

# The Trinidad PRESBYTERIAN



The Official Publication of The Presbyterian Church of Trinidad & Tobago. Est 1904  
AUGUST 2025



*Car Photo Quest & Treasure Hunt  
Youth Sunday*

# THE MODERATOR SPEAKS

PCTT MODERATOR, THE RIGHT REVEREND DANIEL CHANCE

## **Celebrating Fellowship and Faith: Our Annual Sports & Family Day and Biennial National Convention**



Beloved in Christ,

On behalf of the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Trinidad and Tobago, I extend heartfelt gratitude to the entire membership for your faithful, enthusiastic, and consistent support of our Annual Sports and Family Day over the years. This cherished tradition has grown into a powerful expression of unity, joy, and fellowship among us. Through God's grace and the dedication of our members, this event continues to flourish year after year.

As members of the Body of Christ, we are reminded that community life extends beyond our weekly worship services. Scripture calls us not only to worship together but also to “rejoice with those who rejoice” (Romans 12:15), and to “encourage one another and build each other up” (1 Thessalonians 5:11). Our time spent in fellowship—sharing laughter, engaging in play, and strengthening bonds—is an act of worship in itself, reflecting the joy and unity Christ desires for His Church.

Each year, our Annual Sports and Family Day offers the opportunity to do just that: to gather in a spirit of camaraderie, sportsmanship, and love. This year, we look forward with great anticipation to another blessed gathering on Saturday August 9th, 2025, at Skinner's Park, San Fernando. We invite all members, families, and friends to come and experience the joy and warmth that this day always brings. As Psalm 133:1 declares, “How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!”

In addition to this vibrant event, we are also excited to host another deeply significant gathering in the life of the Church: the Biennial National PCTT Convention. Our last Convention remains etched in our hearts as a time of spiritual renewal and communal strengthening. While we continue to reflect on areas that may need refinement, the Convention continues to serve as a sacred space for corporate worship, learning, and encouragement under the banner of our shared faith in Jesus Christ.

The theme for this year's Convention is taken from our national Church focus:

“Persevere in Your Witness – Overcoming the Challenges”

A timely reminder from Hebrews 12:1–2, which exhorts us: “Let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith.” In a world filled with trials and distractions, we are called to endure, to stand firm in our witness, and to press on in the strength that only Christ provides (Philippians 4:13).

We are especially blessed to have two dynamic and Spirit-led servants of God, Rev. Namelia Lutchman-Pulwarty and Rev. Damien Sieunarine, as our keynote speakers. Their message will no doubt inspire, challenge, and encourage us as we seek to live faithfully in the midst of adversity.

Furthermore, the PCTT National Choir and the Penal Rock Road Junior Choir have been preparing diligently for what promises to be a soul-stirring worship experience. Music, the universal language of the soul, will lift our hearts in praise to God, echoing Psalm 100:1–2: “Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth! Worship the Lord with gladness; come before Him with joyful songs.”

We invite you, your family, and your friends to join us in both of these important events. Come with open hearts and willing spirits. Whether we gather on the playing field or in sacred assembly, may each encounter be filled with laughter, inspiration, and the unmistakable presence of the Holy Spirit.

Together, let us continue building up the Church—not just in structure, but in love, joy, and faithful witness. For in all that we do, whether in worship or recreation, may we do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him (Colossians 3:17).

Stay focussed. Stay strong. Stay blessed.

# FROM THE DESK OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY

PCTT GENERAL SECRETARY,  
PRESIDING ELDER MR. ASHFORD D TAMBY



*1 Peter 5: 2-3: "I appeal to you to be shepherds of the flock that God gave you and to take care of it willingly, as God wants you to, and not unwillingly. Do your work, not for mere pay, but from a real desire to serve. Do not try to rule over those who have been put in your care but be examples to the flock."*

Church leadership is not merely about managing logistics, finances, or programs—it is a sacred responsibility rooted in spiritual leadership. Many of you who have been elected for the first time to your local board, session, or a standing board would have realized this by now. As church leaders, we are called to embrace our roles with a willing heart, to lead with integrity, and to serve as examples of Christlike humility.

Leadership in the church should never be driven by obligation or personal ambition. Instead, one should approach it with a genuine desire to serve God and His people. As a leader in your church, you should lead willingly and foster a culture of joyful service and spiritual vitality, regardless of the position to which you have been elected. This mindset encourages others to serve not out of duty but from a place of love and commitment. In today's context, this means church leaders must uphold the highest standards of financial transparency, ethical decision-making, and accountability. Integrity in administration builds trust within your congregation and honours the sacred nature of the church's mission.

True spiritual leadership is not about dominance or control but rather about modelling the gospel's values. We are called to lead by example—demonstrating humility, compassion, and consistency in our actions. This kind of leadership inspires others and nurtures a healthy, Christ-centered community. Ultimately, church leadership is an act of stewardship. It involves caring for the people, resources, and mission that God has entrusted to us. This means making decisions that reflect both faithfulness to Scripture and sensitivity to the needs of the congregation.

Doing the right thing as a church leader means choosing righteousness even when it is difficult or unpopular. It involves standing for truth, protecting the vulnerable, and making decisions that reflect the heart of Christ. Whether it's addressing conflict, managing resources, guiding the spiritual direction of the church, or even standing up to our church workers, we must act with prayerful discernment and moral courage. When leaders consistently do what's right, they honour God and cultivate a culture of trust, respect, and spiritual growth in the church.

1 Peter 5:2–3 challenges us as church leaders to rise above mere management and embrace the heart of a shepherd. By leading with willingness, integrity, and humility, we can reflect the character of Christ and guide the church with grace and wisdom.

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## PCTT CHANNELS



# NSC CAR PHOTO QUEST & TREASURE HUNT 2025!

By PE Dr. Dianne Phillip-Ramjattan

The National Sports Committee (NSC) of the PCTT hosted its Car Photo Quest and Treasure Hunt on Saturday, July 5th, 2025, as a prelude to the National Sports Event. The activity aimed to build excitement, unity, and pride, while promoting fellowship, fun, and faith through a nationwide road trip experience.

Drivers, navigators, and passengers gathered before 7 a.m. at St. Augustine Girls' High School. Mrs. Reshma Sohan and her husband, Stanley, photographed the teams. Vehicles were tagged and tracked electronically by members of the Circuit Breakers Racing Club affiliated with TTRC led by Mr. Jameer Ali who designed the route, managed logistics, and served as neutral judges for the five-hour journey to Naparima College Grounds in San Fernando.

The event opened in the school's auditorium with a flag parade: NSC Chairman, Mr. Ronald Mootoo, carried the National Flag and Reverend Damien Sieunarine the PCTT Church flag. Principal Bonnie Bissoon-Gosine welcomed attendees, and Reverend Sieunarine offered the opening prayer. Mr. Mootoo greeted participants on behalf of NSC, and Mr. Ali briefed them on the event's expectations. Teams departed promptly at 8 a.m.

Over the next five hours, all fifteen teams returned with their treasures to be judged. At the closing ceremony, Mr. Alan Umraw welcomed guests on behalf of Naparima College Principal, Roger Ali. PE Krishna Persad prayed before the Awards Ceremony began.

## Results & Awards

- **1st Place:** Jubilee – Curepe/St. Joseph Pastoral Region – The Challenge Trophy and replica. As 2017 PCTT Car Rally Champions, they successfully retained the trophy.
- **Best Dressed & Bonus Prize:** Jubilee – Curepe/St. Joseph Pastoral Region team also earned a six-person trip to Scotland Bay courtesy Circuit Breakers Racing Club.
- **2nd Place:** Trophy courtesy Mr. Alan Umraw & Family was awarded to Diamond Pastoral Region
- **3rd Place:** Trophy courtesy Mr. Alan Umraw & Family was awarded to Princes Town Pastoral Region

## Additional Awards:

- **Best Dressed Teams:** Pastoral Regions
  - 1st – Curepe/St. Joseph (Circuit Breakers Racing Club-Down the Island Trip)
  - 2nd – Susamachar (Xtra Food hamper)
  - 3rd – Princes Town (Xtra Food hamper)
- **Most Creative Team:** Point Fortin /Cedros (Circuit Breakers Racing Club hamper)

• Every participant received a commemorative medal.

## Special Mention:

Congratulations to the youngest participant: two-month-old baby Kyro—son of PCTT Attorney Mr. Kenneth Shawn Mahase and Mrs. Gleniece Mahase from Guaico Pastoral Region who, accompanied by his parents and grandmother Roma, completed the entire event.

The NSC thanks participants and organizers for fostering unity, fellowship, and fun—truly embodying the spirit of the NSC Motto of “Praying, Playing and Staying Together.”







# FROM THE DESK OF THE PRINCIPAL ST ANDREW'S THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE REV. DR. KERON KHELLAWAN

## BIBLICAL COMPASSION: A CALL TO REFLECT GOD'S HEART

Compassion, as taught in the Bible, is more than mere sympathy; it is a deep awareness of another's suffering coupled with a desire to alleviate it. Compassion is central to God's character and is repeatedly emphasized throughout the Old and New Testaments. In Scripture, it is not just a virtue to be admired but a command to be lived out, especially by those who follow Jesus Christ. This style of compassion is what society today needs- In a world filled with judgment, Godly compassion is desired.

### God's Compassion in the Old Testament

From the beginning, God reveals Himself as compassionate. In **Exodus 34:6 (NIV)**, when God proclaims His name to Moses, He describes Himself as "The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness." This self-description forms the foundation of how God's people are to understand Him. His compassion is not limited or conditional; it is steadfast and woven into His covenant love.

The Hebrew word for compassion, *rachamim*, is derived from the root word *rechem*, meaning "womb" This connection highlights a profound, nurturing love comparable to the tender care and protective instinct of a mother. The Psalms often echo this theme of parental nurture. **Psalm 103:13 (NIV)** states, "As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him." God's compassion leads Him to forgive, heal, and restore His people repeatedly, even when they fall short.

### Jesus Christ: The Perfect Expression of Compassion

In the New Testament, Jesus Christ embodies God's compassion. His ministry is marked by a constant outpouring of mercy toward the broken, the sick, the sinful, and the outcast. In **Matthew 9:36 (NIV)**, it is written, "When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd."

This compassion wasn't passive; it moved Jesus to act. He healed the sick (**Matthew 14:14**), fed the hungry (**Mark 8:2**), comforted the grieving (**John 11:33-35**), and forgave sinners (**John 8:10-11**). Perhaps most powerfully, Jesus' death on the cross was the ultimate act of compassion, demonstrating God's deep love and desire to save humanity.

### Compassion as a Christian Mandate

As followers of Christ, compassion is not optional; it is a *command*. Paul instructs the church in **Colossians 3:12 (NIV)**: "Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience." Compassion is to be the outward garment of the believer's life, visible and active.

The parable of the Good Samaritan (**Luke 10:25-37**) illustrates what compassion looks like in action. The Samaritan sees the injured man, is moved by compassion, and chooses to intervene where others had passed. Jesus ends the story by saying, "Go and do likewise," highlighting that true compassion transcends boundaries of race, religion, or status.

James further emphasizes that faith without compassionate action is dead (**James 2:15-17**). The early church practiced this compassion by caring for widows, orphans, and the poor, modelling a community where God's love was tangibly expressed through mutual care.

### Living Out Biblical Compassion Today

In a world and society often marked by division and suffering, biblical compassion calls believers to be the hands and feet of Christ. This means not only feeling sorrow for those who suffer but being moved to act, whether through generosity, presence, or prayer.

True compassion challenges Christians to step out of comfort zones and reflect the love of Christ to the marginalized, just as He did. It involves seeing others through God's eyes and responding as He would, with grace, mercy, and self-giving love.

### Conclusion

Biblical compassion is rooted in the very nature of God and is exemplified through the life and work of Jesus Christ. It is a powerful force that breaks down barriers, heals wounds, and reflects the heart of the Gospel. For believers and our church, it is both a divine gift and a holy responsibility: to see the suffering, to feel their pain, and, like Christ, to act in love.

# WHAT IS SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION?

## WHY IS IT NEEDED? (PART 1)

By: Angelica Khan

### Introduction

Special Needs Education is more than a specialized field in teaching—it is a pathway to inclusion, empowerment, and meaningful learning experiences for individuals who learn and develop differently. As educators, parents, and members of a diverse society, understanding the essence and necessity of Special Needs Education is critical to creating environments where all children can thrive.

In this article, I aim to provide a clear understanding of what Special Needs Education is, why it is necessary, and how we can effectively support students with special needs through inclusive strategies, curriculum modification, and compassionate classroom navigation.

What is Special Needs Education?

Special Needs Education refers to the tailored instructional programs and practices designed to meet the unique learning requirements of students who have physical, cognitive, emotional, behavioral, sensory, or developmental disabilities. It includes services that support learning differences such as:

- Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
- Down Syndrome
- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- Speech and Language Delays
- Physical Disabilities
- Emotional and Behavioral Disorders
  - Learning Disabilities like Dyslexia and Dyscalculia

The goal is not to change the child but to adapt the environment, teaching style, and curriculum so the child can access education in a meaningful way.

Why is Special Needs Education Needed?

1. To Promote Equity in Learning:

Every child has the right to learn. Special Needs Education ensures that students with disabilities are not left behind due to barriers in traditional teaching methods.

2. To Foster Independence:

Many students with special needs benefit from early and structured interventions, helping them develop life skills.

3. To Enhance Social and Emotional Development:  
Inclusive classrooms promote acceptance, reduce stigmatization, and allow children to build friendships.

4. To Empower Parents and Educators:

Through collaboration, families and educators gain tools to support the learning journey of each child.

Key Areas in Special Needs Education

- Cognitive Development
- Speech and Language Support
- Behavioral and Emotional Regulation
- Motor Skills Development
- Life Skills and Independence
- Academic Adaptation

Strategies for Assistance in the Classroom

1. Individualized Educational Plans (IEPs)
2. Differentiated Instruction
3. Montessori and Piagetian Methods
4. Visual Schedules and Routine Boards
5. Collaboration with Support Services
6. Assistive Technology

Navigating the Classroom with Inclusion

1. Build a Supportive Environment
2. Practice Patience and Empathy
3. Use Peer Buddy Systems
4. Keep Consistent Routines
5. Ongoing Professional Development

Conclusion

Special Needs Education is not a separate form of education—it is education with heart, insight, and adaptability. It opens doors for students with disabilities to experience learning as a joy, not a struggle. When we understand the “why” and embrace the “how,” we become not just teachers—but advocates, facilitators, and change-makers.

The classroom of the future is one that welcomes all learners, recognizing that diversity in learning is not a challenge, but a strength.

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# AGRI FACTS COLUMN

## BUY LOCAL!

SUBMITTED BY RAYANNA BOODRAM

[rayannaboodram@hotmail.com](mailto:rayannaboodram@hotmail.com) GREEN CARIBBEAN MAGAZINE August 2025

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Every year, Trinidad and Tobago spends over TT\$5 billion on importing food—much of which we are fully capable of producing locally. Recently, the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries stated that our food import bill was at an all-time high of over 7 billion. From fruits and vegetables to seasonings, snacks, dairy, and meats, our shelves are stocked with foreign goods while local alternatives compete for visibility. This over-reliance on imported food is not just economically unsustainable, it undermines our agricultural sector, drains our foreign reserves, and weakens national food security.

The truth is, when we choose imported apples over Julie mangoes, frozen fries instead of fresh cassava, or foreign sauces over our rich local seasonings, we are sending our dollars abroad, dollars that could stay right here, helping to create jobs, support families, and drive economic growth. Imported goods are vulnerable to global disruptions, price spikes, and currency fluctuations.

We saw this clearly during the COVID-19 pandemic and more recently with international shipping delays and the global inflation crisis. Buying foreign also increases our carbon footprint, compromises freshness, and distances us from the origins of our food.

Trinidad and Tobago is rich in agricultural potential. We grow Sweet potatoes, Dasheen, Cassava, Tomatoes, Cucumbers, Peppers, Pawpaw, Pineapple, and Plantain, to name just a few.


We produce local snacks, sauces, dairy, meats, fruits, and drinks that reflect our unique Caribbean identity. When we buy local, we directly support our farmers, fishers, agro-processors, food vendors, and entrepreneurs. That support helps keep land in agriculture, motivates younger generations to stay in the industry, and boosts innovation in food processing and packaging. It also encourages a more circular economy where money earned here stays here.

Local foods are generally fresher, more nutritious, and less chemically preserved than imported options. With shorter farm-to-market travel times, the produce on your table retains more of its vitamins and minerals. Trinidad and Tobago imports over 80% of the food we consume. This makes us extremely vulnerable to external shocks. Building food security must start with increasing our local consumption. It's not just about growing more, it's about buying more of what we already grow and produce. Reducing our food import bill starts with citizens choosing local at the grocery, at the market, and on the menu.

What Can You Do?

- Support local vendors and markets. Visit the farmers' markets and look for T&T-grown labels in the supermarket.
- Ask for local. Encourage restaurants and shops to carry local produce and products.
- Try local alternatives. Replace imported juices, snacks, sauces, and seasonings with our vibrant local brands.
- Promote awareness. Share the benefits of buying local with friends, family, and community groups.

Buying local is not just an economic strategy, it's a patriotic act. It's a vote of confidence in the hardworking people of Trinidad and Tobago. It's a step toward reducing our national food import bill, improving food security, creating employment, and preserving our culinary culture. Let us commit to building a stronger, more self-reliant Trinidad and Tobago, one local purchase at a time.



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# THE FAMILY CAN

A MONTHLY THOUGHT TO HELP IMPROVE THE FAMILY - HILTON R SIBOO: CONTACT: 788-2685)  
THE PILGRIMAGE OF PARENTING: [part 14] - Can PERSONALITY be Parented?

In this series, our approach established that parenting is a relationship between the 'parenter' and the 'parentee'. This month we consider - Can RESPONSIBILITY be Parented? and more specifically, can the 'parenter' parent the RESPONSIBILITY formation of the 'parentee'? If so, ... why and how even when the 'parentee' may not always be a young child. An open question to everyone, Can you parent responsibility? But first, what is responsibility?

This is defined as the state of being responsible; or the state or charge or control for which one is responsible, that means to be answerable... liable to be called to account and accountable for one's action. ... with resulting blame or credit. Responsibility requires responses. A response is 'the behaviour reaction brought about by a stimulus' that being, 'any kind of mechanical, physical or chemical change that acts upon a sense organ' [Sperling]. A response is an answer and a respondent's behaviour can be conditioned or unconditioned.

However, learning to be responsible differs from learning to and for a response. How? Consider parents, do you prepare 'parentees' for life's choices and life's daily challenges? Do you expose them to skills of learning to be responsible? Do the responses emanating and stimulated and triggered by our drives, motivation, inspiration and interests require personal-individual and social adjustment to help parent responsibility?

Parents or 'Parenters, how your child stand for self as a child now and later as an adult result from decision, care and freedom you provide. Do you affirm acceptable 'good' behaviours or have responses of fault finding and nagging, not pleased about their attitudes and behaviours – their responses to education and career; diet, exercise 'mental health'; religion and spirituality; substance use/abuse; friends and social activities, etc?

Responsibility is learnt when a child or 'parentee' has boundaries, limits and rules within the family and household, the laws of the state and the commandments of religion, when there are cultural, social and moral values... all impacting personal and social responsibility. Boundaries, limits and rules should be 'definable, reasonable, enforceable and help to develop inner value and control [Norman Wright, 2015].

Responsibility for words, thoughts, actions and attitudes; responsibility for success, failure, achievement, goals... anomie and lethargy begin not with the 'parentee' but with the 'parenter'. Parents model responsibility and responsible behaviours by duties and chores, navigating risks and challenges, grasping the opportunities for decision making and choices and most effectively by parental attention. Can you parent responsibility?

I hope that this perspective can guide the understanding and effect changes and adjustments to the narrative and approach to parenting where the participants interact in a relational exchange that affects and impacts their words and actions, attitudes, behaviours and roles, duties and responsibilities. Can this approach improve our parenting relationships and skills and improve intra-family and inter-family relationships?

Remember, the family is not just a group or gathering without a common purpose. Never let it ever be that the family can NOT adjust and adapt as changes occur.

**Don't lose faith. Hold strong. Believe, The Family Can**

## Encountering ....the Archives of PCTT'

'KNOW THE CAPCTT' SERIES FOR 2025

**2025** is a most significant and celebratory milestone for the Archives of the PCTT (CAPCTT) as this marks the **50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary** since the establishment of the present physical location in September 1975. Therefore, over the next months, '**Encountering ... the Archives**' will continue to share information with you to '**KNOW THE CAPCTT**'.

Having previously briefly described the Location and Administration, aspects of Archives Development since 2020, the June column touched on Content. Here we stay with the questions, Does the PCTT need an Archives? What is its worth and value and relevance and to whom?

Archiving or simply record keeping and management and storage commenced long before the formal, official, present location was established 1975. Archiving began with the Church of Scotland (COS) and the first Presbytery of Trinidad and continued to include the Americans, Madeiran, Canadians and the PCTT. Projecting into the future, these collections of historical materials and data that are kept and stored in the Repository, Museum and Archival Library of the CAPCTT can only grow and expand. At present, research and studies at this 'institution' can mainly be accessed and utilised physically but can change in the future.

Turning to Celebrations for the **50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary** of the establishment of the Archives, the activities were delayed by the closure of the Archives to date since January 2025. However, recent tentative plans [though rushed] in a collaboration of the Archives Committee of Synod and Archives Staff have considered: A Service of Thanksgiving; a Choir Competition; a Researched Publication and a commemorative Jubilee Calendar. Details are being considered and will soon be disseminated. Meanwhile remember;

*An encounter with the Archives is an encounter with ... yourself.*

*The Archives are opened on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon.*

*Call to arrange a visit. Contact: 652-4829 [Synod Office] and 653-4166 [SATC Library] Asst Archivist: Hilton R Bill Siboo 788-2685*

# 9 NEW COMMUNICANT MEMBERS AT PENAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

By Audrey Aliasgar

On the 20<sup>th</sup> of April, 2025, Reverend Kelvin Sookhansingh conducted the Easter Sunday morning service at the Penal Presbyterian Church. His message was based on Christ's resurrection using extracts from Paul's first letter to the Corinthians and Matthew's Gospel. He reminded the congregation that "for as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive" (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:22).

He later welcomed the candidates who attended the weekly Communicants' classes held at the church from 12<sup>th</sup> of February, 2025 to 11<sup>th</sup> of April, 2025. The group of nine, consisting of three adults and six youths, sat in the front pews of the church which were decorated with floral arrangements and Easter-themed banners on the walls. Four persons were first baptized and then each of the nine was received as full members of the church. All new communicants were presented with their Baptism Certificate and a Bible gifted by the Local Board.

As the service progressed, Reverend Sookhansingh served each new member bread and wine – symbols of the body and blood of Christ. The spirit of renewal and hope was especially powerful this Easter Sunday 2025 at the Penal Presbyterian Church where the congregation celebrated the resurrection of Jesus Christ and welcomed these new communicant members.



## HALLELUJAH FOREVER SONG (TUNE: AMAZING GRACE)

By: Clarence Bharath, Aramalaya Presbyterian Church

**Hallelujah! Our praise in song, the love of God is strong.  
Our heavenly showers keep us pure; salvation is secure.**

**From humble manger, peace was born; Goodwill, our saving dawn.  
He healed and taught us all: "Be one," like Father, Spirit, Son.**

**A wondrous gift revealed in time. Come taste the mystic wine.  
The bread of life unlocks the chains: no tears, no death, no pains.**

**He whispers through refreshing breeze: the lush green trees we see.  
A harmony through time and space, from love's unending grace.**

**Our trust in Him burns bright within, where future life begins.  
In love and wisdom, walk His way: to light at close of day.**

**Forevermore, His love will reign, our souls in joy remain.  
Spirit and truth will set us free, for all eternity.**

*Hallelujah*

**Praise  
THE Lord**

# MRS. ROSABELLE DOODNATH A CENTURY OF LIFE

By Jennifer Boodan



Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2025 was indeed a momentous day for Mrs. Rosabelle Doodnath, a member of the St Andrew's Presbyterian Church as she celebrated her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. Rosabelle celebrated this significant milestone with family, neighbours and members of the church at a thanksgiving service held in her honour at her home. Rev Keron Khellawan brought a beautiful message. Some of her favourite hymns were sung as well as the bhajan, 'Karo Meri Sahae' which she requested. Her daughter, Pamela reminisced on the beautiful times she and her siblings shared with their mum. She described her mum as a humble, hardworking, caring, devoted and loving mother. She made special mention of her mum's "pot bake". Mr Alexander Ramnath, chairman of the Local Board, extended best wishes to her on behalf of the church. Also, paying tribute to her was Ministry of the People, Social Development and Family Services. They presented her with a plaque, cake and hamper.

At age 100, Mrs Doodnath is still alert, lively, full of charm and faithful to her God.

Turning 100 is a major accomplishment for her, not just in years but in the lives she impacted. She certainly epitomizes years of a life well lived and a heart well loved.

## SORROW IN PAUL'S EPISTLES

By Presiding Elder George Sammy

Following the previous article on Joy in Paul's letters, this second article discusses Sorrow. The final article will present Lessons Learned.

2 Corinthians has been called "the Letter of Tears", because it shows that Paul has suffered a lot. In 2 Corinthians 1:8, Paul writes that he is **"under great pressure,"** and that he is **"writing with a greatly troubled and distressed heart and with many tears."** However, his intention is not to make his readers sad, but to make them realize how much he loved them. He wants their sorrow to lead them to repentance. (2 Corinthians 7:9).

For Paul, sorrow does not mean that God is not merciful. He believes in Godly Sorrow, which **"brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret"** (2 Corinthians 7:10). Here, then, is the sadness of Christians in its full context: God gives us sorrow so that we might repent and be saved. Sorrow leads us to the foot of the Cross and into the arms of the Crucified and Risen Jesus.

Paul speaks of sadness in other letters as well. In Philippians 3:18, he tearfully reminds us that **"many live as enemies of the cross of Christ,"** and in Romans 9:1-4, he cries out with **"great sorrow and unceasing anguish"** in his heart that he would be willing to be **"cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my people ... the people of Israel."** Here again, Paul is sad that his readers fail to come to the cross and accept the Crucified and Risen Christ.

But all is not gloom and doom. In 2 Timothy 4, Paul acknowledges that, **"the Lord stood at my side and gave me strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed ..."** We, Presbyterians in Trinidad and Tobago, can learn from Paul that even when we face the sternest tests of our Christian Faith, God is at our side giving us strength.

# ROCHARD DOUGLAS PRESBYTERIAN SCHOOL SHINES AT NATIONAL DATA STORYTELLING COMPETITION

By Mrs. Cassandra Mohammed-Ali

Seven outstanding pupils from the Rochard Douglas Presbyterian School proudly represented their school at the Data Storytelling Competition hosted by the Women in Data Science (WiDS) Trinidad and Tobago in collaboration with the Ministry of Education. The competition was a key initiative under the Student Transitioning Effectively From Primary to Secondary (S.T.E.P.S) Programme 2025, which invited Standard Five pupils across the country to explore a topic of interest, analyze data, and present their findings in an innovative and engaging way.

Rochard Douglas Presbyterian School, from the Victoria Education District, submitted two group entries, Alpha Squad and Quad Squad: both of which were recognized with Special Awards, making the school the proud recipient of two out of the six national awards presented.

Alpha Squad, comprising of Varun Badall, John Mohammed, and Bradley Dorman, captivated the judges with their powerful video investigation into bullying. Their message was both impactful and creatively delivered, earning them the Special Award for Best Inspiring Message and Most Creative Presentation Style.

Quad Squad, comprising Saedi Boodram, Chenoa Pegus, Navya Kooarsingh, and Devindra Sookram, brought a fresh perspective with their unique investigation into the most popular colour chosen for graduation dresses for Graduation 2025. Their engaging presentation earned them the Special Award for Most Interesting Topic.

The awards were presented by the Minister of Education, Dr. The Honourable Michael Dowlath, at the official prize-giving ceremony held on 2nd July, 2025, at the University of Trinidad and Tobago, Point Lisas Campus.

These remarkable achievements reflect not only the hard work and dedication of the pupils but also the steadfast guidance and encouragement of their teacher, Mrs. Cassandra Mohammed-Ali, and school administrator, Mr. Hendrickson H. Hublal. Their support was instrumental in preparing the pupils to think critically, collaborate effectively, and present with purpose.

Rochard Douglas Presbyterian School continues to be a shining example of excellence in education, with students who rise to every challenge and mentors who lead with heart and vision.



Alpha Squad



Quad Squad



**Women in  
Data Science  
Worldwide**

Trinidad & Tobago

# JUSTICE FRANK SEEPERSAD CELEBRATES THE 144<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE CUREPE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

By Elder Sharmila Singh

On May 11<sup>th</sup> 2025, Mother's Day, Justice Frank Seepersad delivered the message at Curepe Presbyterian Church.

Justice Seepersad focused on mothers and children. He emphasized that leadership carries parental responsibility. "To a country, the citizens are her children, and those entrusted with leadership authority assume a parental role." He praised the women in national leadership. "There are no glass ceilings, and every young girl knows with certainty that she can achieve anything that she desires, as our President, Prime Minister, and Opposition Leader are all resilient and accomplished women."

He then ended with a call, "We pray for mothering servant leaders who are caring and collaborative as they formulate policies and positions which protect the vulnerable, the unwanted, the unloved, and forge together a future for us all which is bright, peaceful and prosperous."

Two outstanding women were honoured for their years of dedicated service to God at Curepe: Mrs. Ann Bharath and Honorary Elder Elaine Mongroo.

This service was one of four special services held throughout May to celebrate Curepe's 144<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Presiding Elder Larry Kowlessar and Reverend Errol Ragnauth also delivered messages in May, with Curepe's Choir leading the singing with special renditions.

Under Akhbar Ali's house in 1881, Curepe's Congregation was born and today stands as a testimony of the great Missionary work carried out by Canadian Reverend John Morton and so many others for God. All thanks to Elders Lynette Kokaram and Ranjit Boodoo for keeping our church's legacy alive through these Anniversary Services and through our Church's History which was published in January.

The theme this year was, "To God be the Glory" and indeed at Curepe, great things He has done!



# ARIMA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH – HISTORY SYNOPSIS IN A POEM

Written by Elijah Motieram and Indra Mohammed – Elders

In the heart of Arima, a humble beginning,  
A wooden building, spirits ascending.  
With a small congregation, faithful and few,  
The Arima Presbyterian Church grew.

Reverend John Morton, with vision and zeal,  
Extended the church's reach, its appeal.  
Services were held, catechists were assigned,  
Sound of worship, music and hymns intertwined.

Reverend Isaac Smith, a minister true,  
In the late forties, his ministry grew.  
Sunday School, worship service with grace,  
Supporting teachers, a vibrant place.

Christian Endeavour, a group so bold,  
Youth activities, stories to be told.  
Reverends Kirkpatrick, Yoshioka, and Sukhu Sr.,  
Ministers serving, hearts astir.

Three Bible Women, noble and kind, Rose Raghunanan  
Boodoo, Laura Grayhadar-Traboulay, and Josephine  
Boodram Sooknanan,  
in Arima they shined.  
Visiting, teaching, a guiding hand,  
Steadfast in faith, they took a stand.

With a growing congregation, space did shrink,  
A bigger church, the Local Board did think.  
Fundraisers were approved, bazaar and outing,  
To purchase land, the church's accounting.

Mr. Harry Leelah, elder and board chair,  
Drew the plans, the new church to bear.  
Reverend Smith, the chief builder, indeed,  
Assisted by Lindsay Harradan and many others, with every  
need.

Mr. Bhadur George, Miliano Seejagat,  
Seepersad Sudama, a devoted habitat.  
With Kelvin Smith, Glen Smith, their hands so strong,  
Builders, carpenters, diligent all along.

Mrs. Lynette Harradan, lunch ready each day,  
Mrs. Vivian Merigh sporting her different hats provided  
refreshments her way.  
The congregation supported, materials and labour they  
bought,  
Donation sheets distributed, expenses they sought.

A loan was taken from a bank in need,  
Coobla's Hardware and others assisted, a generous deed.  
Upon completion, a dedication so grand,  
Isaac Smith Memorial Church, a name to withstand.

Reverend Isaac Smith, a spiritual guide,  
Dedicated, hardworking, his love testified.  
The old church sold, a new era began,  
Preserving history, a beautiful plan.

Reverends Sieunarine (Snr and Jr), Yorke, and Persad,  
Sitahal, Ramdeen, Lalla Ramkelawan, so glad.  
Bailey, Sookhansingh, and Samuel-Moonoo,  
Ministers who served with devotion, it's true.

Refurbishments made, the interior renewed,  
Perimeter fence, a steadfast fortitude.  
New pews donated, families' love displayed,  
Continued growth, worship never swayed.

Throughout the years, faithful hearts prevail,  
Offering time, talents, treasure to avail.  
Loyalty, dedication, a legacy passed on,  
Families united, the church's bond.

Honorary Elder, Ms. Elsa Marshall's name,  
Organists like Richardson, keeping a flame.  
New families join, work faithfully done,  
Fulfilling God's purpose, together as one.

In 2017, four Elders elevated to Honorary status,  
Devadoss David Lawrence, Dhano Lacaille, Seranie Lynch,  
and Clyde Isaac Seecharan, a shining place.  
Renovations in 2019 to a modern air-conditioned Hall,  
then 2024 and 2025 a face lift to the Exterior of the Church,  
Allowing further comfort and warmth, embracing one and all.

The history of Isaac Smith Memorial Church, A testament to faith,  
community in search.  
From humble beginnings, growth and care, Presbyterian spirit,  
forever to share.



# HAPPY 138<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY TO THE HAPPY WORKERS' SOCIETY!

By Mrs. Irma Lall, Secretary of Happy Worker' Society

Happy Workers' Society of Susamachar Presbyterian Church celebrated 138 years with the congregation on Sunday 22nd June, 2025. Members read Scriptures and sang in the choir "The Right Hand of God". The sanctuary was beautifully adorned with flower arrangements done by Ms. Dolores Brijlal, a talented member of the group. Reverend Letra Jacob uplifted the members in prayer and thanked the group for its positive impact in the work of the church.

In June 1887, Mrs. Grant came face to face with a group of ladies laughing and chatting while doing needle work outside of Grant House. She remarked, "What a happy group of ladies!" From that day, she addressed the group as "Happy Workers ."




Some members with Reverend Letra Jacob, Minister

As we reflect on the journey which began in 1887, the vision has blossomed into a vibrant community of women who support, empower and inspire one another. This anniversary is a testament to the dedication and hard work of each member. We pay tribute to those who have paved the way through their contributions, their passion, their commitment; the lives of many who have been very instrumental on this journey.

As we look to the future, we pledge to continue to build on our strong foundation as we recite our motto at every meeting:

**I am one, I am only one  
I cannot do everything  
But I can do something  
What I can do  
I ought to do  
And by the Grace of God  
I will do.**



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**ACADEMIC**  
**YEAR**  
**2025/2026**  
**SEMESTER I**



**Sociology for Church Leaders**  
**Lecturer: Rev. Dr. Keron Khellawan**  
**Start Date: 15<sup>th</sup> September 2025**  
**Day: Monday | Time: 5.30pm - 8.30pm**

**Constitution of the P.C.T.T**  
**Lecturer: Rev. Dr. Keron Khellawan**  
**Start Date: 16<sup>th</sup> September 2025**  
**Day: Tuesday | Time: 5.30pm - 8.30pm**

**Ecumenical Theology : Theory & Praxis**  
**Lecturer: Mr. Stefan Jerome Wilson**  
**Start Date: 17<sup>th</sup> September 2025**  
**Day: Wednesday | Time: 5.30pm - 8.30pm**

**Homiletics I**  
**Lecturer: Rev. Dr. Annabell Ramkelawan & Rev. Sanya Beharry**  
**Start Date: 18<sup>th</sup> September 2025**  
**Day: Thursday | Time: 5.30pm - 8.30pm**

**New Testament Greek**  
**Lecturer: Rev. Adrian Sieunarine**  
**Start Date: 19<sup>th</sup> September 2025**  
**Day: Friday | Time: 5.30pm - 8.30pm**

Register by :30<sup>th</sup> August 2025

Duration: 12 weeks| Credits :3 (per course)

Cost : \$1,500.00 (per course)

Registration: \$500.00 (per semester)

**TERENCE ALGERNON BISSESSAR SCHOLARSHIP FUND**

C/O NISTAR PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, SOUTHERN MAIN ROAD,  
CHASE VILLAGE, CARAPICHAIMA TELEPHONE: 662-4086/673-0375

The Board of Trustees invites applications for scholarship awards  
Applicants must satisfy the following criteria:

- 1. Must be a graduate of a Secondary School of Trinidad and Tobago;
- 2. Must be in financial need. This will be determined by the Applicant's completion of a Financial Assessment Form which must be submitted with a written application to the Board. The Financial Assessment Form can be obtained at the following venues: the Church Office at Paradise Hill, San Fernando, Nistar Presbyterian Church, Chase Village, and the Arima Presbyterian Church.
- 3. Must not be a recipient of an open scholarship, additional scholarship, bursary or any other institutional funding;
- 4. Must have gained admission to or attending the University of the West Indies or any accredited Tertiary Level Educational Institution at the time of application;
- 5. Must be a practising member of the Presbyterian Church, a communicant member and serving in at least one (i) group, board or committee of the Church;
- 6. Applicants who are already enrolled at the University of the West Indies or any accredited Tertiary Level Educational Institution must have attained a G.P.A. of not lower than 3.0.

**Applicants who are applying for the first time must provide the following:**

- A letter of admission to and identification of the degree being pursued from the Tertiary Educational Institution;
- A letter from the Applicant's Local Church supporting the application and indicating the status and quality of the Applicant's church membership;
- Personal Data i.e. copy of birth certificate, copy of National Identification Card, telephone contact number and email address

**All returning Applicants must provide the following:**

- Transcript of academic performance for the academic year 2024-2025. Must have a G.P.A. of not lower than 3.0;
- A detailed statement of expenditure incurred from the 2025 Award;
- A letter from the Applicant's parent or guardian outlining the need for the Award for the academic year 2024-2025.

Applications are to be submitted by the 30<sup>th</sup> September, 2025 to:  
The Terence Algernon Bissessar Scholarship Fund  
c/o The Synod's Office  
Presbyterian Church of Trinidad and Tobago  
P.O. Box 187, Paradise Hill  
San Fernando

# PLAQUES OF APPRECIATION ON FATHER'S DAY AT DEBE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH'S 125TH ANNIVERSARY

By Chairman Vincent K. Ramoutar

As part of the 125th Anniversary celebrations of the Debe Presbyterian Church (Est. 1900) on June 15, 2025, two longstanding members of the Local Board were honoured for their faithful service and unwavering commitment to the ministry and mission of the church.

Father's Day was also observed on Sunday 15th June 2025. Reverend Indra Kokaram presented plaques of appreciation to Mr. Frank Boodoo and Mr. Robert Manoo, recognizing their long-standing dedication and steadfast contributions to the church's governance and spiritual outreach. The presentation took place during the morning worship service, surrounded by family, congregants, and members of the wider community. Each plaque bore a message of heartfelt gratitude:

"In heartfelt appreciation for your long and faithful service on the Local Board.

Your unwavering dedication to the work and witness of our church has been a true blessing and inspiration."

These words encapsulated the legacy of service and quiet strength demonstrated by both Mr. Boodoo and Mr. Manoo over the years. Their efforts have contributed meaningfully to the spiritual life and community growth of the Debe Presbyterian Church.

As the church marked 125 years of faithful ministry, this moment of recognition stood as a powerful reminder of the value of consistent service and the example set by leaders within the faith community.

The Debe Presbyterian Church family extends its deepest gratitude to these two faithful servants and prays for God's continued blessings on their journey ahead.

In photo: Mr. Robert Manoo, Rev. Indra Kokaram, and Mr. Frank Boodoo, following the presentation.





St. Andrew's Theological College

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Phone: 652-4829 (Synod's Office)

# CARRY “D” KEY- KARAOKE EVENING AT KNOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

BY MR. VENOO RAMDHANIE Local Board Member

Correct Key..... High Key..... Low Key..... Off Key..... There was lots of fun and laughter on Saturday 12th July at the Knox Hall, as members of the congregation and visitors performed their specially prepared karaoke numbers. Our DJ/VJ HascaJ..... Mr. Ashley Soomai, accompanied with the latest sound equipment provided the relevant videos as some “bathroom” singers tried their true and tested voices.

Performers ranged from age two into the eighties, who belted out specialties from different genres such as, “I’m in the Lord’s Army”, “Let it Go” from the movie Frozen to Frank Sinatra’s “My Way”. In between Country Music genre took centre stage with songs like “Take Me Home (Country Roads)” “Coward of the County.” Other songs such “Summer Wine”, “Red Red Wine”, “Three Little Birds” brought a feeling of nostalgia. The men pulled out all stops as they rendered a “bomb” tune “Country Roads.”

At the intermission, an array of sumptuous local items such as bread and channa/chow mein/cheese, aloo pies, and lots of snacks were served followed by ice-cream in cones as well as hot and cold drinks. Special thanks to those members who donated these items. For the first time, there was no lingering as members were eager to get back to the Karaoke – rendering tunes such as, “Send me the Pillow”, “Don’t stop Believing”, “Sweet Caroline”, Islands in the Stream” and “Chiquitita”.

It was a truly special evening, with special thanks going out to the main organizer, Mrs. Jacqueline Ramdhanie, together with members of the church. At the end, tokens were presented to everyone who sang, with young Anuskha Seecharan receiving for most participation, Liam and Lucas Ghouralal for youngest males, Azariah Budhoo for youngest female and Mr. Shafeek Piralli for most mature singer.

The karaoke evening was hosted with the aim of building comraderie and showcasing the talent of the congregation. Music is very therapeutic as well as it builds social bonds and promotes emotional well-being.

I am sure those of you reading this will be accessing YouTube and trying out your karaoke skills with some of your personal favourites. Don’t be shy – open the bathroom door and sing like no one is listening!!!!



# HEALTHY CORNER:

## "BACK TO SCHOOL WITH FAITH, HEALTH AND HOPE"

Dr. Joel David Teelucksingh

The academic year brings a sense of fresh beginnings—uniforms, timetables, teachers, and for some, new starts. However, it also brings with it a plethora of challenges. Now, more than ever, we need to pay attention to well-being—of body, mind and soul.

Viruses love September. With COVID-19 creeping back into the headlines, and regular flu, colds and stomach bugs making their rounds, we have to be vigilant. Children are notorious for sharing—whether it's their lunch, their crayons or their germs.

Parents, please teach your children basic hygiene rules:

- Wash hands regularly, especially before eating and after using the bathroom.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or the elbow—not the hand.
- Stay home if sick. This is public health mixed with kindness.

Teachers should keep hand sanitizer and tissues nearby and schools should maintain clean, well-ventilated classrooms.

Seek medical advice if your child:

- Has a persistent fever, cough or rash
- Is unusually tired or withdrawn
- Complaints of headaches, chest pain, difficulty breathing, belly pain or changes in mood

In too many lunch kits, we see a dangerous pattern—excessive sugar, processed snacks and brightly coloured sweetened drinks that promise energy but deliver sluggishness with sugar crashes.

A healthy breakfast fuels the brain. It should include:

- Protein (like eggs)
- Whole grains (oats, whole wheat bread)
- Fruits or vegetables instead of candy

Children who skip breakfast often feel tired, irritable and perform poorly. Water is best. And a sandwich with protein beats a pack of cheesy curls. I'm not asking you to be perfect. I'm asking you to be intentional.

Gone are the days when stress was something only adults worried about. Children, too, carry invisible loads—bullying, peer pressure, exam anxiety and family struggles. The SEA exam looms large for many, casting long shadows even into Form One.

Let's remind our children that they are more than their marks.

The Presbyterian Church has long championed the cause of education, but never at the expense of compassion. Speak to your children. Listen. Pray with them. Encourage schools to have counselling options or safe spaces for children to speak about their worries.

The online world can be both magical and menacing. Children today are growing up in an age of social media validation, gaming addiction, and YouTube tutorials. But too much screen time comes with risks:

- Poor sleep
- Eye strain
- Reduced physical activity
- Lower self-esteem

Set boundaries. Encourage outdoor play. And at bedtime, keep phones out of bedrooms. Yes, they'll protest—but long-term, their brains will thank you. Primary school children need 9–12 hours of sleep. Teens need at least 8–10 hours. Establish a calming routine: storytime, prayer or quiet music.

Fights, weapons, and even online threats have made their way into our schoolyards. Let us, as a Church, recommit to being watchful guardians. Get to know your child's friends. Attend PTA meetings. Advocate for anti-bullying programmes and counselling support.

As our children head back into the classroom, let us send them with prayers.

With grace.

With the reminder that they are God's masterpieces, created with purpose and promise.

Encourage morning devotions. Say a blessing before school. Invite children to ask not just "What did I learn today?" but "Who did I help today?"

To the educators—those unsung heroes who juggle lesson plans, playground duty and the occasional parent meltdown—we see you.

Your impact extends far beyond the curriculum. You are shaping future leaders, thinkers and believers. Your patience, kindness and resilience do not go unnoticed.

To the little ones who will cry on the first day and to the teens who pretend they're too cool to care: we believe in you. You are not too young to make a difference. You are not too small to carry big dreams. God is walking with you. Whether you are learning to read or preparing for CSEC—keep going. Your journey matters. Your voice matters. You matter.

Parents and guardians— you may be exhausted from ironing uniforms and covering books. You may worry if you're doing enough. But if you've loved your child, if you've tried your best—then you have done more than enough.

Support your child. Support their teachers. And if you're overwhelmed, remember that the Church is here too—for prayer, for guidance, and for community.

The new academic year is a reminder that education is a divine calling, and health is its faithful companion. Let us step into this season not with fear, but with faith. Let us champion safety, celebrate growth and commit to raising children who are not just academically brilliant—but emotionally whole, spiritually grounded and ready to light up the world.

# YOUTH LEAD WORSHIP CENTERED ON DIGITAL WISDOM AND CHRIST-LIKE LIVING. SUBMITTED

By Chairman Vincent K. Ramoutar

On Sunday 29th June 2025, the sanctuary of Debe Presbyterian Church came alive with youthful energy, faith, and leadership as the congregation celebrated Youth Sunday under the theme “Navigating the Digital Landscape with Christ as Your Guide.”

This service was thoughtfully conducted and led by the church’s vibrant youth members, with leadership roles held by Sion Nandram, Tristan Bheekoo, Allison Persad, Addison Persad and Chairman Vincent K. Ramoutar. They inspired the congregation with their devotion, clear voices, and thoughtful preparation.

From the Call to Worship to the Benediction, the youth demonstrated maturity, creativity, and a commitment to Christ. Scripture readings, intercessory prayers, musical worship, and spoken reflections all centered around the theme how young people can live faithfully in a world dominated by digital technology.

The sermon, entitled “Navigating the Digital Landscape with Christ as Your Guide,” was delivered with powerful insight and spoke directly to the hearts of the youth and young adults urging them to use spiritual wisdom as their compass in an online world filled with both blessing and distraction.

Using three guiding Scripture verses: Philippians 4:8, 1 Corinthians 10:23, and Proverbs 4:23 which challenged attendees to:

- Filter what they consume online through the lens of truth and purity,
- Balance their digital freedoms with spiritual responsibility,
- Guard their hearts against the subtle influences of comparison, misinformation, and temptation.

“Christ must not only be your guide at church,” reflected Vincent K. Ramoutar, “but also your guide as you scroll, post, like, and share.”

The message emphasized that young people are not only navigating modern challenges—they are equipped and called to lead with discernment, create with purpose, and live with conviction in both digital and real-life spaces.

Members of the congregation, including parents, elders, and community visitors, expressed their pride and hope in the church’s youth. Several attendees noted that the worship experience was “deeply moving,” “relevant,” and “a call to action for the entire church to embrace the leadership of its younger generation.”

Youth Sunday 2025 stands as a testament to the spiritual gifts and leadership capacity of the young people at Debe Presbyterian Church. As the congregation looks to the future, there is a renewed commitment to support, mentor, and empower the youth to live faithfully in every landscape—especially the digital one.



Youth Members Sion Nandram, Tristan Bheekoo, Allison Persad, Addison Persad and Vincent K. Ramoutar led a powerful Youth Sunday service at Debe Presbyterian Church on June 29, 2025.

# TEENAGERS AND VAPING: A GROWING HEALTH CONCERN

By Dr. Narinesingh

## IMPORTANT NOTICE:

Please note updated BETH-RAPHA phone line is  
(868) 483-2384 (BETH).

Please do share. Thank you for your understanding.

Law will be brought to the Parliament to raise the legal age of alcohol use to 21 years and older with gambling and cannabis (weed/marijuana) use to 25 years and over. The likely aim is protecting public health, especially for our young people. Even though we consider reaching “adulthood” at the age of 18 years, science has shown that prefrontal cortex of the brain- the part that helps with impulse control, decision making and risk taking behaviours is developing until around the age of 25. Early use of drugs such as alcohol and cannabis can impair this development, increasing risks for long-term cognitive and mental health problems (e.g. anxiety, depression, psychosis), among teenagers and has become a widespread alarming issue in recent years amongst parents, educators and health professionals. With the anticipation of decreased rates of such substances, we must also address alternatives such as vaping.

Vaping was introduced to the Trinidad market in 2010 as a safer alternative to smoking. E-cigarettes and vape pens have attracted a younger audience with easily accessible shops (around clubs, malls, universities), appealing flavours, sleek designs and aggressive social media promotion. However, the health risks are real and significant. The Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS) 2022 data showed that the current use of e-cigarettes among 13-15-year-old students was 17.2% in Trinidad and Tobago with our country having the second-highest rate of youth e-cigarette use in all of the Americas, following the United States.

Many teens believe vaping is harmless, but the reality is that most vape products contain nicotine- a highly addictive substance that can interfere with brain development, particularly in adolescents. Nicotine is highly addictive, with rapid dependence due to concentrated doses in some vapes. Studies have shown that nicotine exposure, like alcohol and cannabis, affects brain development in persons under the age of 25. Nicotine use impacts attention, memory, mood regulation, increases the risk of addiction to other substances such as marijuana and are linked to anxiety and depression. Withdrawal symptoms include irritability, insomnia and headaches.

There have been increasing reports of lung injuries and other physical health problems linked to vaping of which have resulted in hospitalizations. The aerosol produced by e-cigarettes can contain harmful chemicals, including heavy metals (lead, nickel, tin), formaldehyde, Diacetyl (liked to “popcorn lungs”) and even cancer-causing agents. Respiratory (Breathing) complications include EVALI (E-cigarette or Vaping Associated Lung Injury) which are cough, chest pain, shortness of breath, fever and fatigue. It may be often linked to Vitamin E acetate found in illicit THC vapes. This can require hospitalization or even cause death. Asthma or Bronchitis can occur or worsen. There is an increased risk of burns as there have been documented explosion injuries from faulty devices!

Did you know that people vape THC (the psychoactive component of marijuana) You may think one is vaping nicotine however, there are modifiers to allow for THC use. Vaping THC usually involves a liquid or oil concentrate sometimes called “dabs”, “wax” or “THC oil”. Marijuana has multiple effects on adolescents including psychosis (“tripping”), aggression, depression, poor judgement and difficulty in memory/concentration.

Social pressure and curiosity often drive teens to try vaping and once they start, it can be difficult to quit. Stopping vaping as a teenager can be challenging, especially if it has become a habit or a way to cope with stress, boredom or social pressure. However, it is definitely possible and is the way for health and freedom for the future! The discreet nature of many vape devices makes them easy to hide, complicating efforts by parents and schools to monitor use. Education is crucial. Teens need clear, honest information about the risks of vaping, not scare tactics. Parents should foster open conversations, while schools and communities can support prevention programs and promote healthy alternatives.

In summary, while vaping may seem trendy or harmless to teens, the consequences can be serious. Addressing this issue early is key to protecting the health and well-being of the next generation. If you are vaping and experiencing symptoms such as shortness of breath, chest pain or unusual fatigue, it is important to seek urgent medical advice.

## TIPS TO STOP VAPING

1. **Know what you are dealing with:** nicotine causes withdrawal symptoms: irritability, cravings, trouble focusing or feeling down.
  2. **The habit is both physical and psychological** - meaning you will have to break the routine to deal with the addiction.
  3. **Pick a Quit Date!** Choose a date within the next week or two. Mark it on your calendar and treat it like a new chapter.
  4. **Tell someone!** Tell a trusted friend, sibling, teacher, parent or family member. They can check in on you, encourage you or just listen when it's hard.
  5. **Understand your triggers:** Do you vape when you are bored? Anxious? Hanging out with certain friends? List your triggers and create a plan to handle each one.
  6. **Find alternatives:** Keep your hands busy, stress-balls, drawing, journaling, games or exercise. Keep your mouth busy - sugar free gum, sunflower seeds or flavoured water. Distract yourself: music, work out, talk to a friend!
  7. **Be ready for cravings-** Cravings pass! Most only last 10mins. Set a timer, breathe deeply. Drink water or distract yourself. Use the “urge surf” technique- ride the wave of the cravings instead of giving in!
  8. **AND REMEMBER! Slip-Ups Happen!** Don't quit quitting! If you vape again, don't beat yourself up. Learn from it...What triggered it? What can you do differently next time?
  9. Try apps such as KWIT (iOS, Android) for gamified quitting!
- Looking for mental health care for teens? [www.teencare.gov.tt](http://www.teencare.gov.tt)

# **"LIVING IN THE FREEDOM THAT CHRIST GAVE US"**

## **KNOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

### **YOUTH SUNDAY SERVICE – JUNE 2025**

Leanna V. Chadee, President of the Knox Presbyterian Youth Group

Are we, as a church family, doing enough to support and encourage our young people in Love? Psalm 8:2 "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightiest still the enemy and the avenger." The bible reminds us of the importance of our young ones.

As is customary, on the 5th Sunday of each month, our young people took to the pulpit to showcase their talents, skills and leadership abilities. From prayers to sermons, songs to leading the order of worship our youths stepped forward to confront the very real challenges they face daily, in their walk with Christ. Challenges made harder by the noise of the world, which so often drowns out the quiet voice of the Holy Spirit.

We all know that walking with Christ is no easy task. It requires constant prayer, spiritual nourishment, and a daily commitment to choose Christ in every decision. This recent Youth Service centered around the theme: Living in the Freedom that Christ Gave Us. Mrs Leanna V. Chadee, the Youth Group president, reminded us that everything we do must be rooted in love in order to gain favor with God.

And so, the question must be asked again: Do we support our young people in love? Do we, as a church, offer them guidance like loving parents, grandparents and friends?

Young people are the prime targets of the enemy. They are still growing in their faith, still learning to decipher the voice of God, and are often vulnerable to the distractions and deceptions of the world.

So let us pause and reflect: Here are some ways we can show our commitment to our young people: We commit to showing up—in body and spirit—for our youth services.

Allow our young people to express themselves freely in a safe, welcoming space. Offer guidance, love without limit, and patience with grace.

Let us be the examples—the mentors and models of Christ-like living—within our church walls and outwards.

We are the Church!!!! Let's love like Christ, lead like Christ, and lift our young people up—like Christ did. Let us be the change we want in the World.



# MIZPAH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH WOMEN'S GROUP VISITS THE QUINAM MISSION STATION VBS

By Margaret Bissessar



Front row.L to R.

Kenrick Bissessar, Sumintra Dookhoo, Karma Ramoutar, Denyse Mohammed, Cynthia Ramraj. Backrow, LtoR: Wilfred Narine, Claudette Narine, Sheila Timothy, Margaret Bissessar

This Mizpah PCW comprise 9 busy women – busy spreading cheer where they can. On Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> July at 3: p.m., they were at it again. At Quinam, Deaconess Marlene Seenathsingh greeted and welcomed them. The women were expecting to meet 10 children, however, when they arrived they were greeted by 25 children who were excited to see them. The children's excitement reduced the PCW members to tears. The women donated items which the children could use in Vacation Bible School, in play at home and when they return to school in September. The PCW had a great evening all to God's glory!

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# ARUNODAI PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH VBS 2025 SUNDAY SCHOOL CHILDREN EMBRACE THE CALL TO “SERVE THE LORD WITH GLADNESS

By Wendy Gajadhar

The Arunodai Presbyterian Church Annual Vacation Bible School was held during the week of Monday 14<sup>th</sup> July to Friday 18<sup>th</sup> July, 2025. Approximately thirty (30) children participated in a spiritually enriching week filled with joyful learning, creative activities and fellowship. The events were thoughtfully planned and carried out by our committed Sunday School teachers: Tyabali Khan, Raelene Ramdial, Stacey Bridgelalsingh, Merlisa Pancham, Denise Ghouralal and Tyler Ramkissoon. They were ably supported by members of our Youth Group and church family: Sydney Gittens, Tristan Gittens, Tristan Deo, Arianna Ghouralal and Niasha Hosein. Our minister, Rev. Damien Sieunarine, graced the children with his presence, sharing words of wisdom and encouragement rooted in the theme and offered special blessings upon all in attendance.

The theme, “Serve the Lord with Gladness,” was both timely and inspiring, reminding us all that true service flows from hearts filled with joy and hands eager to do God’s work. Each day, the teachers followed lessons outlined by the Board of Christian Education. The children participated with great enthusiasm in a wide range of activities, including reciting memory verses, singing, dancing, playing games and doing art and craft. The daily door prizes added a delightful element of surprise and excitement filled the air as prizes were awarded for various games. Refreshments were provided every day by members of the congregation and friends of our church.

The culmination of the week took place on Christian Education Sunday, marking a fitting close to this impactful week. Emma Gajadhar led the Order of Service with grace and poise, while the sermon was powerfully delivered by budding preacher, Jaya Ishmael. The Sunday School children actively participated through scripture readings, prayers and joyful songs, beautifully reflecting all they had learnt. The service was a reminder that when children are taught to “Serve the Lord with gladness,” they shine as true beacons of God’s love and joy. The Arunodai Presbyterian Church is truly blessed to have an amazing group of teachers, members of the congregation, parents and well-wishers who ensured that VBS 2025 was a resounding success. All praise and glory to God!



# POINT FORTIN/ CEDROS CELEBRATES REGIONAL SPORTS & FAMILY DAY 2025 FELLOWSHIP, FUN AND FOOTRACES

Candice Ghoural for Regional Development Committee Point Fortin/Cedros



Despite the unpredictable showers and muddy field, the Point Fortin/Cedros Pastoral Region of the Presbyterian Church of Trinidad and Tobago came together in unity and joy for the annual Regional Sports & Family Day, held on June 20, 2025, at the Boodram Trace Recreational Grounds.

The day began with a spirit-filled time of worship, led by our Resident Minister, Rev. Namelia Lutchman-Pulwarty. Her message reminded us that rain is a blessing, and indeed, it set the tone for a memorable day of fellowship, fun, and faith.

Following worship, the assembly of teams brought colour and vibrancy to the field. Each congregation proudly represented their community with distinct team colours:

Cedros – Orange  
Coromandel – Green  
Point Coco – Purple  
Guapo – Yellow  
Salazar – Blue  
Point Fortin – Red



Together, they formed a true rainbow of unity, beautifully mirrored by an actual rainbow that appeared after the morning showers a divine reminder of God's promises.

The Athlete's Oath was delivered confidently by Aiden Ramsey of the Coromandel congregation, calling all participants to good sportsmanship and team spirit.

We were especially honoured to have the Councillor for the area of Cedros, Mr. Shankar Teelucksingh, officially declare the Sports & Family Day open. His presence added a sense of civic pride to the gathering.

The sporting events were a delightful blend of old favourites and new challenges, from sack races, obstacle races, musical chairs to the newly introduced "Unity Race" & "Crab Race" which quickly became a crowd favourite for its emphasis on teamwork.

A variety of food and fundraising stalls were also set up throughout the day, offering local delights and refreshments. These sales were not only a culinary hit but also served an important purpose, the proceeds will help support the Region's participation in the upcoming National Sports Day, ensuring that our athletes and supporters can represent us well on the national stage.

The energy on the field was matched by the joy of recognition as medals and prizes were awarded in the afternoon. Smiles lit up the faces all around both young and old participants were acknowledged for their efforts, enthusiasm, and team spirit. Every race ended not just with winners, but with memories and laughter that will last well beyond the day.

The day concluded with a heartfelt vote of thanks by Ms. Abigail Boodoo, Chairperson of the Regional Development Committee, who expressed deep appreciation to all who made the day possible volunteers, participants, supporters, and especially God for holding the rain at bay when it mattered most.

While the field may have been muddy, the fellowship was rich, the food plentiful, and the memories unforgettable. In true Presbyterian spirit, the Region celebrated not just sport, but the unity of the Body of Christ, grounded in community and love.

# YOUTHS IN ACTION AT CUREPE

By Elder Sharmila Singh

Kites took to the skies on Sunday 8th June, 2025, at the Spring Village Recreational Grounds. It was Curepe Presbyterian Church's Youths in Action Kite Flying and Sports Day. What was originally planned to bring out the youths in the Church quickly turned into an evening filled with fun activities for the whole family. The youths, children and adults all took up the challenge, and 'boy did they run': 50m dashes, 3-legged races, sapodilla and spoon (traditionally egg and spoon), Chubby drinking, hula hoop dance and many more. Parents, grandparents and children did not only fly their kites, they also made some. 'Chicki Chongs' (small paper kites) were the favourite, and they were made using cocoyea brooms, old cloths and other materials found around the house. With strong winds, the kites flew high and some even became "Aye ohh" (lost)! Lots of trophies and medals were won.

Thanks to the planning committee headed by Elder Keturah Naranjit aka Aunty Kitty, Emit, Avind, Adil, Sanjay and Sharmila, this event was successfully attended by over 80 persons and even included a few persons from the community!



THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF TRINIDAD & TOBAGO (PCTT)

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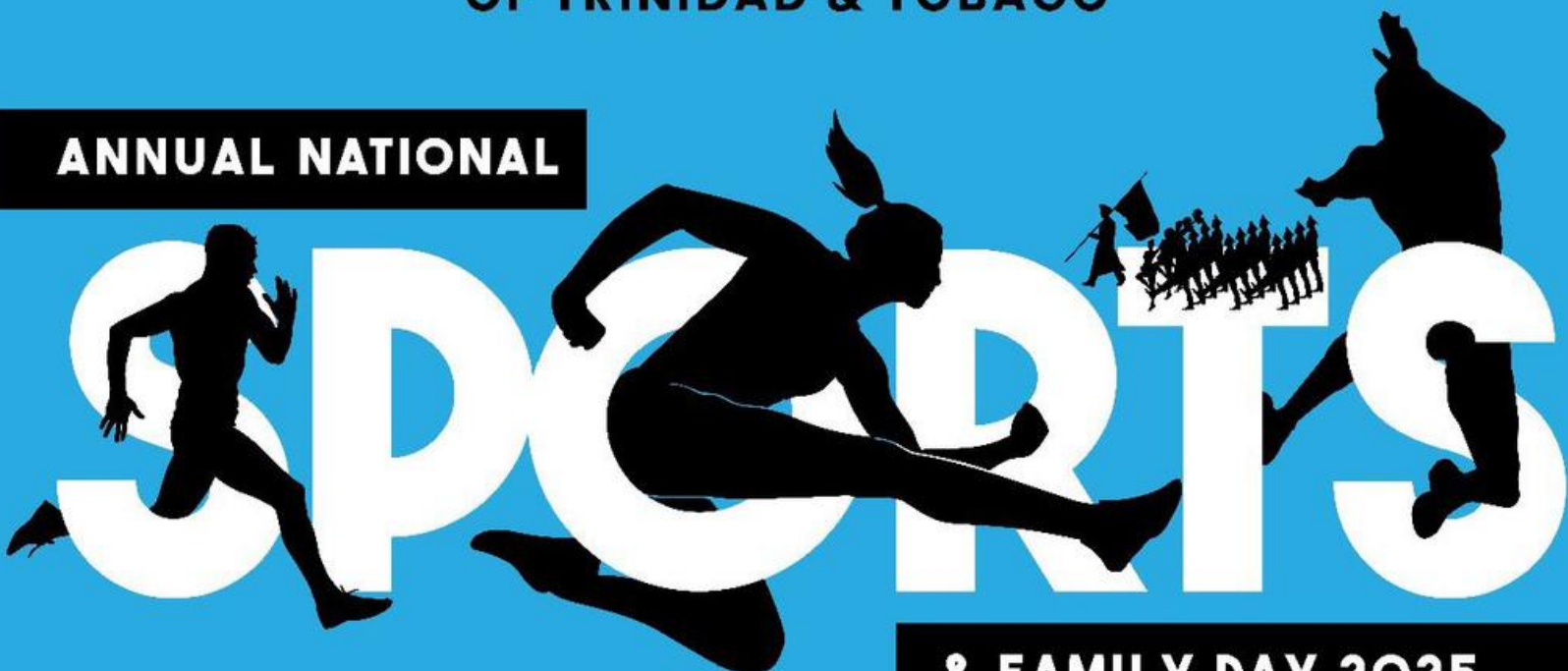
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