



THE UNITING
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH
IN SOUTHERN
AFRICA

6th April 2021

Let's Journey Together (LJT) (1/2021)

TO ALL IN THE UPCSA

Dear Fellow Presbyterians,

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. (Colossians 3:1-2 NIV)

Congratulations! You are still alive. God spared you from all the perils. Be thankful. Every Easter always reminds us about the news of triumph – Jesus is not on the cross, he is not in the tomb, but he is risen. The disciples are receiving the news with joy. We have been raised with Christ. We have conquered the sting of death. We can conquer COVID-19.

As a community of resurrection, I beseech all of us to revisit the values that we share as the members of the UPCSA. I will list without exposing any of them: *Love; Holiness; Scriptural; Integrity; Spiritual growth; and Servanthood*. Let us hold these values firmly and grow together as members of the same fellowship. We shall be able to surmount the seemingly insurmountable obstacles if we work together and love one another.

COVID-19 has played a god over our lives. But our faith has remained strong and unshaken. That is our strength to beat the pandemic and its effects. While we observe all the protocols, let us grow stronger in faith, hope and love. Let us build resilient spirituality to stand the tests of times. The UPCSA, like many other denominations, suffers from all the difficulties that are brought about by the pandemic. The finances of the denomination are getting strained. It is recognized that the congregations go through similar hardships. However, an appeal is made to the congregations to do their utmost best to meet their obligations, doing so cheerfully and out of love.

The denomination has embarked on programmes of growth and development. We call upon the leadership at all the levels to prioritise these issues in every sphere of operation in our denomination. We are confronted by the realities of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) with its pros and cons. We, nevertheless, need to take advantage of technology to advance our connections, so that we may grow and develop together. We have held virtual meetings to address several issues, including the alignment of the work of the General Assembly Committees - considering COVID-19, Gender justice, Youth capacity building, Presbytery empowerment, and building missional congregations. We want to grow together.

The General Assembly of the UPCSA will, for the first time, be held virtually. The supposed location of the Assembly will be Pietermaritzburg in June 2021. The UPCSA leadership will be there physically to be able to conduct certain phases of the Assembly that include the induction of the Moderator and the service where the new Moderator will preach his sermon. That will also be an opportunity to interact with the hosting Presbytery – Drakensberg and for the leadership to confer on the business of the Assembly as it may be needed. The commissioners will participate virtually. They are being orientated on the workings of