trying to at least get a piece of plywood over the window, another member walked from the bottom of the road, which is quite a trip, to bring us some patties. This is but a reflection of the love, kindness, caring spirit and generosity of the members and the Virgin Islanders. Irma made us realise that we are all one.

New Normal

The devastation of the island was unbelievable. And this was compounded by the passage of Hurricane Maria two weeks later. It seems to us that what Irma did not finish, Maria completed. Many were in desperate search for food, clothing and shelter. The long lines to the distribution centers, the supermarkets, gas stations and banks were a test of faith and patience. Many were hurting. Many were depressed. So, when mercy ships and flights were provided for persons to leave the island, thousands took advantage of it. The place of solace for many has been the house of God. With churches opening for services in spite of some damages and lack of electricity members came in whatever they had to give thanks to God.

At the Memorial congregation, like other places, although we had some who have migrated we are thankful for those who have stayed and continue to make an effort to come out to worship, especially the children and youth. The visits after the storm from both the Chairman of PEC and the Superintendent of the VI have been affirming and inspiring. As I write today, coming to the end of October, there is some infrastructural progress. Government and private companies have partnered to clear debris and restore some power. Crews of workers have arrived from the US and are working hard to fast forward this effort. However most places are still without power. And, many have been frustrated with slow responses from insurances and some federal agencies. But the people of the Virgin Islands have come to accept the way of life for the last two months as the "new normal." Many have secured smaller generators which they use to keep some things refrigerated and pump water from their cisterns.

Open the Doors

Upon reflection, this is a great opportunity for the country, businesses, the churches and private owners to build better and bigger. It is a long road to recovery. The Church is well poised to rebuild not just the physical structures that have been destroyed but spiritually rebuild our faith in Jesus Christ. The Church has been given the great opportunity to be the light in the community to let others see our good works. Through the proclamation of the gospel, Jesus can enter the doors of the hearts of those who are discouraged, disheartened and despondent.

It is an opportunity for us to remember the words of Jesus who said: "Behold I stand at the door and knock, if anyone open, I will enter in." We pray, "even so, come Lord Jesus."



FURLOUGH

- The Rev. Nigel Daniel, Pastor of the Spring Garden and Bethesda Pastorate in the Tobago Conference, has been granted four (4) months furlough from July 15 - November 15, 2017.
- The Rt. Rev. Dr. Conrad Spencer, Pastor of the Faith Congregation on St. Croix, Virgin Islands Conference, has been granted four (4) months furlough from September 01 - December 31, 2017.
- The Rev. Ulric V. Smith Pastor of the Cana Moravian Church in the Antigua Conference, has been granted four (4) months furlough from September 1 - December 31, 2017.

'Advance the Kingdom' - Use the Keys

WOMEN'S CONFERENCE IN TOBAGO

The Women's Council of the Tobago Conference is hosting a conference for Women at the Rovanel's Resort and Conference Centre in Tobago, from November 1 - 6, 2017. A group of women from the Moravian Church Eastern West Indies Province was invited to be apart of this conference.

The theme is based on our 2017 Provincial Theme: "Women of Knowledge and the Word — Advance!" This theme first establishes our identity. When we know who we are, then we are more confident and can approach persons and situations with boldness like Esther was reminded by Modecai. Secondly, the theme establishes that we are influential people. When we understand concepts, formulas, and consequences of our actions, it influences our perspective on life and our actions. Therefore, having knowledge and having Christ (The Word) equips us with keys to impart and open doors for those in our homes, workplaces, church and wider communities to come into the fullness of Christ.

The speakers for this conference are the Rev. Annette James who is a dynamic preacher and a well-researched teacher of the Word; a wife in whom her husband is well-pleased. She is currently pursuing doctoral studies on Christianity's Impact on the World; and Rev. Belinda Manswell-Daniel who is a pastor with over 14 years experience, a mother of three, wife and an anointed daughter of Abraham. She is currently serving as pastor in the Moravian Church, Tobago Conference. Workshops: Workshops will be offered throughout the Conference focusing on specific topics including

- Deliverance; Dressing and Deportment;
- Diffusing the Arrows of Domestic Violence;
- Deepening my Relationships (with Christ; husbands, children); \
- Special Services and Events:

The Conference will open with a Procession of Nations Sand Ceremony on Wednesday evening, 1st November and will close on Sunday evening with a Love feast on 5th November, 2017. In addition, we will have a Cultural Concert on Friday 3rd November and a Banquet on Saturday 4th November with special speakers and music.

Let us remember the Women participating in this Conference in our prayers.

MORAVIAN WORLDWIDE MISSION CONFERENCE

The Moravian World Mission Conference will be held in Cape Town, South Africa under the theme: ***"Moravian Unity in Mission: Giving Heed to God's Call In the 21st Century". The Conference will be held*** from November 15th-20th, 2017.

Each Conference will be represented by one delegate. In addition, the Province will be represented by a Youth delegate and the Member of PEC with responsibility for Mission and Evangelism. There are a number of persons who will attend the Conference as Observers.

The Chairman of PEC and Bro. Dion Christopher will attend the Conference in their capacity as President of the Unity Board and Member of the organizing Committee respectively.

The representatives are as follows:

Sis. Conchita Benjamin, Virgin Islands Conference
 Bro. Hilton Joseph, St. Kitts Conference
 Sis. Dionne Isaacs, Antigua Conference
 Bro. Adrian Smith, Barbados Conference
 Bro. Nigel Daniel, Tobago Conference
 Sis. Krystal Baynes, Trinidad Conference
 Sis. Valerie Richardson, Youth Delegate
 Bro. Errol Connor, PEC member with responsibility for Mission and Evangelism
 Sis. Yvonne Francis, Observer, Virgin Islands
 Sis. Eulencine Christopher, Observer, Virgin Islands
 Sis. Janae Christopher, Observer, Virgin Islands
 Bro. Kingsley Lewis, Observer, Antigua
 Sis. Maureen Lewis, Observer, Antigua
 Sis. Cicely Athill-Horsford, Observer, Barbados
 Sis. Ivy Thompson, Observer, Trinidad
 Sis. Prenella Phyllis David, Trinidad
 Bro. Dion Christopher, Member of the organizing Committee
 Bro. Cortroy Jarvis, President of Unity Board

Christians today define *mission* more broadly and variably than ever before. Are we, as the body of Christ, headed in the same direction or are we on divergent missions?

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'Advance the Kingdom' -Use the Keys

I believe that as we meet for this most important Moravian Mission Conference, it is hoped that we will all catch the fever of mission in all of its dimensions. Mission is the heart of the Church and if the heart is missing, there will be no Church. In fact, we will be playing Church and no doing Church. There is therefore that urgency as we meet to have that common understanding of our mission as a Church.

Some argue that the mission of the Church is to confront injustice and alleviate suffering, doing more to express God's love for the world. Others are concerned that the church is in danger of losing its God-centeredness and thereby emphasize the proclamation of the gospel.

As the Worldwide Moravian Church meets in Cape Town, South Africa, it is my hope that we can agree and employ the right categories and build our theology of mission from the same biblical building blocks. I believe that we will be challenged to explain key concepts like kingdom, gospel, and social justice. In addition, it is hoped that the Mission Conference will help us to get on the same page, united by a common cause, and launch us forward into the true mission of the church.

It is hoped that the Great Commission, which is our marching orders for Mission will cultivate a culture of discipling among us. It will help every member own the responsibility for helping other believers grow in the faith. Pastors ought to equip the saints for the work of ministry, says Paul (Eph. 4:11-12), which means the work of the ministry belongs to all the saints. The whole body, speaking the truth in love, grows as it builds itself up, each part doing its work (Eph. 4:15-16; Cor. 12:14).

Finally, let us pray for the success of the Mission Conference as we continue to pray for the health and growth of our Church. The great Preacher and Evangelists Charles Spurgeon said, "I would rather teach one man to pray than ten men to preach". As we pray, Oswald Chambers said, "We have to pray with our eyes on God, not on the difficulties".



Birthday Greetings for the
month of
November is extended to

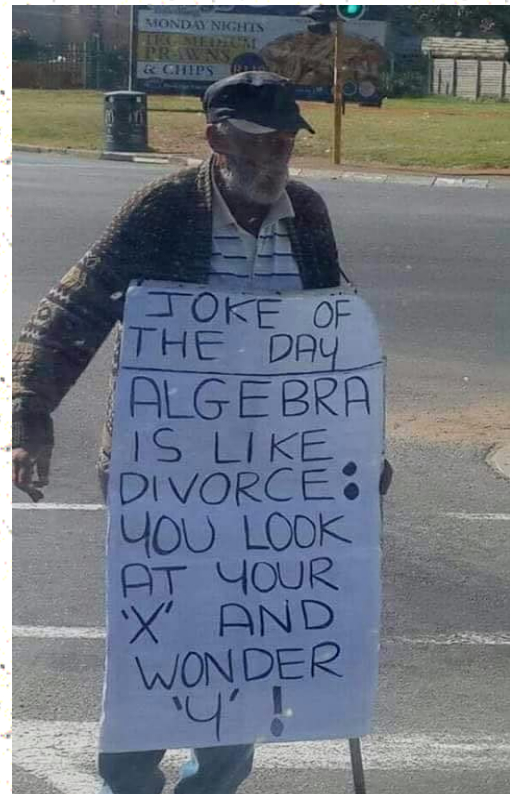
Sis. Onita K. Samuel	01
Sis. Katrina Reece Burley	17
Bro. Rowan Simmons	19
Bro. Ezra Parris	21
Sis. Myrtle Miller	21
Sis. Geraldine Roberts	23
Sis. Joyce Walters	24
Bro. Delroy Burley	24
Bro. Nevin Lewis	27



Anniversary Greetings for the
month of November is
extended to:

Bro. Alban & Cynthia St. Hill

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Moravian Multipurpose Complex



Conference Center & Apartments



- ◆ *Conferences*
- ◆ *Meetings*
- ◆ *Seminars*
- ◆ *Weddings*
- ◆ *Banquet*
- ◆ *Dinner*

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 and cable TV. All utilities are included with the exception of telephone.

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Email: moravianchewip@gmail.com

'Advance the Kingdom' -Use the Keys