



THE UNITING
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH
IN SOUTHERN
AFRICA

CELEBRATING THE REV SHONA VAN DER LINGEN

Journey of Faithful Service: Celebrating a woman minister in the UPCSA

As the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa (UPCSA) celebrates 50 years of ordained women ministers, we give thanks for the women whose faithful ministry, leadership and commitment have helped shape the life and witness of the Church. Among these women is a minister whose journey has been marked by dedication to congregational ministry, presbytery leadership and service at the highest levels of the Church.

Her ordained ministry has spanned two congregations and two Presbyteries, reflecting a life committed to serving God and God's people wherever she has been called.

Her congregational ministry began at Vryheid, where she served from 2009 to 2014. She was ordained in September 2010, marking an important milestone in her journey as an ordained minister. In 2014, she moved to St Columba's, where she has continued to serve faithfully to the present day.

Her ministry has extended well beyond the local congregation. Within the Presbytery of East Griqualand, she has taken on several significant responsibilities. She served as Moderator during 2017/18, provided leadership and guidance to the Presbytery. She also served as Gender Desk Co-ordinator, contributing to the Church's ongoing work of recognising and strengthening the role of women in ministry and leadership. At another important moment, she served as Interim Moderator at Bhongweni, offering pastoral and ecclesiastical leadership during a transitional period.

Her current responsibilities in the Presbytery of East Griqualand include serving as Convener of Doctrine and Worship, a member of the Ministry Committee, and Co-ordinator of FOV. These responsibilities reflect the trust placed in her theological understanding, leadership ability and commitment to the ministry of the Church.

Her contribution has also extended to the Presbytery of Thukela, where she served as Clerk of Presbytery. Through this role, she contributed to the orderly administration and functioning of the Presbytery, once again demonstrating the breadth of her service within the UPCSA.



At the level of the General Assembly and Executive Commission, her contribution has been equally significant. She has served as a Commissioner from both Presbyteries on several occasions, participating in the deliberations and decision-making processes of the wider Church. She has also been part of the Drafting Team and served as a member of the Moderator's Commission.

Currently, she continues to contribute to the wider structures of the UPCSA as Convener of the Government and Administration Cluster and as a member of ABC. Her continued involvement is a testimony to the experience, wisdom and commitment that she brings to the life of the Church.

Beyond titles and positions, however, her story is ultimately one of faithful service. Her journey illustrates how women ministers have contributed not only from the pulpit, but also through pastoral care, theological reflection, administration, governance, leadership and the strengthening of the Church's structures.

As the UPCSA marks five decades since the first woman was ordained into ministry, stories such as hers remind us that this milestone is not merely about the opening of a door. It is about the many women who have walked through that door and, through their ministry, helped to widen the path for those who came after them.

Her journey is also a deeply personal one. She was married for 30 years to the late Rev Greg van der Lingen, with whom she shared a life of faith and ministry. She is a mother of two daughters and a grandmother to one granddaughter.

Fifty years of ordained women ministry in the UPCSA is therefore a celebration of faith, courage, perseverance and service. Her ministry stands as one of the many testimonies of what becomes possible when women are recognised, called and entrusted with the ministry of the Gospel.

As we celebrate this historic milestone, we honour her contribution with gratitude and celebrate the generations of women ministers whose faithful service continues to enrich the UPCSA.

Article by Rev Zukie Klaas

Pictures by Rev Shona Van Der Lingen

50+

Years

OF ORDAINED WOMEN
IN THE UPCSA



3 Generations of strong women



My Ordination September 2010



*Function in Madadeni
before leaving Thukela
Presbytery*



*Celebrating marriage
with the Mnyaka family*



*St Columba's
with captions for the Rev van der Lingen*



Moderator at the induction of Rev Hlati



Baptismal Service