

Bermuda Synod

Evidence of the Life of Christ in the Church - 2014

What trends in celebration, service, justice seeking and proclamation are filled with the Spirit in your Presbytery?

- We are engaged in corporate prayer – Every Friday at 7PM the pastor of Ebenezer and the church are in fervent prayer for the congregation, the immediate community and the Island of Bermuda. We are interceding and praying for a spiritual awakening and renewal
- We are reaching out to a younger demographic – We started youth Sundays on third Sundays where the focus from the worship to the message is geared towards young people. We also began a contemporary service every other Saturday evening, called “Super Saturday.” It encompasses vibrant Praise and Worship and a message which is “seeker” friendly. We have also partnered with Young Life to reach out to community children once a month on Friday evenings.
- We are celebrating ethnic diversity – Ebenezer celebrates Black History Month and has also invited other special guests such as the puppet ministry of the oldest Methodist church – (built by slaves) on the island to come and minister to us.
- We are celebrating our heritage - During May, Heritage month, Ebenezer have special guest speakers share with us about Bermuda’s historic and spiritual heritage as a Christian nation.
- We are communicating around difficult issues in a safe, loving environment – Last fall we had a special congregational meeting to discuss the issue of sexual orientation. The discussion was sensitive, thoughtful and reflective. Although opinions differed we all agreed that everyone is welcome through our doors and deserves to receive the love of Christ and unconditional acceptance from us – His followers.

Where is the Spirit of Jesus, our Judge and our Hope, evident within the “life and work” of your Presbytery?

- We are reaching out within our four walls - Given the dire economic situation that many find themselves in, Ebenezer have started an emergency fund for church members who are in need of essential items. Wesley church gives out non-perishable foods and toiletries to the needy every Wednesday evening, all donated by the congregation.
- We are reaching out to the community from our four walls – Although our resources are limited, in addition to some of the items mentioned above, we hold a monthly feeding program called “The Ebenezer and Friends Dinner”. This is a community dinner open to all who are willing to join us. Special projects like boat cruises, which included a float decorated in the nativity theme in the bi-annual boat parade in Hamilton made the difference. As did two "Boot" sales, which are like yard sales, the only difference is people who rent tables must take their unsold goods back home. The UCW fall spaghetti dinner and Valentine's tea are always well attended with community involvement.

- We are reaching out beyond our four walls- Prison ministry has become a monthly fixture for Ebenezer congregation. We are also engaged in one-to-one discipleship ministry and programs for some of the inmates. Special services were also held to allow people time to reflect on social issues especially crime in our communities and youth gangs. The presence of God's Spirit is evident in the work of the M&S committee and the UCW at Emanuel in increasing the church's contribution to M&S in 2013.

Where is God calling your Presbytery?

- We are moving towards spiritual renewal and re-awakening. In January we held a revival in which over 115 people were in attendance. It was the beginning of something new and fresh. In June 2014, our Synod (Presbytery) will be coming together to partake in a Wesleyan Methodist Conference. It promises to be a Spirit-filled occasion.
- We are moving towards more ecumenical dialogue- whether through the involvement in the reenactment of the Christ's passion with Anglicans, Catholics, Baptists, AMEs, and the Salvation Army on Good Friday, to joining a Sunday morning worship service with the Ethiopian Orthodox Church- we are connecting with others in the faith and raising the profile of Christ in our congregations. We were also involved in a combined effort by all the Christian churches in Bermuda in a week when all our church doors were open in a "Bermuda Prays" event.
- We are moving towards working more closely together with each other. The choir from Emanuel once again joined the Ebenezer choir in a special candle lighting service in St. Georges. Several members of Ebenezer attended the Christmas Eve Service at Emmanuel. A pulpit exchange in the fall was much appreciated.
- At Wesley Methodist Church, the congregation, at its Annual Congregational Meeting held in February this year, approved the creation of the post of Visitation Minister to support, expand and enhance the important work of pastoral care.