



PRESBYTERIAN LINK

OCTOBER

2018

Dear Friends, As we travel towards the Advent Season, let us prepare our hearts and mind for the joyous remembrance of the birth of our Saviour. The Communications Committee



FROM THE DESK OF THE MODERATOR OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY THE REV. DR. PETER LANGERMAN

This month saw the loss of one of our elder statesmen in the UPCS, as Herbert Chikomo passed from this world to be with the Lord on Monday 24th September 2018 just 2 months short of his 91st birthday. As Robert mentioned at the funeral, "A giant tree in the forest has fallen". The funeral was beautifully organized and arranged by the Presbytery of Zimbabwe and the City Church, Harare. The UPCS was well represented by almost all the ministers from the Presbytery of Zimbabwe and the service was tenderly and beautifully led by David Mhlambeni, the Moderator of the Presbytery, and Lydia Neshangwe, the Clerk of the Presbytery. I was there together with Lungile and Robert and I found it profoundly moving to hear of the life and influence of this servant leader of our Church, who was once offered the position of Prime Minister of Zimbabwe but turned it down because he knew that God had called him to be a pastor and not a politician and it was Bishop Abel Muzorewa who took up the post. It was shocking and troubling to hear how, when he was the first black minister of the City Church, Harare, he was not allowed to lay hands on white children at baptisms while the white

elders led the liturgy and officiated at communion. This is a terrible indictment on our history as a denomination and something for which we need to repent to ensure that such injustice never happens again.

I had the privilege of spending time with the Conveners of General Assembly Committees as well as the Presbytery Officials from all our Presbyteries during this last week. We are indeed privileged to be led and served by capable and dedicated men and women from all across our denomination. In line with my theme to "Live Your Legacy" I was asked to share with the Conveners on the topic of "Living Your Legacy - Striving for Excellence".

I asked those present to identify issues from our heritage for which they were thankful. What came up out of the discussion were the following items for which people gave thanks: diversity; democracy; polity; liturgies and worship; the priesthood of all believers; infrastructure; intentional about unity; multi-cultural; multi-national; balanced theologies; members and our Reformed tradition.

Next, I asked people to identify the legacy that we would like to leave to the generations that will follow us. The following items were raised as being part of our desired future: to be a Church with a totally inclusive African character; making an impact on society; strong grassroot communities; proud of our identity; practice what you preach; mission-ministry focus; a healed, healthy and healing church; visible in the world; a transformed community; pluriversal church; self-sustaining and having clear alignment of programs between all units in the church.

We then spoke about the means by which we would move from heritage (that lies in our past and shapes our present) to our legacy (that which we want to the future church). The vision and mission and the strategic plan of the UPCSA together with the plan to address inequalities, inequities and injustices within the Church are the components of the vehicle we have identified as being able to get us from where we are to where we want to be. If we believe that the plans we have put in place are able to get us to where we are going - or, at least, get us closer to where we want to be than where we are now - we need to commit ourselves to those plans.

We have identified our ourselves, as the UPCSA, as “a diverse community of reformed Christians led by the Word of God and the Holy Spirit, prayerfully seeking the will of God for our lives together and the world.”

Remember our vision is

“To be a reconciled community of Christians exercising a prophetic witness to Christ.”

Our Mission is that

“We will proclaim our Triune God in Southern Africa through:

- Bearing witness to the saving love of Jesus Christ
- Building vital, reforming congregations for worship, ministry and discipleship
- Visibly proclaiming the Kingdom of God through unity, justice, peace and love.”

Our Mission guidelines are:

1. The UPCSA will be a Missional Church. (i.e. the Church is sent out.)
2. The UPCSA will have mission oriented and holistically developed ministry
3. The UPCSA will promote the equality of all its members and congregations
4. The UPCSA be welcoming to all, including the youth
5. The UPCSA will reflect the demographics
6. of its membership at all decision-making levels and forums.
7. The UPCSA will have cohesive, efficient and effective administration
8. The UPCSA will be financially sustainable
9. The UPCSA will promote a positive image and raise its profile.
10. The UPCSA will be a reconciled Church.

It is vital that congregations, Presbyteries and the Assembly (through its Committees), together with the various Associations and Fellowships, should take responsibility to make sure that we achieve the vision, commit to the mission and align ourselves with the guidelines as we have discerned the Spirit to have spoken to our Church.

One of the primary weaknesses that we have identified is that of a lack of alignment between the various councils and organizations in our Church. Friends, this is hampering our work as a Church and we need to ensure that we all pull together if we are to continue to be the Spirit-driven Church that Robert urged us to be, and if we are to begin to live our legacy.

Your friend and fellow partner in the gospel

Peter



FROM THE DESK OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY

THE REV. LUNGILE MPETSHENI

"I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God. Then you will know that I am the Lord your God, who brought you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians" (Exodus 6:7 NIV).

Greetings to all the Presbyterians in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Building a Community. The Tiyo Soga House Staff (UPCSA Central Office) proposed and this was approved by the 2018 General Assembly to focus on "Building a Community", going to the 2019 UPCSA 20 Celebrations. Other structures of the church, including the Conveners of the General Assembly Committees and the Moderators, Clerks and Treasurers of the 19 Presbyteries support the area of focus. We strive for the UPCSA to be a "COMMUNITY".

Communication. We thank the Almighty God for a rekindled spirit to resuscitate the Presbyterian Link. The General Assembly agreed to appoint members from Gauteng to serve in the Communications Committee, so as to enable them to hold their meetings on a monthly basis. The buzzword is "Communication". We have identified this as the main challenge in the UPCSA. The Communications Committee has taken a resolution to be robust on communication. It has been realised that there are many good stories in the UPCSA that are not widely shared. It is for that reason that a request goes to all the Congregations, Presbyteries, Synods, Church Associations and General Assembly Committees to share their good stories with the Communications Committee, so as to edify the whole denomination.

Implementation of the Resolutions of the General Assembly. We have come from the

General Assembly and all hands are on deck to implement the resolutions that were taken at the Assembly. We urge all the structures to diligently implement the decisions of the General Assembly, as applicable in the respective domains. Two remarkable consultations were held, one for all the Conveners of the General Assembly Committees (2-3 October 2018), and the other for the Moderators, Clerks and Treasurers of all the 19 Presbyteries (3-5 October 2018). The two consultations agreed, *inter alia*, to give priority to the implementation of the Strategic Plan and the Plan to address inequalities and inequities in the UPCSA. From the two documents, the following are some of the key issues:

- The establishment of the Gender Desk and the Youth Desk. This should happen at Presbytery level and Congregation level.
- The raising of the minister's profile (the welfare of a minister, minister's spouse and minister's children).
- The centralisation of stipends and other benefits for the ministers (funeral cover, and support to families, especially after the death of a minister).
- The dedication of the February Presbytery Council meeting on administration and the need for the submission of the returns from the Presbyteries to the Central Office by the end of February.
- Leadership capacity development.
- Healing and reconciliation.

Ministers' Retreat. The 2019 Ministers' Retreat will be held at eMseni Christian Centre on 25 February to 1 March 2019. The areas of focus will include the following:

- Mending the relationships.
- Healing of memories.

- Building a missional church.
- Leadership capacity development.

The organising team is still waiting for suggestions on the names of the presenters until the end of October 2018. They will go on to contact the identified speakers in November 2018.

The UPCSAs at 20 Celebrations. The 2018 General Assembly, inter alia, resolved to hold the celebrations as the UPCSAs will be turning 20 years in September 2019. The general outline for the celebrations is as follows:

Theme: Rejoice and Celebrate.

Presbyteries and Congregations: The Presbyteries and Congregations are requested to organise events that serve as build up towards the denominational event in September. In doing so, they should take in consideration the following areas of focus:

- Mending the relationships.
- Healing of memories.
- Building a missional church.
- Leadership capacity development, with particular focus on the elders.

Programme: The draft programme is as shown in the table below.

Serial No	Date and Time	Activity	Person(s) Responsible	Comments
	a	b	c	d
1	26 Sept afternoon	Constitution of the Conferences of the 8 Associations. Followed by meetings in separate places.	Moderator of the GA Executive Committees	GAWGA and Associations Task Teams are working on this.
2	26 Sept afternoon	Special programme for the Church leadership.	LOC	
3	27 Sept 09:00 - 10:00	Merger of the associations into four	Moderator of the GA	GAWGA and Associations Task Teams are working on this.
4	27 Sept 10:30 - 12:30	The four new associations meet to adopt the way forward.	Leadership of Associations	
5	27 Sept 10:30 - 12:30	Special programme for the Church leadership	LOC	

6	27 Sept 13:00 - 14:00	Lunch	LOC	Celebratory Lunch
7	27 Sept 14:30 - 15:45	The Journey of 20 years	To be identified	The story of the 20 years will be told.
8	27 Sept 15:45 - 17:45	Symposium on the Church in the 21 st Century	To be identified	Organising Team to find a speaker
9	27 Sept 18:00 -	Reception and entertainment	LOC	The ACCM will feature prominently here.
10	28 Sept 09:00 -11:00	Symposium on the Church in the 21 st Century	To be identified music	Organising Team to find a speaker
11	28 Sept 11:30 - 17:30	Celebrations including Goodwill messages from fraternal delegates and the associations. Presbyteries will feature here. ACCM will feature prominently here.	Moderator of GA will give a message of inspiration to the Presbyterians Priorities and Resources Committee and LOC.	Inputs to be received from all concerned. May include performances by the different artists, displays etc.
12	28 Sept 17:30	Associations Street Revival	Associations	
13	28 Sept 21:00	Whole night Revival Service	Associations	
14	29 Sept 09:00	Closing Service	Moderator of GA assisted by Hosting Presbytery	

The Moderator of the General Assembly's call on all in the UPCSA is: "Live your legacy". We suggest that we should do this by building a community so that we can be "**reconciled community of Christians exercising a prophetic witness to Christ**". We invite all to find the role in this big plan. We have repeatedly asked all to ensure effective communication, so that we move together towards September 2019.

Yours faithfully,

Rev. Lungile Mpetsheni
General Secretary of the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa

CUC 50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS: A PERSONAL REFLECTION

Rev. Zwai Mtyhobile

When the plans to celebrate the anniversary of CUC began, I had questions in my mind on whether CUC should celebrate or lament.

The reality is that, the church is wounded badly and is busy trying so hard to leak her wounds. The process of leaking wounds in anticipation of getting them better and possibly to a point of healing is long and the achievements need to be celebrated all the way. Each time the wound is opened and cleaned, progress is noticed and there has to be a smile which is in essence the celebration towards healing. The anniversary celebration eventually became that process in my mind, a process to remind the church that we need to find a way towards healing.



The woundedness of the church became very evident right through out the conference. Many speakers commented on the need to get the church right. The wounds of the church include inequality, racism, economic injustice, gender inequality and more. Denominations are battling within, with these issues. Divisions are evident on denominational levels. These problems are palpably encumbering the growing together of

churches within CUC. The spillage of internal denominational problems to CUC is problematic.

CUC has taken a decision to have its focus on the following Themes: Centres of hope, Ecumenical Theological Education, Liturgy, And the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification (JDDJ). The focus and the study on John 17 is another highlight to show that CUC is deliberate in doing something towards addressing the wounds of the church.

ECUMENICAL THEOLOGICAL TRAINING

Many denominations become very uncomfortable when the issue of theological education was raised. The derivation of discomfort is the thinking of having to train together possibly in one seminary. CUC has no intention of creating another FEDSEM, but rather is looking at the ways in which denominations can cooperate. It is important for the Denominations to fight inwardness if they want to escape the misery of having to bare the expenses of Theological Education in which case, that is close to impossible to accomplish. The different denominations present agreed that, it is rather unhealthy and economically expensive for any denomination to want to training their ministers unaccompanied. The need for the church to identify areas of need in theological education was also stressed in unison. A need to look and interrogate the curriculum is essential to address the fragmentations in Theological education. CUC seeks to promote togetherness and humility, fighting against selfish ambitions and conceit. CUC seeks to encourage the working together of denominations in identifying areas of cooperation. CUC promotes the spirit of 'Christ like' in the mind of the church. Training together, we can produce well trained and well equipped pastors.

JDDJ

For the church to be faithful to Jesus Christ, constant affirmation of her belief to the Triune God is essential. The Church needs to do away with those human realities that in many times tend to be objects of idolatry. The church cannot be a church if it accepts self created idols of doctrine, insecurity, power in the form of dominance, the violations, undermining and abhorrences of each other. All denominations that signed this document need to adhere to it and make it work in our African context. An African Church needs to gird against fighting the fight that is not hers, a fight that was brought to her by the western church. Allan Boesak rights “The church is called to live the Kingdom of God as a fundamental, and constant, interruption in the reign of evil and as a persistent reversal of the ways of the world.”



About the CUC

In 1970 the Commission proposed a Declaration of Intention to Seek Union which was adopted by all the member churches and celebrated in Services of Commitment to the Search for Union on 24 November 1974. In this Declaration the Churches undertook:

1. *to seek agreement on a common form of ministry of Word and Sacraments, with due regard to those patterns of ministry and oversight to which God has already led us;*

2. *to admit to the Lord's Table communicant members of all our Churches as an immediate and visible sign of our common quest;*
3. *to work for increasing co-operation in all areas of church*

The acceptance of reciprocal communion, as it was called, removed many misunderstandings and hurts and opened the way for far closer fellowship between members of the participating churches.

In the setting of the sixties, the ideal was organic or structural union. A consultation on Spirituality in 1975 affirmed that “the unity of the Church must be the product of renewal of fellowship within the Churches and not the result of a super-imposed unified structure”. The Commission therefore decided to set interim goals which would deepen the possibilities of fellowship between the Churches and move them step by step towards union.

<http://churchunitycommission.org>

“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one— I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

John 17: 20-23

The Link will include stories from the Associations, Presbyteries and Congregations. For this issue, these are the only stories that were received from the associations and we encourage the Associations to send stories for inclusion in the next issue



UNITING PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN AT WORK

2018 UPWW AGM held at Lekoa
from
19 – 23 September 2018

Theme: "Let Go, Let GOD"

A number of UPWW mothers from all the ten (10) Presbyteries came together for an Annual General Meeting (AGM) held in the boundaries of Lekoa presbytery. This was one of the remarkable AGM's with a "difference". These were the highlights:

1. UPWW 5th year birthday celebration

UPWW was celebrating its 5th year since its inception in 2013. This was rejoiced by the melody from the Minister's wives.



A toast by Ms. Nyama with the delighted General President, Ms. Qina, GENCO members and Minister's wives amongst them.



This was concluded by a treat "cake".



2. Recognition Awards

"It is a Lord Christ you are serving", Colossians 3 vs 23. The General President is presenting awards to UPWW senior citizens, past General Presidents; amongst them was Ms. Sontange. The portfolios awards were also presented to the best secretary, treasurer, prayer coordinator, JBWW president and GA president from each presbytery.



3. Entertainment

Caribbean Night

This was the most “memorable” event with our mothers in colourful tropical outfits. This was complemented by Caribbean food, music and dance with splendid Island decorations.



Women and Heritage

Our mothers were taken aback to their roots in cultural diverse. They were dressed in their traditional attires.



4. The Church “In attendance”

5. The UPCSA Moderator, Rt. Rev. Dr. Langerman, UPCSA General Secretary, Rev. Mpetsheni, UPCSA GA Working Group of Ass: Rev. Prof Pillay and; UPCSA CAC Convenor: Rev. Zungu were in representation of our denomination



UPCSA General Secretary, Rev. Mpetsheni



UPCSA CAC: Rev. Zungu
(UPCSA CAC Convenor)



UPCSA GA Working Group of Associations:
Rev (Prof) G Pillay (GAWGA Convenor)

6. Memorial Service

A moment of Candlelight in memory of our departed Mothers represented by the respective presbyteries.



Rejoice

A time to rejoice and thank our Lord in "Song and Dance". OoMama benza abadume ngazo.

UNITING PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

YOUTH ASSOCIATION 2018 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

10-12 August 2018, the Youth Association from across Mzansi gathered at Lefika Christian Centre celebrating amongst others, the underserved love that God has loved us with and His undying grace which was manifested for us when His Son died on the cross.



This great gathering was shadowed under the theme which was abstracted from the book of the **Prophet Habakkuk 2; 2-3**

"Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

Philippians 4: 4-7



**VISION: THOUGH IT MAY TARRY,
WAIT FOR IT**

This was to affirm that even though young people may face daunting challenges, they are to never lose sight of their God given vision, as it is only through it that they'll unlock their dreams and come to realize their potential in life, and that of those around them, as we, the Christian community, live to better the lives of others as God betters ours. We are blessed to be a blessing to others.

It wouldn't have been the same if we were not blessed by the presence of Church officials and Reverends that attended, their wisdom and guidance was a blessing and we are deeply grateful.



Our conference was filled with much fun as we engaged in activities that focused on team building, spiritual upliftment and fruitful deliberations.

We give praise to God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Proverbs 11: 7-10 "Young people, it's wonderful to be young! Enjoy every minute of it. Do everything you want to do; take it all in. But remember that you must give account to God for everything you do. So refuse to worry, and keep your body healthy. But remember that youth, with a whole life before you is meaningless."



In remembrance of our late sister
Unathi Bashman.

May her soul rest in Eternal Peace

MISSION AND DISCIPLESHIP COMMITTEE OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Theo Groenveld

On the 9-11 October the Mission and Discipleship Committee hosted the 5th Inspire Conference which was attended by Presbyterians from all across the UCPSA. Nearly 100 people were in attendance for plenaries and workshops to equip and inspire people to develop and grow Missional Congregations. The conference was held at Emseni Conference Centre where we were graciously and generously hosted.

Our Speakers were:

- Christopher Harrison on church planting
- Paul Siaki on the Gospel and Culture
- Our Moderator, The Rt. Rev. Dr Peter Langerman, A Trinitarian Theology of Missional Church

There were seven workshops offered and delegates could each attend 3.

- Heartlines: What's your story



The conference kicked off with a time of worship and a reading of Ephesians 3:20-21: ***"Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen."***

The theme of the conference was "growing and going" and placed an emphasis on incarnational ministry, calling local churches and members to see what God was already doing and joining in.

- Strategic Planning: Lungile Mpetsheni.
- Discipleship: Armando Sontange.
- Missional Values: Theo Groeneveld
- Missional Masterclass: George Marchinkowski
- Order of Lay Ministries: Eddie Stopforth
- Presbytery Church Planting: Christopher Judelsohn.

Alan Webster and Royden Blackwell also gave a presentation on two amazing resources, Kairos and Luke10Transformation.

The response to the conference has been very positive. People were encouraged, inspired and equipped.

We give thanks to God for His goodness!

You can see more on the website:

<http://www.upcsa-mad.org.za>

6 GREAT REASONS TO PRAY:

Why do we pray?
 God knows everything already anyway. He's almighty, sovereign, and in control of all things. What could we possibly add to His wisdom with our feeble attempts at prayer? It's a great question.

FIRST, WE PRAY BECAUSE WE ARE GOD'S CHILDREN, AND HE LOVES TO HEAR FROM US! <small>Zephaniah 2:17</small>	SECOND, WE PRAY BECAUSE IT DEEPENS OUR TRUST IN GOD. <small>Philippians 4:6-7</small>
THIRD, WE PRAY BECAUSE IT CAUSES US TO DEPEND ON GOD. <small>Isaiah 40:25</small>	FOURTH, WE PRAY BECAUSE IT GIVES US THE CHANCE TO EXPRESS OURSELVES COMPLETELY TO THE LORD. <small>Psalms 62:5</small>
FIFTH, WE PRAY BECAUSE OUR PRAYERS MOVE THE HEART OF GOD. <small>James 4:2</small>	SIXTH, WE PRAY BECAUSE IT'S AN AMAZING WAY THAT WE GET TO BE INVOLVED WITH WHAT GOD IS ALREADY DOING IN OUR WORLD. <small>1 Thessalonians 5:15</small>

PRAYER

"God shapes the world by prayer. The more praying there is in the world the better the world will be, the mightier the forces against evil." - Mother Teresa

Poster found in a Church in France...
(translated):

“When you enter this church it may be possible that you hear “the call of God.”

However, it is unlikely that He will call you on your mobile.

Thank you for turning off your phones. If you want to talk to God, enter, choose a quiet place and talk to Him. If you want to see Him, send Him a text while driving.”

A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

I would like to give special thanks to the UPWW and Youth Association for submitting their contributions for this edition of the Presbyterian Link.

Disclaimer

The views or opinions presented in the Presbyterian Link may not necessarily represent the official position of the UPCSA.

Submissions

We welcome submissions from anyone. Please submit photos as well. The editors of the Presbyterian Link reserve the right to edit/adapt or decline articles submitted to it. Submissions can be emailed to the.kellys@mweb.co.za

Feedback

We would love to hear from our readers regarding any article.

Please email us at: the.kellys@mweb.co.za

Executive Editor: The General Secretary.

Editorial: Glenys Kelly

Email them at: the.kellys@mweb.co.za

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